



PROGRAMME DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT 2001

Programme: Teaching and Learning

Director: Charles Desforges

Period: From 1 January 2001 to 31 December 2001

1 Introduction and contribution to ESRC themes

This Programme of research into teaching and learning is funded to a total of £25.0 m by the HEFCE, the Scottish Executive, the Welsh Assembly, the Northern Ireland Executive and the DfES. The present report covers the period 1 January 2001 to 31 December 2001. This has been a period primarily concerned with consultation on commissioning and building collaborative networks.

1.1 The core objectives of the Programme are to:

- enhance the achievement of learners at all ages and stages in education, training and life-long learning.
- develop the capability for transforming the knowledge base relevant to learning into effective and efficient teaching and training practices.
- enhance the system-wide capacity for research based practice in teaching and learning.
- promote and extend multi-disciplinary and multi-sector research in teaching and learning.

1.2 Contribution of the Programme to the ESRC's thematic priorities

The Programme will make a significant contribution to the thematic priority referring to **Knowledge, Communication and Learning**. The Programme's research themes focus on the acquisition of knowledge and skilled performance.

The research work will seek to promote understanding of effective contexts for teaching and learning and, of necessity, will explore the challenges and opportunities afforded by new technologies. It will promote life long learning at the level of pedagogy.

The Programme also has relevance to other ESRC themes such as People and Technology, Innovation, Social Inclusion and Exclusion and to Economic Performance and Development.

2 Overview of the year

2.1 Preparation for Phase III

- 2.1.1 At the beginning of the year, Phase II commissioning was completed. The Programme comprised 4 large Research Networks, 2 Career Development Associates and 9 major Research Projects.
- 2.1.2 In January the HEFCE announced further funding of £10.5M. Subsequently further funding of £0.5M from the Welsh Assembly, £0.25M from the Northern Ireland Executive and £1M from the Scottish Executive has been announced.
- 2.1.3 Throughout the spring and summer a consultation process was conducted to inform the design of Phase III of the Programme. Phase III is dedicated to research in teaching and learning in post compulsory education in all its forms, phases and settings. The commissioning process was also to be a capacity building exercise. The consultation comprised a paper questionnaire (N = 5,000), circulated with the Programme's post-compulsory newsletter, a website questionnaire; 6 regional invitational seminars (held in Belfast, Cardiff, Edinburgh, London, York and Birmingham); interviews with an extensive list of significant people in the field, and 12 focus group meetings with students in the field.
- 2.1.4 Reports were prepared for the Steering Committee on each of these activities.
- 2.1.5 An advisory group of specialists in the field was convened to provide further guidance on the research specification.

Following consideration by the Steering Committee and the Advisory Group a specification for Phase III was agreed in November and published in December.

2.2 **Work in Support of Communication and Impact**

2.2.1 Two seminars on Conceptualising Research Impact were held in London and Edinburgh, 23 February and 8 March 2001. These involved discussions with mixed groups of researchers, teachers and policy makers of concepts of impact, measurement and getting research into practice in relation to the Programme. The outcomes of these seminars were circulated to the participants and fed directly into the development of the Programme's Communication Strategy.

2.2.2 Two seminars on Researcher/User Partnerships were held in Cardiff and York in April and May 2001. These seminars were parallel events, each involving a representative from half the Programme's projects, and a group of practitioners and policy makers. The objective was to discuss the development of researcher/research user partnerships in support of knowledge transformation and impact and to advise on practical action in support of Project and Programme strategies, activities and outputs.

2.2.3 15 meetings were held with key partners to discuss collaborations and partnership issues, with particular emphasis on work in support of impact.

2.2.4 Two Programme Newsletters were published, in April and October. Both Newsletters were placed on the Programme Website as well as being posted to an extensive distribution list. The April edition was sent to over 40,000 individuals including nearly 32,000 school head teachers. There were three versions, for primary, secondary and post-compulsory sectors. The latter had a print run of 5,000 and included as an insert a questionnaire on Phase III priorities.

The October edition was published in school and post-compulsory versions. The latter had an increased print run reflecting the additional contacts arising

from Phase III consultation. It included progress reports on Phase III commissioning. The schools versions featured reports from the three relevant Phase I Networks.

