Current Projects:

1. Handwriting and the 21st century curriculum
A two-part process with multiple stages. The central focus on understanding and supporting young writers. The project builds on previous research focused on early writing.

Changes in the curriculum in Finland have brought forward the discussion on handwriting and its specific place in 21st century schooling in Australia. While the changes in Finland are about the removal of the instruction of cursive handwriting, this change signals a possible trend for a decreasing role of handwriting instruction in curriculums around the world. The topics explored in the literature are complex. While many studies show how important handwriting is for a number of reasons, these studies often neglect any discussion of the place of digital technologies. The benefits of ongoing handwriting instruction need to be weighed against the cultural significance of writing with digital technologies - and trying to fit both in to an already overcrowded curriculum.

Part 1: Becoming a Writer: the place of handwriting in early years classrooms – 2016 in Australia
Co-Investigators: Dr Noella Mackenzie (NM), CSU; Ass Prof Janet Scull (JS), Monash University, Collaborator: Dr Terry Bowles (TB) University of Melbourne

Part 2: weWrite: writing in early primary education [weWrite: Kirjoittaminen ja näppäintaito alkuopetuksessa] – 2016 in Finland
Co-Investigators: Dr Noella Mackenzie (NM), CSU, CI Dr Tuija Turunen (TT), University of Lapland.

2. Understanding and supporting young writers: 2015
Understanding and supporting young writers examined approaches to the teaching of writing in the final year of preschool and the first year of school; measured the impact of different approaches to teaching young writers and investigated the role of children's drawing in early writing instruction. This study has the potential to significantly influence approaches to the teaching of writing in the first year of formal schooling and by extension improve learning opportunities for students. This project addressed an important concern for Australia in current times given that 'literacy under-achievement has high social and economic costs' (Department of Education, Science and Training, 2005, p. 7). The literacy debates to date have focused almost completely on reading and ignored the important role of writing in literacy development.
Chief Investigator: Dr Noella Mackenzie
Associate researchers: C Phillips and M Bishop (VCAA).

This project was a collaborative project funded by Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA).
3. Exploring writing in year 1

*Exploring writing in year 1* was launched with two separate but connected projects in 2010. The first project involved an exploration of writing in year 1 in Victoria and NSW. Samples of writing from 1700 year 1 children were gathered and analysed using an analysis tool developed for this purpose. The second project involved writing and Reading Recovery which is the highly regarded early literacy intervention which is implemented at year 1 level in many schools. Quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis were applied.

**Investigators:** Dr Noella Mackenzie (CSU), Ass Prof Janet Scull (Monash University), Dr Terry Bowles (University of Melbourne) and Ms Lynne Munsie (NSW DEC)

*Writing analysis tool*

The analysis tool used in the study and has proven useful to teachers in classrooms is available here.

4. 0-3 Literacy Project: 2015/2016

This project addresses a gap in early literacy research by examining Early Childhood Educators and parents understandings of how to support the literacy learning and in particular the emergent writing, of children 3 years and younger. An initial pilot study in 2015 will lead to an article and the development of a grant application to expand the study in 2016.

**Investigators:** Dr Noella Mackenzie, Dr Laura McFarland and Ms Natalie Thompson.

5. Becoming a writer (2007-2011)

* Becoming a writer (in the first year of formal schooling) began in 2007 and has a particular focus on the relationship between talking, drawing and early writing. Each year since 2007 Noella has worked closely with teachers of children in the first year of school and gathered extensive data from young children. The project expanded (2010-2011) to include the exploration of the teaching and learning of writing in the six months prior to enrolment in formal school. An exciting professional outcome of the Becoming a Writer Research has been the development of resources to be used by schools with parents of children starting school. These resources were funded and supported by the NSW Department of Education and Communities, Riverina Equity programs.

- You can access the video presentation by clicking here.
- You can access the parent brochure in PDF form by clicking here.