



# TEACHERS AS RESEARCHERS PROJECT 2012



Independent Schools  
Queensland

choice & diversity

## PROJECT GUIDELINES

The Teachers as Researchers Project 2012 is funded by the Literacy, Numeracy and Special Learning Needs (LNSLN) Commonwealth Program for Non-government schools.

## PROJECT GUIDELINES & PROJECT APPLICATION

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## SECTION 1

### INTRODUCTION

The Teachers as Researchers Project is funded through the Literacy, Numeracy and Special Learning Needs (LNSLN) Program. The objective of this program is to improve the Literacy and Numeracy learning outcomes of educationally disadvantaged students, including students with disabilities, by contributing funding for additional teaching and learning assistance.

The needs of students, experiencing educational disadvantage, can be addressed by focusing on research specifically designed to make a contribution to knowledge, and/or to improve classroom or whole school practice in the area of Literacy and Numeracy. Active research, of this nature, can identify and guide effective change leading the way to improved learning outcomes for educationally disadvantaged students, including students with disabilities.

### Action Learning & Action Research Processes

Action learning is a collaborative process in which a group of people come together to critically reflect on ways to improve their practice and help each other learn from their shared experience by trialing different actions. Action research is a more formal process by which change and understanding can be pursued simultaneously, to better understand what contributes to the effectiveness of action learning as a process. It is usually described as cyclic, with action and critical reflection taking place in turn. The reflection is used to review the previous action and to plan the next. Individual teachers can also use the action learning action research approach. Both action learning and action research have been used often in the field of Education to improve practice.

The action learning process is recognised as an excellent approach to consider and act on issues in schools. Action research is a straightforward, efficient method for teachers wanting to continually develop their understanding of issues affecting learners. Teachers have ownership of and drive the research process. Teacher researchers choose a particular focus area, gather data, reflect on and share their findings, plan for action, carry out their actions, check their results and plan for further action.

### Teachers as Researchers Overview

The *Teachers as Researchers Project* acknowledges and values the increasing confidence amongst teachers in their ability to use action learning strategies including focusing, planning, gathering evidence and reflecting to improve particular aspects of their teaching and to enhance student learning. Research leading to action learning, with its focus on a specific aspect of a program or pedagogy, is seen as a way of making change manageable.

A group of teachers, who will work collaboratively as researchers, will to be offered the opportunity to explore their own area of interest which will be strongly focused on a reasonable and significant issue in the area of Literacy or Numeracy during the course of the 2012 Teachers as Researchers Project. The action research process is recommended for this research. Most commonly, teachers' research will be within their school setting and must be achievable with the available project resources. Normally the research questions will fall directly within the researcher's professional interests.

Participants in this project will have the opportunity to work with Dr Margaret Fletcher, PhD, Med (Hons), GDip (Reading), Dip Ed (Primary). Dr Fletcher is an Adjunct Lecturer from the School of Education and Professional Studies at Griffith University. She has research expertise in Literacy theory and practice in primary, secondary and tertiary fields of English education, teacher education, action research and communities of learning, professional development, innovation and practice.

## AIM

The aim of the research is to encourage and facilitate development in professional teaching practice by supporting teachers to analyse existing teacher practices and identify elements for change in their own teaching context.

## TIME FRAME

The maximum time frame for conducting the research project is March-October 2012.

## ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS FOR PROJECT FUNDING

Essential Elements	Elements Explained	Mandatory requirements and expectations
Applications are to be received by the due date and indicate clearly if the application is new to the project or of a continuing nature.	Applications close on 27 January 2012	Late applications will not be accepted. It is anticipated schools new to the project will receive an initial and separate professional learning ( PL) session from the continuing schools.
Continuing Project Schools application consideration	Continuing Project Schools must clearly articulate how they can build on their existing work if granted a further research opportunity in 2012.	Strongly recommended as this information will be critical to the selection process.
A Project Leader is to be nominated.	Possibly, a member of the school leadership team	Mandatory, to focus and support the project initiative(s)
The Project Leader is required to attend all Professional Learning Sessions	Possibly, a member of the school leadership team	Mandatory
A Project Team is to be nominated	One or more teacher researchers, one who will be designated as the Key Researcher	Mandatory
The number of teachers in the research team is to be stated.		

