

# Teaching & Learning Research Programme

## BULLETIN 03/05

December 2005

### Actions requested:

- Welcome seven new projects on widening participation in higher education.
- Consider any follow up actions from TLRP's annual conference.
- For school-focused projects, consider proposed dissemination and impact ideas.
- For on-going projects, note the 31<sup>st</sup> January deadline for annual reports.
- Discuss your media strategy and sending stories and news of events to the TLRP office.
- Consider responding to the call for UK/Finnish collaboration.
- Discuss offering a possible paper for the 2007 BERJ Special Issue on TLRP.
- Note a new presentation of thematic development on the TLRP website and the fact that there will be some additional commissioning of specific thematic work in the New Year.
- Stand by for publication of the first of the *Improving Learning* series from Routledge, and note that updated series guidelines are now available on the website.
- Keep James O'Toole up to date with your conference plans for 2006, including AERA, BERA and Australia/New Zealand.
- Note the forthcoming launch of new capacity building initiatives.
- Record the major change in the scheme for supplementary funding for user engagement, communication and impact activities – so that applications must now be from *groups* of projects.
- Note changes in the role and number of critical friends from the Steering Committee.
- Note that office roles will change a little in the New Year following the departure of Bernie Ryder.
- Accept our **warmest best wishes for Christmas and the New Year!**

### **Welcome to new projects**

We were delighted that all 7 projects that have been successful in the Widening Participation in Higher Education were able to attend the TLRP conference and provide a brief introduction to their planned projects and design. We would now like to welcome these projects to TLRP. The seven projects are all due to begin in early 2006 and are already beginning to work together over their research designs and plans. Several of the projects are drawing on national datasets for their projects and are trying to develop collaborations and gather advice from previous and current TLRP projects.

A special welcome then to: Gill Crozier of Sunderland University who will be leading a team studying the socio-cultural and learning experiences of working class students across a diversity of HEIs; to Chris Hockings of Wolverhampton University who is leading a team on aspects of learning and teaching for social diversity and difference, and to a team based entirely at the University of Manchester led by Julian Williams on pedagogic cultures in relation to learning maths and mathematical identities; to Geoff Hayward of Oxford and his team on vocational and educational training; and a contrasting study by Gareth Parry and his team at Sheffield University on the impact of the division between further and higher education for widening participation. Last but not least we would like to welcome again Alison Fuller now of Southampton University and her team who are looking at 'networks of intimacy' and how they influence decisions or non-decisions to take up HE.

### **Thanks to everyone who contributed to the Warwick conference**

The Directors' Team would like to thank everyone who attended or otherwise contributed to the presentations made at the recent annual conference. There was a tremendous amount of informal discussion and networking – with ideas developing which will no doubt come to fruition in due course. The evaluations suggest that the overall event was a great success and we will use the feedback in planning the next event in Glasgow. Special thanks to Anne Edwards, Michael Eraut and Margie Wetherell for their plenaries.

### **Dissemination and impact strategy for school-focused projects**

The main focus of the schools-mini conference at the TLRP annual conference was generation of ideas for a major dissemination campaign in 2006. The discussion centred around *what* cross-cutting big themes we should concentrate upon, *who* we wanted to target and *how* we should communicate our messages. (Overarching, of course, was the question of *why* we should do this.) The following possibilities were proposed and the next stage is to ask project teams about what they see to be priorities and how they might wish to contribute. (Mary James will send around a short questionnaire to school-focused projects.)

