

# Programme Director's Annual Report

**Programme:** Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP)

**Director:** Andrew Pollard, University of Cambridge

**Period:** 1<sup>st</sup> January 2003 to 31 December 2003

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**T · L · R · P**  
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COUNCIL

## 1 Introduction

This programme of research into teaching and learning represents a significant strategic investment by UK governments and agencies. ESRC manages TLRP under the terms of a contract with HEFCE.

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### *Aims*

As part of an increase in promotional, dissemination and impact activity during 2003, the public representation of TLRP's aims was redrafted to improve accessibility and to emphasise the positive contribution being made to research on teaching and learning.

*Learning:* TLRP aims to improve outcomes for learners of all ages in teaching and learning contexts across the UK.

*Outcomes:* TLRP studies a broad range of learning outcomes. These include both the acquisition of skill, understanding, knowledge and qualifications and the development of attitudes, values and identities relevant to a learning society.

*Lifecourse:* TLRP supports research projects and related activities at many ages and stages in education, training and lifelong learning. The Programme is concerned with patterns of success and difference, inclusion and exclusion through the lifecourse.

*Enrichment:* TLRP commits to user engagement at all stages of research. The Programme promotes research on teaching and learning across disciplines, methodologies and sectors, and supports various forms of national and international co-operation and comparison.

*Expertise:* TLRP works to enhance capacity for all forms of research on teaching and learning, and for research-informed policy and practice. This work is the particular focus of the Programme's Research Capacity Building Network.

*Improvement:* TLRP develops the knowledge base on teaching and learning and contributes to the improvement of policy and practice in the UK. The Programme works to maximise the impact of its research.

TLRP's work focuses on the outcomes of teacher/learner interaction in many settings, and is thus central to educational research. However, it does not by any means embrace the whole field. In particular, it does not draw significantly on the interface between education and cognitive psychology, neurobiology and other learning sciences. Nor does it fully address the broader concerns of sociology, economics, history, philosophy, political science, etc as they contribute to education.

The reporting period, 2003, is the 4th year in which TLRP's funded research activity has taken place. The Programme's research projects started work during 2000 and the last funded activity is presently expected to end in 2008. Within this period, there have been three main phases of work. Phase I (2000-03) supported four networks of projects (three in school sectors and one in post-compulsory education); Phase II (2001-04) supports nine projects (six in school sectors and three in post-compulsory sectors); Phase III (2003-08) supports additional projects in post-compulsory sectors. Building on Phase II projects, four

Scottish Extensions (2003-05) have also been supported. Additionally, two Career Development Associates (CDA) (2000- 03) and five research training fellowships (RTF) (2001 to PhD completion) have been funded.

TLRP has been staffed during 2003 by a distributed Directors' Team of five (2.9 fte) and by a Programme Office of two (2 fte). Following the funding of Scottish Extensions and Phase III projects, the number of discrete funded activities (networks, projects, CDA, RTFs) at, or beginning, work during 2003 was thirty-seven. The number of researchers involved in the Programme during 2003 was approximately 300.

## **2 Overview of Year**

2003 was a challenging but very constructive year for TLRP. Seventeen new investments started or were commissioned. The infrastructure of the Programme was significantly developed and should now bear the weight of our objectives through to 2008/9. Awareness of TLRP was raised within policy-making communities in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. TLRP's purposes were affirmed with particular reference to enhancing learning outcomes and contributing to evidence-informed policy, practice and democratic debate.

*Leadership and administration:* Professor Sir David Watson, retired from his role as Chair of the Steering Committee and was succeeded by Professor Robert Burgess, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leicester. A rolling programme of retirement and new appointments to the Steering Committee was initiated. The spatially distributed Directors' Team worked effectively together throughout 2003, and the TLRP Office Staff provided magnificent support under what, at times, was enormous pressure.

*Phase I networks:* Major funding for these four networks ended during 2003, though one received a supplementary award for impact work. The dissemination strategies of each network began achieving results with their target groups. Further impact work will continue during 2004.

