

A·C·E·R

NEWSLETTER

Edited by John King

ACER
- 1 DEC 1989
LIBRARY

Increased Student Retention: Challenges to Teachers

The Australian Council for Educational Research has been commissioned to undertake one of the projects of national significance sponsored by the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training. The aim of the study is to investigate the challenges to teachers arising from increased student retention. The project brief contains a paragraph which explains the rationale for the study:

Increased school retention has changed and will continue to change further the composition of the upper secondary school. The range of needs, interests, abilities, motivating factors, expectations and aspirations to be found among Years 11 and 12 students will change as an increasing proportion of each high school intake cohort stays on at school. Upper secondary schooling will need to cater for this greater diversity in order to ensure that all students benefit to the greatest possible extent from the schooling they receive. Teachers are a central factor in this process.

The study will be undertaken in three states – Queensland, South Australia and Victoria. At the end of 1989, a survey will be conducted of a sample of government and non-government secondary schools to find out from administrators and teachers how the staff of each school is responding to the challenges presented by increased retention rates in terms of:

- institutional policy and organisation,
- curriculum development,
- teaching and learning experiences,
- staff development, and
- personal and career development of students.

The second stage of the study will be undertaken in Term 1 1990. A small number of schools will be selected from the survey sample for more detailed study. Short visits to each school will be made to explore further, through discussions and interviews, the views of teachers on how they can and should respond to the challenges of increased retention. Students' views on the relevance of the curriculum and

on the challenges facing them at school will be sought at the same time.

The expected outcomes of the project are: a full report of the study, including instances of exemplary practice; a summary report to participating schools on the survey results; feed-

back to case-study schools on the outcomes of school visits and discussions with staff and students; and the development of inservice materials.

For further details about this project contact Project Staff, Margaret Batten or Graeme Withers: (03) 819 1400.

Australian Language Certificates

During 1990 ACER will undertake a study on behalf of the Australian Bicentennial Multicultural Foundation to develop proficiency certificates in Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese and Modern Greek for secondary school students. The Australian Language Certificates will be awarded to students on the basis of their performance on specially developed reading and listening tasks in each language.

The purpose of this project is to

encourage and celebrate second-language learning in schools by providing external recognition of achievement through attractive certificates which record students' proficiency levels. Reading and listening tasks are being developed by language panels chaired by academic staff of the University of Melbourne's Faculty of Arts and Institute of Education. Each panel will include practising language teachers from across the country.

In 1990, the trial listening and reading tasks will be designed for students in their second year of language learning. It is proposed to use these tasks in a limited number of classes in each state and territory. Depending on the success of the 1990 trials, the Australian Language Certificates will become generally available to students from 1991. Planning is underway for extending the certificates to other languages and levels in subsequent years.



Teachers interested in learning more about the Australian Language Certificates should contact Susan Zammit at ACER: (03) 819 1400.

New Charges in 1990

From January 1990, the following freight and handling charges will be added to all invoices:

- \$3.00 for orders less than \$20.00
 - \$5.00 for orders \$21.00–\$100.00
 - \$10.00 for orders \$101.00–\$1000.00
 - \$20.00 for orders over \$1000.00
- Prepayment is required for orders of \$20.00 or less.



Conference on Behaviour Problems in Schools

In August 1989 ACER's Development and Training Division collaborated with the Faculty of Special Education and Paramedical Studies in Victoria College in conducting the first national conference on Educational Programs for Children and Adolescents with Emotional or Behavioural Problems.

Participants included practitioners working in integration programs, special education, guidance and counselling, senior staff in student support services sections of Education departments and ministries, academics with particular expertise in the behaviour problems area, and representatives of other interested groups such as school councils, hospitals and support organisations. Interstate participants had the opportunity of visiting Victorian programs dealing with behaviour problems on the Friday before joining the conference; the visits were endorsed as being of particular value for the sharing of expertise between systems.

The keynote address, given by Commissioner Quentin Bryce of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, was followed by a number of individual and group papers presenting system initiatives, details of particular programs and analyses of particular approaches. Those present were invited to evaluate the residential conference and to indicate whether there should be another in 1990. The majority of responses expressed gratitude for the opportunity to meet with colleagues from other states and territories, commended the conference organisers and gave enthusiastic support to another conference.