The portfolio of initiatives proposed might include:

- Production of a schools' booklet (similar to 'Personalised Learning') to summarise the main messages from schools' sector projects related to a loose over-arching theme – linking teaching and learning innovation in classrooms - to professional learning in and across schools - to policy contexts. All projects have something to say about two or three of these levels. Martin Ince is now writing 1000 word synopses around these themes for all projects and will invite projects to improve on his drafts. Andrew Pollard and Mary James will write a 1500 word introduction. We hope to print this in time for a launch at a National Teacher Research Panel event in National Science week on 14 March 2006. Further dissemination is planned at other conferences and via DfES research seminars.
- Schools' newsletter – to be sent to all UK schools – summarising key findings from each project (probably using the content of the first page of project research briefings).
- Poster(s) with map or matrix of projects cross-cutting themes and/or 10 principles of teaching and learning. This could be a centre-fold in the schools' newsletter and/or the schools booklet.
- Videoasset in the form of a video paper on 'images/representations of learning' with layered commentaries from various perspectives.
- Special Issue of a Journal on cross-cutting themes. (The Curriculum Journal has offered a special issue in 2006 as one possibility).

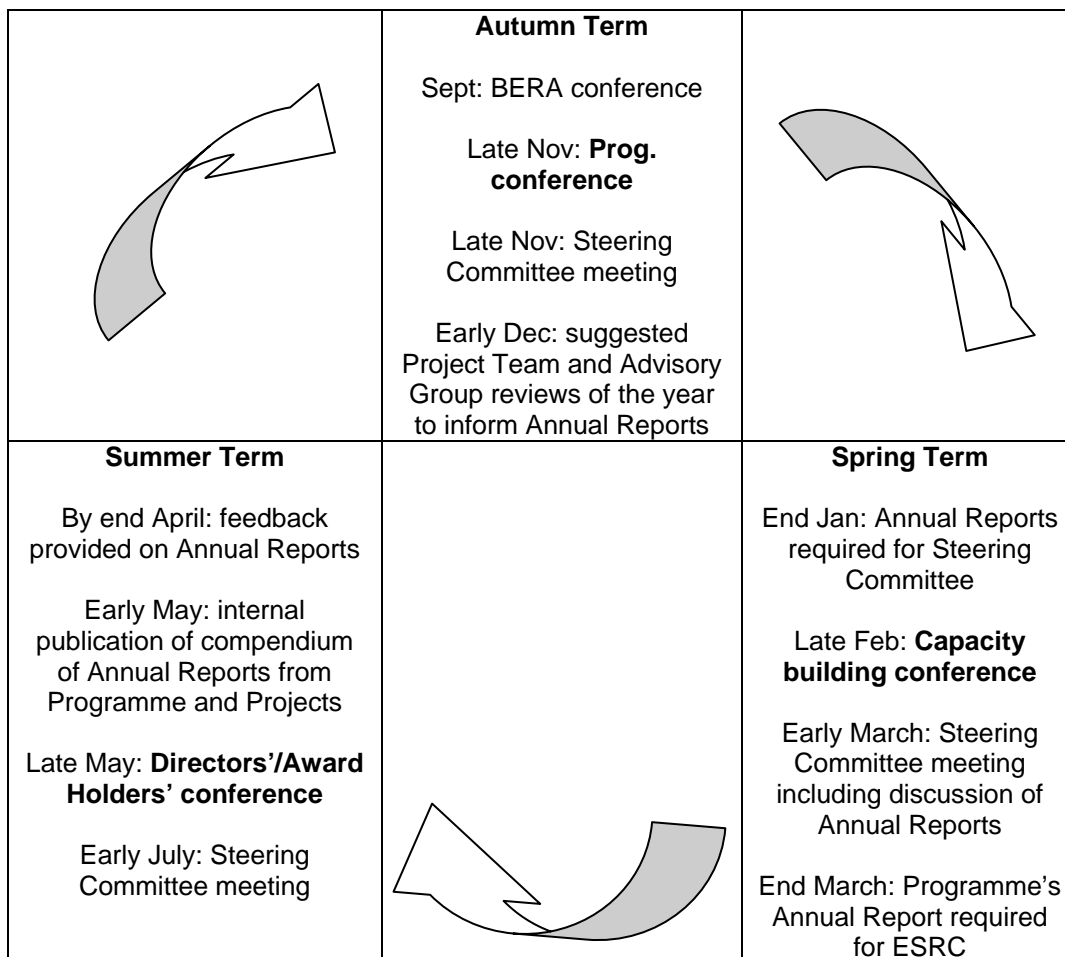
- Small project on impact – tracing some of the ways that findings have been taken up in policy and practice. (We would need to make a bid for extra funding to support this.)
- Academic book(s).