*Phase II projects:* During 2003, the nine research teams were heavily involved in data collection and analysis, but also began to consider their strategies for completion. Annual reports show cumulative progress and a strong sense of purpose. Participation in Programme events has been good.

*Scottish Extensions:* Four small projects started during 2003 and have been making good progress. Constructive interaction has been developing with linked projects.

*Phase III projects:* Final decisions on the commissioning for this £9m phase of research on post-compulsory education were made in early 2003. Twelve projects were successful and almost all had begun work by the end of 2003. Researchers from all Phase III projects participated in an induction day and made valuable contributions to the 2003 TLRP conference in Edinburgh.

*Welsh and Northern Irish Extensions:* Agreement was reached to support a small number of additional projects, to start during 2004.

*User engagement:* Excellent progress was made during 2003 as the considerable benefits of close user engagement became apparent. In addition to active user participation in direct research activity, many Phase II projects further developed their Advisory Group relationships. Additionally, the Directors' Team extended their work with high-leverage user organisations in each sector in which TLRP is researching (see Section 9 for further details). Key users, such as the National College for School Leadership, the Learning and Skills Development Agency and Department for Education and Skills, were extremely helpful in the dissemination of project results through their communication systems. 'Research Briefings' began to be produced offering summaries of project findings and the formation of 'Policy Task Groups', to respond quickly to contemporary issues, was agreed.

*Cross-Programme thematic development:* Five Thematic Groups worked during 2003 to address key Programme issues, add value to project investments and draw on user and researcher expertise from beyond the Programme. Building on these, a new strategy for thematic development, including a competitive directive-mode seminar competition, purposive commissioning and Directors' Team leadership was conceptualised for progressive implementation from 2004.

*Capacity building:* All TLRP projects, many with particular strengths in capacity building through user engagement, continued with the activities which are integral to their research designs. RCBN offered improved provision during the year despite many changes in personnel. A consultation exercise took place on future provision.

*International developments:* European liaison deepened and TLRP led production of a Euro 2.7m ERANET proposal with six partner national programmes for submission to the European Commission. TLRP represented British Educational Research Association at the annual conference of the American Research Association.

*Research highlights:*

- Phase I network, 'Improving Incentives to Learn in the Workplace', coordinated by Helen Rainbird. The concepts of 'expansive' and 'restrictive' learning environments.
- Phase I network, 'Consulting Pupils about Teaching and Learning', led by Jean Rudduck. Multiple forms of evidence on the significance of consultation to pupil self-worth, learning, school membership and agency.

*Dissemination highlights:*

- 'TLRP Showcase' events for users in Westminster and Edinburgh (with Cardiff and Belfast to follow). Presentations by Ministers and TLRP Directors to cross-sectoral users in each country. Supported by some 40 project posters and representatives.

### **3 Programme Activities**

This Programme Chronology follows the structure and guidance of the 2003 Reporting Requirement by including key milestones for significant events for the Programme only. It

does not include project-level information such as visits, advisory group meetings, events or other activities, and it omits large numbers of user liaison meetings and strategic activities of other sorts.

<b>Month/ Year</b>	<b>Programme events</b>	<b>Project starts</b>	<b>Project ends</b>
January 2003	21 <sup>st</sup> : Decision with partners that TLRP will lead a European consortium for trans-national programme development within the European Research Area		CDA: Newman, <i>Problem-based Learning</i>
February 2003	4 <sup>th</sup> : Media Training for Directors' Team and Phase I network leaders  25 <sup>th</sup> : Lifecourse Thematic Group Meeting, Open University Conference Centre, London  27 <sup>th</sup> : Transformation and Impact Thematic Group Meeting, MRC, London		
March 2003	6 <sup>th</sup> : ICT Thematic Group Meeting, Faculty of Education, Cambridge  7 <sup>th</sup> : Learning Outcomes Thematic Group Meeting, Faculty of Education, Cambridge  21 <sup>st</sup> :CDA/RTF meeting Faculty of Education, Cambridge  21 <sup>st</sup> :International Synergy Thematic Group meeting, UCL Library, London  24 <sup>th</sup> : TLRP Steering Committee decisions on twelve Phase III awards		Ph1: Ainscow, <i>Inclusive Practices</i>
April 2003	21-25 <sup>th</sup> : TLRP represents the British Educational Research Association at AERA conference, Chicago  29 <sup>th</sup> : Phase III Induction Day, Faculty of Education, Cambridge  Meeting with Chair of House of Commons Select Committee on Education	SE: Christie, <i>Scottish Group Work</i>	

