

Teaching & Learning Research Programme

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July 2006

Actions requested:

- Note for interest TLRP's agreed medium-term goals and sustainability objectives in the light of recent ESRC initiatives.
- Note developments with the ESRC Research Centres Competition, the Strategic Forum for Research in Education UK and 'EEP'
- Send any inclusions for the *TLRP BERA Booklet* to James O'Toole by 21st July (or contact him at once if more time is needed)
- Diarise future Directors' Forums for 2007 and 2008
- Explore the 2005 annual report disk and send any feedback to the Directors' Team
- Register for TLRP's Annual Conference and send contributions in by the specified date
- Note the renewed availability of supplementary impact and dissemination funding
- Consider potential candidates for TLRP Fellowships – 'Meeting of Minds'
- Visit the TLRP website to view new Programme and project publications
- Welcome the new Technology Enhanced Learning projects and new thematic investments to TLRP. Note that 'progression project' scheme is now available.
- Note important new developments in relation to schools, HE and workplace learning sectors and in capacity building
- Marvel at the fact that policy-makers really do seem to be interested in the ideas which the Programme is producing! The extent to which they really get taken up remains to be seen of course, but the interest is certainly encouraging
- Note the international interest which is also being generated and various other developments in relation to impact activities
- Have an enjoyable and productive summer!

TLRP's range, duration and sustainability

The medium term goals and sustainability objectives of TLRP have been reviewed in the light of the progressive implementation of the recommendations of ESRC Strategic Research Board's 'Education for Life' Research Challenge Sub-group. Essentially, the Directors' Team and Steering Committee are delighted with the progress which is being achieved. This includes:

- e-learning: co-funding within TLRP with EPSRC and potentially others on technology enhanced learning (see below);
- Neuroscience and education: a highlight notice in RGB response mode scheme;
- 'Knowledge and skills in a successful global economy' and 'education, life-chances and social inclusion': suggested education-linked investments in the 2006 research centres competition (see below);
- Science and maths education: new Programme being developed, perhaps with some linkage to TLRP.
- Capacity building issues: 'town meeting' convened and BERA/SRHE to make suggestions to ESRC (see also below);
- Use of evidence in policy and practice: potential links to EEP and NECE developments (see below)

Two other areas of work were also identified by the SRB sub-group - 'theory and methods issues' and 'international collaboration'.

The Directors' Team see their major responsibility as delivering on TLRP's academic goals with particular respect to present investments – that is project outputs, thematic and sectoral analysis and capacity building. However, they warmly welcome the diverse spin-offs and associated initiatives, whether linked to TLRP or not.

In the light of these initiatives, TLRP is unlikely to continue as a multi-faceted programme beyond the end of the present Director's Award on 31st December 2008. However, the substantial extension of TEL investment after the end of major Programme funding, is welcomed both in its own right and as a contribution to the follow-on administration and support which will be necessary to facilitate TLRP's continuing publications and dissemination/impact infrastructure. It is anticipated that a future Directors' Team member for TEL, to be appointed in January 2007, will also be able to respond to the continuing needs of TLRP projects, users and thematic work.

Capacity building is a 'special case'. The Directors' Team believe that there will be a continuing need for capacity support for education for many years and that its particular characteristics may justify ear-marked funding within ESRC's overall capacity building strategy. There may be a case therefore for a new initiative building, among other things, on TLRP's capacity building investments and partnerships. The recent 'Town Meeting' convened by ESRC to discuss this was most welcome and BERA and SRHE are constructing proposals to be put to ESRC in the Autumn.

New ESRC Research Centres Competition

ESRC have recently announced the 2006 Research Centres Competition, with particular earmarking of the need for two investments related to the 'Education for Life' research challenge. These could add significant value to TLRP work and be excellent for the sustainability of the research agenda. With this in mind, the Directors' Team has published a statement indicating willingness to advise and support applications from any UK institution in respect of TLRP's work. Additionally, some members of the present team may become part of proposals in anticipation of the end of TLRP funding in the same year that new centres begin. The potential for conflicts of interest here will need to be kept under review.