Other ideas are invited. Please send your thoughts to Mary James.

### Annual reports and the Compendium

A request for completion of annual reports for all appropriate TLRP investments went to Principal Investigators last week,, with a deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> January 2006. Completion of such reports can be a chore – but it can also be a great opportunity to take stock of progress collectively, as a team. We hope that colleagues will see it in this way!

For those projects new to the Programme, the diagram below is a useful summary of the cycle of TLRP's accountability processes and its relationship with some key meetings.



### Media news stories?

Many of you may have noticed the rolling news stories on our website – this is a call for more!

We are trying to become more proactive with the press. Positive news stories help publicise the work of TLRP across all school sectors including teaching staff; parents; ESRC; DfES; civil servants; university staff; further education sector; educational journalists; and employers.

Within the TLRP office team, we now have the potential to promote more stories, both on our website and to provide articles for the education supplements and the general press. If you have

potential news stories, please send ideas or draft copy through to James O'Toole and we will (at the very least) publicise the story on the TLRP website.

Where appropriate we will also involve Martin Ince, or other journalists, to take up and promote the story.

Alternatively, you may choose to use the services of your institutional press office. If you do the latter, TLRP has no objection at all but would ask that there is appropriate acknowledgement of ESRC TLRP within any story or press release. A copy of any coverage obtained would be appreciated.

### **TLRP Events**

In addition to the news section of the TLRP website, the events section has been updated. Again, publicity of significant project events can easily be made available here too. Please stipulate if events are 'invitation only' otherwise you may receive uninvited guests!

For both news and events, email James O'Toole at [j.o'toole@ioe.ac.uk](mailto:j.o'toole@ioe.ac.uk).

### **Media training**

Martin Ince will be providing media training during 2006 and at least one representative from each project will be expected to have this. Of course, in some cases, colleagues have indulged already! For projects with one year of completion, please expect an enquiry from Martin at some point soon.

### **UK/Finnish Collaboration**

Mary James and members from four TLRP project teams contributed to an invited UK/Finnish Symposium on *Learning to Learn*, within the InterLEARN05 Conference in Helsinki, 1-2 December. In addition to hearing about one another's work in this area, the symposium was convened to consider possibilities for collaborative work, possibly through bidding for funds through a bilateral arrangement between the Finnish Academy and ESRC. Our Finnish colleagues proposed three areas of interest:

1. Visits to UK researchers to find out about approaches to multi-level modelling.
2. Collecting data in both UK and Finnish schools using instruments developed in Finland (e.g. pupil level assessment of L2L) and England (e.g. school level staff questionnaire of teacher learning and school culture values and practices. This was developed in the TLRP Learning how to Learn project and is freely available, with an analytical tool, on the project website.) This might permit some interesting comparative work on pupil differences, school conditions and policy contexts.
3. Ways of increasing user engagement and overcoming barriers between researchers and practitioners.

Short proposals as an expression of interest are invited in January 06. If colleagues from *any* project are interested, Mary James would like to hear from them.

Informally, Norwegian colleagues who attended the conference expressed interests in similar ideas and this might be a possibility for similar collaborative work.

### **Special issue of the British Educational Research Journal**

The editors of BERJ have invited TLRP to compile a special issue to be published in 2007. This issue is expected to:

- illustrate and discuss a selection of substantive, methodological or theoretical developments drawn from TLRP's projects, thematic and dissemination work;
- review some major issues concerning the contemporary development of educational research as a field and take stock of the contribution of TLRP to such developments.