- 2.2.5 The Programme Website has seen significant development with a cleaner typeface and a 'Latest News' box. Detailed content enhancements included, in addition to the Programme Newsletters, a number of new publications and background documents and a revised Communication and Impact Plan. There was also a new section for Phase III including an on-line version of the consultation questionnaire, reports from all the consultation activities and, at the very end of the year, the whole Phase III Specification and supporting documentation. Work has also begun on the creation of a closed discussion forum for Programme members and on the transfer of the Website to the server at Cambridge in 2002.
- 2.2.6 More than half the Phase II Projects and the Research Capacity Building Network now have a dedicated website, which is linked from their summary pages on the Programme website. Others are planned for 2002.
- 2.2.7 The Programme contributed to a number of external conferences and events in support of the communication and impact strategy. In particular, the Assistant Director gave a paper setting out the Programme's conceptual analysis and strategic approach to the British Educational Research Association Conference in Leeds in September 2001.
- 2.2.8 The Programme also contributed to a review by the Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development of learning in the workplace. Three joint seminars bringing together training / HR practitioners and researchers on work-related learning were planned. The Programme and the ESRC SKOPE project co-sponsored an international workshop on measuring achievement in work base learning in Northampton, 8-10 November.
- 2.2.9 The Steering Committee agree that additional funding (totalling up to £200,000 in the first instance) should be made available from uncommitted

funds for Networks and Projects to bid for supplementary activities in support of impact, user engagement and related communication. Guidelines sent to research teams stressed that priority would be given to bids that featured innovative and collaborative new approaches.

2.2.10 The second Programme Conference in November 2001 was principally an internal event for Network/Project teams and key partner organisations. A major public conference is planned for November 2002.

2.2.11 Expenditure on communication, impact and user engagement activity (other than for Phase III consultation and commissioning) included:

(a)	Newsletters (x2)	£37,000
(b)	Travel costs, etc.	£15,000
(c)	Seminars	£28,000
(d)	TLRP Conference	£18,000

2.3 **International Collaborations**

2.3.1 In conjunction with researchers in Finland, Spain, Norway and Iceland, an EU grant was acquired to promote international work on advancing theory and methods in educational research and to create opportunities for doctoral and post-doctoral level training. The project, called LearningSpace, has set up a website to offer shared training opportunities, and held conferences and seminars to consider developments in teaching and learning theory and research methodologies. The group has submitted papers to the EU commission to help shape educational research policy and a bid for large scale funding for a joint research project is under early consideration.

2.3.2 Consultants from the NSF have attended Programme seminars and conferences to present papers, take part in debates and provide feedback.

2.3.3 A benchmarking review of the Programme level management has been prepared by Professor Eamonn Kelly (until recently a Programme Officer at

NSF). This provides a commentary on the progress of the Programme and its management against best US research management practice.

2.3.4 Programme researchers (Professor Bryant and Professor Gorard) are taking part in cutting edge methodological developments in design experiments sponsored by NSF.

2.3.5 The Programme Director has presented papers at NSF, PROO (The Netherlands) and Finnish Academy sponsored conferences. In respect of PROO and the Finnish Academy, research programmes with strong family resemblance to TLRP are in the planning and funding stages. Links are expected to be formed affording opportunities of sharing assets in methodological advances, capacity building and possibly, joint research projects.

2.4 **National Collaborations** chiefly with a view to promoting Programme impact, have been pursued through discussion with a range of high leverage agencies including NFER, LSDA, NCSL, COSLA, TTA, EPPI, CIPD, BPS, LGA, ILT, OFSTED, LTSN, GTCE, BERA, NTOs and NIACE.

2.4.1 National debates on educational research have been promoted through the normal academic conference routes and also through the active engagement of the Director in NERF and in DfES Research Strategy activities.

2.5 **The Internal dynamics** of the Programme have been exercised through a series of Programme seminars, the Programme conference and capacity building activities.

2.5.1 Particular attention has been paid to advances in theory and method and in promoting thinking and action about research impact on policy and practice where Dr Kanefsky has played a strong leadership role.

2.6 **Highlights** it is still too soon to expect many substantives research outputs. The Phase II projects have appointed good quality staff and have, in some cases made

good progress in the first stages of data collection but it is too soon to expect much in the way of analysis. The earlier funded, Phase I Networks are more advanced but even here, definitive results cannot yet be expected.

