



WHAT'S INSIDE

- 2 Winning ways
- 3 Who's doing TLRI research in 2004
- 4 TLRI workshop series
- 4 Key dates for 2004
- 4 Researchers needed for National Register
- 4 Who to contact

ABOUT TLRI

The Teaching and Learning Research Initiative (TLRI) is a Government initiative which aims to:

- build knowledge, through partnership research, about teaching and learning
- use this knowledge to create improved outcomes for learners
- create partnerships between practitioners and researchers to maximise the value and usefulness of research.

Funding boost for TLRI

Annual funding for the Teaching & Learning Research Initiative (TLRI) has been doubled from \$1 million to \$2 million.

Education Minister Trevor Mallard, who made the announcement in mid-March, said the new funding will be available from the beginning of 2005 and will support more research, build additional research capability, and strengthen the links between researchers and practitioners.

There is a significant opportunity to increase the level of research activity in the education sector

Trevor Mallard

The Minister said it was critical that the knowledge base in this key area of research continued to build so that educators and the community could better understand what worked in the classroom and assisted students.

He also noted that with more than 180 expressions of interest received in 2003 but only 13 proposals able to receive funding, it was clear that there was a significant opportunity to increase the level of research activity in the education sector.

The TLRI programme was originally announced in the Government's 2002 budget.

The Minister's media release on the funding boost is available through the TLRI website www.trli.org.nz.

TLRI aims to build knowledge

As educators, how can we improve educational outcomes, and just what can teachers do to support student learning?

The existing evidence clearly shows that teachers do make a difference, in fact they are the most important school-related factor influencing student achievement.

However, there are significant gaps in our knowledge.

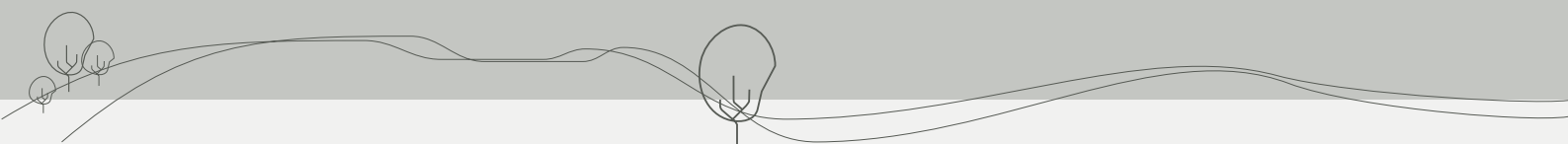
The TLRI aims to build knowledge of teaching and learning through supporting research in all areas of the education sector, from early childhood to industry training organisations, kura, and wānanga.

The intention is to encourage teachers and researchers to work together on research projects that have the potential, individually and collectively, to contribute to our theoretical and practical knowledge of strategies that have a positive impact on students' learning.

Partnerships the key

In 2003, 30 projects from researcher-practitioner project teams, drawn from 180 expressions of interest (EOI), were short-listed. The selection panel had a difficult task in choosing from many worthwhile projects to arrive at their final lists. While there were many worthwhile proposals, what differentiated the short-listed projects was that they were more aligned to the aims and principles of the TLRI – building knowledge about teaching and learning through well designed partnership research projects.

(continued on pg 2)



(TLRI aims to build knowledge – from pg 1)

A number of EOIs that did not make the short list failed to show an understanding of the necessity of partnerships between researchers and practitioners. Frequently, practitioners appeared to be subjects of, or participants in, the research rather than partners. The short-listed projects demonstrated that all partners were involved in all stages of the research from design to analysis. Having teachers involved in design of research helps ensure the relevance and practical value of research to teaching and learning. A common trap was for projects to have a professional development instead of a research focus. Successful proposals were focused on inquiry into a problem or question.

On the other side of the partnership equation, some teams had a strong practitioner base but lacked research expertise. Often the links between the research aims, research questions, and methodologies were unclear. Other weaknesses were project aims that were too broad or diverse in focus, and unrealistic timeframes.

Increased funding

The Government's recently announced increase in TLRI funding will further support the development of meaningful partnerships between researchers and practitioners, and of research that will have a positive impact on learning.

Both the TLRI Advisory Board and the New Zealand Council for Educational Research, as project managers, are committed to ensuring there is ample support for people thinking of submitting a proposal (see *Workshops* page 4) and, secondly, that assistance and mentoring is available from specialists on the National Register (see story page 4) as research is undertaken.

Winning ways

Last year, 180 people or groups applied for research funding under the TLRI. In August 2003, this was pared down to a short list of 30, and in October the 13 funding recipients were chosen.