Proposed Strategic Forum for Research in Education UK

TLRP is continuing to facilitate this initiative. There has been strong endorsement from BERA's Executive Council including, in principle, financial support of £15,000 pa for administration. The idea is apparently going to feature in the Summer issue of Research Intelligence. In respect of ESRC, envisaged as the other core partner, there have been supportive discussions with Ian Diamond and ESRC has indicated willingness to provide financial support for travel, subsistence and/or accommodation. A group is meeting to work up more clear proposals, including a framework for holistic strategic review. The starting point for this is an OECD template which has been developed as a result of four national assessments of educational research. This initiative is seen as being important for continuous monitoring of the 'health of the discipline' – particularly in relation to future capacity and knowledge management issues.

Evidence in Education Portal (EEP)

This is the new name for NEEP - as changed to acknowledge the aspiration to create a UK-wide evidence facility. TLRP is now a partner in this initiative and has been supporting both the technical development and new thinking about appropriate governance and funding. In particular, a consortium is sought to underpin the costs of the British Education Index in providing the core knowledge management functions which will underpin the new facility in the long-term (Microsoft's development support terminates at the end of 2006). These developments have potential connections to whatever may follow the NERF proposal to create a National Evidence Centre for Education (NECE), about which consultations are continuing. For example, it is understood that ESRC and DfES are to meet to discuss possibilities quite soon.

BERA 2006 – can we promote your session?

As last year, we would like to promote any TLRP project presenting at BERA, 6-9 September. We are therefore producing a conference booklet containing project details and abstracts of all those presenting. To ensure inclusion in the booklet, abstracts will need to be sent to James (j.otoole@ioe.ac.uk) by 21st July. This booklet will be widely distributed so it is an excellent opportunity to showcase your work.

Directors' Forum

Thank you to colleagues who attending the Directors' Forum in May. Please make a note of the future forum dates; 23 May 2007, 28 May 2008. The dates of major TLRP events up to the end of 2008 are available on the website.

Annual Reports

You should by now have received a CD-ROM containing a compendium version of all the annual reports from 2005. If you haven't received this, please contact the TLRP Office.

The CD-ROM also contain Atlas.TI coded reports – and these make for some extremely interesting comparisons on how particular projects have tackled various issues in different ways. If you have any feedback on these, please do contact the Directors' Team with your thoughts.

Annual Conference, Glasgow

Plans for this conference are now advanced and, in addition to conventional TLRP activities, feature collaboration with AERS and SERA to engage with Scottish policy makers and practitioners on the themes of:

- 'Learning'
- 'Equity'
- 'Transitions'.

You should by now have received an emailed invitation to e-register for this event. If you have not received the email, or have any queries, please contact James (j.otoole@ioe.ac.uk). Please note that the closing date for registration is 20th October.

Please make a note of the deadlines for submission of abstracts, 15th September. See this web page: <http://www.tlrp.org/conference/2006/contributions.html> for more information.

Supplementary impact and dissemination funding

This scheme has been re-launched in a new form. Proposals are now required to be based on collaborations by two or more project teams to enhance impact. They may be initiated from anywhere within the Programme and, if recommended by the Directors' Team, from outside. The normal maximum award is £15,000 with fast decision-making being assured through the TLRP Troika (or a sub-group of the Steering Committee). Exceptionally, bids to £50,000 may be considered with decision-making by the full committee. The first proposal, from Roz Ivanic and Marilyn Martin-Jones projects on everyday literacies in Further Education, has been agreed and the work began with a 'Literacy Festival' in Scotland in mid-June. Please see the web page: http://www.tlrp.org/manage/supp_user_engage_comms.html for further information on the funding scheme.

