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## ABOUT TLRI

The Teaching & 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.

## CONTACT

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## New projects, greater scope

Eighteen research projects under the Teaching & Learning Research Initiative (TLRI) will receive funding from 1 January 2005.

Announcing the funding, Education Minister Trevor Mallard said the quality of proposals put forward this year was significantly higher than those in 2003, a reflection of the importance of this initiative, and the depth of interest in educational research.

The Minister noted that for the first time there were three-year projects in the funding round which will enable those researchers, one each in the areas of learning in science and technology, early childhood learning, and teacher education, to partner with other educators over a longer period to produce outcomes that are relevant, practical and usable.

In March, funding for the TLRI was doubled to \$2 million a move the Minister said ensured the important research work being done to raise student achievement through quality teaching across all sectors was continued.

Thirteen projects were funded in the 2003 round. Of those, four one-year research projects will be completed by the end of 2004, with the remaining nine due for completion at the end of 2005.

The New Zealand Council for Educational Research continues to manage the TLRI contract on behalf of the Ministry of Education.

Details of the 18 new projects can be found on pages 3 and 4, while full abstracts are available at [www.tlri.org.nz](http://www.tlri.org.nz).

## Three keys to successful collaboration

While four of the first 13 Teaching & Learning Research Initiative contracts are drawing to a close, nine will continue until the end of 2005. What dynamics and processes are needed to sustain these collaborations over an extended time, and what are some of the challenges facing the researchers and the educators involved?

Professor Stuart McNaughton, of the University of Auckland's Woolf Fisher Research Centre, received a two-year contract in the first round of TLRI funding to continue a research / practice collaboration which has now been under way for nearly two years. The project, entitled *Enhanced teaching and learning of comprehension in years 5-8*, involves more than 60 teachers and 2000 students at seven schools in Mangere, South Auckland.

## Flexibility has been central to the evolution of this project.

Stuart McNaughton

"The most apparent thing in research of this type is the need to develop mutual trust on several levels, including interactions between teachers, researchers, administrators and others involved in the project," says Stuart. "One of the things we did before beginning the project in 2002 was to think through the ways we could develop trust amongst all these groups and how this could be used to enhance the research.

"For example, each teacher has a different fund of knowledge and brings different

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## 2004 funding round – selectors notes

All people who entered an Expression of Interest (EOI) for the latest TLRI round have been given feedback on their proposal. Below is a summary of the advice given to applicants.

**High quality** – There were 72 applications for funding in 2004, and the selectors were heartened that the applications this year were better aligned to the TLRI's aims and intentions.

**Design** – A number of proposals were submitted by emerging researchers and practitioners. These frequently focused on areas that were strategic in terms of the TLRI and had the potential to also address practice requirements. However, there were limitations in the

research design so it was unlikely the teams would be able to address the research questions adequately.

**Partnerships** – In some cases the selectors suggested that a short-listed team seek an experienced research partner. However it is difficult at that late stage to identify someone with the relevant experience and, secondly, it does not allow enough time to establish the relationships needed for effective partnerships.

**Mentoring** – The National Register was established in 2003, and aimed to match emerging researchers and practitioners with more experienced researchers. This worked well in some

cases, but more participants are needed to make this mentoring process more successful. The TLRI co-ordination team is seeking ways to make this matching arrangement more proactive than reactive.

**Involvement** - A meeting of people currently undertaking research projects was held in late October. The forum was a chance to share experiences of the first year of the TLRI and to highlight the pros and cons of running researcher / practitioner collaborations. Many of the views expressed will be integrated into future funding rounds to enable the process to be more transparent for both the selection panel and applicants. Feedback or enquiries are always welcome and should be sent to Christina Smits at [tlrinfo@nzcer.org.nz](mailto:tlrinfo@nzcer.org.nz).

*(Three keys to successful collaboration – from pg 1)*

experiences to their day to day teaching practice. From the research perspective, it is important that we get to know our colleagues, what they bring to the table and how they can make a meaningful contribution to the research and its outcomes."