A meeting of interested participants at the end of the conference resolved to support a *Behaviour Problems Network Newsletter* as a way of facilitating the sharing of information and expertise. ACER agreed to coordinate production of the newsletter and people in each state and territory agreed to act as local contact persons for the newsletter (see item page 3 for further details).

Conference proceedings: Copies are available from ACER Customer Services for \$25.00 plus \$3.00 handling charge. Telephone (03) 819 1400.

1990 National Conference

Planning for the 1990 national conference commenced soon after the 1989 conference closed and we are pleased

to announce that the 1990 national conference on Practical Approaches to Resolving Behaviour Problems: Programs, Implementation and System Initiatives will be held at the University of Western Sydney, Nepean (Westmead South Campus) in Westmead, a western suburb of Sydney, from Thursday 19 July 1990 to Sunday 22 July 1990. This conference will be a joint endeavour of ACER and the University of Western Sydney, Nepean, with considerable assistance from the Sydney Conference Program Committee chaired by Ms Susanna Richardson. A call for papers is enclosed with this *ACER Newsletter*. Those intending

to offer papers should check the schedule of dates on the announcement, as papers chosen for the program are to be presented by at least one of the authors.

The conference will provide an opportunity for those working with children who have emotional behavioural disorders and/or physical, sensory and other disabilities – in regular or special schools – to meet with colleagues from other parts of Australia. Those wishing to attend the 1990 conference should register their interest by completing the form enclosed with this newsletter and returning it to ACER.



Malaysian Visitors. ACER is providing a seven-week course on *School-based assessment in primary schools* in Australia for a group of key teachers from the Malaysian Ministry of Education with funding from the World Bank. Dr John Izard and Dr Kevin Piper visited Malaysia in September 1989 to talk with senior officers of the Ministry of Education, to meet those chosen to travel to Australia for the course, and to visit some urban and rural primary schools. The eighteen visitors began their course at ACER on 23 October 1989. Dr Noor Azmi Ibrahim and Mr Mohd Rosli Ghazali lead the group which includes School Principals, Primary Curriculum Coordinators, Principal Assistant Directors (curriculum), and senior officers in curriculum, assessment, and teacher training divisions of the Ministry.

While the group is in Australia they will visit a number of primary and secondary schools in both urban and country areas to see the various practical approaches to school-based assessment as used in Australian primary and junior secondary classes. On their return to Malaysia in December 1989 they will be providing advice on those assessment practices which are most appropriate for the Malaysian context, and conducting teacher development programs on school-based assessment.

ACER Research and Development Themes for New Triennium

From July 1987, ACER's Research and Development Program has been organised around five themes. This three-year thematic program will end in June 1990. Work has begun on identifying themes for the new triennium from July 1990 to June 1993.

The current feeling of ACER staff and Council is that fewer and more

narrowly focused themes should form the core of ACER's program in the second triennium. Requests for advice and comment have been circulated widely and a considerable range of advice has been received. Specific proposals for the themes will be prepared by staff and presented to the ACER Council for final decision in April 1990.

The Centre of Philosophy for Children

Workshops

The Centre conducts inservice courses for teachers and other educators (including parents) and, in conjunction with the Institute of Education at Melbourne University, is able to provide ongoing support to Victorian schools implementing Philosophy for Children. Workshops are usually two or three days in length and are either organised by the Centre itself or are sponsored by regional and school support centres. For details of the

workshops to be conducted at ACER in the first part of 1990 complete and return the form on page 5. For information on other forthcoming workshops involving the Centre, to be held in:

- Melbourne, at the King David School (February 1-2) – contact the Centre.
- Brisbane (January 23-25) – contact Dr Lyn English (07) 263 6222.
- Alice Springs (March 20-22) and Darwin (March 27-29) – contact Mr Alan Day (089) 89 6236.

Australian Behaviour Problems Network

The main objective of this network newsletter would be to disseminate information to people interested in the area of behaviour problems and stimulate Australia-wide communication in this field.

ACER, and the coordinators listed below, will collect, publish and distribute on a quarterly basis the *Behaviour Problems Network Newsletter* for \$15.00 annual fee commencing September 1989. See order form page 5.

The coordinators, who will gather information and newsletter items and provide copy for central collating and distribution are:

Australian Capital Territory

Ms Sandra Renew
Senior Teacher ACT Schools Authority, Yarralumla Centre, Loftus Street, Yarralumla ACT 2600; Telephone (062) 822 936; Fax (062) 851 266.

