

PRESS RELEASE

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HEFCE funds new phase of ESRC teaching and learning research programme

The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) is to provide additional funding of £10.5 million, over 7 years, to the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) for a third phase of the Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP).

This programme aims to deliver high-quality research which leads to improvements in the achievement of learners of all ages, in all sectors and contexts of education, training and lifelong learning throughout the UK.

The new phase of the programme will build on the successes of the existing programme, and will focus particularly on the areas of post-compulsory education and lifelong learning. Developing research capacity in these areas will be a key feature.

The programme will shortly be launching a major consultation process involving researchers, practitioners, policy-makers and other potential users of the research to determine the detailed priorities and scope for Phase III. Following this, commissioning of the main phase of work will start in the autumn of 2001 and will be completed early in 2003. Research projects will then be expected to start from mid 2003 and run for up to five years.

Sir David Watson, Director of the University of Brighton and Chair of the TLRP Steering Committee, said: 'I welcome the substantial extension to the programme

which should bring about significant benefits to both policy and practice in the post-compulsory phases of education?.

For further information about the current programme visit

www.ex.ac.uk/ESRC-TLRP

For further details, contact Philip Walker at HEFCE on 0117 931 7363, or Lilian El-Doufani or Lesley Lilley in External Relations at the ESRC on 01793 413032 or 01793 413119.

Notes to editors

1. The TLRP is funded by the HEFCE with contributions from the Scottish Executive, Welsh Assembly and Department for Education and Employment, and is managed by the ESRC. This additional funding brings the project total to over £23 million. Discussions are on-going with the other programme funders about additional support for Phase III.

2. The programme features partnership between researchers and practitioners in contributing to and using research, and fosters collaborative work between disciplines and across sectors. Teachers, trainers and other users have a strong voice in ensuring that the research is relevant and accessible, so that their peers can use its findings to make significant advances in the achievement of learners.

3. A team from Cardiff University School of Social Sciences, has been appointed to lead the programme's research capacity building activities. Over the next three years the Research Capability Building Network will collaborate with other researchers in the programme and the wider teaching and learning community to develop and share best practice.

4. The Programme was launched in 1999 and is led by a Programme Director, Professor Charles Desforges (School of Education, University of Exeter) and Assistant Director, Dr John Kanefsky (also at the University of Exeter). Dr Kanefsky can be contacted on 01392 264978 e-mail J.W.Kanefsky@exeter.ac.uk. Strategic management of the programme rests with a Steering Committee chaired by Professor Sir David Watson (Director, University of Brighton), and comprising practitioners, other users and academics from a wide range of UK institutions (full membership provided on the programme web-site).

5. The ESRC is the UK's largest funding agency for research and postgraduate training relating to social and economic issues. It has a track record of providing high-quality, relevant research to business, the public sector and government. The ESRC invests around £46 million every year in social science research. At any time, its range of funding schemes may be supporting 2,000 researchers within academic institutions and research policy institutes. It also funds postgraduate training within

the social sciences, thereby nurturing the researchers of tomorrow. The ESRC web-site address is www.esrc.ac.uk

6. The HEFCE distributes public money for teaching and research in universities and colleges. In doing so, it aims to promote high-quality education and research, within a financially healthy sector. In 1999-2000, HEFCE distributed £4.22 billion. For further information, please visit our web-site: www.hefce.ac.uk.