2.6.1 One exception is a Delphi study of the expert science community's priorities for teaching about science (Osbourne, Ratcliffe, Collins, Millar and Duschl, 2001). This paper is being extensively cited as a significant contribution to the debate on 'teaching the nature of science' and has had an impact on the QCA review of the UK science curriculum.

2.6.2 In relation to learners' attainment, significant findings of differences between comparable groups of learners under different conditions of learning have been reported in projects run by Millar, by Nunes and by Newman. The findings have considerable pedagogic importance.

2.6.3 All projects report very high levels of user interest and engagement. Several projects are oversubscribed in terms of the volume of requests from users to participate or engage in active communication.

2.6.4 Perhaps the most significant highlight of the Programme this year is the installation and operation of the Research Capacity Building Network led by Professor Gorard. The main aim of the RCBN is to develop the research skill profile of Programme researchers using the Programme as a training resource. A broader remit is to train mid-career researchers in the community more generally and to contribute to the development of research methodology.

2.6.4.1 Significant progress has been made on all fronts. In regard to training, a skills audit instrument has been devised and is in wide, national circulation. Analysis of returns will provide the first evidence based picture of educational research capacity in regard to skills in the UK. In regard to impact on methodological development members of the RCBN are involved in the NSF funded initiative on advancing thinking in the design, operation and analysis of design experiment. This is possibly the most significant potential advance in

education research methods in a decade. More generally, Professor Gorard has been prolific in publishing ideas and analyses for advancing thinking on cause-effect modelling and warranting. Outstanding academic leadership is evident here.

3 Programme Activities

3.1 Progress of projects

(Please see for the moment, individual project reports).

4 Internal Communication

There have been four meetings of the Programme Steering Committee (including one during the Programme Conference; two programme seminars each involving half the projects and networks (23/24 May and 6/7 June); one Programme Conference (14/15 November); extensive telephone and e-mail discussions; and 10 meetings with individual projects including attendance at launch events.

5 External Communications

5.1 External communications work is itemised in section 2 above, particularly section 2.3.

Priorities were: work in support of Phase III Commissioning; developing contacts with key partner organisations; communicating through newsletters, emailed briefings and papers to conferences and seminars; participation in national policy forums including NERF; and website developments.

5.2 The Director has presented papers to a wide range of audiences proposing and examining new theoretical developments in the field of teaching and learning. (see, for example, Annex D items 2,24,48,56,65,67,87,92).

6 Future Programme Developments

- 6.1 The major tasks facing the Programme in the immediate future are (a) the commissioning of Phase III and (b) the re-engineering of the Programme management consequent upon the installation of a new management team and upon the acquisition of Phase III.
- 6.2 Perhaps more significant challenges in meeting the Programme objectives lie in realising the potential in the Programme to develop rather than be captured by extant research cultures. The benchmarking review from Professor Kelly should prove to be a guiding instrument in this task. The main directions for change might be in (a) delivering in practice on the conceptual advances in strategy planning for impact (b) advances in methodological developments and (c) capacity building focussing on the next generation of research leaders.

Annex D

Directors' Activities

- 1 These comments cover the work of the Director and the Assistant Director.

- 2 **Adding value.** We have brought added value through contributions to debate on research designs and communication planning particularly during the consultation phase. This work has been face-to-face resource greedy. The focus of the intro Programme seminars and the Programme conference has been on promoting advances in theory, measurement and analysis in the field.

- 3 We have **provided intellectual leadership** in the above instances. In addition we have led in shaping conceptions of educational research and its impact in discussions with researchers and users and in international collaborations and developments. Papers have been presented at conferences for a range of audiences and for NERF (see section 5.2).

- 4 Perhaps because of the unusual nature of TLRP we have been particularly busy in **user engagements**. This has been worked in to consultation processes, research planning, advisory and support work and communication planning. User engagement has been an essential and organic process throughout. That being said, some users are perceived as offering more leverage than others in potential impact. We have worked to identify these 'key users' and to develop strategic partnerships with them. Additionally we have engaged in all the predictable user engagement strategies of conference presentations to practitioners, distributing a newsletter to all UK providers in compulsory school years, all HE/FE providers and a host of other post compulsory sector/private sector providers.

