

NEW ZEALAND ASSOCIATION FOR RESEARCH IN EDUCATION

TE HUNGA RANGAHAU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

Sutton-Smith Award 2008

Doctor of Education Thesis Title: Feedback for learning: Deconstructing teachers' conceptions and use of feedback

The recipient of the 2008 Sutton-Smith award for excellence in a doctoral thesis in education is: Dr Helen Dixon of The University of Auckland.

Helen Dixon's doctoral study makes a significant contribution to furthering knowledge and understanding in the area of feedback, with particular reference to teachers' beliefs about the nature and place of feedback in children's learning, the role of teachers and learners in the feedback process, and the strategies and practices that teachers ascribe importance to and utilize in their classrooms. The study not only provides crucial baseline information about the current state of play but also offers, through case studies of teachers' practice, critical insights into future possibilities and ways forward.

There has been considerable research over the last 20 years demonstrating and exploring the important role that assessment can play in promoting learning. Within this work, a central idea has been that the greatest positive impact occurs when children are helped to become more active and skilled in assessing and controlling their own learning. Helen found that three teacher attributes were important in achieving this goal: beliefs that are consistent with the goal, commitment and persistence to bring their practices into line with these beliefs, and in-depth subject knowledge to help them guide students' thinking along lines that are most conducive to productive learning.

The international examiner, recognized as the leader in this field, wrote: "the thesis is remarkable in the visibility and coherence of its line of development... everything was clearly and cogently related to the theme".

The council members of NZARE are pleased to be able to offer Helen the Sutton-Smith Award for such a carefully planned, systematically executed and well written piece of work that is applicable to the professional practice of all teachers in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

