

WEST AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL
RESEARCH

Secretary's Report – 22/4/32

Period – 12th Nov. 1929 to 19 April, 1932

Members will be aware that the West Australian Institute for Educational Research came into being when Professor Cameron was entrusted with the task of inviting certain people to form a committee in this State for the prosecution of educational research.

The first meeting was held in the University Buildings at Irwin Street on the 12th November 1929. There were present Professor Cameron, Miss Pendred, Miss Thomas and Dr. Fowler. An apology was received from Mr. Miles. At that meeting the following office bearers were unanimously elected:

Patron:	Mr Clubb
President:	Professor Cameron
Vice-President:	Mr Miles
Hon. Secretary – Treasurer:	Dr Fowler
Members of Committee:	Professor Whitfeld Miss Pendred Miss Thomas Miss Stoneman Mr Le Couteur

To these was added later, Dr Atkinson

It will be seen that the first committee consisted of men and women who were intimately connected with educational affairs in one way or another, or were especially trained in and qualified for educational research. As the most urgent business was to get work done it was decided not to enlarge the scope of the Institute for the time but to get various types of research undertaken. That the Committee has been successful in their endeavour you will probably agree when it is realized that already after only some two years' work, one major research has been completed and a report forwarded to the Central Council. I refer to the work of Miss Thomas on the Standardization of Phillips Group Test, concerning which you will hear more tonight. Another which is almost ready for publication is the work which Mr Marshall has done on the Standardization of Spearman's Group Test of Intelligence. These results will also be discussed tonight.

Mr. Miles was entrusted by the Council with the preparation of a report on the work of the correspondence system in Western Australia. That report has since been incorporated in a publication of the Council.

The Secretary received a grant for the publication of an abridged account of a research into the relative merits of the inductive and deductive methods of teaching.

Since that time Miss Thomas has been granted two separate amounts for further investigations; one is an enquiry into the relationship between intelligence scores obtained from students in training, their scholastic success, and their success in teaching. The second is research into the construction of reading tests.

A further investigation is being conducted into the compilation of spelling lists by Mr. A. Walker, and we are to be privileged by hearing how far he has progressed later this evening.

Some time ago Dr. Jull obtained a grant for the conduct of an experiment into the influence of the cinema. Much work has been done by the sub-committee formed to deal with the work, and it will not be long before the actual experiment is conducted.

The Teachers' Union was granted a sum for the investigation of some problems concerning the care and treatment of the backward child.

Mr. Oates has received a grant for the purpose of inquiring into educational costs in Australia. This research is in full swing at the present time.

Mr. Hamilton has received a grant towards an enquiry into the teaching of Nature Study.

Professor Cameron has several students investigating the errors made in the arithmetic tests recently conducted throughout Australia.

Three other researches under my direction are at present in their birth throes. One is an enquiry into the extent to which it is possible to improve by training the reasoning ability of children. Another is directed to discover the most effective methods of revision after the study lesson. A third is directed to the question of the prevention of errors as a teaching device.

It will be seen from the above account that your committee has not been unmindful of the necessity of undertaking investigations before worrying about publicity or increasing membership. The function of a research association is, I take it, not the discussion of teaching problems so much as the prosecution of research, and we shall have failed in our main objective if mere discussion takes its place. Something like £1,000 has been granted to investigators in this State this year, and researches are therefore in progress which could not under any circumstances have been undertaken without the co-operation of the Australian Council for Educational Research.

I thought that you would be most interested in the records of the achievements of the Institute than in matters of more domestic concern; but it will be necessary to mention several more humble matters in order to give you a fuller idea of the activities of the Institute. Since the opening meeting of the Institute, some twenty meetings have been held, without counting sub-committee meetings for special purposes.

In February of last year it was decided to widen the scope of the Institute by the introduction of new members and action was taken accordingly by circularizing people thought to be interested. When their replies were received the first meeting of the general body was called and addressed by Professor Cameron. The second meeting was held during Dr. Cunningham's visit, and we were fortunate in getting him to address us.

The personnel of the Committee has changed slightly since its commencement. We were unfortunate to lose the services of Miss Stoneman at the end of 1930 and of Mr Le Couteur in the latter part of last year. Their places have been filled by Mr. J. Parsons and Miss J.N. Phemister.

May I take this opportunity of thanking of behalf of the Committee the Director of Education for the permission which he has always given for the conduct of investigations in the schools, and those teachers who have welcomed our investigators so willingly. Without this co-operation our work would of course be impossible and we are extremely grateful for it. This co-operation has been so appreciated that early opportunity will be taken to ask the co-operation of these and other teachers again this year.

In closing, I should like to draw your attention to the publications of the Council, copies of which are on the table before you.

[Signed H.L. Fowler, Hon. Secretary]