

Teaching & Learning Research Programme

BULLETIN 02/05

July 2005

Actions requested:

- Without being complacent, please take some pleasure from the fact that people seem to think that TLRP is doing reasonably well. Note the congratulations and thanks which are offered!
- Send Andrew Pollard any relevant comments on the RAE consultation by the end of August.
- Note the way the thematic strategy of the Programme is shaping up.
- Review progress of colleagues on special journal issues, Research Briefings, books in the *Improving Learning* and *Improving Practice* series and D-Space. Note too that the video-assets project is refocusing its work.
- Make it a priority to prepare for the TLRP annual conference!
- Keep Sarah Douglas informed about any plans for AERA, NZARE and AARE in 2006 and note that Programme proposals will follow.
- Note capacity building developments and register for the email alert service on tlrpcapacity@jiscmail.ac.uk
- For school projects, note that Mary James and Martin Ince are preparing a special dissemination and impact strategy for 2005/6.
- Note progress of the Widening Participation in HE competition.
- Welcome Alex Withnall leading the latest Associate Project on older learners and note the introduction of a 'Progression Project' scheme.
- Be aware of the opportunity for funding to support inter-project liaison – and of the forthcoming review of the impact funding scheme.
- Consider data archiving issues and sending the TLRP office copies of end of award reports.
- When the time comes, note how important it is to send the TLRP Office an electronic copy of your end of award report!
- Note the clarification about Directors' Team Links and Steering Committee Critical Friends and the review which will take place in November.
- Note the new electronic facilities from ESRC, SOSIG and NERF.

Evaluating TLRP progress

Building on the 2004 Annual Reports and the Mid-Term Review, the TLRP Steering Committee and ESRC's Strategic Research Board recently reviewed the progress of the Programme. They were very complimentary about what had been achieved, noting in particular the exemplification of high research quality in the field of Education. The chairs of both committees made positive comments about the contributions of the research teams and users associated with the Programme.

Congratulations and thanks to all! This Programme does not move forward without a great deal of imagination, work and commitment from a lot of people – and this is appreciated.

Whilst on this sort of thing, we offer congratulations to Alan Brown on his appointment to a Professorial Fellowship at Warwick.

Programme Report 2004

A public version of the report is now available on the website at:

<http://www.tlrp.org/manage/progprep.html> This draws on all project reports, and we would like to record our thanks for all the hard work which went into these.

Thanks also to those who contributed the compilation of data for the Programme's 2004 KPIs – a process which has been promoted by ESRC as a form of 'good practice'. You might be interested to see the overarching framework which we have been working within. This represents an attempt to identify valid, but categoric, indicators. It can be seen at:

<http://www.tlrp.org/manage/account.html>

Mid-Term Review of TLRP

This has now been published and the full document is available on the website at:

<http://www.tlrp.org/manage/progprep.html> The report is based primarily on documentary analysis and interviews with researchers and key users in different sectors. The report as a whole was very complementary about the Programme both in respect of both the quality of project research and the key strategies of the Programme as a whole. Thematic development across the Programme was highlighted as one of the most important issues for development in the next few years, and this priority will influence the design of future activity.

The Research Assessment Exercise

A consultation on the criteria and procedures for the forthcoming RAE is taking place and full details are to be available at: www.rae.ac.uk. TLRP expects to respond. Any observation from colleagues for consideration as part of this response would be welcome. Please send them to Andrew Pollard (a.pollard@ioe.ac.uk). A response will be considered by the TLRP Troika (as senior sub-set of the Steering Committee) before submission.

Compendium of 2004 Annual and End of Award Reports

This document – an increasingly large one – will be circulated very soon following the collation and editing of all available material. Our thanks to Sarah Douglas for her work on this. We hope that you will find the compendium valuable for finding out about other projects of interest to you and for comparing the ways in which different projects tackle some of the enduring research challenges which we all face. To help with this, we have clustered all the 2004 reports in terms of the educational sector with which the project is associated. Project reports are also an extremely important resource for the Programme as a whole, both in terms of practical organisation and for thematic analysis.