New South Wales

Mr Steve Jessup
Assistant Principal Itinerant Teacher Behaviour Disorders, Mt Warrigal Public School, Hogarth Avenue, Warilla NSW 2528; Telephone (042) 966 266.

Northern Territory

Ms Sandy Groom
SEO Behaviour Management Services, Schools North, Catterthun Street, Winnellie NT 5789; Telephone (089) 220 774; Fax (089) 470 724.

Queensland

Ms Buffy Lavery
Centre for Learning & Adjustment Difficulties, 242 Gladstone Road, Dutton Park, Qld 4102; Telephone (07) 846 1090; Fax (07) 391 6529.

South Australia

Ms Anne Bolst
Crippled Children's Association of SA Inc, PO Box 209, Kilkenny SA 5009; Telephone (08) 243 8243; Fax (08) 243 8208.

Tasmania

Ms Alison Jacob
Lecturer in Special Education, Dept of Teacher Education, University of Tasmania, GPO Box 252C, Hobart Tas 7001; Telephone (002) 202 523; Fax (002) 202 186.

Victoria

Ms Gail Ward
Teacher in Charge Social Integration Unit, Heathmont East Primary School, PO Box 292, Ringwood Vic 3134; Telephone (03) 720 2381.

Western Australia

Ms Gail Whitham
Director of Education Support, St Mary's Anglican Girls' School, PO Box 105, Karrinyup WA 6018; Telephone (09) 341 1022.



Ross Trust Fellow. The R. E. Ross Trust sponsors attachment programs at ACER for senior education officials involved in examinations and assessment, as part of the Ross Trust's program of assistance to South Pacific nations. Mr Abel Olul from the Ministry of Education in Vanuatu is ACER's latest Ross Trust Fellow. His time at ACER began in September this year and he returns to Vanuatu in December 1989. While at ACER he has been reviewing assessment materials which may be appropriate in Vanuatu, and preparing a report on priorities and expectations in Vanuatu. Further Ross Trust Fellows from Western Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu are expected to take up attachment programs at ACER early in 1990.

Development and Training Courses for 1990

ACER arranges a number of scheduled courses and workshops for development and training within Australia in order to make ACER expertise in research, testing and resource selection and use more widely available to teachers, psychologists, and professionals in related areas. Courses to be offered in 1990 will include:

- Tests of Reading Comprehension (TORCH)
 - Neale Analysis of Reading Abilities (Revised)
 - Student profiles for special education programs: Tools for teachers (focusing on use of the Non-Verbal Ability Tests Battery)
 - Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)
 - Child Behavior Checklist and related materials
 - Stanford-Binet (4th edition)
- Similar courses will be offered on

educational strategies and materials to teachers, parent-education leaders, psychologists, school bursars, and users of the *Australian Education Index*. These courses will include:

- Managing effective English classrooms
- Living in a Stepfamily
- Leadership Skills for STEP, Next STEP and STEP/Teen
- Talk Sense to Yourself: A program for children and adolescents
- Curriculum and financial performance – Non-government schools

Details of these and similar courses are available from the ACER Development and Training Division: (03) 819 1400.

In addition to scheduled courses, ACER can provide special-purpose training under contract to government departments, statutory authorities and other agencies. Please contact Dr John Izzard at ACER to discuss requirements, possible venues and dates, and costs.

November 1989

NEW FROM
A·C·E·R

**Literacy and Numeracy
in Victorian Schools
1988**

ACER Research Monograph
No. 34

*B. McGaw, M. G. Long,
G. Morgan, M. J. Rosier*

This report publishes direct evidence about levels of numeracy and literacy in Victorian schools. It provides:

- details of the levels of literacy and numeracy of Year 5 and Year 9 students in Victorian schools;
- comparisons between the performances of Year 5 and Year 9 students;
- definitions of 'minimum adult competency levels' in numeracy and literacy, and estimates of the proportions of Year 5 and Year 9 students achieving above and below those levels; and
- comparisons of the performance levels of students in 1988 with those of similar groups of Victorian students in 1975 and 1980.