May 2003	<p>9<sup>th</sup>: Keynote: Teaching, Learning and Becoming. Scottish Council for Research in Education, Dunfremline</p> <p>23<sup>rd</sup>: Building Confidence in Our Conclusions (Warrants Meeting), Kings College, London</p> <p>23<sup>rd</sup>: Learning Outcomes Thematic Group Meeting, MRC, London</p> <p>30<sup>th</sup>: ICT Thematic Group Meeting, TTA, London</p> <p>Capacity Building: national consultation on future strategies launched</p> <p>Meeting with Conservative Party Front Bench Education Spokesman</p>		Ph1: Rudduck, <i>Consulting Pupils</i>
June 2003	<p>9<sup>th</sup>: International Synergy Thematic Group Meeting, UCL Library, London</p> <p>18<sup>th</sup>: Meeting with Liberal Democrat Education Parliamentary Team</p> <p>Research Briefings begin publication (Nos. 1-5)</p> <p>Two policy-maker seminars held</p> <p>Schools and Post-compulsory Newsletters published</p> <p>25<sup>th</sup>: TRLP Showcase, Westminster Launch of Phase III post-compulsory projects</p> <p>25<sup>th</sup>: Meeting of Steering Committee Change of Steering Committee Chair and several Steering Committee members</p>	SE: Howe, <i>Maths in Scotland</i>	Ph1: Rainbird, <i>Workplace Learning</i>  Ph1: Millar, <i>Science Education</i>
July 2003	<p>29<sup>th</sup>: Learning Outcomes Thematic Group Meeting, Faculty of Education, Cambridge.</p> <p>Learning Culture booklet to be distributed to FE colleges by LSDA</p>		

August 2003	27 <sup>th</sup> : European Association of Learning and Instruction: multiple presentations from TLRP projects.		
September 2003	13 <sup>th</sup> : British Educational Research Association: multiple presentations from TLRP projects  18 <sup>th</sup> : Transformation and Impact Thematic Group Meeting, MRC, London.	Ph3: Wolf, <i>Adult Basic Skills</i>  Ph3: Daniels, <i>Interagency Working</i>  SE: Plowman, <i>Interplay ICT</i>  SE: Gallacher, <i>Community-based Learning</i>  RTF: Dudley, <i>Lessons for Learning</i>	
October 2003	8 <sup>th</sup> : Learning Outcomes Thematic Group Meeting, Faculty of Education, Cambridge.  13 <sup>th</sup> : Evidence-based Policy and Practice Initiative.  29 <sup>th</sup> : Learning seminar with ESRC series and key TLRP researchers, Cambridge.  Series of meetings with National Education Research Forum	Ph3: McNally, <i>Competence-based learning</i>  Ph3: Felstead, <i>Learning as Work</i>  Ph3: Hoyles, <i>Techno-Math. Literacies</i>	
November 2003	4 <sup>th</sup> : International Synergy Thematic Group Meeting, UCL Library, London  7 <sup>th</sup> : ICT Thematic Group Meeting, IoE, London  17 <sup>th</sup> : TLRP Showcase in Scotland, Edinburgh Marriott  18-20 <sup>th</sup> : TLRP Annual Conference, Edinburgh Marriott  18 <sup>th</sup> : TLRP Steering Committee  25 <sup>th</sup> : Lifecourse Thematic Group Meeting, NATFHE, London  27 <sup>th</sup> : Keynote: TLRP strategies and the development of educational		

