

DENI Funded Research 1998/99

1. This Research Briefing provides information on projects commenced in 1998/99 funded by DENI. Details of funded projects from previous years which were still in progress at the start of the year are also provided.
2. The purpose of this Briefing is to provide clear and succinct summaries of the research projects funded by DENI to ensure that policy makers and administrators in the education services, teachers, academics and other interested parties are aware of research both in progress and recently completed.
3. The findings of research commissioned by DENI are disseminated:-
 - a. through the publication of research reports as part of the **DENI Research Report Series**; and
 - b. through publication of summaries of the findings of projects as part of **the DENI Research Briefing Series**.
4. Please note that the dates given for uncompleted projects refer to when the draft final report is due to be received by DENI. Projects can be affected by delays. Actual publication of reports tends to occur about 6 months after the draft final report is received.
5. Copies of DENI research publications may be obtained from the address on the back of this Briefing.

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Section A: Projects Commenced in 1998/99

1. Project Title: PROVISION IN FURTHER EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND / OR DISABILITIES

Research Body: DTZ Piedad Consulting

Start Date: June 1998 **Duration:** 6 months

Cost: £15,000 **Final Report:** Draft Received November 1998

Brief Description of Project

This project aims to:-

- a. provide estimates of the level and nature of participation by people with disabilities and/or learning difficulties in non-vocational, vocational and higher level courses in the Further Education sector;
- b. provide baseline information about the numbers and characteristics of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities which might be monitored in future years via colleges' information systems;
- c. estimate the nature and scale of unmet need; and
- d. identify factors influencing participation and non-participation.

2. Project Title: GATHERING PARENTAL VIEWS ON EDUCATION TO ASSIST THE DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGY & POLICY: A PILOT STUDY INTO THE USE OF FOCUS GROUPS

Research Body: BDO Stoy Hayward

Start Date: September 1998 **Duration:** 7 months

Cost: £6,000 **Final Report:** Due March 1999

Brief Description of Project

This project seeks to provide detailed information on the feasibility and utility of using focus group methodology to gather parental views on education to assist the development of strategy and policy.

3. Project Title: ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF ADULT LEARNERS IN THE CONTEXT OF INCORPORATION OF FURTHER EDUCATION COLLEGES

Research Body: University of Ulster at Jordanstown

Start Date: April 1998 **Duration:** 15 months

Cost: £39,600 **Final Report:** Due July 1999

Brief Description of Project

This project aims to investigate how college managers can meet the challenges presented by incorporation, and address communities in order to make long term provision which will meet the needs of adult learners.

4. Project Title: EDUCATION & EARNINGS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Research Body: Department of Economics, Keele University & Department of Economics, University College, Dublin

Start Date: April 1998 **Duration:** 18 months

Cost: £49,000 **Final Report:** Due September 1999

Brief Description of Project

This is an econometric research project which aims to identify the rate of return (in terms of earnings) to participation in higher education. Comparisons are to be made between rates of return to higher education in Northern Ireland, Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland. The project further aims to provide explanations for the participation in higher education of Northern Ireland domiciled students and their choices to study in different territories. This research will draw on existing large data sets which include the Continuous Household Survey and the Family Expenditure Survey.

5. Project Title: IMPROVING SCHOOLS THROUGH PURPOSEFUL LEADERSHIP

Research Body: School of Education, QUB

Start Date: January 1999 **Duration:** 16 months

Cost: £26,900 **Final Report:** Due April 2000

Brief Description of Project

This project aims to investigate the most effective ways of applying agreed academic values consistently through head teachers' leadership to the key areas of teaching and learning, as a means of improving school performance.

6. Project Title: AN INVESTIGATION DESIGNED TO IMPROVE HEALTH EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

Research Body: University of Ulster at Jordanstown

Start Date: September 1998 **Duration:** 12 months

Cost: £44,500 **Final Report:** Due September 1999

Brief Description of Project

This project will investigate the needs of teachers charged with providing health education as a cross-curricular theme for young persons in primary and secondary education. It aims to provide evidence-based recommendations for curriculum policy and practice through an examination of the perceptions of teachers regarding the relevance of current policy, and their suggestions for improvement.

7. Project Title: NORTHERN IRELAND CURRICULUM COHORT STUDY

Research Body: National Foundation for Educational Research

Start Date: June 1998 **Duration:** 21 months

Cost: £87,400 **Final Report:** Due March 2000

Brief Description of Project

This study aims to investigate primary pupils' perspectives and experiences of the curriculum, following them through into secondary education. This will offer policy makers and teachers a valuable and wide-ranging source of information with which to review and, if appropriate, restructure the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

8. Project Title: UPTAKE & USER PERCEPTION OF NON-GCSE COURSES

Research Body: BDO Stoy Hayward

Start Date: October 1998 **Duration:** 6 months

Cost: £8,000 **Final Report:** Due March 1999

Brief Description of Project

This proposal seeks to provide detailed information on the uptake and perceived usefulness and appropriateness of 2 non-GCSE courses, within the context of concerns about the level of low achievement among school leavers in Northern Ireland.