Meeting of Minds: TLRP Fellowships

This new scheme has made a good start with seven applications – of which six are likely to be funded. The Fellowships formalise mentoring support for prospective new Principal Investigators from an experience researcher – and give appropriate recognition to the importance of good preparation in submitting first proposals to ESRC. We are grateful for the willingness of Mentors to give of their time to support a new generation of leaders of educational research. For further details of the scheme, see: http://www.tlrp-archive.org/cgi-bin/tlrp/news/news_log.pl?display=1148485827

Are there people you know who might benefit from this?

New and Forthcoming Publications

You can keep informed of new outputs by visiting this web page: <http://www.tlrp.org/pub/index.html>. This is going to be an increasingly exiting part of the site for the next few years and will contain both brief summaries and links for purchase of specific TLRP publications.

The first book in the Improving Learning series is:

Improving Literacy by Teaching Morphemes

Terezinha Nunes and Peter Bryant, with Ursula Pretzlik and Jane Hurry

Further details of this publication can be found here: http://www.tlrp.org/pub/il_books.html

Other Improving Learning books which should be out soon are:

Improving Workplace Learning

Karen Evans, Phil Hodgkinson, Helen Rainbird, Lorna Unwin

Improving Subject Teaching

Robin Millar, John Leach, Jonathan Osborne, Mary Ratcliffe

Improving Schools, Developing Inclusion

Mel Ainscow, Tony Booth, Alan Dyson

Improving Learning through Consulting Pupils

Jean Rudduck, Donald McIntyre

For more information about these titles, please see http://www.tlrp.org/pub/il_books.html

Research Briefing no. 17: ***Learning how to Learn: In classrooms, schools and network***. This can be downloaded from here: <http://www.tlrp.org/pub/research.html>

Research Briefing no. 18: ***Building thinking skills in thinking classrooms ACTS (Activating Children's Thinking Skills) in Northern Ireland***. This will be available to download from here: <http://www.tlrp.org/pub/research.html>

A new TLRP Commentary: ***14-19 Education and Training*** can be downloaded from here: <http://www.tlrp.org/pub/commentaries.html>

Knowledge transfer in each UK country

This remains an important aim of TLRP and we foster opportunities in each country. The use of ESRC's placement fellowship scheme looks particularly promising and we anticipate fellowship applications in Spring 2007 through both Scottish Education departments. This strategy is also being explored in the Welsh context.

Technology Enhanced Learning – future development

The specially constituted TEL Commissioning Panel met during the first week of July and made recommendations to fund seven Development projects. They also shortlisted eleven outline proposals for major awards of up to £1.5m FEC – with full proposals due in October. These recommendations have been endorsed by the TLRP Steering Committee.

The competition produced many exciting ideas but the achievement of full inter-disciplinarity between those concerned with education and technology remains challenging. Many proposals would have been strengthened by more engagement researchers who are experienced in the key issues which TLRP has been tackling – including authentic inter-disciplinarity, user engagement, intervention designs to test learning outcomes, capacity building, etc.

A two day conference is scheduled for 20/21st September to facilitate the exchange of ideas between those involved in this initiative. A public programme of monthly seminars has also been planned for the Autumn and early Spring to facilitate discussion of key features of the research specification and to support both full proposals. Links with other related programmes overseas (including NSF) are being investigated. TEL has also been accepted as a 'Grand Challenge in Computing' by the BPS/CRC conference.

The successful development bids were:

Workplace personalised learning environments for the development of employees' technical communicative skills.

Professor Celia Hoyles, Institute of Education, London; Professor Alan Brown, Warwick; Dr George Magoulas, Birkbeck; Professor Alexandra Poulouvassillis, Birkbeck; Professor Richard Noss, Institute of Education, London

Exploring e-learning and communication tools for improving children's language usage in social interactions: EchoeS.