Expressions of interest and draft abstracts are invited from both those who have been directly involved in TLRP and from those beyond the Programme. Such expressions will be helpful in working towards some sort of balance in the special issue as a whole and feedback will be given on them. Submitted full manuscripts will be subject to normal BERJ peer review.

- Please send expressions of interest and draft abstracts to Andrew Pollard as soon as possible at: [a.pollard@ioe.ac.uk](mailto:a.pollard@ioe.ac.uk)
- Five copies of full manuscripts will be needed by 1<sup>st</sup> November 2006.
- The deadline for receipt of papers is 1<sup>st</sup> November 2006.
- Manuscripts should be between 6-8,000 words. Final abstracts should be 100-150 words. The full postal and email address of the author(s) should be provided on a separate page.
- Following refereeing, if accepted, final copy will be required by 1<sup>st</sup> May 2007.
- Publication will be in October 2007 (BERJ Vol. 33, No. 5.).

### **Thematic strategy**

Updated thematic pages are now up on the TLRP website. These summarise the work of thematic groups and seminar series, and draw directly from tagged depositions within D-Space. Please take a look. They will be the subject of considerable development over the next few years.

### **New thematic commissioning**

You may be interested to know that we anticipate a new round of commissioning for thematic work will take place in the New Year. This is intended to take forward some particular issues, drawn from the Programme's conceptual model, which are not otherwise being covered and also to enable specific work on a small number of strategically important issues.

Each area of work will be defined by a specification and a budget (not exceeding £15k per topic). Some areas are suitable for work by individual consultants whilst others will require group and/or seminar activities. The calls will be publicised on the TLRP website and invitations to tender will also be issued.

### ***Improving Learning Series***

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. We are delighted to now have four manuscripts almost in press. The first group of these books should be out soon.

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, expected length is now 75,000, the attribution of group and individual authorship is addressed and some textual conventions for the series as a whole have been clarified. The four part structure and continuity in titles remain. For full information, please see: <http://www.tlrp.org/manage/admin/rfgatewaybooks.html>

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***

Two manuscripts for these A4 books aimed at practitioners have now been submitted.

### **BERA 2006**

The call for papers comes earlier this year – 6<sup>th</sup> January for keynote symposia and 20<sup>th</sup> January for the main conference. We hope for good representation by TLRP projects and expect to run an exhibition and promotional activity as usual. Additionally, TLRP is in negotiation with BERA's conference team to offer a significant poster exhibition at the 2006 event.

## **AERA 2006**

TLRP is presenting in BERA's invitational slot at AERA this year and we are keen to use the occasion to promote as many projects and thematic activities as possible. If you are attending AERA in San Francisco, please do let us know. The contact for this is James O'Toole.

## **Australia/New Zealand 2006**

We have been asked to represent BERA at the AARE conference and we are still planning to visit NZARE. So far, we have only heard of two projects expecting to go 'down under' for these events. Are there others? Please do let James O'Toole know and we will try to build some collective activity. Are there others who might be interested in attending these events?

## **TLRP Alert Service:**

Please note that the Alert service previously offered by the Cardiff RCBN is now being offered from Strathclyde and hosted on the JISC mail system. Monthly alerts will contain details of capacity building events for the next three months as well as details of other relevant events. These Alerts will shortly be integrated into the TLRP Events page. People can sign up for the Alert service through the JISC website [www.jiscmail.ac.uk](http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk) and by subscribing to the `TLRPCapacity` list. Detailed guidance on how to sign on is contained on the TLRP website at <http://www.tlrp.org/pub/flyers/>. Please encourage colleagues, within and outwith TLRP, to subscribe to this list and please circulate the Alert and details of how to sign up for it within your own institution.

## **Capacity Building Conference:**

Please note that the annual Capacity Building Conference will be held in Cardiff on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2006 and details of this will be circulated early in the New Year.