Setting protocols and procedures that could be agreed by, and were common to, all the parties co-operating in the research was critical.

"It is important to develop the collaboration so that teachers are comfortable sharing information about classroom practices. They also need to know their views and experiences will be fairly heard and represented in any presentations or public displays, including the final report. The dynamics of each school, and the intellectual property it contains, is different so we constantly need to be flexible."



Stuart McNaughton

This flexibility has been central to the evolution of this project.

"We developed a robust research framework which has some flexibility, but schools move forward and priorities and interests change, so the flexibility had to be built in at the design stage. We needed to allow schools to generate their own questions, ones not originally included in the design, but which might make a significant contribution to the overall project.

"A good example was one school's interest in the 'Holiday Effect' – do achievement levels differ from the end of one academic year to the start of the next? When we are looking at learning comprehension, this may well be a factor, so the question has been integrated into the project."

As always, effective communication has been the key to sustaining and developing the research.

"We have an overall team leader, based at one of the schools, who is the central port of call for questions and information, and project management at a school level. This makes our communication much more effective. It also means that while everyone within the project has a clearly defined role, any actions or requirements that may impact on others can be quickly and efficiently brought to the attention of others."



## Contracts beginning in 2005

For more details on these projects, go to the TLRI website  
[www.tlri.org.nz/programmes.html](http://www.tlri.org.nz/programmes.html)

### Three-year contracts - Three

The 2004 funding round is the first in which three-year research grants were offered. Known as Category A contracts, the project funding level is set between \$120,000 and \$400,000.

#### The Classroom InSiTE project

*Project Leader: Alister Jones, Centre for Science and Technology Education Research, The University of Waikato.* Collaboration with teachers and students from six schools investigating classroom based interactions, values, and attitudes that contribute to student learning in science and technology.

#### Key learning competencies across place and time

*Project Leader: Margaret Carr, School of Education, The University of Waikato.* Investigating pedagogy designed to develop five learning competencies in ECE and early years classrooms.

#### The role of initial teacher education and beginning teacher induction in the preparation and retention of New Zealand secondary teachers

*Project Leader: Ruth Kane, College of Education, Massey University.* Examines beginning secondary teachers' experiences of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and induction, identifying factors that promote or hinder teacher capability and retention.

### Two-year contracts - Eight

Category B contracts are for medium-sized two-year research projects with funding of between \$75,000 and \$180,000 available.

#### The art of the matter: Development in the arts

*Project Leader: Deborah Fraser, Wilf Malcolm Institute of Educational Research, School of Education, The University of Waikato.* Investigating what children bring to the arts, how they develop ideas and related skills, and how teaching processes support or constrain arts education.

#### Enhancing mathematics teaching in early childhood education

*Project Leader: Maggie Haynes, School of Education, Unitec Institute of Technology.* Investigating what motivates and hinders effective mathematics teaching and learning for young children in three ECE settings.

#### Enhanced teaching and learning of comprehension in Years 5-8

*Project Leader: Stuart McNaughton, Woolf Fisher Research Centre, University of Auckland.* Collaboration with eight Otago schools to test an intervention to increase effective teaching of comprehension for Māori and Pasifika students.

#### Measuring classroom literacy practice

*Project Leader: Judy Parr, School of Education, University of Auckland.* With two clusters of schools, develop and trial classroom observation instruments in Years 1-8.

#### Conceptions of assessment and feedback in secondary school mathematics

*Project Leader: Gavin Brown, School of Education, University of Auckland.* Identifying activities and tasks in assessment and feedback that can lead to enhanced teaching and learning

outcomes in two key disciplines - mathematics and English.

#### Understanding learning communities in tertiary science and engineering education

*Project Leader: Mike Forret, Centre for Science and Technology Education Research, The University of Waikato.* Examining how existing systems, processes and practices influence students' and lecturers' perceptions and attitudes in science and engineering education.

#### Investigating teachers' pedagogical approaches in environmental education

*Project Leader: Chris Eames, Centre for Science and Technology Education Research, The University of Waikato.* Regional co-ordinators will partner with teachers to research classroom practice in environmental education.