Dr Kaska Porayska-Pomsta, Edinburgh; Dr Helen Pain, Edinburgh; Dr Judith Good, Sussex; Dr Annalu Waller, Dundee; Miss Wendy Keay-Bright, Cardiff; Dr Oliver Lemon, Edinburgh

Authoring as acting: exploring embodied interaction in game authoring environments for children.

Dr Judith Good, Sussex; Professor Benedict du Boulay, Sussex; Dr Juan Romero Mares, Sussex; Dr Judy Robertson, Glasgow

Transforming perspectives: technology to support the teaching and learning of threshold concepts.

Dr Patrick Carmichael, Cambridge; Dr Keith Johnstone, Cambridge; Professor Peter Robinson, Cambridge

Personalisation of learning: constructing an interdisciplinary research space.

Professor Nicky Solomon, City;

Merging cognition and technology to enhance learning in the field.

Professor David Martin, Southampton; Dr Itiel Dror, Southampton; Professor Michael Clark, Southampton

Supporting Sign Language Users through Technology Enhanced Learning.

Professor John Glauert, East Anglia

Progression projects

The Directors' Team continue to welcome news of 'follow on' work building on TLRP investments. Some of these are, by request, registered as 'TLRP Progression Projects' and web-links and modest publicity are provided. For more details of the scheme, please contact tlrp@ioe.ac.uk

Thematic developments

The six seminar series which have been in action for almost eighteen months are coming to an end. These have been very successful in engaging users and researchers from beyond TLRP as well as in adding value to existing investments. Substantive foci on learning through the lifecourse, teacher roles and learning and on the influence of learning contexts have made essential contributions to our understanding. The TSS on neuroscience and education generated considerable public discussion, including a debate in the House of Lords. We expect to publish a TLRP Commentary on this topic. Work on user engagement and on the quality of different forms of research has moved thinking forward in the field. We are grateful to all those who have contributed to these seminars. Publications, in special journal issues, edited collections and other forms, will be forthcoming over the next year.

Following competitive tendering, new thematic investments, starting from September, have been agreed for the following:

- Curriculum and domain knowledge (Bob McCormick and Bob Moon) Assessment and indicators of learning outcomes (Richard Daugherty, Paul Black, Kathryn Ecclestone, and Mary James)
- Impact of social, economic, medical and environmental factors through the lifecourse (Leon Feinstein, Anna Vignoles, and Kirsten Hansen)
- Epistemological basis of educational findings (David Bridges, Richard Smith and Paul Smyers)
- Reviewing Reviews (Harry Torrance and Judy Sebba)
- Project design for researching learning contexts, processes and outcomes (David Gough, Karen Bird, Mark Newman, Sandy Oliver, Vicki Strange, and James Thomas)
- Initial and early professional development of teachers across the UK (Ian Menter, Moira Hulme, Pat Mahony, Anne Moran and Martin Jephcote)

These investments go a long way to fulfilling the various elements of TLRP's conceptual model which highlight enduring elements in teaching and learning. As previously agreed, a further round of proposals for thematic development will be made in early 2007. We will, for example, wish to revisit the issue of 'inter-disciplinarity' on which we did not attract viable proposals in the last round.

Schools Campaign

The Schools Commentary continues to be well received and, it appears, to make a significant impact. Indeed, the electronic version on the website has been downloaded almost 20,000 times since March. We have received unsolicited affirmation from politicians, civil servants, government agencies, academics and teachers – and a further print run has been completed. If you need some copies for an event or other worthwhile purposes, it may be possible to provide some.

We are planning a mail-out of a set of school-focused Research Briefings to some c500 UK educational opinion leaders, to take place in the autumn. It is hoped to produce a TLRP Newsletter, including a poster featuring the '10 principles for learning and teaching', during the Autumn Term. Additionally, we are drawing increasingly on David Budge for promotion of the schools projects (reserving Martin Ince for post-compulsory projects). This was particularly successful in respect of the Blatchford group-work project which featured on Radio 4's 'Today' programme.