	research, Scottish Educational Research Association, Perth		
December 2003	<p>1<sup>st</sup>: General Teaching Council for England, London</p> <p>4<sup>th</sup>: Keynote: Finnish Learning Through Life Programme, Helsinki</p> <p>5<sup>th</sup>: Appointment with Secretary of State for Education and Skills</p> <p>18<sup>th</sup>: Learning Outcomes Thematic Group Meeting, Faculty of Education, Cambridge</p> <p>11<sup>th</sup>: TLRP presentation at LSDA national conference, Warwick</p>		

## 4 Progress of projects

### *Number of projects*

The total number of awards during 2003 was 37, but the number of discretely managed TLRP research activities was 53. They were:

- Phase I networks began in 2000 and ended in 2003. There have been 4 of these, within which, there were 15 projects.
- Phase II projects began in 2001 and all end by 2005. There are 9 of these.
- Scottish Extension projects began in 2003 and all end by 2005. There are 4 of these.
- Phase III projects begin in 2003/4 and all end by 2008. There are 12 of these.
- There have been 2 Career Development Fellows and 5 Research Training Fellows.
- During 2003 there have been 5 Thematic Groups working across the Programme.
- The Research capacity building network runs from 2002-2005.

### *Project Investigators*

The total number of named *award holders*, across all phases of TLRP funded or commissioned during 2003 is 110.

The total number of contract research staff, engaged practitioners, technical and administrative staff involved in the Programme is hard to quantify without criteria for inclusion and exclusion. In terms of 'active researchers' it is estimated that there were some 300 involved in TLRP during 2003.

### *Project Advisory Group meetings*

TLRP strongly suggests to all projects that they establish Advisory Groups, and encourages critical friends to attend these. Half of Phase I networks have had an Advisory Groups, two-thirds in Phase II, and all Phase III projects are expected to create them. The benefits of having such groups are readily apparent in terms of formalising relations with key users and providing interim opportunities to take stock.

### *Project Site Visits and discussions by DT and SC critical friends*

The TLRP Directors' Team and Steering Committee Critical Friends are associated with projects on the basis of sectoral knowledge and expertise. They are thus, in principle, able to offer constructive support and critique to projects. On the basis of their knowledge, they are often asked to advise on these projects, to comment on alterations to awards or on any issues which may arise.

The Directors' Team has a performance goal of visiting or having substantial contact with each project team at least twice a year. From the evidence of project reports, this goal was comfortably exceeded during 2003, with an average of 4.5 visits or substantial contacts being recorded. There are normally particular reasons when the number of contacts is large. Whilst these may include a project in difficulty of some sort, a more routine reason relates to the stage that a project has reached, with coordination of outputs generating particular activity. In future, an 'Output Summit Meeting' for each project is being scheduled well before the end of funding to manage the impact and dissemination process more effectively. DT members are also responsible for

monitoring the general progress of Research Training Fellows associated with their sectoral projects. RTFs also met for a special day conference during 2003.

Members of the Steering Committee each take on the role as Critical Friend to a small number of relevant projects. An average figure of 2.0 visits or substantial contact by SC Critical Friends was recorded by projects, though there were also projects that received none. It is likely that contact might have been higher if it were not for the fact that almost half of the members of the SC attended their last formal TLRP meeting in June 2003. Several retirees have generously continued to support projects.

## 5 Capacity building

Capacity building is an intrinsic part of TLRP's work. In all phases of TLRP funding, it has been a criterion for project selection. Many projects make excellent provision, for instance, through training of researchers and engagement of practitioners. This work is supported, monitored and reported on each year. Particular attention is paid to skill and career development of contract research staff.

With support from the Department for Education and Skills, TLRP has funded five Research Training Fellowships. These enable senior practitioners to study part-time for PhD's in association with TLRP projects.