<b>Essential Elements</b>	<b>Elements Explained</b>	<b>Mandatory requirements and expectations</b>
Key Stakeholders	Email addresses are required to be supplied for all key stakeholders to ensure receipt of all communications. Changes to team members or contact details must be advised to the ISQ Program Officer.	Essential
Researchers are required to attend all action research professional learning sessions	See Section Professional Learning below	Mandatory
The project focus is to be explicitly articulated and is to articulate the professional learning needs of teachers.	The aim of the research is to bring about development in practice by analysing existing practice and identifying elements for change. The project will focus on the gathering of evidence on which to make informed rather than intuitive judgements and decisions.	The course of the research must enhance teachers' professional learning through fostering their capability as researchers and decision makers.
The anticipated outcomes of the project are to be outlined.	Reference should be made to teachers' knowledge, understanding and skills, the literacy and numeracy learning outcomes expected for students, the role of research in professional development, changes considered in curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.	
The level of support for the project is to be clearly articulated.	School support for the project leader to undertake their role will be indicated within the project application.  The project leader will detail how he/she will support the researchers in undertaking and completing the project.	Mandatory, school support for the project is to be validated and the project leader will detail how he/she will support the researchers. Mandatory, school will enter into a signed agreement with Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ).
A budget will be required with the project application and the budget will be included as part of the Project Action Plan submitted by successful applicants in March.	The purchase of capital equipment cannot be purchased in support of a project.	Mandatory

Essential Elements	Elements Explained	Mandatory requirements and expectations
Project Budget and Project Action Plan	The principal will be required to endorse the action plan, budget and the full allocation of project grant monies to the teacher researchers for use in the course of the project.	Mandatory
Reporting Requirements	An interim report will be submitted at PL Session 3 A final report will be submitted by PL Session 4 or Project Schools may select to write a final report in a format acceptable for consideration for publication in Catalyst magazine.	
An expression of willingness to meet the Independent Schools Queensland accountability requirements is to be included.	Including a written progress report and presentation by PL Session 3, a written final report and presentation by PL Session 4 for uploading to a website by due date, a reflective journal maintained throughout the project, provision of a Financial Accountability Statement signed by the Principal by 5 November 2012.	Mandatory, project documentation is required within specified timeline  Mandatory, financial accountability requirements will be met and schools will provide a Financial Accountability Statement
An expression of willingness to share research project outcomes with other schools.	This may include providing a workshop or seminar to other independent schools during 2012. Successful schools will be required to provide a report that can be uploaded onto a designated website. Research work may be published in the ISQ Catalyst magazine.	Independent Schools Queensland has an expectation that the learning from this project will be communicated to all member schools.
Payment of Grant Monies	Grants will be paid in two instalments of \$5000 each.	The first instalment will be paid during April and upon receipt of a satisfactorily completed, detailed action plan and budget both endorsed by the School Principal. The second instalment will be paid during November and after the final PL session presentation together with the submission of a final written report due on 31 October 2012.

## PROJECT EXPENDITURE

Applications will be considered with proposed expenditure not exceeding \$10,000 per application. The funding granted to individual school research projects will be influenced by the overall project cost, the funds sought and the total number of applications received.

Independent Schools Queensland may not be able to fund all applications. A range of schools will be considered for inclusion in the project. Consideration will be given to both new and continuing schools based on the information provided in applications. Continuing schools must clearly articulate how they can build on their existing research work when applying for a further research grant.