Annex D continued

- 5 **Inputs to public policy debates.** We are not in a position to comment on the several current high profile education debates because we have yet to collect substantial bodies of relevant evidence. We have however, contributed to strategic debates about educational research through the Director's involvement with NERF and through a wide range of conference presentations.

- 6 **Inputs to ESRC Debates.** We have engaged fully in these as appropriate. We attend Centre and Project Directors meetings and participated in various consultation exercise.

- 7 **A channel of communication for the ESRC.** Through reports to the Steering Committee we have been in a position to feedback to the ESRC any issues we find in the field.

Attachment to Annex D

List of activities in the year 2001

Director (CWD) and Assistant Director (JWK)

1	5 January	CWD/JWK	National Leadership College (Heather DuQuesnay), London
2	10-13 January	CWD	Paper on TLRP , NSF Conference in Washington DC, USA
3	15 January	CWD/JWK	Stephen Gorard (Capacity Building Network), Exeter
4	16 January	CWD/JWK	Meeting with Andrew Morris / Geoff Stanton, LSDA Research Strategy, London
5	18 January	JWK	SCRE, Entwistle project. CoSLA and Scottish Executive (with DW / GG), Edinburgh
6	23 January	CWD/JWK	TTA Chief Executive and Teacher Panel, London
7	25 January	JWK	EPPI-Centre, CIPD, London
8	31 January	CWD/JWK	Chief Executive of LSDA; Head of Education LGA, London
9	7 February	JWK	Research Seminar, University of Portsmouth
10	9 February	CWD	NAHT Conference (paper on teaching and learning)
11	9 February	CWD/JWK	Briefing for Express & Echo newspaper
12	12 February	CWD/JWK	British Psychological Society, London)
13	15 February	CWD/JWK	ILT (P Clarke), OfSTED (D Taylor), London
14	16 February	JWK	Mark Newman Steering Group, London
15	23 February	JWK	Impact Seminar, London
16	1 March	JWK	ESRC Programme Directors meeting, London
17	2 March	CWD/JWK	Group Phase III Working Group, London
18	8 March	JWK	Impact Seminar, Edinburgh
19	15 March	CWD	LLL Institute (Chris Brookes) Brain Research Seminar, Oxford
20	15 March	JWK	TTA Research Co-ordinators Conference, Bath
21	20 March	CWD/JWK	GTC, London
22	22 March	CWD	Paper (Recent research on teaching and learning) at the Brighton and Hove Primary Headteachers' Conference, Arundel.
23	23 March	CWD	Dr David Hung, National Institute of Education, Singapore.
24	25/26 March	CWD	Paper at the PROO Conference on, 'What does educational research have to offer in education?', The Netherlands
25	28 March	CWD	Paper (Recent research on teaching and

			learning), Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Headteachers' Conference, Newbury.
26	29 March	JWK	'Holyrood Explained Seminar', Edinburgh
27	2 April	CWD	NERF Writing Group, London.
28	5 April	CWD	Paper on evidence based practice, CPSE Seminar, University of Leeds
29	6 April	CWD	Ainscow Project seminar, University of Manchester.
30	29 April	CWD	Paper (Recent research on teaching about learning), SouthWest Deputies Conference, Torquay.
31	30 April	CWD/JWK	TLRP User Research Seminar, University of Cardiff.
32	30 April	CWD/JWK	Paper on TLRP, School Research Seminar, UWIC.
33	2 May	JWK	Sutherland Project launch.
34	3 May	CWD	NERF Writing Group Meeting, London.
35	4 May	CWD	Oxford Brookes University launch, Nunes Project.
36	8 May	CWD	TLRP Phase III Consultation Seminar, York.
37	10 May	JWK	User Research Seminar, York.
38	14 May	CWD/JWK	TLRP Phase III Consultation Seminar, Belfast.
39	15 May	CWD/JWK	TLRP Phase III Research Capacity Building Seminar, Manchester.
40	16 May	CWD	Paper (Recent research on learning and development), Early Excellence Conference, Huddersfield.
41	21 May	JWK	TLRP Phase III Consultation Seminar, London.
42	22 May	CWD/JWK	TLRP Research Capacity Building Seminar, London.
43	23/24 May	CWD/JWK	Intra-Programme Seminar, London.
44	4 June	CWD	TLRP Phase III Consultation Seminar, Birmingham.
45	6 and 7 June	CWD/JWK	TLRP Phase III Intra-Programme Seminar, Sheffield.
46	12 June	JWK	TLRP Phase III Consultation Seminar, Cardiff.
47	14 June	JWK	Tender meeting, CIPD Research Review., London
48	15 June	CWD	Paper on evidence based practice, Annual Memorial Lecture, University of Brighton.
49	15 June	JWK	Lesley Saunders, GTC, London.
50	18 June	CWD	TLRP Phase III Consultation Seminar, Edinburgh.
51	20 June	JWK	Professor Michael Bassey, BERA to discuss partnerships for impact.
52	22 June	JWK	BBC Seminar, Plymouth
53	26 June	CWD	Annual Deputy Headteachers Conference, London
54	27 June	JWK	PBL Workshop, London

