

How do projects get developed  
to support scaling up and sustainability?

## ACTS in Northern Ireland

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Implementation, Scaling up and Sustainability

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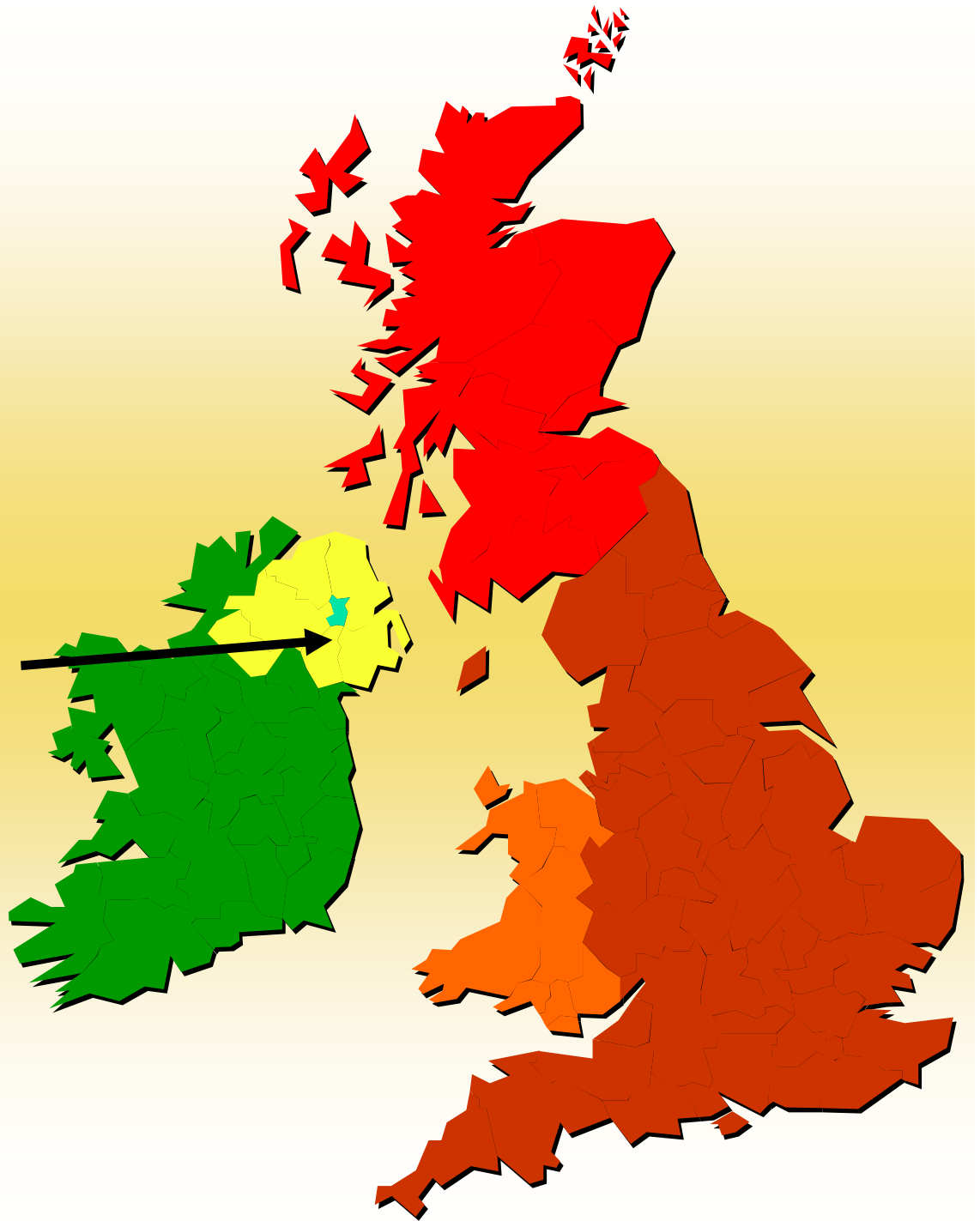


Funded: ESRC TLRP, DENI, CCEA, ELBS

T·L·R·P  
TEACHING  
& LEARNING  
RESEARCH  
PROGRAMME

E·S·R·C  
ECONOMIC  
& SOCIAL  
RESEARCH  
COUNCIL

**Northern Ireland**





# Facts and Figures about Northern Ireland Education

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- Population of NI: 1.7 million, 25% under 18
- Details about schools (from 2003-2004 statistics)
  - 900 primary schools, 250 secondary (excludes special schools)
  - 340,000 pupils, 160,000 in primary sector
  - 20,000 teachers
  - Teacher: Pupil ratio: 20:1 in primary, 14/15:1 in secondary
- Education policies differ from England/Wales/Scotland
  - Selective system at age 11 based on academic achievement (to end in 2008 .....maybe)
- Structures
  - Department of Education in Northern Ireland (DENI)
  - Northern Ireland Council for Curriculum and Examinations (CCEA)
  - Regional educational administration to support schools, curriculum advisory officers at the level of Education and Library Boards (ELBS)