What made the Advisory Board choose those proposals over the rest? What qualities did they have, and when did the applicants start planning their proposals and the research they were hoping to undertake?

Nick Zepke, Linda Leach, and Tom Prebble, from the School of Education at Massey University's Wellington campus, received funding for a two-year study entitled *Improving tertiary student outcomes in their first year of study*. Below they identify some of the issues and potential pitfalls when applying for funding, as well as giving some tips for those considering undertaking TLRI research in 2005.

The Proposal – Four steps

Planning, designing and writing

Understand what is required under the headings in the 'Expression of Interest' (EOI), especially information about strategic, research, and practice values. Ensure the EOI criteria is met when developing methodology and rationale based on the three values.

Finding partners

Identify and approach institutions that have already done independent research work or who have practical expertise in the area of interest.

Devise a budget for your EOI

Itemise every activity in the methodology description, put a time estimate on each, and apply the hourly rate prevailing in your institution. While a detailed budget is not needed at the EOI stage, careful allocation of time to activities ensures a realistic proposal.

How much detail is necessary?

Use the guidelines for length of submission. Think the project through clearly, and early, for the EOI – remain open to changes for the full proposal.

Getting the project going

Work, enthusiasm, work, energy, work, courage, work!

- One person, or a small group, needs to take the initiative to draft an initial proposal and take responsibility for convening and driving initial meetings.
- Initial agreement from other researchers or institutions may not mean they are ready to be active participants immediately – the initial group needs to work hard to get that commitment.
- The rest of the team will come on board when they see that the project really will proceed and that their own contributions will be both vital and valued.
- Keep the communication between researchers and practitioners going – ensure face-to-face meetings early on.
- Get signed commitments from CEOs or participating institutions.
- Use institutional services to help with project management.

Working in a collaborative team

- Collaboration must be worked at and 'buy-in' from partners is vital.
- Communicate! Make sure everyone is in the loop, especially during the early stages.
- Have clear and agreed accountabilities – understand the mutual dependency in the project. If team members can't meet their commitments, the project leader needs to act fast and reshuffle responsibilities.
- Benefits of collaboration:
 - ability to assemble a team with complementary expertise;

(continued on pg 3)



(Winning ways – from pg 2)

- access to other research sites and information;
- working with a diverse group of colleagues.

Helpful hints

- Have an idea of the literature before planning starts.
- Develop clear research questions that connect to the three values – strategic, research, practice.
- Make sure the methodology answers the research questions.
- Consult widely – use the expertise available in your institution.
- Link the project closely to the literature, current research and Government policies.
- Plan carefully – follow the supplied guidelines.

Who's doing TLRI research in 2004?

Two-year contracts

Effective teaching in different cultural contexts: a comparative analysis of language, culture and pedagogy – Dr Leonie Pihama, Director International Research for Māori and Indigenous Education; Dr Tupeni Baba, Professor, Centre for Pacific Studies; Dr Trish Stoddart, Professor of Classrooms and Schools, University of Auckland. Cross-cultural comparative study of instructional policies and practice and student outcomes in partnership with teachers and administrators from three intermediate schools.

Improving tertiary student outcomes in their first year of study – Nick Zepke, Linda Leach and Tom Prebble, School of Education, Massey University. Collaborating with seven tertiary education institutions, two universities,

four polytechnics, and one college of education.

Whakawhanaungatanga – partnerships in bicultural development in early childhood care and education – Dr Jenny Ritchie, University of Waikato. Collaborating with three key groupings – Māori and mainstream early childhood educators, professional development providers, and teacher educators.

Enhanced teaching and learning of comprehension in Years 5-8: a research/practice collaboration for Mangere schools – Professor Stuart McNaughton, Woolf Fisher Research Centre, University of Auckland. Research and practice partnership with seven Mangere schools.

Making sense of learning at secondary school: an exploration by teachers with students – Professor Ruth G Kane, College of Education, Massey University. Collaborating with teachers, students and management from four Manawatu secondary schools.

Great expectations: enhancing learning and strengthening teaching in primary schools with diverse student populations through action research – Dr Mary Hill, School of Education, University of Waikato. Collaborating with teacher/researchers from six schools in Auckland, Hamilton and Taumarunui.

Under-three-year olds in kindergarten: children's experiences and teachers' practices – Dr Judith Duncan, Children's Issues Centre, University of Otago, in conjunction with Dr Carmen Dalli, School of Education, Victoria University. Collaboration with teachers from four kindergartens, two in Wellington, two in Dunedin.