Thematic Seminar Series

This is just to thank those participating in the seven seminar series now at work. They are involving many colleagues both within and beyond the Programme and are engaging with important issues in constructive ways. The Annual Conference has been organised to provide significant further opportunities for exchange of perspectives between colleagues involved in thematic and project work.

Thematic strategy

The Programme's thematic strategy was recently reviewed and endorsed by the Steering Committee. Updated thematic pages will shortly appear on the website, drawing directly from tagged depositions within D-Space. As a result of the update a number of consultancies will also be established soon to support cross-Programme analysis of key topics. We are also beginning to use Atlas-TI to conduct detailed thematic analysis of key documents such as the annual reports and end-of-award reports.

Special Issues of journals for thematic analysis

Congratulations are offered to all those colleagues who have been involved in the first two thematic special issues– some 35 in all. The Curriculum Journal, Vol 16 No 1, March 2005, featured nine articles on learning outcomes and warrants – and was recently used as the basis for a very well attended seminar at the DfES. Research Papers in Education, Vol 20, No 2, June 2005 featured six papers on teacher learning. Editor Ted Wragg commented generously on the important contribution being made by TLRP. Further special issues of journals are in preparation.

If anyone would like copies of such focused, TLRP special journal issues, Routledge are providing a 'special offer' web ordering facility. For example, the one for TLRP's Special Issue of the Curriculum Journal available at: http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/offer/rcjo_si.asp

Research Briefings

We are delighted to be receiving a steady flow of new Research Briefings for production. This is just an appeal for colleagues to take very seriously the dummy layout template which has been circulated and can also be downloaded from: <http://www.tlrp.org/manage/admin/briefings.html>. The various elements and word-counts for Research Briefings were established following a consultation process in 2002/3 and now form part of our 'house style'. The bullet points on the front page, which link 'key findings' and 'key implications' have been favourably commented upon by users. If working on a Research Briefing and in any doubt about this, please contact Sarah Douglas (sarah.douglas@ioe.ac.uk) before going too far!

Improving Learning Series

Congratulations to Robin Millar, John Leach, Jonathan Osborn and Mary Radcliffe on completion of the first manuscript: 'Improving Subject Teaching: Lessons from Science Education Research'. Hard on their heels is Mel Ainscow, Tony Booth and Alan Dyson with a trenchant argument on inclusion/exclusion and the efforts made by schools to provide opportunities. Texts from Helen Rainbird's network and from Jean Rudduck are expected imminently – thus completing this set of key outputs from Phase I of the Programme. Terezina Nunes and her team also have a manuscript close to handover.

In the light of the experience of working on these books, following further negotiation with Routledge and with an eye on the specific criteria of the RAE, the guidelines for the *Improving Learning* series have been refined. For example, the attribution of group and individual authorship is addressed and some textual conventions for the series as a whole are clarified.

Details on the new version will be circulated to Project Directors and will soon be available for viewing at: <http://www.tlrp.org/manage/admin/rfbooks.html>

Production of these books, providing an accessible overview or 'gateway' to the work and key findings of each project, remains an extremely important TLRP goal. The cover design for the series will reflect TLRP's 'lifecourse' range by using images of learners at different ages in relation to each major sector.

If you are beginning work on your book for the series, do talk to your link from the Directors' Team at an early point and liaise with Sarah Douglas. Sarah is responsible for tracking progress of the Programme's key outputs and will be very pleased to be kept informed of progress.

Improving Practice Series

This is the new name for TLRP's A4 Routledge books aimed at practitioners. Martin Hughes and colleagues are about to handover two manuscripts, and Mary James' team is not far behind. It is understood that Peter Kutnick and colleagues also have in hand a proposal for this series.

D-Space, copyright and use!

Following enquiries from colleagues, clarification has been sought with the journals division of our publishing partner, Routledge, about the copyright and publication status of journal articles deposited on D-Space. Working and conference papers can certainly be deposited, even though in later versions they may lead to journal articles. Full copies of articles published in journals should not be deposited – but should always be represented by a partial deposition. This is done by completing the D-Space submission in the normal way, including a synopsis or outline of the paper – but not the full text. There should then be a direct link to the electronic version of the paper on the Routledge web-site. This can be introduced manually but Routledge are also investigating the possibility of providing a D-Space deposition service as part of their routine publication process. For the moment, please continue to ensure that all published papers are deposited or appropriately represented on D-Space.