Additionally, the Programme's Research Capacity Building Network (RCBN) has provided cross-Programme training services in the research methods which are particularly appropriate in the study of teaching and learning. This has been extended to the wider research community in education.

The principal focus of RCBN's work through 2003 was on the implementation of a practical programme of research-capacity building activities, reflecting the priorities established during an initial skill survey and consultation. This programme comprised the following elements:

- Workshops, seminars and conferences aimed at enhancing participants' knowledge and competences with respect to the methods necessary to conduct empirical research on teaching and learning.
- The journal, *Research Capacity Building*, aimed at disseminating information and analysis about research methods and related issues.
- A website ([www.cardiff.ac.uk/socsi/capacity](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/socsi/capacity)) aimed at providing a resource for TLRP researchers and others, through direct provision of information (about forthcoming events, references on methods and so forth), as well as through links to other providers (training providers, publishers, the ESRC Research Methods Programme, etc.).
- The provision of training and other support to individuals and projects at their request to our 'hotline'. Two awards were made under a scheme of small grants for capacity building.

RCBN activities were focused on the following areas:

- Research design issues
- The use of large-scale data-sets

- The uses of quantitative analysis in teaching and learning research
- The uses of qualitative analysis in teaching and learning research
- Combining quantitative and qualitative methods
- Researching the impacts of interventions.

A total of 214 individuals attended RCBN events, ranging from 175 who attended one event each to two individuals who have attended seven.

The Programme consulted during the year on the nature of its capacity building provision from 2005-8. This will be developed in association with ESRC's provision through the Research Methods Centre and Research Methods Programme. TLRP's resources will be deployed to complement and enrich this provision in specific relation to educational research. This will be developed in a close working relationship with the Applied Research in Education Scheme in Scotland and with relevant UK learned societies, such as the British Educational Research Association.

## **6 Internal communication**

During 2003, the full Steering Committee met for one 2 day meeting and two 1 day meetings the first being the final commissioning meeting of Phase III projects. Between meetings, there are effective links among members by email. As in 2002, the Chair, Deputy Chair, Research Priorities Board member, Programme Manager and Director have liaised regularly when pressing matters arise between meetings. In 2003 the composition of the Steering Committee changed substantially. Approximately half the members, including the Chair, retired. 'Retired' members of the Steering Committee have continued to liaise with specific projects as 'critical friends', as have those with continuous service. New members will be allocated to projects. Projects have been encouraged to involve critical friends via their Advisory Groups.

The Directors' Team has continued to develop effective ways of working together and the mix of skills and expertise has been a great source of strength. Twice termly meetings, group email lists, electronic discussion facilities and an intranet have continued to be used, as has the Action Planning and Reporting template devised to facilitate coordination and accountability.

Termly intra-Programme 'Bulletins' have been produced and the website facilities have been strengthened considerably. Cross-Programme administrative tasks are being supported through web downloads and web/data-base links.

Inter-project communication and activity has been encouraged through a number of cross-programme events including the work of five thematic groups: international development; ICT; transformation and impact; learning outcomes; lifecourse. The first three have completed their work but the last two are continuing. There has also been a meeting for Research Training Fellows, the Phase III and Scottish Extensions induction event and a seminar on the warrants issue from which a paper was developed and presented at the TLRP Annual Conference in November.

Work on publications, outputs and media strategies continued, with a final meeting of the Publications and Other Outputs Group and the production of a substantial Outputs Portfolio as a guide to projects on a range of electronic and paper-based outputs they

are encouraged to consider. This was distributed at the annual conference. Media training for representatives of all Phase I networks and the Directors' Team was undertaken in February and a Media Fellow (Martin Ince) was made available to the TLRP for one day per week. He is working with the Directors' Team and project teams on further media training and the development of media strategies.