# *ACTS - a pedagogical intervention in primary classrooms*

*Activating*

*Children's*

*Thinking*

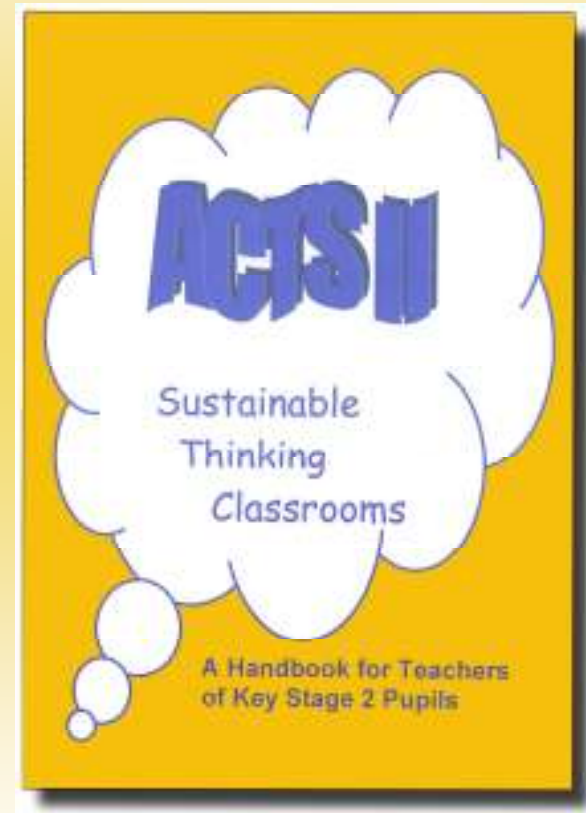
*Skills*

*Working for*

*Sustainable*

*Thinking*

*Classrooms*





# ACTS - Development and Research

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- Frameworks and classroom strategies - working in and through the current curriculum (curriculum and pedagogy)
- Professional development of teachers (ways of working)
- Developing support materials (handbooks, videos)
- Evidence of impact on pupils' learning, teacher practices and beliefs, and school policy over three years (evaluation)
- Working with partners for sustainability (systems)

ACTS intervention with teachers, 5-day PD programmes:  
Design Infusion Thinking Lessons, Pedagogy (N=134)

Video analyses  
(N=21)

Classroom  
dialogue

Metacognitive  
Framework

Teachers' end-of-year evaluations  
(N=94)

classroom practices

self-as-teacher

changes in children's thinking

Children's self-evaluations (ALCPS scales), four  
points in time (N= 1252)

Children's attainments, reading and  
mathematics, four points in time (N=1252)

## Phase 1 1991-1995

*Literature Reviews, NI Seminar on Thinking Skills*

*ACTS I - small scale, feasibility study with 17 teachers, funded by Curriculum Council*

- *Theoretical and empirical analysis*
- *Local policy interest and local funding*
- *Practitioner base*
- **NO SUSTAINABILITY**

## Phase 2 2001 - 2005

*DFES Commissioned Review, Thinking Skills to Thinking Classrooms*

*Funds from ESRC Teaching and Learning Programme for rigorous evaluation and scaling up*

*Local partnerships - DENI co-funding, link advisors at regional level, schools across Northern Ireland*

*Review of Northern Ireland Curriculum*

- *Interest at UK policy level*
- *Research Council Funding*
- *Part of a research programme*
- *Partnerships*
- *Practitioner capacity*
- *Evidence-base*
- *Policy review*

## Phase 3 2003-

*Proposed Revised Curriculum includes A Framework for Developing Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities  
Seconded 50% to Curriculum Council (funded by DENI)  
to advise on Framework and training materials for roll-out  
2007 and beyond*

- *Conceptual scaling up*  
*Integrated with other features*

# Weighing it up.....

## *Key positive influences*

- *Special focus*
- *Comprehensive*
- *High teacher buy-in*
- *Built practitioner capacity*
- *Local partnerships*
- *Consistent with directions in policy*
- *Linked well with other initiatives*
- *Timing*
- *Geography*

## *Challenges*

- *Stretched capacity of research team*
- *Future CPD capacity*
- *Modest evidence for impact on children's learning*
- *Big leap in terms of scaling up to national policy*
- *Assessment issues not resolved*

## *Uncertainties*

- *Reorganisation of public services*
  
- *Political - devolution*