

DENI Funded Research 1997/98

Introduction

1. This Research Briefing provides information on projects commenced in 1997/98 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 Research 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**.
 - 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.

Section A: Projects Comenced in 1997/98

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: Due April 1998

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 aims to follow on from the recent 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 September 1998

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 (part-funding)

Final Report: Due March 2003

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: Due September 1998

Brief Description of Project

This project aims to assess the personal and professional development needs of newly qualified teachers, and to examine ways in which competence-based profiling could be extended and used effectively to support their professional development.

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: Draft received December 1997

Brief Description of Project

This project aims to review existing research on the aims of; demand for; and impact of integrated education, and identify any gaps in existing research. The project will also review 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 which might 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: 12 months
Cost: £9,992
Final Report: Due June 1998

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: Draft received February 1998

Brief Description of Project

This project aims to undertake an evaluation and assessment of 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: Draft received February 1998

Brief Description of Project

This project aims to assess and quantify 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 (part-funding)
Final Report: Due March 1999

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 Pieda 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: 1 year
Cost: £42,436
Final Report: Due September 1998

Brief Description of Project

The first two 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 IMMersed IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE: A LITERATURE REVIEW

Research Body: Graduate School of Education, QUB and St. Mary's College of Education, Belfast
Start Date: March 1998
Duration: 6 months
Cost: £5,000
Final Report: Due September 1998

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: March 1998

Duration: 9 months

Cost: £14,580

Final Report: Due December 1998

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.

Section B: Projects in Progress at Start of 1997/98

1. Project Title: READING STANDARDS IN NORTHERN IRELAND 1996

Research Body: National Foundation for Educational Research in England and Wales

Start Date: May 1996

Duration: 1 year

Cost: £55,000

Final Report: Published April 1997

Brief Description of Project

This project is a follow-up to a previous (1993) study of reading standards. It relates to the reading standards of pupils aged 8, 11 and 14 in Northern Ireland. Performance is analysed by age, sex, and socio-economic status (as indicated by entitlement to Free School Meals). The study provides comparisons of reading standards over time and assessment of progress by pupils between different ages.

2. 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: Received February 1998

Brief Description of Project

Information is collected on existing practices and provision in mainstream schools for children with special educational needs. The information will provide 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.

3. 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: Received December 1997

Brief Description of Project

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

4. 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: 2 years

Cost: £8,850

Final Report: Due June 1998

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.

5. 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: 18 months

Cost: £15,000 (part-funding)

Final Report: Due March 1998

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.

6. Project Title: INDEPENDENT TRAVEL FOR CHILDREN/ADULTS WITH SEVERE LEARNING DISABILITIES

Research Body: Agencies in Consortium for Education and Training (ACET)

Start Date: April 1996

Duration: 14 months

Cost: £10,000 (part-funding)
Final Report: Produced June 1997

Brief Description of Project

This inter-agency project was designed to investigate the present level of competence in and opportunities for independent travel among children and adults with severe learning disabilities. Factors which promote or hinder the development of independent travel for these children and adults are identified. The project investigated ways of enhancing opportunities for people with severe learning disabilities through increased independence in travel.

7. 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: 30 months
Cost: £121,225
Final Report: Due January 1999

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.

8. 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 (part-funding)
Final Report: Due Spring 2001

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.

9. 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: 2 years
Cost: £30,000 (part-funding)
Final Report: Due Summer 1998

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.

10. Project Title: MEASURING THE BENEFITS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE OF PARTICIPATION WITHIN YOUTH GROUPS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Research Body: Youth Council for Northern Ireland

Start Date: April 1994

Duration: 4 years

Cost: £52,000

Final Report: Published April 1998

Brief Description of Project

The research assessed the extent to which young people in the 14-18 age range have benefited from regular participation in youth service groups. Phase 1 of the project collected data from 726 youth service attendees, and also involved semi-structured interviews with 92 youth workers. Phase 2 of the project used qualitative techniques to study young people's perceptions in 6 different youth work locations.

11. Project Title: WOMEN IN EDUCATION: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Research Body: Deloitte and Touche

Start Date: October 1995

Duration: 18 months

Cost: £67,556

Final Report: Received April 1997

Brief Description of Project

A study of women's progression to higher posts in schools to identify the barriers, actual and perceived, into women's progression to higher posts (including those attracting responsibility points), so that employing authorities can devise appropriate action plans.

12. Project Title: REDUCING NON-COMPLETION RATES ON NVQ/GNVQ COURSES IN FURTHER EDUCATION

Research Body: Further Education and Training Research Unit: Faculty of Social and Health Sciences, University of Ulster

Start Date: June 1995

Duration: 18 months

Cost: £24,996

Final Report: Published February 1998

Brief Description of Project

This project was designed to ascertain the reasons why students did not complete courses and on the basis of the evidence collected to make recommendations for improved practices and procedures intended to increase achievement rates in colleges.

13. Project Title: SECOND 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 (part-funding)

Final Report: Due Autumn 1998

Brief Description of Project

This major study is 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 is part of a wider international study supported by OECD. The survey provides a profile of adult literacy abilities for three aspects of literacy: prose, document and quantitative. A summary of key findings was published in January 1998, and provides the first detailed information on adult literacy levels in Northern Ireland. It presents data analysed along a variety of social and economic dimensions including sex, age and economic status. Comparisons with other countries are also available.

14. 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: Received March 1998

Brief Description of Project

The project aims to:

- i. establish the nature, extent and type of exclusions across the Province;
- ii. provide a profile of the young people concerned;
- iii. give a detailed overview of existing monitoring systems at Board level;
- iv. consider use of the CLASS attendance module at school level;
- v. identify 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.

15. 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: 18 months

Cost: £5,000

Final Report: Due April 1998

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.

16. Project Title: YOUTH TRANSITIONS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Research Body: NIERC

Start Date: February 1994

Duration: 2.5 years

Cost: £13,634

Final Report: Published December 1997

Brief Description of Project

The primary purpose of the research is to examine the post-16 experience of young people, looking at transitions from secondary education to the labour market, and to provide a greater understanding of the key factors determining their experiences and destinations. The study draws on existing data sources such as the School Leavers Survey and the 1991 Census.

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 educational 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.

Previous Research Briefings

- DENI funded research 1993/94 RB1/1993
- DENI funded research 1994/95 RB1/1995
- Persistent school absenteeism in Northern Ireland in 1992 RB2/1995
- Approaches to differentiation in primary schools RB1/1996
- Education and economic development in Northern Ireland: empirical evidence and regional perspectives RB3/1996
- DENI funded research 1996/97 RB1/1997
- A follow-up survey of teachers who qualified in 1991 and 1992 RB2/1997
- Diversification of the first foreign language - a review of the literature RB3/1997
- An initial analysis of the impact of formula funding and local management of schools RB4/1997
- A review of research evidence on the apparent underachievement of boys RB5/1997
- Staying on in full-time education in Northern Ireland: an economic analysis RB6/1997
- An Investigation into Non-completion of NVQ and GNVQ courses in Further Education Colleges RB1/1998
- Science at Key Stage 4 RB2/1998

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*Edited and produced by
Statistics and Research Branch, Department of Education Northern Ireland.*



A Government Statistical Publication