The highlight internal event of the year was the TLRP annual conference. This took place in November at Edinburgh. This was the first, and only, time in the life of the Programme that it was possible to bring all three Phases of the programme together. The first day, combined with the Scottish Showcase event, was an opportunity for new Phase III projects to come together and share information and understanding as a means of promoting greater interaction and synergy among them. Posters for each project were available and on display. On the second day, there was a key opportunity for all projects to share and discuss their conceptions of teaching and learning, a theme that will be developed further. Then on the third day, when Phase I and II projects remained, the emphasis shifted to a consideration of warrants for conclusions and other issues of communication and impact. Feedback on this event was extremely positive.

## **7 External communication**

During 2003 a major effort was made to increase the profile of TLRP with the education policy-making communities of the four UK governments. Links were deepened with relevant government departments in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. In England, constructive talks also took place with the members of the Parliamentary Front Bench Education Teams of the Conservative and Liberal Democratic parties and appointments were made to discuss TLRP with the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (a meeting subsequently took place in early 2004). Excellent working relationships were established with various sections of the Department for Education and Skills and with key staff in the National Education Research Forum. In such discussions, TLRP positioned itself in terms of ESRC's commitments to 'Quality, Relevance and Independence'.

The concept of a 'TLRP Showcase' was developed, based on invitations to significant users to attend a short presentation on the Programme, followed by a buffet, poster-display on all projects and opportunities for discussion with project teams. The first TLRP Showcase was held in Westminster during Social Science Week in June 2003, and was attended by some 170 users and project researchers. Amongst the speakers were the ESRC Chief Executive and Parliamentarians from each of the major political parties and including Barry Sheerman, MP, Chair of the House of Commons Select Committee on Education and Skills.

A TLRP Showcase in Scotland was held in Edinburgh in November 2003 with extensive support from the Scottish Executive's Education Department and [ELLD-ASD](#) Secretariat; there were contributions from Professor Sally Brown, Stirling, and Deputy Chair of the TLRP Steering Committee, Professor Ian Menter, Paisley, of the Scottish Educational Research Association, together with Andrew Pollard and Mary James from the TLRP Directors' Team. Lewis Macdonald MSP, Deputy Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning, Scottish Executive, addressed the TLRP Annual Conference following the Showcase.

In Wales, the TLRP Director contributed to the development of the research strategy of the Department for Training and Education as a member of the Liaison Group for Research in Education and Training. A TLRP Showcase has been arranged to take place in Cardiff in February 2004, with the Minister, Jane Davidson, AM, speaking and expected to announce a new funding scheme for 'Welsh Extensions'. In Northern Ireland, with the support of colleagues from the Department of Education and Department of Employment and Learning, a TLRP Showcase has been arranged for May 2004, again with a new funding scheme for 'Northern Ireland Extensions' expected to be announced by the Minister, Jane Kennedy, MP.

Beyond central government departments, TLRP aims to work as closely as possible with relevant user organisations and to promote projects and their findings through multiple forms of output.

Links with many research users have been developed since the inception of TLRP and progress during 2003 is described in Section 9 of this report. TLRP works across every educational sector and over 3000 user organisations (excluding schools) are now registered on the TLRP database. In the light of the scale of these possibilities for engagement, 'key user organisations' have been identified in each sector. Selection is based on a judgement of significance and potential leverage for impact. Working relationships with contacts in these organisations are developed by members of the TLRP Directors' Team. The benefits of these relationships began to become apparent during 2003 as the first findings from TLRP's Phase I networks started to come through.

TLRP's corporate design was significantly upgraded during 2003, building on the work of a Programme working party (POOG), a user-based Thematic Group on Transformation and Impact and substantial consultation with media and corporate image specialists. New design features were introduced to the Programme leaflet, newsletter, website and all other outputs. The design of the Programme's 'Research Briefing' series was established. A substantial 'Outputs Portfolio' was produced setting out clear expectations for all project teams and providing practical support.

In parallel, Programme's infra-structure for managing external communication to 2008/9 was also significantly developed. This included the negotiation of partnership arrangements with: Taylor & Francis for journal outputs and RoutledgeFalmer for several forms of book and e-book publications; the British Education Index for promoting TLRP occasional publications; and Fieldfare Press, Cambridge, for TLRP's print requirements. Additionally, agreement was reached to fund a project at the University of Bristol to produce multi-media material for each project representing their 'key findings'.