Mary James is expecting news of her Fellowship application to ESRC. If successful, this will enable her to spend most of next academic year in analysis of cross-Programme issues uncovered by the schools projects – as well as in selective impact, dissemination and project support activities.

Developments in Higher Education

There has been an increase in activities and intensity of research on teaching and learning in higher education both in TLRP and nationally. First, the seven WP in HE projects are now collaborating over a number of issues, facilitated by Miriam David. Several are presenting papers in progress at BERA, including a symposium on methodology largely about accessing and using large scale datasets. This will be followed, the next week, by an in-house seminar with three of the projects within this group to share approaches. There will also be 3 or 4 symposia around the themes of widening participation to and in HE at the SRHE conference in Brighton between December 12th and 14th 2006. There will be presentations not only from the 7 new projects but also from SOMUL and the Disabled Students' project and possibly others.

The SOMUL project and CHERI (its base at the OU) have been involved with several European and ESRC funded projects about the role of HE in regional and national economic developments.

The HEA is also keen to collaborate with TLRP and has been developing several schemes particularly on capacity building for pedagogic research in HE. The HEA has several other recently funded projects that may begin to develop the field conceptually and empirically.

The Research and Teaching Forum (of the HEA) is concerned with the research/teaching nexus in HE and is also organizing an international conference on this for the Spring of 2007.

Developments on work-related learning:

Facilitated by Alan Brown, the Warwick Institute for Employment Research and TLRP are collaborating on knowledge development, combination and representation in career development and workplace learning. This will involve the development of a joint IER/TLRP website on work-related learning (linked of course to the main TLRP website). The website will seek to draw together findings from across TLRP work-related projects on a number of topics that take further the work started by the TLRP 'sharing expertise' group. The final *outcomes* will be a series of extended web-based commentaries on key issues that will be housed on both the IER/TLRP site and the main TLRP site. At least six web-based commentaries will be produced on the following issues (note there may be some change of configuration/titles following consultations with TLRP projects):

- Apprenticeship

- Learning in the workplace
- Organisational learning (including networks)
- Identities at work
- Knowledge at work
- Strategies for enhancing learning at work

These extended web-based commentaries will:

- highlight substantive findings from individual projects
- produce a higher level narrative that links findings from different TLRP projects
- contain an annotated commentary that highlights links to a range of material both from within and beyond TLRP research
- be framed in an international context with links to research undertaken in a range of partner institutions.

The material will also be available in a written (downloadable PDF) format. The first two web-based commentaries will be produced by December 2007; the second two web-based commentaries will be produced by July 2008; and the third two web-based commentaries will be produced by December 2008.

Capacity building

Progress is being made in respect each part of TLRP's strategy and capacity building is to be given more prominence on the website during the summer. We are pleased to have launched the fellowship scheme in May. In terms of the materials to support capacity building training with ESRC recognition, a distinction is now being drawn between the modular structure being developed by AERS for the Scottish Masters and the more flexible availability of 'resources' required for diverse uses elsewhere within the UK. Interest in the resources remains high, particularly from UCET members (particularly for the support of new staff) and from the HEA (particularly to support research on pedagogy in HE).

The Higher Education Academy has made some interesting suggestions for collaboration with TLRP in terms of capacity building for pedagogic research in HE. This builds on their existing provision of short courses and workshops, and on TLRP's anticipated provision of capacity building e-resources. In addition, it is proposed that a network of Pedagogic Research Fellows might be established, with TLRP/HEA coordination. A crucial aspect of this will be to enable HE disciplinary specialists to engage with educational researchers on more generic topics and to use advanced analytic conceptual and empirical tools.

Teaching and learning reviews by political parties in England

TLRP continues to actively contribute to the Conservative Party's review of public services through Mary James' membership of the group. We have been able to introduce papers and have been asked for additional information on a number of topics. The Liberal Democrats have announced a review of Primary Education and this is to be chaired by Bethan Marshall, a TLRP researcher. The Government's 'Gilbert Review' of personalisation and principles of learning and teaching to 2020 is about to invite submissions. Our Commentary on Learning and Teaching has been pre-circulated to the group and we are to meet the civil servants working on the review. TLRP will make active contributions to these developments which we see as part of a process of re-thinking public policies for the improvement of educational standards and inclusion.