9. Project Title: RESEARCH ON SELECTION

Research Body: QUB; University of Ulster; BDO Stoy Hayward and Stranmillis College

Start Date: October 1998 **Duration:** 16 months

Cost: £99,850 **Final Report:** Due January 2000

Brief Description of Project

This research aims to evaluate the effects of the current secondary education selection system on:-

- the education system in general;
- pupil performance at GCSE level, including identification of any differences in opportunity and performance in respect of different socio-economic groups;
- schools;
- teachers; and
- the community.

10. Project Title: STUDENT INCOME & EXPENDITURE SURVEY

Research Body: School of Education Policy & Social Science, Southbank University

Start Date: October 1998 **Duration:** 12 months

Cost: £10,230 **Final Report:** Due Autumn 1999
(part-funding)

Brief Description of Project

This project follows 3 previous studies (in 1988/89, 1992/93 & 1995/96) reflecting the Government's ongoing commitment to monitor student participation and finances following the introduction of student loans. The project aims to provide an insight into the impact of the new higher education funding regime, and help identify the financial circumstances - and particularly the extent of hardship - facing key groups of students.

11. Project Title: THE BRAIN DRAIN

Research Body: Northern Ireland Economic Research Council

Start Date: July 1998 **Duration:** 3 months

Cost: £3,675 **Final Report:** Draft received October 1998
(part-funding)

Brief Description of Project

The purpose of this study is to bring together existing sources of data and research to provide some basis on which to assess the significance of any 'brain drain' effect in Northern Ireland.

12. Project Title: UNIVERSITY GRADUATES STUDY

Research Body: University of Ulster & QUB

Start Date: November 1998 **Duration:** 12 months

Cost: £19,200 **Final Report:** Due October 1999
(part-funding)

Brief Description of Project

The overall aims of this project are:-

- to ascertain graduates' perceptions of their level of development on a range of skills/abilities on leaving higher education;
- to determine graduates' perceptions of the degree of utilisation of these skills/abilities within their chosen occupation;
- to improve our understanding of the extent of brain drain (or brain gain) to Northern Ireland; and
- to examine the long term value of a higher education qualification to labour market opportunities.

The project will follow up those graduates who entered degree level courses in 1985.

13. **Project Title:** PROGRAMME FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ASSESSMENT (PISA)

Research Body: Office for National Statistics (ONS), & Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency (NISRA)

Start Date: April 1998 **Duration:** 4 years

Cost: £148,000 **Final Report:** May 2002
(NI study)

Brief Description of Project

This study forms part of an international exercise to develop and implement a strategy for producing student outcome indicators on a regular basis, in reading, maths and science. The age group is 15-16 year olds.

Section B: Projects in Progress at Start of 1998/99

1. **Project Title:** DIVERSIFICATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Research Body: Centre for Modern Language Teaching, QUB

Start Date: April 1997 **Duration:** 12 months

Cost: £15,000 **Final Report:** Received January 1999

Brief Description of Project

Diversification in this sense refers to the offering of languages other than French in the early years of post primary education. This project follows on from a literature review to analyse in greater depth the current provision of languages in schools in Northern Ireland, taking account of the findings of the literature review.

2. **Project Title:** INVESTIGATION INTO THE APPROPRIATENESS OF CAREERS GUIDANCE TO STUDENTS' LONG-TERM OCCUPATIONAL GOALS

Research Body: Northern Ireland Hotel and Catering College

Start Date: January 1998 **Duration:** 2 years

Cost: £47,139 **Final Report:** Due April 2000

Brief Description of Project

This project aims to examine the effectiveness of careers guidance and to suggest strategies which will result in fewer failures; fewer drop outs; less mis-directed talent and the widening of horizons as more options are considered seriously.

3. Project Title: TO INVESTIGATE A CO-ORDINATED APPROACH TO THE PROMOTION AND DELIVERY OF GNVQs IN HOSPITALITY AND CATERING

Research Body: Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education, and Northern Ireland Hotel and Catering College

Start Date: May 1997 **Duration:** 16 months

Cost: £5,335 **Final Report:** Due Spring 1999

Brief Description of Project

Despite career opportunities in the hospitality industry there is a relatively low uptake of places on GNVQ Intermediate and Advanced Diplomas. This project aims to investigate the possibility/feasibility of a 'seamless' delivery across the interface between Secondary and Further Education, from Foundation to Advanced level, using the advantages and strengths of both providers. The aspect of urban/rural differences and constraints will play a major part in the research.

