

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Turning the COGs for Better Teaching

Associate Professor Wayne Sawyer from the **Centre for Educational Research** and **Associate Professor Christine Johnston** from the **School of Education** have been investigating the impact of professional learning on the attitudes and capacity of teachers in schools using a new type of curriculum planning. This research was funded by the NSW Department of Education and Training.

'In order to make the primary school curriculum more manageable, connected outcomes groups (COGs) have been developed by teachers and curriculum specialists,' explains Associate Professor Sawyer. 'COGs are used in an integrated approach for teaching a balanced curriculum across key learning areas, making connections between ideas to maximise a student's learning. This new approach has been gradually introduced into NSW schools since 2006 with 113 schools now currently involved. This study examines the critical factors that impact on teacher learning in COGs implementation. This includes productive engagement in collegial networks to extend and support teacher knowledge and skills, the increase in capacity to measure, analyse and report learning outcomes and the increase in overall teacher confidence with the program, as well as the curriculum development.'

Surveys have been used to gather data from teachers at the schools involved. COGs has particular key focus areas and five school sites have been chosen for in-depth evaluation studies of three of the key focus areas. Data will be analysed quantitatively and, in addition, teachers from 60 schools new to the program will be surveyed online about teacher attitudes.



Professional development of teachers is vital for best practice in curriculum development. Detailed knowledge of the impact of the COGs approach on teacher learning and on curriculum implementation is needed so that recommendations can be made to other schools for assisting with improved student learning outcomes as a basis for a well-educated young Australian population.

Project Title: Evaluation Study of the Impact of Professional Learning on Teacher Capacity in Implementing Curriculum Planning and Assessment Frameworks (COGs).

Funding has been set at: \$36,364

Contact Details: w.sawyer@uws.edu.au

<http://www.uws.edu.au/cer>

December 2009