OECD/ESRC/DfES conference, July

TLRP worked closely with CERI to organise a two-day international conference on the use of evidence in policy making. Delegates from government bodies and others in almost 20 countries attended. This is the fourth event in a series and featured ESRC policies, TLRP strategies and

DfES commentaries. Among the contributions were a keynote by Jane Davidson (Minister of Education, Welsh Assembly Government) and Ian Diamond (Chief Executive, ESRC).

Other international developments

TLRP represented BERA and UK educational research at the annual conference of AERA in San Francisco in April, and presented at the InterLEARN conference in Finland and on Work-based Learning in Australia. The Programme will also represent BERA this year at the annual research association conferences in Australia and New Zealand. We have joined an EU-funded consortium of educational research initiatives (SINCERE) providing contacts in South America and East Asia. The Director spoke for the Research Council of Norway in June and is scheduled to provide a keynote for the Swedish educational research programme in October. He served on a OECD panel of assessors in reviewing the quality of educational research in Switzerland and has been appointed to the International Relations Committee of AERA. Links continue with members of the EDRES and LIRICA consortia. Miriam David has secured a SSRC/ESRC fellowship to support visits on social diversity to USA and Canada in Spring 2007. TLRP's international web section is being given a revamp.

Social Science Week

TLRP provided three events for the week and we would like to thank everybody who contributed to these events. They were on: science education, new technologies in educational research, and on the new Commentary on teaching and learning in schools.

Virtual Research Environment project

This JISC-funded project continues to stimulate interest and we now have over a dozen projects, networks or thematic initiatives using the VRE tools. There is continuing interest within BERA and we are delighted that a SIG is trailing the facility. JISC funding is providing for systematic evaluation of the resource and the project will report back within JISC's VRE Programme. It is likely that there will be a further competition and a VRE2 project is serious possibility. This could possibly involve trialing of the facility for one or more other disciplines within the social sciences and future liaison with ESRC about this will be undertaken.

Video-assets project

This project has been taking stock following the Steering Committee's decision to request it to focus on core Programme findings from the schools sector. Following liaison with Teachers' TV and the Innovation Unit, plans have been made for production to take place during the Summer and Autumn 2006. The previously allocated budget for 2007/8 will be brought forward and redeployed to engage a professional production company to assist in this venture. The Directors' Team would particularly like to thank the Bristol project team for assisting in this transition.

Media Fellows

Martin Ince continues to support TLRP's media strategy and to work with the majority of projects. Thanks to the generosity of ESRC he has now been joined by David Budge, former Deputy Editor of TES, to take specific responsibility for selected schools projects. Building on the paper on media strategy presented at the last meeting of the Steering Committee, the Programme now has a series of Media Coordination meetings, linking our journalists with our office and directors' teams.

'Practitioner Applications'

Agreement has been reached with CUREE and Continuum for the production of a practitioner-orientated 'reflective activities' drawing on TLRP project findings in the style of materials from Andrew Pollard's Reflective Teaching textbook. This synergy is part of the Programme's strategy

for transforming new knowledge into new forms for particular audiences. The materials will be made available through the website and the first examples are expected to be published in the Autumn.

Teachers TV

We were pleased to hold a training session for production company staff on issues involved in working with researchers to produce programmes. Teachers TV continue to be interested in research and we are able to offer contacts to approach with ideas.

Best wishes for the summer!

The TLRP team wish colleagues well for at least some rest during the summer vacation. We also know it is an opportunity to take some quality research time and really focus on things. Whatever your priorities, we'd like to thank you for your efforts in respect of TLRP's projects, themes, events, publications and other activities during the academic year.