4. Project Title: EFFECTIVE PROVISION OF PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

Research Body: University of Wales, Cardiff

Start Date: March 1998 **Duration:** 5 years

Cost: £163,975 **Final Report:** Due March 2003 (part-funding)

Brief Description of Project

This project, also funded by DHSS and the inter-departmental Social Steering Group, parallels a similar exercise in England. The Northern Ireland study aims to identify the most effective types of pre-school provision (in terms of progress within the pre-school and subsequent progress within the first 3 years of primary school) in order to describe the characteristics which make them effective, using methods developed from previous pre-school and day care research. The results of the research should help to guide future planning of pre-school provision.

5. Project Title: SUPPORTING NEWLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS IN POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Research Body: University of Ulster at Jordanstown

Start Date: May 1997 **Duration:** 16 months

Cost: £20,000 **Final Report:** Published March 1999

Brief Description of Project

This project assessed the professional needs of newly qualified teachers. The study sought to obtain, by different methods, information on the type of support newly qualified teachers received from their schools and from the Education and Library Boards (ELBs), and on the

extent and effectiveness of the role of those providing support, in particular, Heads of Department, teacher tutors, other teachers in school and ELB personnel.

6. Project Title: INTEGRATED EDUCATION LITERATURE REVIEW

Research Body: University of Ulster at Coleraine

Start Date: August 1997 **Duration:** 6 months

Cost: £6,500 **Final Report:** Published March 1999

Brief Description of Project

This project reviewed existing research on the aims of; demand for; and impact of integrated education, and identified gaps in existing research. The project also reviewed existing research into the impact of other types of education provision on attitudes and behaviour in the 2 Northern Ireland communities, and relevant 'international' research to inform future policy and practice in the integrated education sector in Northern Ireland.

7. Project Title: FOLLOW-UP SURVEY OF RECENTLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS

Research Body: School of Education, QUB

Start Date: June 1997 **Duration:** 2 years

Cost: £9,992 **Final Report:** Due Summer 1999

Brief Description of Project

This project repeats a previous study, and aims to contact teachers who qualified in 1995 to ascertain their employment status over the intervening period.

8. Project Title: AN EVALUATION OF THE DICKSON PLAN

Research Body: School of Education, QUB

Start Date: April 1997 **Duration:** 12 months

Cost: £25,000 **Final Report:** Published November 1998

Brief Description of Project

This project evaluated and assessed the relative performance of pupils attending schools within the Dickson Plan (Craigavon) area, compared to schools elsewhere in Northern Ireland.

9. Project Title: PROFESSIONALLY QUALIFIED COMMUNITY YOUTH WORKERS

Research Body: Youth Council for Northern Ireland

Start Date: April 1997 **Duration:** 12 months

Cost: £9,400 **Final Report:** Received March 1998

Brief Description of Project

This project assessed and quantified the need for professionally qualified community youth workers to the year 2005.

10. Project Title: HEALTH BEHAVIOUR OF SCHOOL CHILDREN

Research Body: Health Promotion Agency

Start Date: September 1997 **Duration:** 18 months

Cost: £26,000 **Final Report:** Due March 1999
(part-funding)

Brief Description of Project

This project repeats earlier studies in 1992 and 1994, and aims to gain new insights into and increase understanding of health behaviours and lifestyles, in the context of young people's lives.

11. Project Title: PROGRESSION OF GNVQ INTERMEDIATE STUDENTS

Research Body: DTZ Piedad Consulting

Start Date: October 1997 **Duration:** 3 years

Cost: £28,500 **Final Report:** Due October 2000

Brief Description of Project

This project will examine the progression of GNVQ Intermediate level students into vocational training and work, with the aim of informing future policy on the development of programmes to prepare GNVQ Intermediate level students for study at GNVQ Advanced or NVQ levels 2 and 3.

12. Project Title: EXCLUSIONS FROM SCHOOL, PHASE III

Research Body: School of Education, QUB

Start Date: September 1997 **Duration:** 18 months

Cost: £42,436 **Final Report:** Due March 1999

Brief Description of Project

The first 2 phases of this research found that pupils who experience multiple suspensions and those who are expelled are the groups which give most cause for concern. Phase III will build upon the findings of phases I and II, and will include detailed case studies of schools and pupils in order to identify factors related to the exclusion and reintegration process.

