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ABOUT TLRI

The Teaching & Learning Research Initiative (TLRI) is a government programme that aims to:

- build a cumulative body of knowledge linking teaching and learning
- enhance the links between educational research and teaching practices—and researchers and teachers—across early childhood, school, and tertiary sectors
- grow research capability and capacity in the areas of teaching and learning.

ABOUT TLRI

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Welcome to the newsletter for the Teaching and Learning Research Initiative community. It's that time of year when we start to advertise for expressions of interest in TLRI funding for 2009—see the timeframe on the back page. We also have an update on changes to TLRI reporting requirements, and news about the projects that received funding in 2008.

New output requirements for the TLRI

The TLRI co-ordinators want to be sure that each TLRI project builds as much capacity and capability in the education sector as possible. To that end, we've reviewed final reports from past projects and talked to researchers and practitioners about what might be most helpful for them. The result is that we have changed the required outputs for those who are awarded TLRI grants to maximise the dissemination of information and minimise the administrative work that grantees have to do. Rather than a single final report as in previous years, the TLRI is moving to a portfolio approach in its output and dissemination strategies. There will be three main areas of output expected: administrative outputs, research-community outputs, and practitioner-community outputs. In each of these categories there is lots of room for flexibility. Each TLRI group can decide what would be of highest value for disseminating its particular research. For example, the

research-community output requires at least one conference presentation and at least one journal article submission per year of funding, but there are no limits about which journals or conferences—or about which pieces of the findings get presented. The practitioner community outputs also requires a piece of writing and a presentation, but here the requirements are even more flexible. TLRI groups might choose to present to a school cluster, to a practitioner-oriented conference, or to other groups of practitioners who might be interested in the findings of the project. Similarly, the piece of writing can be directed at a practitioner-oriented journal (e.g., *set*), or be for example, a postcard mailed to schools or early childhood centres with key findings highlighted. In any case, the changes should make it easier for grantees to spend their time researching interesting things about teaching and learning—and telling the world about what they've found!

Thinking about research priorities

We want TLRI projects to build on existing knowledge and tackle relevant research questions. To assist people putting together a research proposal, each year we are asking leading educationalists for their research wishlist—where the research gaps are, and what research can be built on.

The TLRI website has articles from Dr Anne Meade on research priorities in early childhood education, Dr Adrienne Alton-Lee on schools, and Dr Peter Coolbear on the tertiary sector. This year we've focused on Māori education. Go to the website, www.tleri.org.nz to read



Liz McKinley



Mere Berryman

views about Māori educational research priorities from Associate Professor Liz McKinley, who leads the Starpath project at The University of Auckland, and Mere Berryman, a researcher and manager of the Ministry of Education (Special Education) Poutama Pounamu Education Research and Development Centre.



TLRI goes to NZARE

The TLRI was well represented at NZARE, as usual, and once again the TLRI co-ordinators were impressed with the breadth and depth of the projects—as well as the great diversity represented within a common theme of investigations into teaching and learning. Researchers and practitioner-researchers from universities, polytechnics, and schools offered their findings in such core educational topic areas as maths, literacy, and early childhood education. They also looked at particular areas of interest, such as the role of visiting teachers, engagement of tertiary students in diverse settings, and innovative pedagogy for teaching nurses and midwives. In addition to the diversity of projects and presenters, TLRI recipients also spoke about their research in a wide variety of formats: single papers, symposia organised by the TLRI Co-ordination Team, and symposia organised with other,



*Dr Sally Peters and teachers Sue Biggar, Frances Bleaken and Tracey Hooker presented *Fostering a community of learners within a home-based network* at the TLRI Symposium.*

non-TLRI research projects. The TLRI co-ordinators look forward to NZARE each year because it is a time for the New Zealand educational research community to gather and share

ideas about both the process and content of educational research, and we appreciate the opportunity to highlight the work emerging from TLRI-funded projects.

Projects 2008

13 projects have been selected for funding in 2008. They are:

Shifting the conceptualisation of knowledge and learning in the integration of the new NZ curriculum in initial and continuing teacher education

Principal investigator: Dr Vanessa Andreotti;
Coinvestigators: Dr Kathleen Quinliva and Dr Jane Abbiss

Partnerships: University of Canterbury and UC Education Plus

Our place: Being curious at Te Papa

Project leaders: Jeanette Clarkin-Phillips and Dr Margaret Carr

Partnerships: Wellington Region Free Kindergarten Association and Te Papa

Infants and toddlers as learners: Pedagogy in the first years

Co-ordinating director: Dr Carmen Dalli; Project Directors: Dr. Iris Duhn, Jean Rockel, and Janita Crow

Partnerships: Victoria University of Wellington; The University of Auckland; AUT University, Auckland; and a variety of urban early childhood centres in Auckland and Wellington.

Moments of wonder, everyday events: How are young children theorising and making sense of their world?

Project leaders: Keryn Davis and Dr Sally Peters

Partnerships: University of Canterbury, University of Waikato, and Canterbury Playcentre Association

Linking culturally responsive teaching, learning and assessment to enhance the engagement of diverse students in the primary science classroom

Project leader: Dr Bronwen Cowie

Partnerships: Wilf Malcolm Institute of Educational Research (WMIER), The University of Waikato, together with Arataki Primary School, Tauranga, and Peachgrove Intermediate School, Hamilton.

Working collaborations: A project leader's perspective

Many TLRI recipients are leaders or team members in collaborative projects. Associate Professor Kogi Naidoo reflects on the challenges of her role as project leader for a three-year collaborative project funded by TLRI, *Unlocking Student Learning*. She is now Deputy Director at the Centre for Learning and Professional Development, The University of Adelaide.