Code 325BK Price \$24.95

Technical Report

M. G. Long, M. J. Rosier

The technical report provides information to supplement that contained in the main report. The contents comprise:

- Section A* Sampling and Administration
- Section B* Sample Design and Execution of ASSP Studies
- Section C* Estimation of Bias Due to Non-response of Schools
- Section D* Measures of Language Background and Home Background
- Section E* Construction of Mathematics, Reading and Writing Scales

This report is available only on request.

Price \$20.00

**Seven Keys to Successful
Study**

Peter Edwards

The most important reading and study skills needed by all students are included in this highly recommended book. *Seven Keys to Successful Study* can be used by students as a workbook, by teachers and instructors as a textbook, as class sets, or by parents and other interested people as a guide for study in the home. It has been designed specifically for secondary and TAFE students, apprentices, students in traineeships, overseas students studying in Australia, and adults returning to study.

Using clear explanations, numerous examples, and graded exercises with

immediate feedback on performance, this book shows how to:

- Organise, plan time, set study goals
- Read efficiently and to skim and scan for main information
- Understand graphics
- Prepare notes quickly
- Recall information for study and examination purposes

The author has taught at all levels of education in Australia and Canada, and was on the Faculty of Education at Monash University for a number of years. Dr Edwards has published widely and is the author of three books on education, a reading test and a training program on negotiation skills for business organisations and schools.

Code 282BK Price \$14.95

Best of set: Discipline

In this special edition of *set: Research Information for Teachers* you will find clearly written and well-reasoned answers to the following typical questions:

- Why do students misbehave?
- Is it possible to avoid most classroom misbehaviour?
- What techniques are available for handling classroom behaviour?
- What do parents and students want in the way of classroom behaviour?
- How can I reduce the stress I experience in disciplining misbehaving students?
- Can aggressive student behaviour in the schoolyard be avoided?

The fourteen articles have been selected to assist teachers, counsellors and policy makers in the decision-making processes that every school must address.

Code 989BS Price \$17.00

The Best of set: Reading (\$7.00) and *The Best of set: Assessment* (\$10.00) are also available for purchase.

**set: Research
Information for
Teachers**

No. 2 1989

The second edition of *set* for 1989 contains fifteen reports covering a wide range of topics including the use of process writing

across the curriculum, school projects and the quest for information, teaching economics using the media, how principals manage curriculum change, a new learning strategy and participation in education.

set is available on subscription. The 1989 subscription rate is \$27.00 (\$30.00 for overseas subscribers).

**Starting a Career: The
Early Attainments of
Young People**

ACER Research Monograph
No. 36

*Peter G. Carpenter and
John S. Western*

Starting a Career offers a picture of the career beginnings of a group of young people, following them from the time they left school at the end of Year 12 until a point some four years later. The study unravels a number of key processes bound up with starting a career.

The investigation described is one of the very few long-term studies to trace the connections between young Australians' plans, abilities and actual achievements as they start their working lives.

Code 327BK Price \$24.95

**Woodcock Reading
Mastery Test - Revised**

R. Woodcock

This major revision of the *Woodcock Reading Mastery Test* provides an individual assessment of reading performance from kindergarten to adult. Two forms, G and H, consist of the following: Word Identification, Word Attack, Word Comprehension (antonyms, synonyms, analogies), and Passage Comprehension, with Form G only also containing Visual Auditory Learning, Letter Identification, and a Supplementary Letter Checklist.

Publisher AGS (1987)

	Code	Price
Complete kit Form G	990BP	\$230.00
Complete kit Form H	991BP	221.00
Record forms G, pkg. 25	101BP	42.00
Record forms H, pkg. 25	100BP	42.00
Manual	500BP	46.30
Report to parents, pkg. 25	102BP	22.30

Scholarship Testing Programs

ACER conducts two annual testing programs which are used by independent schools in all Australian states and territories for the award of scholarships and, increasingly, as selection and placement instruments.

Cooperative Scholarship Testing Program

The Cooperative Scholarship Testing Program (CSTP) provides an assessment of academic ability at three levels: Level 1 for final-year primary and first-year secondary pupils; Level 2 for pupils in Year 8; and Level 3 for pupils in Year 10. Assessment at each level is based on the total score obtained over four subtests, which include two creative writing exercises, a forty-item multiple-choice humanities test, and a thirty-item multiple-choice test of mathematics/science material. The degree of difficulty built into the tests at each level, together with the scaling of the raw scores, gives CSTP excellent discrimination of ability at the upper levels.