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

All research team members, including project leaders, are required to attend the scheduled professional learning days. Research teams who are new to the project in 2012 will be required to attend 4 PL sessions commencing on the 8<sup>th</sup> March and continuing schools will join in the PL sessions from 9<sup>th</sup> March. Continuing schools can attend the initial PL session if they have a need to revisit the introductory information.

PL Session	2012 Dates	Detail
One  For schools new to project	8 March	Introduction to Project – Action Learning /Action Research (ALAR) Theory and Research Expectations of Project
Two  For new and continuing schools	9 March	Using ALAR Development of action plan Building a learning community
Three  For new and continuing schools	13 June	What are the others doing? Presentation of Project Phase One Planning of Phase Two Submission of Interim Report
Four  For new and continuing schools	31 October	Sharing of final presentation including project results Researchers will showcase their research using electronic media. Submission of Final Report or suitable article for Catalyst magazine.

## MEETING REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

To meet the requirements of the project and to receive instalment payments, it is essential that the following reports are submitted according to the specified time line:

Project Action Plan (including a detailed budget)	To be submitted by end of PL day 9 March
Project Action Plan (including a detailed budget) endorsed by School Principal	To be submitted by 16 March.
Reflective Journal	Ongoing throughout project
Interim Report and presentation	On PL day 13 June
Final Report and presentation	On PL day 31 October

## SIGNED AGREEMENT

If your project is funded, a formal agreement with Independent Schools Queensland will need to be signed. The agreement will outline the conditions of funding in terms of meeting the mandatory requirements and will detail the schedule for payments.

## ACCOUNTABILITY REQUIREMENTS

Early in November 2012, Independent Schools Queensland must be provided with a Financial Accountability Statement, signed by the Principal confirming that the grant has been expended in accordance with the approved application and budget.

## SECTION 2

### PROJECT APPLICATION

Schools are invited to submit an application for funding to support a Literacy-and/or Numeracy-focused research project using the application form attached.

### RESEARCH TEAM

A research team will be nominated on the project application.

The team will comprise a Project Leader (a member of the school leadership team) and one or more teacher researchers, one of whom should be the Key Researcher.

## The Project Leader

- is pivotal in focusing and supporting the project initiative.
- will have demonstrated ability to facilitate effective professional learning based on adult learning principles.
- will participate in team meetings, act as a mentor and 'critical' friend, focus and support the research and researcher(s) and assist in sourcing resources.
- will provide leadership to teachers, assist in the development of a research plan (outlining the project's essential components including all necessary professional learning required) and provide on-going leadership to sustain the necessary motivation required to complete the project.

Project leaders and researchers must be staff members from Queensland independent schools to ensure that the investment made in providing staff members with the opportunity to improve their skills in project facilitation, research and mentoring remains with, and is of continuing benefit to the whole school or cluster of schools.

## PROJECT DETAILS

A research question will be required along with a general description of the research process to be implemented during the research project. It will be necessary to discuss the research proposed with reference to current theoretical framework, the school context and current school practices and /or issues.

The research project will need to be further explained in terms of the professional learning and the project outcomes anticipated and the means of evaluation to be applied. Continuing schools must clearly articulate how they intend to build on their pre-existing research base. Lastly, an itemised project budget is to be completed to support the application and to establish the destination of the project research grant.

## PROJECT APPLICATION TIMELINE

Closing Date: by 4:30pm 27 January 2012
Notification: by 10 February 2012

## FURTHER INFORMATION

You are encouraged to discuss your proposed project and application with Leigh Witney to clarify any questions or concerns you may have on (07) 3228 1515 or by email to [lwitney@aisq.qld.edu.au](mailto:lwitney@aisq.qld.edu.au)

## SEND YOUR COMPLETED APPLICATION BY MAIL, FAX OR EMAIL TO

Leigh Witney. PO Box 957, Spring Hill. Qld. 4004

Email: [lwitney@aisq.qld.edu.au](mailto:lwitney@aisq.qld.edu.au) Fax: (07) 3228 1575