#### The impact of technology use on the teaching and learning of mathematics in the secondary classroom

*Project Leader: Mike Thomas, Mathematics Education Unit, University of Auckland.* Developing protocols for improving mathematics learning through the integration of technology into teaching.

### One-year contracts - Seven

Category C are smaller-scale projects (funded at between \$15,000 and \$40,000) which are expected to be particularly useful for practitioner-driven, researcher-supported projects.

#### Primary students' and teachers' experiences of collaborative learning online

*Project Leader: Patsy-Ann Street, The South Learning Centre.* Collaborating with two Year 6 classes from two

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schools for 15 weeks on an online project on a local community issue.

### Zeroing in on quality teaching

*Project Leader: Christina Harwood, Massey University College of Education.*

Exploring the multiple impacts of curriculum and pedagogical innovation on learning for students, especially Māori.

### Investigating responses to diversity in a secondary environment

*Project Leader: Lindsey Conner, Christchurch College of Education.*

Examining the policies and practices used by Linwood College in response to its diversity of students.

### Pasifika teachers in secondary education

*Project Leader: Tony Brown, School of Education, The University of Waikato.*

Examines the experiences of Pasifika secondary teachers, and initiatives for recruitment and retention.

### Developing rich mathematical language in Māori immersion classrooms

*Project Leader: Tamsin Meaney, University of Otago.* Document and evaluate the scaffolding and modelling strategies of teachers in a Māori medium school.

### A collaborative self-study into the development of critical literacy practices

*Project Leader: Susan Sandretto, University of Otago.* Self-study research in two schools and four classrooms, where participants investigate their own professional practices.

### Effective teacher education practice

*Project Leader: Liz Everiss, The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand.* Exploring the role lecturers' written post-assessment feedback to student teachers plays in the students' learning and support.

## Making it work

*Numeracy Practices and Change* is a two-year project directed by Associate Professor Glenda Anthony and Dr Margaret Walshaw of Massey University. The four studies within the overall project involve a wider research team, including Ngaire Davies, Karen Walker, and Bobbie Hunter, all working in partnerships and close collaboration with teachers in schools.

For all the team, collaboration means community building. The partners in the research identify strengths in one another's ideas and actions and build on them. They all work towards change in their own individual practice by supporting and encouraging each other. Here are some of the ways they have worked towards the goals in the project:

### Establishing partnerships

- First and foremost, develop trust and goodwill between researchers and teachers.
- Value teachers' knowledge and experience about classrooms and school realities.
- Make sure that the research questions/objectives benefit and interest all involved.
- Teachers need to see something tangible for their own practice as reward for ongoing time investment in the project.
- Schools are busy places – learn to be flexible and fit into their schedules. Have contingencies!

### Developing the research community

- Developing a community of learners takes time but is central to successful work with teachers.
- Develop supportive structures within schools to allow 'teacher researchers' to work as communities.



Margaret Walshaw

Glenda Anthony

- Provide teachers with time and resources, and listen to the feedback on their experiences.
- To encourage and support teacher participation and reflection, a variety of methods may be useful, for example computer diaries, digital recordings, annotated transcripts of videos, and narrative accounts.
- Shared peer and self-reviewing of videotapes provided teachers with a new lens for viewing their teaching. When teaching a lesson the teacher must focus on what to do next, but while watching a videotaped lesson the teacher can 'notice' what is happening in more detail.
- It has been important to allow time for teachers to develop new techniques for noticing and explaining classroom interactions. When viewing videotapes teachers shift from commenting on what the teacher should or could do to manage the lesson, towards focusing on understanding what took place in the episode.

Collaboration involves people who "share mutual aspirations and a common conceptual framework and these aspirations and conceptualisations are characterised by each individual's consciousness of his/her motives toward each other, by caring and concern for the other, and by chosen commitment to work with the other over time" (Peter-Koop, Santos-Wagner, Breen, & Begg, *Collaboration in Teacher Education*, 2003).