

UniServices

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Its mission is to apply the University's research and expertise to client needs and business opportunities, enabling organisations based on new knowledge to grow, expand the University's research capability and benefit the broader community.

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Mary Hill is Associate Dean (Research) in the Faculty of Education at The University of Auckland, New Zealand. Her research and teaching interests are in assessment for learning, and practitioner and teacher education research. Before working as an academic she was deputy principal of a large primary school. She has experience in leading and mentoring qualitative and practitioner research projects, is deputy chair of The University of Auckland's Human Participants Ethics Committee and deputy chair of the New Zealand Council for Educational Research.

Welcome to the world of education research at The University of Auckland

There can be no greater driver for education than the question: what will deliver the best outcomes for students?

This is the starting point for every contract undertaken by the Faculty of Education at The University of Auckland.

We have a very strong professional focus that comes from broad exposure to policy, practice and the classroom, combined with demonstrable skills in creativity, research vigour, novel ideas and new knowledge. We are, in effect, a laboratory of ideas and over the page you can preview some of our most recent achievements.

The Faculty has an enviable track record that extends beyond individual projects. Our researchers sit on national policy committees where they have a direct influence on future educational directions. We work with universities internationally and national research institutions, such as the New Zealand Council for Educational Research. We have direct links to the New Zealand Ministry of Education.

We work with Auckland UniServices which manages the University's commercial research and consultancy partnerships. UniServices' systematic approach to contract research provides a single point of contact and accountability and is a major contributor to our success in remaining classroom-focused.

That focus is critical. We believe we must work in and for the classroom so that we will deliver the education and future life skills needed by children around the world.

Dr Mary Hill
Associate Dean (Research)
Faculty of Education
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Our research

Our research is diverse and demonstrates our expertise in research, evaluation and development. Our focus is to insure that policy makers and providers have the evidence-base to inform decisions that will produce the best possible outcomes for students, teachers, principals and the communities in which they live.



Iterative Best Evidence Synthesis: Education Leadership

Professor Viviane Robinson and her team researched the leadership practices that have the most impact on student outcomes.

"Using Iterative Best Evidence Synthesis, we identified five leadership dimensions that made a difference to student outcomes. The main message is that the closer the leadership is to teaching and learning, the greater the impact."



Literacy and Language Development

Professor Stuart McNaughton and his team focus on child literacy and language, particularly in multi-lingual and diverse urban communities.

"We design collaborative research and development work using evidence-based inquiring and problem solving. Our work is scalable, it's tested in the classroom and we have created assessment materials in a range of languages."



Bilingual and Biliteracy

Dr Meaola Amituanai-Tolosa investigated literacy issues for bilingual/biliteracy students.

"Our research has already identified the importance of culture and the need for culturally inclusive and responsive learning communities with relevant and authentic teaching resources and standardised assessments."



Teacher Learning and Development

Professor Helen Timperley researched how teachers learn to understand the impact on student learning and achievement.

"Using the Best Evidence Synthesis approach, we have given the Ministry of Education a framework for at both policy and practice levels, while also identifying gaps that need addressing, particularly in areas such as diversity, ICT and mentoring."



Iterative Best Evidence Synthesis: Social Studies

Professor Graeme Aitken and Dr Claire Sinnema used an Iterative Best Evidence Syntheses (BES) approach to identify and explain teaching approaches that enhance outcomes for diverse learners in the Social Studies.

"This synthesis of outcomes-linked evidence identified four underlying mechanisms that explain learning in the Social Studies."



Assessment Tools for Teaching and Learning

Professor John Hattie and his team developed asTTle (Assessment Tools for Teaching and Learning) to assess literacy and numeracy in countries with growing knowledge economies.

"asTTle is critical infrastructure for knowledge-based economies because it has been developed to meet the very specific challenges those economies present."



Researching Literacy Professional Development

Associate Professor Judy Parr researched and evaluated literacy professional development in a project delivered to nearly 300 schools over 2004-2007.

"We've identified factors enabling schools to promote sustainable change and inquiry processes that help teachers to immediately adjust their teaching, along with tools to help teachers formulate learning intentions and success criteria with their students."



Sustaining Numeracy Project Practices

Dr Fiona Ell researched structures and processes in schools that support the continuation of Numeracy Project practices.

"We examined actual classroom practice, as the Numeracy Project aims to impact the ways in which teachers and children interact around mathematics concepts."



Improving Outcomes for Diverse Learners

Dr Claire Sinnema researched how a Social Studies teacher professional learning initiative supported teachers in improving outcomes for diverse learners.

"A key finding was the way in which teachers' engagement with outcomes-linked evidence enabled them to teach in more culturally responsive and effective ways."