13. Project Title: NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS IMMERSSED IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE: A LITERATURE REVIEW

Research Body: Graduate School of Education, QUB and St. Mary's College of Education, Belfast

Start Date: September 1998 **Duration:** 6 months

Cost: £5,000 **Final Report:** Due March 1999

Brief Description of Project

This review will focus on how children from an English-speaking background in a predominantly English-speaking country, who are immersed in another language, perform at school relative to other children educated in English. Attainment at both primary and secondary levels will be of interest.

14. Project Title: OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS WHO RECEIVE IRISH MEDIUM EDUCATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Research Body: Hanna and Company

Start Date: April 1998 **Duration:** 1 year

Cost: £14,580 **Final Report:** Draft Received February 1999

Brief Description of Project

This project aims to analyse the qualifications gained by pupils who have experienced Irish-medium secondary education, their destinations on leaving school, and their career choices. It will collect attitudinal information from those who have had an Irish-medium education, on the advantages and constraints which they feel have resulted, both in terms of their subsequent education and in other respects. The research will also consider the reasons why pupils who have had an Irish-medium primary but not secondary education opt for an English-medium secondary education, and the impact of the Irish-medium primary education on their secondary education.

15. Project Title: EXAMINATION OF PRACTICE IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Research Body: University of Newcastle Upon Tyne

Start Date: September 1996 **Duration:** 17 months

Cost: £29,745 **Final Report:** Published August 1998

Brief Description of Project

Information was collected on existing practices and provision in mainstream schools for children with special educational needs. The information provides a base from which to monitor and measure the success of the Code of Practice for special educational needs, which gives practical advice to schools and Education and Library Boards on how to exercise their statutory responsibilities.

16. Project Title: A MICROECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF THE FURTHER EDUCATION SECTOR IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Research Body: Northern Ireland Economic Research Centre

Start Date: June 1996 **Duration:** 16 months

Cost: £8,500 **Final Report:** Published June 1998

Brief Description of Project

The project investigated the economic role of the FE sector in Northern Ireland. The analysis focused on the levels and types of qualifications gained by young people at FE college and on the destinations of FE leavers. The work was based mainly on information taken from a microeconomic survey of young people in the labour market (the 'Status 0' Survey) although other administrative data were also used.

17. Project Title: THE IMPACT OF NVQ PROGRAMMES WITHIN HOSPITALITY AND CATERING IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Research Body: Northern Ireland Hotel and Catering College

Start Date: July 1996 **Duration:** 33 months

Cost: £8,850 **Final Report:** Received February 1999

Brief Description of Project

This research is designed to investigate the impact which NVQs have had on the hospitality and catering industry within Northern Ireland. The factors which inhibit people from taking up NVQ programmes in Hotels and Catering will be identified as will the implications for the level of skills of the labour force. The research will provide an examination of the positive and negative impacts of NVQs on both colleges and industry.

18. Project Title: THE DEVELOPMENT OF LINGUISTIC ACCURACY IN IRISH MEDIUM PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Research Body: School of Behavioural and Communication Sciences, University of Ulster at Jordanstown

Start Date: September 1996 **Duration:** 30 months

Cost: £15,000 **Final Report:** Due February 1999 (part-funding)

Brief Description of Project

The project aims to contribute to good practice in the development of competence in Irish in Irish-medium Schools. It will identify norms in relation to grammatical accuracy in speech and writing; identify recurring errors and determine which of these persist in the later primary years; and devise and evaluate strategies for improving linguistic accuracy where appropriate.

19. Project Title: THE DEVELOPMENT OF BASELINE AND VALUE-ADDED MEASURES FOR DENI/RSSI

Research Body: Institute of Education, University of London

Start Date: August 1996 **Duration:** 42 months (including extension)

Cost: £171,225 **Final Report:** Due January 2000

Brief Description of Project

The project will provide an analysis of agreed baseline assessments in the primary and secondary schools participating in the Raising School Standards Initiative (RSSI). It will also provide a value-added analysis of the baseline and outcome assessments relating to these

schools. The report will provide evidence for the evaluation of RSSI and give advice on developing a value-added framework for measuring school performance.

20. Project Title: RURAL DAY-CARE ACTION RESEARCH

Research Body: Northern Ireland Pre-School Playgroups Association (NIPPA), in partnership with National Children's Bureau

Start Date: January 1997 **Duration:** 4 years

Cost: £10,000 **Final Report:** Due Spring 2001
(part-funding)

Brief Description of Project

This cross border action research is taking place in six locations in border areas. The project is managed by a multi-agency steering group.