Colleagues may be interested to know that a recent audit of the use of TLRP's website shows that D-Space has now become the most popular feature. It was really worth getting all that stuff in there – and it still is! If you get stuck, Bernie Ryder remains on hand to provide advice on depositions: b.ryder@ioe.ac.uk

Video-assets

The project team of Federica Olivero, Ros Sutherland and Peter John have developed a second video to highlight key findings from the School Inclusion project. They have also been evaluating responses to these video-assets in the light of recent developments by government agencies, Teachers TV, etc.

As a result of this review, the Steering Committee has agreed to proposals that the Video-assets project should focus its efforts on a smaller number of initiatives. The team will therefore no longer attempt to provide multiple project-focused videos but will switch its attention to trying to represent a selection of major cross-Programme findings or themes – with particular reference to schools sectors projects.

The Director's Team would like to thank all those who have been involved in the trialling of his new form of output. We will be building on this.

BERA 2005

We are delighted that there will be no less than 16 TLRP symposia or paper presentations at BERA this year. As last year, TLRP will have a stand and a promotional programme for the sessions. Please drop by and say 'hello'. We hope too that there will be particular opportunities to support educational research in Wales.

Annual TLRP Conference, Warwick, November 28th, 29th and 30th

Plans for the conference have now been refined, thanks to inputs from colleagues at the Directors' Forum. Given the scale and complexity of the Programme, the conference organisation will reflect the particular stages which projects in each sector are at – with four sectoral strands being provided. However, the balance of sessions has been adjusted to provide more time for cross-Programme thematic analysis and, as requested, this will be carefully structured to maximise effectiveness. As previously, there will be plenty of time for creative discussion and networking. With provision for 175 colleagues to stay at the Scarman Conference Centre, and for more to come on a daily basis, it is hoped that a higher proportion of colleagues from across the Programme, including new researchers, will be able to enjoy the conference this year. Representatives from key user organisations in respect of each major sector will also be invited. Specific details on the conference have been circulated. As in previous years, each TLRP investment will be required to both present and to contribute written materials, some of which will be deposited via D-Space.

AERA 2006

The recent trawl for indications of who is expecting to attend AERA in San Francisco suggests that six projects will be represented. TLRP will be representing BERA on this occasion and will be working with the new President, Geoff Whitty. Our session is likely to focus on similarities and differences in the circumstances and opportunities facing education research in the US and UK. We hope to be able to draw on those colleagues who may be attending. Please continue to keep Sarah Douglas informed of your plans.

Australia/New Zealand 2006

So far, we have only heard of two projects who are expecting to go 'down under' at present. We have contacted NZARE and AARE to enquire if they would be interested in a group of TLRP presentations at these conferences and will keep you posted.

Supporting research training and development

The *National Centre for Research Methods* is now 'up and running' and held its launch event on 21st June. The six nodes focus on particular forms of research expertise and involve a number of colleagues with educational backgrounds. You can take a look at: www.ncrm.ac.uk. Each node will be providing training and other enriching events, as well as conducting their own research to extend methodological knowledge.

TLRP's capacity building '*e-mail alert service*' has now been re-established as a JISC email list, but is accessed via an email address: tlrpcapacity@jiscmail.ac.uk. It will provide news of NCRM events and of other opportunities as they become available.

The Cardiff RCBN journal, '*Building Research Capacity*' is to continue with TLRP sponsorship. The editorial team of Chris Taylor and Gareth Rees will be joined by TLRP's Associate Director for Capacity Building, Steve Baron.

Chris Taylor is to continue his work as a TLRP Fellow in respect of capacity building, with particular reference to provision for *new researchers and contract research staff* (CRS). This builds on Chris's work for BERA and represents another example of the progressive synergy

between TLRP and the association. Building on the success of last year's event, a further conference for CRS is expected soon.

TLRP has cooperated with BERA to co-fund a survey of the perspectives and needs of new researchers. This is being led by Steve Hodgkinson – himself a TLRP Research Training Fellow.

