

*Faculty of Education*

# Research Bulletin



***Happy 2008!***

Did you hear?

'Childwise', the latest survey of children's online behaviour in UK – reports 85 per cent of five to 16-year-olds have accessed the internet, and more than a third (including a quarter of five to six-year-olds) own a computer or laptop.

'On average, they go online over four times a week, two hours each time. Research in Australia mirrors this trend. And teachers' working lives are further complicated by increasing demands to convert all assessment and curriculum reporting to online formats.

'These research trends – of young people's behaviour and management demands – highlight the importance of professional development for teachers critical for effectiveness in our digitised society.

'Our research highlights the gap in teachers' knowledge to meet these demands for our future citizens. One can only imagine that this knowledge-gap compounds the feelings of frustration of many teachers in their attempts to maintain parity with other members of the workforce.'

In the Australian census 2006-07, 'home was reported to be the most popular location of Internet use, with 61% of people aged 15 years or over using this location. An estimated 31% of people aged 15 years or over used the Internet from work.

The challenges are ours!

Regards

Associate Dean, Research

## Research Calendar for 2008

**Please see the attached link for important research related dates for this year:**

<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/education/downloads/research/RGS-calendar-2008.pdf>

The 2008 Professorial Research Development Seminar series is currently being drafted. Details to follow in the next bulletin.

## Distinguished Visiting Fellow

Professor Maurice Galton is currently at the Bundoora campus until January 24. He has presented two seminars, one at Bendigo and one at Bundoora which were video-conferenced to other campuses and were extremely well received, has taught in the Research Methods class and has been available for individual staff consultations.



*Professors  
Lorraine Ling,  
Margaret  
Robertson,  
Maurice Galton  
and Tim Brown  
(DVC –  
Research)*

## ***Equipment for loan***

The following equipment has been purchased with Research funds and is stored with Gail McNaulty. Research grant recipients have first call on the equipment, as requested in grant applications.

2 x Dell laptops, 1 MacBook, digital voice recorders, digital transcription kit, foot controls for use with transcribing digital files, iPod video, iPod stereo player, iPod Nano, iPod MicroMemos, Sony Video HandyCam, Zing Software and keyboards. As before, staff also have access to School equipment

including voice recorders, transcribers, lap tops etc. Contact Gail McNaulty for further details. Some equipment is already booked out.

### *What are our staff up to?*

#### **Albury-Wodonga news**

**Ms Laura Fildes** has been invited by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to undertake research in a pilot of the Department's Research Interns Program. This is an initiative undertaken by the Department as a component of the forthcoming Departmental Research Strategy. It sits within the core components of the strategy: to build and strengthen partnerships with world class research bodies, such as universities. We at Albury-Wodonga, as one of two universities that were approached by the Department, nominated prospective researchers within the program. Laura will be involved in the program for 6 weeks and she will be undertaking topic-specific literature scans during that time.

**Dr Kim Keamy** has been invited to join with Indigenous academic leaders from the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia (ASSA) in a summer school for Indigenous Postgraduate Students, held at the University of Melbourne, from February 11 to 15. The Summer School is a five day fully residential program which brings together Australian Indigenous postgraduate students and their supervisors with a distinguished faculty of senior Indigenous scholars and Fellows from the ASSA. The purpose of the Summer School is to provide students with the knowledge, skills and mentoring to help them towards successful completion of their postgraduate degrees and move into their careers. The Summer School is hosted by ASSA in conjunction with the Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health, the Australian Indigenous Studies Program and the Centre for Indigenous Education at the University of Melbourne.

#### **Handheld research off to a good 2008 start for Howard Nicholas and Wan Ng.**

Wan Ng and Howard Nicholas presented a paper titled Ubiquitous Learning with Handheld Computers in Schools to a packed audience at the mLearn2007 Conference in Melbourne. The session was chaired by Professor Mike Sharples from the University of Nottingham, a renowned researcher in the field of mobile learning. The paper was chosen as one of ten best papers at the conference and Wan and Howard have been invited to write an article for a 2008 special edition of the Journal of Computer Assisted Learning.

Wan and Howard are currently working with The Learning Federation (TLF) and several schools on a project that seeks to adapt learning objects for handheld devices. TLF will provide funds for Wan and Howard to conduct the research that addresses the question: How effective are TLF learning objects

that have been adapted for mobile learning devices in enabling seamless distribution, access to and/or use of the content for a more effective and distributed learning purpose whether within and/or between formal and non-formal learning environments? Howard is coordinating this project.

Wan and Howard are also working with TLF and academics from Finland and the University of Nottingham to submit a symposium based on mobile learning for the 2008 British Educational Research Association conference in September.

Subsequent to the invitation to speak at the 2007 Australian Literacy Educators Association (Victoria) conference, the Victorian Information Technology Teachers Association (VITTA) has invited Wan and Howard to run a professional learning session on handheld computers in 2008.

Perhaps the most exciting aspect of the research with handheld computers is the use of an avi-screen and audio capture software as a non-intrusive method of capturing the verbal and screen-based (visual) elements of students' thinking as they use handhelds to construct representations. Wan and Howard have trialled the software with a group of year 6 students working individually as well as collaboratively to undertake small tasks that required the demonstration of understanding of science and mathematics concepts on the handhelds. The software was able to capture a number of interesting aspects of the thinking processes of students as they translate thoughts into speech and actions on the handhelds. Two journal articles have been written to date and submitted for review – one paper is a methodology paper focusing on the use of the handheld as a research tool and the other on the use of the device as a pedagogical and research tool in science and mathematics education.

### *Student Success*

**Le Thi Anh Phuong** recently completed her EdD titled "Feedback Given to Student Teachers by Supervisors" with flying colours and her thesis was recommended for a merit award by all three examiners. One of the examiners, Dr. Sharon F O'Neal, a pioneer researcher in the field, wrote that "The content of this thesis is of the highest quality and contributes to our overall knowledge of the impact of the supervising teacher during the practicum experience of the student teacher."

Phuong's thesis was supervised by Dr. Lloyd Holliday and Dr Christine Brew.

After graduating from Hue Education College, since 1980 Phuong has been an EFL teacher trainer at Nha Trang Education College. Since then she has been involved in teacher training at a national and local level in Vietnam, as well as in cooperation with the British Council, the Overseas Service Bureau and the Teacher Inservice Education program of the Vietnam Australian Training project. Phuong also completed a Graduate Diploma in TESOL from

Deakin University and a Master of Applied Linguistics from Macquarie University.

In her research at La Trobe from 2004-2007 she concentrated on examining the quality of and the topics on which feedback was given to young teacher trainees in Vietnam, with the aim of improving the effectiveness of the feedback given to novice teachers and hence the eventual EFL learning outcomes for students in Vietnam. Her research has wider implications in contributing to promoting the effectiveness of giving feedback in all vocational and professional training situations.

Phuong is the second highly successful doctoral student from Nha Trang Education College in our offshore program. The other doctoral student, Dr Ha Van Sinh has just recently returned from a year in the USA on a post-doctoral Fulbright fellowship.