Expenditure on Programme-wide external communication activities was:

- Liaison work and administration: £20k approximately
- Design: £3k
- Showcase events: £19k
- Research Briefings: £2k
- Newsletters: £17k
- Website development: £15k

## 8 Scientific Representation

Europe: TLRP has led a consortium working on an ERA-NET proposal during 2003. This, with very helpful ESRC support, is nearing completion. A Life as Learning/InterLearn conference in Helsinki in December, which all the TLRP Directors' Team attended, was an opportunity to discuss a draft of the full proposal which will be submitted in March 2004. Partner countries are those with comparable programmes on teaching and learning. These include Norway, Finland, Netherlands, Sweden and France. If successful, 'EDRES' offers the possibility of mounting a transnational European programme in the area of 'Knowledge and Learning' from 2009 or thereabouts. Work on this may thus form part of a TLRP sustainability or 'hand-over' strategy for the future. Alan Brown coordinates TLRP's work in Europe and attended the 2003 EARLI and ECER conferences.

US: TLRP represented BERA at the 2003 meeting of AERA. A symposium, co-ordinated by Mary James, and including papers from her own, Nunes and Sutherland's Phase II projects was well attended. Professor Eva Baker, CRESST and UCLA, was the discussant.

Pacific Rim and Australasia: The Directors' Team continue to receive visitors and requests from Hong Kong, Singapore, New Zealand and Australia with specific enquiries about the Programme.

Members of TLRP projects have many other international links and presented at events across the world. Information on these activities is available in project reports.

## 9 Links with Research Users

Established TLRP strategies for developing user engagement have been affirmed. All projects are encouraged to work closely with users in their research sites to enhance validity and relevance, and to develop links with appropriate bodies with high impact leverage. In many cases, this is formalised through Advisory Groups. In 2003 projects were requested to submit names of their user contacts to the Programme office for entry into the database so that information can be appropriately targeted.

On behalf of the Programme as a whole, the Directors' Team is particularly active in relation to the development of links with national bodies. Members of the Directors' Team continued to visit, or communicate in other ways with, almost all designated 'key user' organisations, and to consolidate personal contacts. In particular, they have negotiated the potential for cooperation and synergies. More specifically, in 2003, face-to-face meetings have taken place with members of the: BECTa, Department for Trade and Industry, SKOPE, Department for Education and Skills, Department for Education Northern Ireland, Sector Skills Development Agency, Confederation of British Industry, VETNET, National Association of Further and Higher Education, National Teacher Research Panel, Teacher Training Agency, Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, Office for Standards in Education, Standards and Effectiveness

Unit, National College for School Leadership, General Teaching Council for England, Association of Teachers and Learners, University Council for the Accreditation of Teachers, Learning and Skills Council, Dysg, Assessment and Qualifications Alliance, Learning and Skills Council, Learning and Skills Development Agency, Higher Education Funding Agency for England, Learning and Teaching Support Network, Institute for Learning and Teaching, ESCALATE, National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education, The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, UK-Refer-Net, British Association for Educational Research, Society for Research in Higher Education, National Assembly for Wales, Northern Ireland Inspection service, Scottish Executive Education Department and the Department for Education and Skills in England, UNESCO, IBM, RegioNet.

Users are also represented on all Thematic Groups. The Programme now has a contract with RoutledgeFalmer of Taylor & Francis to publish a series of 'gateway books' explicitly targeted at users. Research briefings and A5 and A4 books and pamphlets will also be aimed at user audiences. A Media Fellow, Martin Ince, has now been appointed with ESRC support and will take up his post fully on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2004.

## **10 Key Performance Indicators**

TLRP's KPI's are under review by the Steering Committee. This is an illustrative set of achievements during 2003, based around each of the six Programme aims.