Over the next six months, the content of the Cardiff RCBN *website* will be progressively migrated into the TLRP main website. It is hoped to draw on the expertise of colleagues to update some of the material – for example, in the potentially very helpful section on resources.

TLRP and AERS continue to cooperate in the production of a set of 'modules' to support research training. These are seen as a major means of harnessing the collective expertise of the research community, and offering it back (at no initial cost) for the support of higher degree students and/or new teaching staff who are new to research issues. Whilst the materials are being designed to satisfy ESRC criteria, any courses based on them will rely entirely on the validation and accreditation procedures of institutions which choose to use them. Trials of the first module will start in Strathclyde in the Autumn, and commissioning of authorial teams for other material is underway. Discussions about the use of these resources have been going on in Scotland for some time, but are now being extended through BERA's SIG organisation and through the UCET Research Committee. This is a bold experiment in cooperation within a research community – and one which, given the age-profile of the education research community, may be timely! If successful, it is hoped that it may be possible to sustain the provision for the longer term through the good offices of BERA and other associations.

Dissemination and impact strategy for school-focused projects

With a large proportion of TLRP's school-based projects completed or completing in the next six months, attempts are being made to coordinate dissemination of some 'shared' messages. There are various dimensions of this – which will run, of course, in addition to the initiatives taken by each individual project. As a starting point, a school-focused set of Research Briefings will be made available for distribution to those registered on the TLRP database. Additionally, the findings will be taken up and promoted in relation to contemporary issues by our media specialists. Mary James will be facilitating a particular focus at the annual TLRP Conference on major themes across the projects concerned.

End of Award Reports – please could we have yours (when appropriate)?

We have learned that it is not an automatic part of ESRC procedures to forward End of Award Reports to the office of their Programmes. We would therefore be extremely grateful if colleagues could make a point of sending both Sarah Douglas and your link from the Directors' Team an electronic copy of your report. We are, of course, extremely interested – but this material is also crucial as a data-set in respect of cross-Programme thematic analysis. There are a few projects where we will need to play 'catch up' on this. Appropriate parts of the reports will be included in the Programme's annual compendium.

Widening Participation in HE

This competition has been moving forward on schedule. Following the closing date in early June, 64 projects were accepted into the competition. Referee comments are now coming in and applicants will have an opportunity to respond to these at some point in early August. All comments will then be 'assessed' prior to the commissioning meeting. Outcomes should be known by late October. All applicants have been informed of the dates of TLRP's November conference and SRHE's December event – and we hope to see representatives of the successful projects at these.

Associated projects

TLRP's 'associated project' scheme has been successful in filling significant 'gaps' in the programme's provision – but will close in December 2005. Areas which continue to be of particular interest include family and community learning, cross-sectoral studies of pedagogy and international or comparative studies. Any suggestions in relation to these topics will be welcome – preferably before the end of September.

We are pleased to welcome a new associated project which has recently been approved by the Steering Committee. The project is entitled: 'Older People and Lifelong Learning: Choices and Experiences' and is led by Alex Withnall of the University of Warwick. The project was formerly part of ESRC's *Growing Older* research programme and continues to have much to offer TLRP. It will join the projects concerned with lifelong learning.

'Progression projects' – a new scheme

A new TLRP scheme has been created to recognise and support new projects which have grown from or extended existing TLRP work. Such projects don't quite fit the terms of the associated project scheme but are nevertheless of great value. Indeed, they reflect the ways in which TLRP has both drawn on pre-existing portfolios of work and enabled the development of new ones. We want to endorse and honour such work. For this reason, the concept of a 'progression project' has been created.

A 'progression project' will be officially recognised by the Programme if it can be shown that it is independently funded work which has 'spun off from', 'extended' or 'been stimulated by' a TLRP-funded project. The work will then be promoted by highlighting a link to information about the new project on the TLRP gateway webpage relating to the source project. This will ensure that it is picked up by search strategies involving TLRP. Where resources allow and it seems appropriate, colleagues involved in progression projects will also be invited to participate in selected TLRP activities and outputs.

Application for recognition of a progression project will be very straight forward. Please simply work through your link from the Directors' Team and explain the situation. The decision will be taken by the Directors' Team with minimal delay and basic project information for placement on the website will then be required.

