

4 March 2003

Professor Alan Gilbert  
Vice-Chancellor  
The University of Melbourne

Dear Professor Gilbert,

**International Centre for Classroom Research**

The Faculty of Education seeks approval to now formally establish the International Centre for Classroom Research (ICCR) in the Department of Science and Mathematics Education. I have attached a summary of the background to the project and the manner in which it has been formed through collaborations with two institutions (RMIT University and the Australian Council for Educational Research) and multi-disciplinary research teams from nine nations.

The unit is located in a re-furnished terrace house in Barry Street (in front of Building B). Funds for the refurbishment, which was completed in late 2002, were approved by Capital Projects Committee.

It is proposed that Associate Professor David Clarke serve as Director of ICCR.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Brian J. Caldwell  
Dean, Faculty of Education

Encl.

# PROPOSAL FOR THE FORMAL ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR CLASSROOM RESEARCH

## Background

The International Centre for Classroom Research (ICCR) was conceived by a consortium of classroom researchers as a major international facility to support the collection, storage and analysis of data (particularly video data) related to the study of learning and teaching in classrooms. The ICCR received its initial funding from an Australian Research Council Linkage-Infrastructure grant to a consortium of researchers from the University of Melbourne, the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), and RMIT University (RMIT). The ICCR has been established at 107 - 109 Barry Street on University Square, and is located in the Department of Science and Mathematics Education in the Faculty of Education. The aim of the ICCR is to investigate and assist the improvement of learning and teaching in classroom settings in Australia and around the world. In this, the Centre's aims correspond with the Faculty's in its commitment to be a leader in "the creation, dissemination and critical evaluation of fundamental knowledge about education." A distinctive feature of the ICCR is the international character of its collaborations.

## Partnerships

The ICCR was established as a collaborative venture of the University of Melbourne, the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), and RMIT University. In addition, the ICCR is the nexus of a variety of project-specific partnerships with research institutions such as the University of Hong Kong, and Uppsala and Gothenburg Universities (Sweden), professional associations such as the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers and the Australian Association of Teachers of English, the Victorian Department of Education and Training, and statutory authorities such as the Victorian Institute of Teaching.

## Funding

The activities of the ICCR are currently funded from a variety of grants (for example: Spencer Foundation (USA) – US\$319,500 over three years; ARC Linkage-Infrastructure - \$120,000; ARC Linkage-International - \$90,000 over three years). Funding obtained by the Centre's collaborative partners will continue to support the employment of project-specific research assistance. In addition, doctoral and masters students will make use of the facilities provided by the ICCR for the conduct of their research. In the past six months, a variety of grant applications (two ARC Discovery-Project applications, two ARC Postdoctoral Research Fellowship applications, and one ARC Linkage-Project application) have been submitted by several affiliates of the Centre. A further Linkage-Project application is being prepared in collaboration with a major commercial software developer. The extent of the ICCR's affiliated collaborative partnerships ensures that there are a wide variety of institutions and research groups committed to ensuring the on-going viability of this new international facility.

## Facilities

The unit is located in a re-furbished terrace house in Barry Street (in front of Building B). Funds for the refurbishment, which was completed in late 2002, were approved by Capital Projects Committee.

Technological advances allow the complexity of classroom settings to be matched by correspondingly complex data sets, involving the integration of multiple video records with video-stimulated post-lesson interviews and other supplementary test, questionnaire and scanned written material. The digitising of the substantial data sets and their storage in a readily accessible and analysable form poses a major resource challenge that the ICCR is designed to meet. Within the next two years, the ICCR will house one of the largest collections of classroom data ever accumulated. Researchers working at the ICCR can make use of the multiple computer workstations to access, analyse and compare data from classrooms in such countries as Mainland China, the Philippines, South Africa, Germany, the USA, Japan, Hong Kong, Sweden and Australia. The ICCR provides six such workstations for research assistants and doctoral students working on a range of projects, two additional workstations for use by international research associates of the Centre, and four other workstations for use by the Centre Coordinator, Technical Manager, Technical Assistant, and Administrative Assistant. Meeting room facilities support the display and discussion of classroom data.

### Board of Management

A Board of Management will be established and will have representation from the Faculty of Education, RMIT and ACER, as collaborative partners in the Centre, and representatives of government, industry and other tertiary institutions (including Monash University). An immediate task of the Board will be formal consideration of a Business Plan encompassing the activities of the ICCR over the next three years.

### Administration

The administration of the Centre is the responsibility of its Director (Associate Professor David Clarke, University of Melbourne), two Deputy Directors (Dr John Ainley, ACER; Professor Nicola Yelland, RMIT), and two Centre-specific appointments: the Centre Coordinator and the Technical Manager.

### Review

The Board of Management will monitor the ICCR's achievement of its aims, its financial viability, the scale and direction of its research program, and the productivity of that program. A three-year review cycle will be implemented.

### International Collaborative Research Program

Delays in the fitting out of 107 - 109 Barry Street prevented occupation of the new Centre until November 2002. Since that time, however, the following international researchers have worked at the Centre, familiarising themselves with the facility, the database and the analytical tools available, and carrying out a variety of analyses of the growing international database:

- Germany: Professor Christine Keitel-Kreidt and Ms Astrid Bekehr (research student)
- Hong Kong: Professors Frederick Leung and Ida Ah Chee Mok
- Japan: Professors Yoshinori Shimizu, Toshiakira Fuji, Keiko Hino, Koichi Nakamura, Minoru Ohtani, and Yasuhiro Sekiguchi; and Mr Yongchol Hong (research student)
- The Philippines: Dr Florenda Gallos and Dr Soledad Ulep
- Sweden: Professors Sverker Lindblad and Ference Marton, and Drs Jonas Emanuelsson, Ulla Runesson, Fritjof Sahlstrom, and Josefin Haggblom.
- USA: Professor Joanne Lobato

During 2003, extended working visits of one to three months will be made by Dr Herbert Khuzwayo (University of Zululand, South Africa), Professor Terry Wood (Purdue University, USA), Professor Ida Ah Chee Mok (University of Hong Kong, China) and Professor Alister McPhee (University of Glasgow, Scotland). A wide range of other researchers will spend periods of less than one month working at the ICCR. Funding for such collaborative visits comes from Linkage-International funding, U21 Fellowship funding, and from support provided by the visiting researcher's home institution.

### Summary

The ICCR provides its affiliated researchers with state-of-the-art data storage and analysis facility, supported by staff with substantial experience and expertise in the collection, storage and analysis of classroom data (particularly video data). The response of overseas and local researchers to the establishment of the ICCR has been universally enthusiastic and the anticipated program of high-profile international researchers committing time to work at the ICCR is well under way. Increasingly, Australian researchers will design research projects that make use of the facilities now available at the ICCR, representing substantial economies in capital expenditure and savings in any related funding applications. The research community whose activities centre on the ICCR is an extensive and international one. The International Centre for Classroom Research should be of demonstrable benefit to the University of Melbourne, providing a unique technical facility, a unique collaborative research community, and, importantly, supporting Faculty of Education colleagues in their investigation of teaching and learning in classroom settings.