In 1989 approximately 9000 candidates sat these tests. Whilst most candidates were from major population centres around Australia, ACER makes administrative arrangements so candidates can sit for the tests in remote areas of Australia, and in most overseas countries.

The date of the CSTP tests is determined by the CSTP Policy Committee, and for 1990 is Saturday 12 May.

Australian Cooperative Entry Program

The Australian Cooperative Entry Program (ACEP) reports on measures of both academic aptitude and academic achievement, based on six subtests. These comprise: Reading, Humanities (Comprehension and Interpretation), Mathematics Comprehension, Language Usage, Mathematics Achievement, and Written Expression. The program is for pupils currently in Year 6. The test date for 1990 is Saturday 7 April.

The ACEP, which was developed to meet the needs of South Australian independent schools, is gaining wider acceptance and usage in all states and territories, particularly for the selection and placement of students into Year 7 classes. Compared with CSTP, the ACEP tests are more curriculum dependent and serve as an excellent diagnostic tool for a wide range of student abilities.

There are many advantages for schools participating in these programs. New tests are prepared each year from materials written, panelled, and trialled by experienced subject-matter professionals. Each written-

expression exercise is scored independently by two members of ACER's trained essay-marking panel. The latest in optical mark-reading (OMR) technology is used to score the multiple-choice responses of candidates on the humanities and mathematics subtests. Confidential reports to schools provide results in both alphabetic and merit order, and include raw and scaled scores. The percentile rank of candidate performance can be read from tables of the large-sample normative data. Detailed instructions accompany these programs, enabling reliable standardised administration of these secure test instruments.

Schools wishing to enter these programs, or obtain more information on either, should contact Jacqui Barley or Mike Sorrell at ACER: Telephone (03) 819 1400 or Fax (03) 819 5502.

Overseas Publications

New from National Foundation for Educational Research—Nelson

Playtime in the primary school: Problems and improvements by Peter Blatchford — Playtime takes up more than a quarter of the school day, and is of vital importance in children's experience of school. However, teachers are becoming increasingly aware that a large amount of disruptive behaviour occurs at playtime, particularly in the primary school. Based on research conducted at the Thomas Coram Research Unit, *Playtime in the primary school* identifies problems that commonly arise during playtime, and documents ways in which these difficulties may be resolved.

Self-evaluation: A primary teacher's guide by Janet Moyles (Leicester University School of Education) — Teacher appraisal is a charged political issue, but there is little doubt that a system which takes due account of the particular problems of teaching as a profession would be welcomed. This book provides a model to help teachers assess their own performance, showing:

- what they are doing effectively;
- where their strengths and weaknesses lie and consequently what in-service requirements they have; and
- what modifications, if any, they need to make in classroom practice.

These publications are available by the special order system placed with ACER Customer Services. Information about other NFER—Nelson publications is available on request.

Restructure of ACER Council

The ACER Council has changed its structure and membership considerably. Its size has been reduced from twenty-seven to fourteen, and the new members are:

Nominees of State Institutes of Educational Research

Dr Leo Foster (Director, Phillip Institute of Technology)
Dr Len King (Head, Department of Educational Studies, WA College of Advanced Education)
Dr Alan Watson (Senior Lecturer, Sydney College of Advanced Education)

Nominees of Conference of Directors-General

Dr Ken Boston (Director-General, SA Department of Education)
Dr Fenton Sharpe (Director-General, NSW Department of Education)

Nominee of Secretary of Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training

Dr Neil Johnston (Deputy Secretary, Department of Employment, Education and Training)

Nominee of Chair of National Board of Employment, Education and Training

Dr Gregor Ramsey (Deputy Chair, National Board of Employment, Education and Training)

Members elected by the ACER Council

Ms Lyndsay Connors (Chair, Schools Council, National Board of Employment, Education and Training)
Professor Peter Karmel (formerly Vice-Chancellor, Australian National University)
Dr Jillian Maling (Principal and Chief Executive Officer, University of Western Sydney, Nepean)
Professor Millicent Poole (Faculty of Education, Monash University)
Ms Isabelle Proctor (Executive Support Unit, Ministry of Education, WA)

Nominee of ACER staff

Dr Margaret Batten

Director of ACER

Dr Barry McGaw