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ABOUT TLRI

The Teaching & Learning Research Initiative (TLRI) is a Government programme 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.

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What the selectors look for when choosing projects

This year 22 projects were shortlisted for consideration by the TLRI selection panel. Of these, 12 were chosen for funding. While the TLRI information pack for Expressions of Interest outlines the selection criteria, we felt that a summary of the selectors' comments would give a clearer guide to the features that make for a successful full proposal.

Here are some of the points that kept coming up in the discussions.

- **Strong conceptualisation, clear outcomes.** The proposal must define clearly the scope of the project, the issues it intends to cover, and how its objectives will be achieved. It must demonstrate a robust theoretical framework, with strong implications in terms of outcomes for learners. The proposal also needs to show how learning from the findings of the project will be disseminated.
- **Strong research focus, good design.** Proposals need to demonstrate good research design and methodology, describing the kind of data on which the project will be based and giving an outline of the research protocols, evidence of the capability of the research team, details of the proposed analysis procedures, and how the findings will be used to improve practice. The selectors need to be confident that the project team has thought out each step.
- **Commitment to partnership.** A strong commitment to partnership is essential. The proposal needs to outline how the partnership will work, in terms of relationships, power sharing, control, and how the team will make decisions, in line with the TLRI's principles of practical, collaborative partnerships based on respect and trust.
- **Good project management.** In this area, proposals need to demonstrate good project planning, addressing issues such as: how the project is to be co-ordinated (clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and workloads); realistic time frames and milestone targets; a detailed breakdown of the budget; and quality control.
- **Strategic value—impact and practical application.** The project needs to deal with an area that is significant, that needs investigation, and that will result in new knowledge which has an impact on teaching and learning. Some projects had too much emphasis on professional development and, while valuable to the people putting it forward, did not add to the existing knowledge in the field. If the project builds on earlier work, the proposal must explain what it is based on and what value it will add. It must have the potential to generate new interest.
- **Firm basis in the literature.** The proposal must include a solid review of the literature, setting the project within the work in the field and showing that the applicants are aware of the existing knowledge, both in New Zealand and internationally.

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Contracts beginning in 2006

You can find more details on these projects on the TLRI website at www.tlri.org.nz/projects/index.html.

One-year contracts

Early algebraic thinking: links to numeracy

Project leader: Chris Linsell, Dunedin College of Education

Partnerships: John McGlashan College, King's High School, Otago Boys' High School

This project aims to make explicit the knowledge and strategic thinking of students as they make the transition from arithmetic to algebra, by using a diagnostic interview similar to that used in numeracy assessment. This research hopes to enhance students' learning of algebra in their own schools and to inform mathematics educators who are extending the implementation of the Number Framework into high schools.

Enhancing teachers' beliefs, knowledge and practice about bilingualism and bilingual/immersion education through critical action research

Project leader: Donal McLean, Richmond Rd School

Partnership: University of Auckland

This pilot project aims to assist teachers to develop and apply critical research methods that will identify the existing strengths, gaps, and needs in multicultural/bilingual policy and practice. The project will also analyse current best evidence in critical multicultural and bilingual education theory.

Addressing the needs of transient students: a collaborative approach to enhance teaching and learning in an area school

Project leader: Jude MacArthur, Donald Beasley Institute

Partnership: Lawrence Area School

This project emerges from earlier research that highlighted childrens' perspectives on their learning and social lives at school. In a small area school, student transience was observed to complicate the learning and social experiences of some of the students. This research aims to enhance the learning and social experiences of transient students through action research, and professional development focused on a community of practice.

Classroom questioning by teachers: an investigation of how teachers formulate, select, and present questions to guide student learning

Project leader: Linda Bonne, Redwood School

Partnerships: Seatoun School, Windley School, Rangikura School, Cashmere Avenue School, Churton Park School, Te Aro School, and in consultation with Don Miller, educational consultant

This research aims to bring the "teacher's voice" to the existing body of research, develop the research capability of a group of teachers, and investigate their use of questioning to facilitate students' learning in mathematics. Teacher-researchers will analyse their practice and identify aspects of questioning behaviour, the conditions that support the effective use of questioning, and the barriers to the use of certain types of questioning.

Write on!

Project leader: Sue Carswell, Aranui High School

Partnership: University of Canterbury

This pilot study will investigate

possibilities for teacher intervention in the learning and achievement of diverse students in low-decile secondary schools in the context of a whole-school writing programme intended to raise student achievement.

Two-year contracts

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

Project leader: Susan Sandretto, University of Otago

Partnerships: East Taieri Primary School, Port Chalmers School, Balacava School, Brockville School

This project consists of collaborative research into the development and implementation of critical literacy practices within guided reading lessons and the integrated curriculum. Teachers will study their own professional practices and chart the growth of student reading comprehension and academic achievement in relevant curriculum areas.

Developing teacher-researcher partnerships to investigate best practices: cross-curricula literacy learning and teaching in secondary schools

Project leader: Trevor McDonald, Education Associates Ltd

Partnerships: Auckland Seventh Day Adventist High School, Roxburgh Area School, Waitaki Girls' High School, Teuila Consultancy

Teachers will focus on the collaborative development and implementation of pedagogical approaches and teaching content to assist students develop strategies to improve their literacy learning and assessment outcomes. They will also document, theorise, and evaluate the process as an approach to professional development.



