

Conference Abstract

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**Developing a culture of second language acquisition research amongst NZ
primary and secondary school mainstream teachers**

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The research aimed to investigate the barriers and enablers to primary and secondary school teachers carrying out second language acquisition research in their classrooms. What are the strengths of teacher research, what are its characteristics and limitations, and what sorts of conditions are needed to support it in the New Zealand context? Particularly in the field of second language acquisition there is currently very little data from New Zealand primary and secondary school classrooms. Ellis (1997, p22) states, "...teachers should become more than consumers of theories and research; they should become researchers and theorists in their own right."

Practising primary and secondary school teachers who carried out classroom research in 2003 as part of the Diploma of TESSOL and/or participated in Ministry of Education research contracts participated in the study. A combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods were used to gather data. Initially, a written questionnaire was given to teachers with the purpose of establishing an overview of teachers' attitudes and beliefs about carrying out research as well as to provide a starting point for framing questions to be used in the focus group interviews.

These teachers clearly gained much from the research experience. Their ongoing observations, reflections, and analyses led to modifications in practice and recommendations for further improvements to teaching and learning in the classrooms and schools they were working in. They were also very clear about the conditions that are needed to nourish and sustain teacher classroom research.

Reference

Ellis, R. (1997). *SLA research and language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.