



UPDATE

**Volume 3, Number 2
December 1994**

Projects Off and Running

Thirteen exciting and varied research projects sponsored by the McDowell Foundation are now being carried out in communities across Saskatchewan. In response to its initial call for research proposals, the Foundation received 26 applications totalling \$252,425 in funds requested. From these the Project Review Committee chose 13 projects involving 40 active teachers as either primary researchers or co-researchers. The projects address a variety of research topics and are being carried out at all levels of K-12 education.

Foundation President Fred Herron says he's pleased at the response to the initial call for proposals: "Teachers are interested in

action research when they have the time and supports necessary to carry out worthwhile projects. These projects address questions of real interest to teachers, and we hope they will provide insights that can be used by colleagues throughout Saskatchewan."

All projects currently underway are scheduled for completion by the fall of 1995. Tentative plans for disseminating the results of the research include the issuing of research reports, publishing a journal, and other communications activities undertaken by each researcher.

Details about the various projects begin on Page 2. □

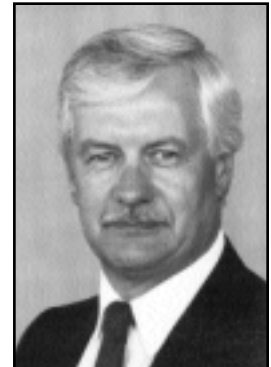
New Coordinator On-Board

Harold Schultz will join the Foundation in January as part-time coordinator, focussing on the development of a fund-raising/public relations plan.

Harold is familiar to educators throughout Saskatchewan as a former STF Executive Assistant and the current Director of NORTEP.

"The need for classroom teacher action research has never been greater," Harold says. "The problems related to teaching and learning are a part of a rapidly changing society. Today's students have quite different and unique needs that require some fresh instructional approaches."

He adds: "The McDowell Foundation is here to encourage and support practising teachers and organizations in the development of knowledge about teaching and learning. I see the Foundation as providing a real opportunity for teachers to become more directly involved in determining the future of the teaching profession." □



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The First McDowell Researchers

Collaborative Action Research into Primary Mathematics Using a Manipulative Approach. Lillian Forsythe and Vi Maeers. Regina. Amount: \$6,050

This collaborative action research study is intended to explore ways in which the classroom teacher uses a manipulative approach in mathematics instruction with primary children, plans and makes decisions about the teaching of mathematics, organizes materials and groups within the classroom, integrates math into all subject areas, and connects theory and practice.

Organizational Learning and School Effectiveness. Coral Mitchell and the Staff of W.P. Bate School: Jim Baker, Linda Chartier, Irene Friesen, Ingrid Gabert, Howie Maxwell, Joel Nostbakken, Martin Sterling, Crystal Torgunrud, Ann van der Wal. Saskatoon. Amount: \$5,400

This study is intended to test the usefulness of organizational learning processes (e.g., conversation, affirmation, invitation, and reflection) for increasing staff effectiveness in various aspects of school programs and operations.

Initial Perceptions on Alternate School Year Pilot at E. D. Feehan High School (1994-95). Phil Anton. Saskatoon. Amount: \$500

The objective of this study is to ascertain the initial perceptions of school administrators, teachers, students and parents of the alternate school year being piloted at E.D. Feehan High School that ends the semester prior to the Christmas break.

Planning Integrated Thematic Units of Study. Laura Kroeger. Saskatoon. Amount: \$4,050

The project will discover what information would be helpful and relevant to teachers in planning interdisciplinary thematic units of study, with the compilation of this information into a theme planning book for multi-graded, culturally diverse classrooms.

Supporting Literacy Instruction in Cross-Cultural Classrooms. Valerie Harper, Pamela Aldorfer, Lynn Fraser, Marion Kimberley, Shauneen Willett, Kim Newlove, Avon Whittles, Angela Ward, and Linda Wason-Ellam. Saskatoon. Amount: \$2,500

The purpose of the study is to describe effective practices by both First Nations and non-Aboriginal teachers as they teach reading and writing in a cross-cultural environment and to begin the development of a teacher network to share experiences in adapting literacy instruction to meet the needs of cross-cultural learners.

A Process Approach to Reading and Writing: Student Journeys through a One Year Classroom Experience. Tim Caleval and Ted Green. La Ronge. Amount: \$3,500

This project will take a process approach to examining changes in how middle years students approach reading and writing over the course of one year, providing a descriptive narrative of teacher and student experiences.

Voices of Northern Teachers: Finding Our Place with Students, Schools, and Communities in Northern Saskatchewan. David Friesen, Liz Bird and Jeff Orr. Regina. Amount: \$2,000

This project will involve a collection of teacher stories that explores how an aboriginal identity impacts the practice of NORTEP graduates and tells the story of the impact that these graduates have had on northern Saskatchewan.