55	3 July	CWD	Torquay Conference, Somerset LEA
56	4 July	CWD	PhD Training Seminar, ESRC, Manchester
57	5 July	CWD	University of Durham, Evidence Based Policies and Indicator Systems Conference
58	6 July	CWD	Imperial College London, Equals Conference UKRA, Canterbury
59	9 July	CWD	Westminster College, Enhancing the quality of project proposals, London
60	10 July	CWD	Research Training Fellowships, London
61	13 July	CWD	Bob Williams, University of Glamorgan
62	16 July	CWD	NERF Meeting, London
63	19 July	CWD	Essex Senior Advisors Conference, Huntingdon
64	23 July	CWD	PROO Conference, London
65	25 July	CWD	Welsh Assembly Seminar, Glamorgan
66	13/14/15 September	JWK	BERA Conference, Leeds
67	14 September	CWD	AAIA Conference, Liverpool
68	17 September	CWD	LearningSpace, Brussels
69	17 September	JWK	CIPD Steering Group, London
70	19 September	JWK	Newsletter design meeting, Exeter
71	24 September	CWD	DfES, London
72	26 September	CWD	ESRC Meeting, Cliff Allan, London
73	27 September	CWD	The role of ESRC, London Leadership Centre, London,
74	1 October	JWK	Hughes Project launch, Newport
75	2 October	CWD/JWK	Research Capacity Network, Cardiff
76	6 October	CWD	Gateshead Conference, Gateshead
77	8 October	CWD	NERF Meeting, London ESRC, New Director Meeting, London
78	11 October	CWD	Hertfordshire Primary Headteachers Conference, Stratford-upon Avon
79	16/17 October	JWK	NTO Annual Conference, London
80	18 October	CWD	DfES, Expert Meeting, London
81	19 October	CWD/JWK	Phase III Working Group, London
82	24 October	CWD/JWK	Bangor Meeting, Exeter
83	5 November	CWD	Consultation Exercise, Chris Taylor, Exeter
84	7 November	CWD	Lewisham Headteachers Conference, Hythe, Kent
85	8/9/10 November	JWK	TLRP/SKOPE Workshop, Northampton
86	13 November	JWK	ESRC/TLRP Annual Conference, B'ham
87	14/15 November	CWD/JWK	ESRC/TLRP Annual Conference, B'ham
88	21 November	CWD/JWK	LTSN, Oxford
89	28 November	CWD/JWK	Andrew Pollard, London LTSN Materials Sub Centre Meeting, London Phase III capacity, London
90	30 November	CWD	Glamorgan University, Dai Smith
91	5/6/7 December	JWK	LSRN Conference, Cambridge
92	6 December	CWD	Paper 'Expertise' to LSRN Conference, Cambridge
93	11 December	CWD	Paper 'Challenged to educational Research',

94	14 December	CWD	DfES Research Conference, London TLRP Phase III capacity building seminar, Huddersfield University
95	15/16 December	CWD	LearningSpace Conference, Brussels
96	17 December	JWK	Paper on impact, Manchester University Graduate School
97	18 December	CWD/JWK	Phase III workshop for LSTN Conference, Birmingham