Our project was rather ambitious, with the partners in our collaboration coming from all New Zealand universities in different discipline areas. Each university team had its own context, research focus, and aims and aspirations for what its team wanted to achieve in the collaboration. The study was a participatory action research project which allowed for contingencies and changes in team members' contexts, activities, and directions.

So what did we do that ensured our success? We used several strategies to keep our focus on the central study while allowing team members to pursue their institutional interests. Our team's core values included commitment, trust, and transparency. The team was characterised by shared values, willingness to work together, valuable team expertise, and the passion to make a difference.

The job of project leader

The project leader provides the overall direction and ensures that the milestones set are being met, opportunities for reflection and sharing are created, and that team-member strengths are recognised and their contributions acknowledged. Astute leadership and being aware of the team dynamics, anticipating problems, dealing with conflicts, mediating, offering options in negotiations, and support and understanding when "life happens" in the team are critical aspects that should not be overlooked. A project leader also has to be prepared for challenges that may occur: staff changes, the need to sustain commitment of team members, and institutional issues.



The issues you may need to consider at the proposal stage or soon after you receive funding are management protocols

for the research team and contingencies in research design and methodology. Know your team members: identify their values and aspirations early. Reach consensus on important issues, e.g., agree on a communications protocol, meeting schedules, a robust research design, negotiated project milestones, clear reporting guidelines, and a publications and dissemination plan.

What worked for us

Some of the team-management strategies we used included:

- ensuring equality of team members—treating teachers and academic developers as co-researchers
- having milestone plans and reporting at two levels—national milestone mapped against project goals, and institutional milestone mapped against institutional project plans—these serve as a time line, plan, and action list
- being flexible and adapting to institutional contexts, e.g., case study design and meeting institutional ethics requirements
- maintaining timely, regular communication and correspondence (updates, follow-up, and reminders using group emails)
- holding regular meetings—rotate venues; meet institutional team

members who host the team; include presentations, reflections, and discussions

- reflection at team meetings to build community in a supportive environment
- keeping records of meetings and data on a team wiki
- reporting regularly on progress, challenges, and successes
- showcasing progress through seminars and workshops, conference presentations, and publications
- implementing strategic dissemination using position papers (institutional and national) to obtain high-level support
- carrying out evaluation and review, ongoing reflection
- sharing the latest literature and research findings
- having a critical friend for the project who provides an external perspective and fulfils the roles of evaluation and mentor.

Advantages of the collaborative approach

There are many benefits of working in collaboration. These include a focus to work together, mutual learning and sharing, networking, encouragement and support from team members, and the prestige of being in the research team undertaking a national project. In the final analysis, you are working in collaboration, a team focusing on a common project and goals. It is important to note that the focus should not only be on the outputs, but on the journey and process. As the leader or team member of a collaborative project, maintain a balanced perspective between the institutional/team focus, and the whole project. Revisiting the TLRI criteria and the project goals regularly will assist in maintaining your team's perspective and focus. Use your collaboration to extend your network on both personal and professional levels. It can be fun, so enjoy!



Projects 2008

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Exploring e-learning practices across the disciplines in a university environment

Project leader: Dr Marcia Johnson

Partnerships: A multi-disciplinary team from across the University of Waikato, including educational researchers, lecturers, and the team leader for eEducation university staff development.

Developing communication and participation patterns within Numeracy classrooms: Structuring equitable access for diverse learners

Project leaders: Dr Roberta Hunter and Associate Professor Glenda Anthony (Team Researcher)

Partnerships: School of Education, Auckland, Massey University; and West Harbour school teachers.

Designing learning environments that encourage a wide range of mathematical abilities and understandings

Project leader: Dr Caroline Yoon

Partnerships: The University of Auckland, in partnership with Auckland Girls Grammar School and Northcote College.

Arts e-learning and the online specialist teacher: Increasing opportunities for quality student outcomes

Project leaders: Jan Bolton, Jan Bolwell, and Delia Baskerville

Partnerships: Victoria University of Wellington with Manutuke School, Gisborne Intermediate, Ormond School, Whakarongo School, and Rangikura School.

SCIAntICT—Science classroom investigations of the affordances in teaching with ICT

Project leader: Dr Kathrin Otrell-Cass

Partnerships: Wilf Malcolm Institute of Educational Research (WMIER), The University of Waikato, with St. Andrew's middle school.

Building students' inferential reasoning: Statistics curriculum Levels 5 and 6

Project leaders: Dr Maxine Pfannkuch and Pip Arnold

Partnerships: The University of Auckland and six teachers from a variety of schools.

An exploration of field-based early childhood teacher education in Aotearoa New Zealand

Project leaders: Dr Margaret Brennan, Liz Everiss, and Kate Ord

KEY DATES FOR 2009

Call for Expressions of Interest	Monday 2 March 2009
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Closing date for Expressions of Interest	Tuesday 12 May 2009
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Notification of shortlisting	Monday 29 June 2009
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Closing date for full proposals	Friday 28 August 2009
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Notification of decisions	Thursday 1 October 2009
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Feedback	Thursday 1 October 2009 TLRI funding commences January 2010 or as in contract
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Expressions of Interest

The purpose of requesting Expressions of Interest is to establish a shortlist of applicants who will be invited to submit Full Proposals. For the 2009 funding round, Expressions of Interest are invited from 2 March 2009. Full details are on our website: www.tlri.org.nz

Partnerships: The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand, Waikato Institute of Technology (WINTeC), and Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa.

Developing secondary school students' understanding of statistical literacy in a data analysis environment

Project leader: Sashi Sharma

Partnerships: Wilf Malcolm Institute of Educational Research (WMIER), The University of Waikato, and Marcellin College, Auckland.

Full details of the research projects are available on the TLRI website: www.tlri.org.nz