Aboriginal Students' Writings. Lucy Howes, Sheryl Detchon, Sandra Harris, and Bernice Odeen. Onion Lake. Amount: \$5,420

The project will investigate whether or not the integrated English Language Arts approach leads to measurable improvement in the writing skills of Aboriginal students, employing a variety of data-gathering methods

that includes analysis of writing samples, testing, anecdotal records, checklists and ratings scales, meetings with parents, and interviews with parents.

Improving the Social Skills of Students with Emotional or Behavioral Challenges in the Inclusive Classroom. George Falk and Faithe Daniels. Moose Jaw. Amount: \$7,300

The project will provide teacher evaluation of and a study of the effect of a self-evaluation via videotape procedure on the frequency of negative and positive peer interactions when implemented by teachers with children described as Emotionally/Behaviourally Disturbed and exhibiting externalizing or internalizing behaviours.

Gender, Language and Ethnicity from the Perspective of Middle Years Youth in an Urban Classroom. Heather Blair and Agnes Rolheiser. Saskatoon. Amount: \$5,000

The project is a classroom ethnographic case study examining issues of gender, language and ethnicity in developing insights on how to improve the education of middle years students.

Teaching Ecologically. Tim Molnar. Regina. Amount: \$3,850

This is a collaborative action research project which will involve four classroom teachers in analyzing the classroom as an ecology of interactive connections and patterns and developing a more responsive and ecological teaching approach.

Implementation of "A School-Based Anti-Violence Program". Brenda Tenold-Phillips. Prince Albert. Amount: \$2,800

The research will document the process of implementing ASAP inservice and will provide guidelines as to how much inservice and teaching time is necessary to translate into a change in actions and ways of dealing with violence.

Urban Aboriginal Students and ESL/ESD. John Taras. Saskatoon. Amount: \$3,850

The fundamental purpose of the proposed research is to identify specific ESL/ESD resources, practices, and instructional strategies that will support Aboriginal students in an urban high school.

Ethical Guidelines in Place

The McDowell Foundation has approved a set of ethical guidelines that researchers receiving funds from the Foundation will be expected to follow. Developed by a subcommittee of the Project Review Committee, the guidelines protect students, teachers, and others from any detrimental effects from research and also assist researchers in protecting themselves from possible suspicion or misunderstanding of their work.

The guidelines are based on the principle of informed consent from the subjects of research and the need for administrative approvals for research conducted within the school system. They also underline the need for sensitivity to cultural, religious, gender, or other differences in the design, implementation and dissemination of research projects.

Research Coordinator Verna Gallén notes: "The Foundation needs to be as clear as possible about what it expects from research projects so that the results are trusted and respected. The guidelines are an important step in achieving that clarity."



Memorial Award in Honour of the Late Dorothy Christie

Among its supporters the McDowell Foundation was fortunate to count Dorothy Christie, a teacher at W. J. Berezowsky School, Prince Albert, who passed away suddenly this fall. Dorothy was working with others in Prince Albert to raise funds for research into teaching at the time of her death. Numerous colleagues and friends recognised her commitment to the improvement of teaching and learning by making memorial donations to the McDowell Foundation.

In gratitude for Dorothy's life and example, the Foundation has decided to name a major research award for 1995 after this dedicated teacher and supporter. The recipient of the Dorothy Christie Memorial Award will be announced along with the other recipients of research grants next May. □



Support Continues



Jim Longstaff, President of the Saskatchewan School Based Administrators Association, presents a \$1,000 donation to Fred Herron, Foundation President, to demonstrate support for the McDowell Foundation by SSBA members.

More Proposals Wanted in January '95

At its October 1 meeting, the Board of Directors approved a 1995 research budget of \$35,000.

A call for research proposals will be issued at the beginning of January through the *Saskatchewan Bulletin*. Notices and application information will also be sent directly to schools, local teachers' associations, the universities, educational partners, and other interested groups in Saskatchewan. The call once again places priority on relatively short-term projects that involve teachers in the role of researcher.

The deadline for proposals is March 31, 1995. Application packages and assistance in completing them are available on request from Verna Gallén, Research Coordinator. □

The Dr. Stirling McDowell Foundation was formed by the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation in 1991. It is a registered charity governed by a Board of Directors that oversees the activities of the organization. A Project Review Committee appointed by the Board is responsible for evaluating and selecting research projects for funding by the Foundation. An advisory board with representatives from educational, business, and community groups is also in place to assist in the development of policies and procedures. For further information, please contact:

Dr. Stirling McDowell Foundation
for Research into Teaching Inc.
2317 Arlington Avenue,
Saskatoon, SK S7J 2H8
(306) 373-1660; Toll free: 1-800-667-7762
Fax: 374-1122

Revenue Canada Charitable Registration No. 0893677-21