A research partnership to enhance capacity to analyse students’ writing, using the English Exemplars (2003)

Project leader: Libby Limbrick, Auckland UniServices Ltd

Partnerships: 32 Manurewa Enhancement Initiative schools

This project will collect evidence to modify writing instruction in order to raise student achievement in writing and strengthen teacher practice in using evidence to inform teaching. It will investigate the role of professional discussion in quality learning circles (focused on students’ writing) and in enhancing teachers’ knowledge about, and confidence and competence in implementing, writing processes and pedagogy.

Addressing obstacles to success: improving student completion, retention and achievement in science modules in applied health programmes, with particular attention to Māori

Project leader: Kelly Gibson-van Marrewijk, Waikato Institute of Technology

Partnership: New Zealand Council for Educational Research

This project will explore what science knowledge is needed by new graduates for them to become competent midwives and nurses. It aims to develop, pilot, and evaluate an intervention in the science modules taught in the applied health programmes at a representative tertiary education institution.

Te Puawaitanga—partnerships with tamariki and whānau in bicultural early childhood care and education

Project leader: Cheryl Rau, School of Education, University of Waikato

Partnerships: Thames Valley Coromandel Playcentre Association, South Taranaki Kindergarten Association, Tauranga Regional Free Kindergarten Association, North Taranaki Kindergarten Association,

Dunedin Kindergarten Association, Belmont Kindergarten (Hamilton), Galbraith Kindergarten, Te Kuiti Playcentre, Pirongia Playcentre

This project aims to document the narratives of a diverse group of children and families as they engage with early childhood services committed to honouring the bicultural intent of the curriculum document *Te Whāriki*.

Three-year contracts

Valid and practical tertiary assessment of student learning outcomes

Project leader: Luanna Meyer, Victoria University

Partnerships: Massey University, Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangī, Manukau Institute of Technology

This research will investigate policy and strategies for the assessment of student learning outcomes across a wide range of tertiary institutions. The project aims to better understand and support evidence-based, valid, and practicable

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Thinking of applying for a TLRI grant?

A recent research report commissioned by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research, *The TLRI: Teachers’ Perspectives on Partnership and Research*, highlights the benefits teachers are gaining from participation in TLRI projects. It also points out what aspects of project organisation and implementation are needed to maximise these.

Benefits

Among the benefits the teachers cited are:

- encouragement to try different ways of teaching
- support to try new challenges

- opportunities for self-reflection, critical examination of practice, and ongoing support and mentoring through change
- enjoyment of the collegiality that comes from partnership with other teachers
- the potential for the research experience to have lasting impact on them as teachers.

What needs to be in place?

The teachers in the study identified some key factors for successful teacher research. Among these were:

- a supportive overall school climate

- release time
- support from senior management
- a strong sense of collegiality among staff.

When these elements are in place teacher research is more likely to have benefits, not just for those taking part, but for teaching and learning in general.

The full text of the report The TLRI: Teachers’ Perspectives on Partnership and Research, by Alex Oliver, is available on the TLRI website, www.tlri.org.nz. A summary of the report is included with this newsletter.



(What the selectors look for when choosing projects – from page 1)

- **Addressing the feedback.** There were some projects that the selectors would have liked to recommend, but lack of attention to the issues raised in the feedback on the original expressions of interest meant that the quality of the proposals did not stand up to the selection criteria.

Ultimately, what the selectors looked for was innovative ideas backed by detailed, practical planning and anchored and positioned firmly in the current literature. Proposals will have a greater chance of being accepted if they are built on the relevant literature, rather than listing a literature review as one of the tasks for the project.

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assessment strategies to enhance both teaching and the learning process.

Unlocking student learning: the impact of teaching and learning enhancement initiatives (TLEIs) on first-year university students

Project leader: Kogi Naidoo, Massey University

Partnerships: Victoria University of Wellington, University of Otago, Lincoln University, Auckland University of Technology, University of Canterbury, University of Waikato, University of Auckland

This research will focus on the provision of academic development and its impact on the success of first-year student learning at all the universities in New Zealand. The goal of the project is to increase students' learning and success in targeted, large first-year classes through the development and implementation of teaching and learning enhancement initiatives that make a difference to students' learning and success.

KEY DATES FOR 2006

Please note there are some changes to the timeline for 2006. The call for Expressions of Interest begins in March and closes on 16 May. Those shortlisted will be informed on 23 June.

This allows two months for the project teams to prepare their full proposals, as the date for submission of full proposals remains the same. This change is in response to the feedback received and is intended to give the project teams a longer period in which to write their proposals.

9 February	TLRI Board meeting
1 March	EOI documents for 2006 published on website EOI documents mailed out
16 May	EOI applications close
Week of 2 June*	EOI selection panel meets (1 day)
Week of 15 June*	TLRI Board meeting to approve shortlist
23 June	EOI applicants notified about shortlisting
29 August	FP applications close
Week of 11 Sept*	Selection panel meets (1 day)
Week of 18 Sept*	TLRI Board meeting to approve funded projects
4 October*	FP applicants notified about funding decision
24 October*	Announcement of successful 2006 funding round projects
January 2007	Funding commences for 2006 funding recipients
January 2007	Completion of one-year projects from 2006 and two-year projects from 2005

* Dates to be confirmed

TLRI symposia at NZARE

This year the TLRI will be holding three symposia at NZARE (Dunedin, 6–9 December), focusing on the early childhood, school, and tertiary sectors. Ten TLRI project teams will be presenting papers on selected aspects of their research, highlighting how current TLRI projects are contributing to the aims and principles of the TLRI.