## **TLRP Fellowships:**

The Steering Committee has agreed to establish a series of non-stipendiary TLRP Fellowships which will be advertised in the New Year. The purpose of these Fellowships is to support early career researchers in becoming Principal Investigators by attaching them as a mentee to more established researchers for a time limited, focussed programme of personal development. The new ESRC First Grants Scheme:

([http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/opportunities/current\\_funding\\_opportunities/first\\_grants.aspx](http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/opportunities/current_funding_opportunities/first_grants.aspx) ) would be a prime source of funding for proposals emanating from the Fellowships. Each Fellowship would centre on a Learning Compact between the mentor, the mentee and the mentee's home institution defining the learning outcomes (if one may use such a phrase) and conditions for the Fellowship. Each Fellowship has been budgeted at £500 to cover travel and incidental expenses. Would projects please: 1) bring the scheme to the attention of colleagues, within and outwith TLRP, who might benefit from such a Fellowship; 2) be prepared to respond positively to requests for mentoring as part of the *pro bono* capacity building activities of TLRP. Only exceptionally would Fellowship arrangement between Fellow and mentor within the same HEI be considered.

## **Conference for Contract Research Staff and for New Researchers:**

Following the success of the Conferences for Contract Research Staff (CRS) organised by the Cardiff Research Capacity Building Network it has been decided to continue with these and to expand the constituency to include other new researchers (classically, newly appointed lecturing staff). The focus of these Conferences will increasingly focus on strengthening the voice of CRS and New Researchers in establishing better conditions for fostering nascent research careers. Projects are requested to seek the involvement of CRS and New Researchers in developing these Conferences with expression of interest being sent to [s.baron@ioe.ac.uk](mailto:s.baron@ioe.ac.uk) .

## **New Researchers' Survey:**

Steve Hodgkinson of Brighton University has recently completed a survey of New Researchers in the field of education co-funded by TLRP and BERA in response to concerns of the New Researchers' Special Interest Group of BERA. The Report on the Interim Survey will shortly

be placed in DSpace. The findings of this survey will inform into the Phase 2 TLRP Capacity Building Strategy.

### **Funding for inter-project liaison still available**

*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 (see [www.tlrp.org/manage/fund.html](http://www.tlrp.org/manage/fund.html) ).

### **A new User Engagement, Communication and Impact Activities scheme**

As foreshadowed in the July Bulletin, the original scheme with this title has been withdrawn. It was simply too expensive to provide for individual projects. In its place, there is to be a new scheme to support *collective* user engagement, communication and impact activities. In particular, it is expected that groups of projects, perhaps within a particular sector, may wish to collaborate in organising events, publications or other initiatives which could 'make a difference'. Details of the new scheme will be posted on the website in the New Year, but if you have ideas for collaborative activities please do go ahead with their development and consult with a member of the Directors' Team.

### **Role of Critical Friends**

The role and responsibilities of critical friends was discussed by the TLRP Steering Committee in November. The conclusions were as follows.

The role of the *Directors' Team Link* will not change. It remains 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.

From January 2006, each investment will now have only **one** *Steering Committee Critical Friend*. The previous system, which allocated two per project, was felt to be unsustainable given the scale of the Programme. Within the Steering Committee, critical friends will still 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 is that such colleagues should be involved in selective activities – 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. They will also wish to retain a degree of independence. ESRC manages these appointments.

Reallocations of Steering Committee critical friends will be made in the New Year, with attention to providing as much continuity as possible. The table showing each projects' SC Critical Friends and DT Links remains on the TLRP website at: <http://www.tlrp.org/manage/index.html>.

### **Bernie Ryder**

Bernie is to improve her quality of life by taking up a new post nearer home from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2006. In a short time, she has done a great deal for the Programme and we thank her wholeheartedly. There will be a slight reallocation of roles within the office and James O'Toole will take up many of Bernie's previous duties. It is expected that a clerical appointment will be made in due course.

### **Seasonal Greetings!**

The Directors' and Office Teams would like to offer you our very best wishes for a peaceful, and restful, Christmas and New Year.