21. Project Title: DIVERGENCE BETWEEN INITIAL AND CONTINUING EDUCATION PERFORMANCE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SCOTLAND AND NORTHERN IRELAND

Research Body: University of Ulster at Jordanstown and University of Edinburgh

Start Date: June 1996 **Duration:** 3 years

Cost: £30,000 **Final Report:** Due Spring 1999
(part-funding)

Brief Description of Project

This study focuses on the divergence between initial and subsequent educational aspiration and performance. It deals with participation rates and outcomes, and also with attitudes towards education and training. The aims are to explore the statistical basis for divergence in participation rates; identify possible reasons for the divergence; gather views from a range of stake holders; and compile recommendations.

22. Project Title: INTERNATIONAL ADULT LITERACY SURVEY

Research Body: Central Survey Unit, NI Statistics and Research Agency

Start Date: March 1996 **Duration:** 2.5 years

Cost: £60,000 **Final Report:** Published November 1998
(part-funding)

Brief Description of Project

This major study was jointly funded by DENI, the Training and Employment Agency and the Social Steering Group (an inter-departmental government policy group). The Central Survey Unit of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency undertook the fieldwork for this survey which was part of a wider international study supported by OECD. The survey provided a profile of adult literacy abilities for 3 aspects of literacy: prose, document and quantitative. A summary of key findings was published in January 1998, followed by a detailed report in November 1998 which presented data analysed along a variety of social

and economic dimensions including sex, age and economic status. Comparisons with other countries are also available.

23. Project Title: EXCLUSIONS FROM SCHOOL, PHASES I AND II

Research Body: School of Education QUB

Start Date: January 1996 **Duration:** 2 years

Cost: £32,772 **Final Report:** Published January 1999

Brief Description of Project

The project:-

- i. established the nature, extent and type of exclusions across the Province;
- ii. provided a profile of the young people concerned;
- iii. gave a detailed overview of existing monitoring systems at Board level;
- iv. considered the use of the CLASS attendance module at school level; and
- v. identified appropriate monitoring systems for future use.

Phase III of the project will include detailed case studies of schools and pupils in order to identify factors related to the exclusion and reintegration process.

24. Project Title: FROM PRE-SCHOOL TO SCHOOL: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Research Body: NICER, Applied Research Unit, School of Education, QUB

Start Date: March 1996 **Duration:** 3 years

Cost: £5,000 **Final Report:** Due March 1999

Brief Description of Project

A systematic review of pre-school education focusing upon the age range 3-6 in order to inform practice and provide a basis for further research. The review gathers evidence and examines theories on the effectiveness of the different types of educational experience before the statutory age including nursery schools, playgroups, early admission to reception and other classes in primary schools. Particular attention will be paid to evidence on the effects of pre-school education on language development and pre-literacy skills and whether enrolment in pre-school education is related to social background factors.

Previos DENI Research Briefings

DENI funded research 1993/94 RB 1/93

DENI funded research 1994/95 RB 1/95

Persistent school absenteeism in Northern Ireland 1992 RB 2/95

Approaches to differentiation in primary schools RB 1/96

Education and economic development in Northern Ireland RB 3/96

DENI funded research 1996/97 RB 1/97

A follow-up survey of teachers who qualified in 1991 and 1992 RB 2/97

Diversification of the first foreign language - a review of the literature RB 3/97

An initial analysis of the impact of formula funding and local management of schools RB 4/97

A review of research evidence on the apparent underachievement of boys RB 5/97

Staying on in full-time education in Northern Ireland: an economic analysis RB 6/97

An investigation into non-completion of NVQ and GNVQ courses in further education colleges RB 1/98

Science at Key Stage 4 RB 2/98
DENI funded research 1997/98 RB 3/98
The success of young people in further education and vocational training: an economic analysis RB 4/98
Practice in mainstream schools for children with special educational needs RB 5/98
An evaluation of the Craigavon two-tier system RB 6/98
Northern Ireland suspension and expulsion study (1996/97) RB 1/99
Supporting Newly Qualified Teachers in Post-Primary Schools RB 2/99
Integrated education literature review RB 3/99

Purpose of DENI Research Briefings

DENI places a high value on the wide circulation of research results to ensure that research has the maximum impact on policy and practice in education. DENI Research Briefings are designed to provide attractive, interesting and easy access to research findings for policy makers, researchers, teachers, lecturers, employers and the public to facilitate informed discussion of education issues. Research cannot make decisions for policy makers and others concerned with improving the quality of education. Nor can it by itself bring about change. But it can create a better basis for decisions, by providing information and explanation about educational practice and by clarifying and challenging ideas and assumptions.

The full range of DENI Research Briefings can be accessed at the DENI Internet site - www.deni.gov.uk.

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