Supplementary funding

As colleagues will know, there are two major schemes for supplementary funding available within TLRP (www.tlrp.org/manage/fund.html).

The Inter-project Liaison scheme is intended to support projects in sharing issues and building understanding and expertise together. The initiative to set up an event can come from anywhere within the Programme, and support is available at 50% of costs. This funding comes directly from the Director's award and requires completion of a simple form and provision of a short report.

The User Engagement, Communication and Impact Activities scheme provides a new formal ESRC award, and must be applied for using the designated form and reported upon in the normal way. The scheme was created in 2001 as a way of maximising added value from projects. The expectation was that bids would be between £10k and £30k, with a maximum to any one project of £45k. Five years later, the Programme has ten times more projects, but the uncommitted funding is a good deal smaller than it was in 2001. This scheme is therefore going to be reviewed by the Steering Committee in November. This fact should not deter proposals from being made,

but it would be prudent to bear in mind that the funding limits may have to be significantly reduced.

Data archiving

Some TLRP projects have now deposited data-sets with ESRC's 'Economic and Social Data Service' (ESDS), based at the University of Essex – and further offers will be welcomed. This includes both quantitative and qualitative data and is, of course, in line with standard ESRC expectations for data-sharing and long-term curation. At, or approaching, completion, Project Directors may well get a direct approach from ESDS. For information on this, please take a look at www.data-archive.ac.uk and/or www.esds.ac.uk. For those with qualitative data-sets and concerned about confidentiality, ethics, etc, a discussion with Louise Corti at Qualidata may be helpful (01206 872145, corti@essex.ac.uk).

Role of Critical Friends

The TLRP office is sometimes asked for guidance about this, and we attempt a clarification below. Each investment should have two sorts of 'critical friend'.

The *Directors' Team Link* is a point of liaison between the Programme as a whole and the project, seminar series, or other activity. You should expect to have at least two 'substantial interactions' each year with him/her – though experience suggests that this is likely to be more at times. The TLRP Director manages these roles.

Each investment should have two *Steering Committee Critical Friends*– one 'user' and one 'academic'. Within the Steering Committee, such members will sometimes be invited to comment on the particular investments to which they have been allocated – for example, in respect of the Annual Report. The Programme's advice has always been that these colleagues should be involved in on-going activities where appropriate – perhaps through Advisory Group meetings. However, it is necessary to bear in mind that Steering Committee members serve on a voluntary basis and their circumstances vary considerably. ESRC manages these appointments.

A table showing each projects' SC Critical Friends and DT Links is to be made available on the website at: <http://www.tlrp.org/manage/index.html>. It is intended to make this definitive!

The role and responsibilities of critical friends is to be discussed by the TLRP Steering Committee in November. If any colleague would like to contribute to these deliberations, please contact Andrew Pollard.

ESRC's new web-site: www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk

This is a major gateway to online resources in the social sciences. It is possible to configure the search engine (or does it configure us?) – in any event, form of 'intelligent' or 'personalised' searching is possible. Why not take a look?

'Best of the Web' guides for social research

SOSIG have recently published two new guides entitled *Internet Resources for Social Research* and *Internet Resources for Psychology*. These are available in the social science section of the Resource Discovery Network at www.rdn.ac.uk. These will be updated annually as a collective resource, and feedback about them is encouraged.

NERF Bulletin: Evidence for Teaching and Learning

For anyone who has not picked up on this, NERF are now providing a simple summarising and informational service in relation to recent research on teaching and learning – and have made it to a third issue. The Bulletins are available from www.nerf-uk.org or by emailing nerf@prolog.uk.com. There is no charge. Contributions to future issues would also be welcome.

PACCIT seminar

We are pleased to share information about a seminar demonstrating novel ways of using IT from a parallel ESRC programme. The event is titled: ‘Fun and Games and Learning: Harnessing Technology to Support Learning’ and will take place on Thursday 13 October, 2005, 9.45am – 4.30pm at the BT Centre, 81 Newgate Street, London EC1A 7AJ. Although there is no fee for the seminar, places are limited so registration is essential. For further information and to register see: <http://www.paccit.gla.ac.uk>