Mathematics enhancement project: professional development research – Associate Professor Bill Barton and

Dr Hannah Bartholomew, Department of Mathematics, University of Auckland. Collaborating with 20 senior mathematics teachers.

Numeracy and practices change – Associate Professor Glenda Anthony and Dr. Margaret Walshaw, Department of Technology, Science and Mathematics Education, Massey University. Four nested projects in collaboration with diverse populations of teachers and students.

One-year contracts

The Connect.ed action research project – Louise Starkey and Jedd Bartlett, The Correspondence School, Wellington. Partnership between teachers and researchers to improve teaching practice, develop understandings about the Connect.ed programme, and improve student learning.

Who, what, how and why? Profiles, practices, pedagogies, and self-perception of adult literacy practitioners – Dr Robyn Chandler, Canterbury Adult Basic Education Research Network (CABERN), Christchurch. Collaborating with a large number of adult literacy practitioners in Canterbury.

Narrative of beginning Māori teachers: identifying forces that shape the first year of teaching – Paora Stucki, School of Education, Te Wānanga o Aotearoa. An experienced researcher mentoring Te Wānanga Staff and their new graduates in collaborative narrative enquiry.

The relationship between English language and mathematics learning for non-native speakers – Phillipa Neville-Barton, School of English and Applied Linguistics, UNITEC Institute of Technology, Auckland. Research team includes 15 senior secondary and undergraduate tertiary mathematics teachers.



TLRI workshop series

As part of the administration of the TLRI programme, we are holding a series of workshops to assist people wanting to apply for funding in 2005. The sessions will cover a range of issues relating to the call for expressions of interest proposals, which will be made on 31 March 2004, and the process and procedures that need to be followed.

If you are interested in finding out more about the TLRI, applying for funding, and the application process, you are invited to attend these workshops. There is no fee, but numbers will be limited. If you are interested in attending, please contact Christina Smits on (04) 802 1461 or e-mail tlri@nzcer.org.nz stating which city and which session you would like to attend.

At present we are confirming venues, and we will contact everyone who registers as soon as these are confirmed. Details will also be posted on the TLRI website www.tlri.org.nz.

WORKSHOP DATES

Wellington	Thursday, 1 April 2004 3.30pm - 5.30pm
Palmerston Nth	Thursday, 1 April 2004 3.30pm - 5.30pm
Dunedin	Monday, 5 April 2004 3.30pm - 5.30pm
Christchurch	Tuesday, 6 April 2004 3.30pm - 5.30pm
Hamilton	Tuesday, 6 April 2004 3.30pm - 5.30pm
Auckland	Wednesday, 7 April 2004 Noon - 2.00pm
Auckland	Wednesday, 7 April 2004 3.30pm - 5.30pm

KEY DATES FOR 2004

Call for Expressions of Interest proposals	Wednesday, 31 March 2004
Workshop series (see story this page)	Early April 2004
Closing date for Expression of Interest	Tuesday, 15 June 2004
Notification of short listing and invitation to submit full proposal	Friday, 23 July 2004
Closing date for full proposals	Tuesday, 31 August 2004
Notification of decisions: successful and unsuccessful proposals	Tuesday, 5 October 2004
Contract negotiations with successful teams completed	30 November 2004
2005 funding commences	January 2005, or as in contract

Researchers needed for National Register

The TLRI is supported by a group of researchers throughout New Zealand who contribute to the programme by being on a National Register. These researchers may be asked to offer their expertise through activities such as assisting with workshops that focus on research methodology, or by mentoring or supervising less experienced researchers and practitioners who are interested in undertaking a TLRI project. People on the register may also be asked to be a member of the team that assesses the short-listed proposals.

In the first funding round a number of people applying for research funding asked the TLRI co-ordination team to identify a researcher who might be prepared to work with them in developing a proposal. We anticipate more requests of this nature in the 2005 round. However, if the TLRI team is asked to match up practitioners with researchers, who have relevant experience and expertise, we need a larger pool of people to call on.

If you would like to be included on the National Register please contact Christina Smits on (04) 802 1461 or e-mail tlri@nzcer.org.nz. You will need to include brief details of your expertise in research methodology and the particular strengths you have in relation to teaching and learning.

WHO TO CONTACT

For more information on the Teaching & Learning Research Initiative, please contact:
Christina Smits (04) 802 1461
Fax (04) 384 7933
Email tlri@nzcer.org.nz

Mailing address:

TLRI
C/- NZCER
PO Box 3237
Wellington
New Zealand

Website: www.tlri.org.nz