### *Learning*

- Twelve Phase III projects commissioned covering teaching and learning in post-compulsory sectors.
- Annual conference in Nov 2003 focused on conceptions of teaching and learning underpinning all projects.

### *Outcomes*

- Thematic Group on Outcomes analysed definitions and measures used in Phase I and II and will publish.
- Cross-Programme discussion facilitated on forms of warrant, with paper being produced.

### *Lifecourse*

- Phase III projects commissioned and associate project scheme established to improve coverage.
- Thematic Group on Lifecourse working on analysis and with special issue of journal anticipated.

### *Enrichment*

- Deepening of UK user engagement and formation of constructive partnerships in all education sectors.
- ESRC TLRP leading partners in ERANET bid to European Commission on Educational Research.

### *Expertise*

- Research Capacity Building Network providing respected, high quality training opportunities across UK.

- Building academic commitment through consultation and negotiation on new capacity building provision.

#### *Improvement*

- Four Phase I projects began reporting and key findings having significant impact on target groups.
- Specific output expectations of projects established with practical support through Output Portfolio.

## **11 Forward Look**

TLRP has, at present, five years more to run and the Directors' Team believe that, although a lot of hard work lies ahead, these years can be approached with reasonable confidence.

An organisational and procedural infrastructure has been built which is capable of both supporting research development in the various specialist sectors in which we operate, and capable of making a serious attempt to achieve significant impact. Further, good relationships and clear expectations have now been established with all project teams. Looking forward, we expect that this infrastructure will begin to deliver a stream of high quality outputs which will have a progressive impact on policy and practice. We are beginning to generate attention from journalists, and we expect to establish ESRC TLRP as a source of newsworthy stories.

Close relationships have been established with key users in every sector in which TLRP's research is taking place. We have engaged key politicians across the political spectrum and have established good working relationships with colleagues in six government departments with responsibility for education and training across the UK. We believe that the work of TLRP is increasingly seen as making a constructive contribution to both the production of knowledge about teaching and learning and to the development of educational research as a field. We will continue to try to build confidence in TLRP and will use any resulting influence to promote a constructive approach to change and development in this field. We intend to promote recognition of the value, in principle, of diversity in research approaches in education, combined with recognition of the present imbalance in capacity for different forms of expertise. We will continue to argue that all forms of research should satisfy appropriate criteria of quality and will support attempts to establish greater agreement on these. We aspire, in other words, more sophisticated appreciation of strengths and weaknesses within educational research.

We have commissioned 12 new Phase III projects which will come on stream fully during 2004. At the same time we expect to commission between 5 and 8 new Extension Projects in Wales and Northern Ireland, and perhaps 6 new Thematic Seminar Groups. There may also be up to 6 new Associate Projects which will join TLRP during 2004 or 2005. The Programme will not grow further in terms of projects.

Two further important developments are anticipated during 2004. First, a strategy is being developed for a new phase of thematic work on topics of strategic significance to TLRP. This will include a Thematic Seminar Series competition. Such investments are intended to add significant value to the work of projects and draw new UK expertise into the Programme. Second, we will begin to form Policy Task Groups - rapid

response teams to tackle issues of contemporary significance. DfES has suggested a source of funding for this activity. This illustrates another trend which is likely to continue - the continuing formation of alliances. For example, closer working seems very likely with the Applied Educational Research in Scotland initiative, the DfES Innovation Unit is providing future support, and TLRP's liaison with both the British Educational Research Association and National Educational Research Forum is also close. EDRES, if successful, should provide the opportunity to cooperate at a European level.

Whilst TLRP is what it has become, it 'looks forward' on the basis of what it can do. The intention is to be respectful and constructive, but also realistic, open-minded and practical. Where we can do something useful, we will try. In doing this, we aim wherever possible to form alliances with other, more sustainable bodies.

The ultimate future-oriented goal of TLRP is to contribute both to a more capable, self-confident and respected body of researchers in this field, and to the improvement of knowledge about teaching and learning on which better educational policy and improved practices can be based.