



**Media release - National**

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## **2006 TLRI funding announced**

Twelve new educational research projects have been awarded grants under the Teaching & Learning Research Initiative (TLRI). The Initiative has now funded had a total of 55 separate research projects since its inception in 2003.

The selection panel short-listed 25 projects from 52 expressions of interest, and commented that this year the notions of partnership between researchers and practitioners, and the focus on the practical impacts the research would have on teaching and learning were much better reflected in the proposal designs, a sign of a greater understanding of the aims of the TLRI by the educational research sector.

The TLRI also demands strong partnerships between researchers and practitioners, and in the 2006 funding round, two projects will be led by practitioners, those by Alfriston College in Auckland, and the Hamilton Childcare Services Trust. Another project, led by Associate Professor Bill Barton, and Senior Tutor Judy Paterson from the University of Auckland's Department of Mathematics, will bring an overseas perspective as it will be undertaken in collaboration with teams from the University of Michigan and Oxford University as part of a wider international study.

The New Zealand Council of Educational Research is contracted to manage the programme on behalf of the Ministry of Education. A team of specialists in key areas of educational research manage the initiative and assist the researchers.

During the year, a steering group was established with responsibility for designing a programme development project that will seek new ways of building cumulative knowledge, and giving more support to develop research capability. The project will provide insights into the research methodologies used, and the impact of the research studies on practice, the intention being to use the findings of the study to make recommendations to the TLRI Advisory Board about future priorities for the Initiative.

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**Details** of the 12 new contracts, and information on the background to the TLRI, are attached.

**Further information** on the 2006 funding round, previous funding, and details of the TLRI can be found at [www.tlri.org.nz](http://www.tlri.org.nz) or by contacting [tlri@nzcer.org.nz](mailto:tlri@nzcer.org.nz), ph 04 802 1461.

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## BACKGROUND TO TEACHING & LEARNING RESEARCH INITIATIVE (TLRI)

In May 2002 the government established the Teaching & Learning Research Initiative (TLRI) to build knowledge about teaching and learning, which will lead to significantly improved outcomes for learners. Research undertaken in all areas of the education sector, from early childhood centres to industry training organisations, kura and wānanga, was eligible for funding under the Initiative.

To enhance the potential of the research findings to inform practice, the Initiative emphasises partnerships between researchers and practitioners. This approach is expected at all stages of the process from research design, to communicating results to teachers and other educators. The project priorities determine there must be demonstrable strategic, research and practice value based on six principles:

- the research will address themes of strategic importance to education in New Zealand;
- it will draw on related overseas work and build upon New Zealand-based research evidence;
- the research will address strategic themes and be forward looking;
- the project design will enable substantive and robust findings;
- the research will recognise the central role of the teacher in learning; and
- the projects will be undertaken as a partnership between researchers and practitioners.

Three categories of funding are available under the scheme:

- A - large-scale projects (maximum \$400,000) of up to three years with a \$150,000 maximum for any project in the first year.
- B - medium-scale projects (maximum \$180,000) of up to two years with a cap of \$90,000 for any project in any one year.
- C - small-scale projects (\$15,000–\$50,000) often with an emphasis on practitioner-driven, researcher-supported projects.

The programme began with annual funding for three years of \$1 million, although funding for projects of more than one year is conditional upon continued government funding of the TLRI, and on a satisfactory performance during the first funding cycle. In March 2004, funding was doubled to \$2 million per annum. In 2003, 13 applicant groups received funding for the 2004 year, while in the 2004 funding round, 18 projects were approved. In 2005 12 projects, to start in early 2006, were approved. The 2006 round has seen a further 12 projects receive funding.

The project's Advisory Board has members representing a range of sector interests and is chaired by the Ministry of Education. The New Zealand Council of Educational Research (NZCER) is contracted to co-ordinate the management of the TLRI programme, and a team of specialists in key areas of educational research is in place to facilitate the initiative and assist the researchers.

In 2006, a steering group was established with responsibility for designing a programme development project that will seek new ways of building cumulative knowledge, and giving more support to develop research capability. The project will provide insights into the research methodologies used, and the impact of the research studies on practice, the intention being to use the findings of the study to make recommendations to the TLRI Advisory Board about future priorities for the Initiative.

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*December 2006*



## Teaching and Learning Research Initiative contracts 2006

### Two-year contracts

#### Teaching literature in the multicultural classroom

Project leader: Associate Professor Terry Locke of The University of Waikato's School of Education

*Partnerships: Henderson Intermediate School, Wymondley School, Somerville School, Macleans College, and the University of Waikato.*

The overall goal of this project is to find effective ways of teaching literature in multicultural and multilingual classrooms at primary and secondary level. In doing so, the aim is to develop a range of effective classroom approaches and practices for the teaching of literature in such settings. A secondary aim is to link the research associated with this project with research being done in relation to other Level 1 curriculum. An additional secondary aim is the production of at least one teachers' resource on the subject of teaching literature in the multicultural classroom.

#### Mathematics classrooms: explorations into the teaching/learning nexus

Project leaders: Associate Professor Glenda Anthony, and Dr. Margaret Walshaw from Massey University's College of Education.

*Partnerships: The project is a collaborative venture between researchers from Massey University, and students and teachers from three secondary schools.*

The aim of this project is to investigate the teaching/learning nexus in Year 9 New Zealand mathematics classrooms, with a commitment to identifying teachers' and students' constructed social and mathematical meanings. The project involves working with Year 9 teachers and students over a two-year period. The principal data gathering and analytical strategy is technology intensive and will involve video sequences of 30 lessons taken from three cameras in each classroom.

#### Home-based early childhood education (family day care): the visiting teachers' role in improving educators' practices—what makes a difference?

Project leader: Dr Judith Duncan, Senior Lecturer at Otago University's Children's Issues Centre

*Partnerships: The Dunedin Community Childcare Association, and its Director Mrs Pat Irvine; the visiting teachers; and the Children's Issues Centre, University of Otago.*

This project proposes to investigate the role of the visiting teacher in improving the quality of educators' practices and children's learning outcomes in the home-based settings supervised by the Dunedin Community Childcare Association. The visiting teachers will be examining:

- the teaching practices of the educators;
- the roles of the visiting teachers in supporting and improving the practices of the educators;
- the wider support roles of the Dunedin Community Childcare Association; and
- the role of professional development opportunities for both the educators and the visiting teachers.

#### Researching understanding of learning and teaching (RULT): a case study in using practice-based research to develop a school-wide learning community

Project leaders: Dr Elaine Mayo and Dr Lindsey Conner of the University of Canterbury's College of Education

*Partnerships: Avonside Girls' High School and University of Canterbury College of Education.*

This research project investigates how teachers who are using a peer-coaching model to help them each gain a deeper understanding of teaching and learning, can distil and share their emerging experiential knowledge, and how this influences future praxis (thinking and acting) in teaching. The school aims to build a reflective learning community where teachers collaborate deliberately to support improved outcomes for students. The project involves four cycles of activity, in which the “learning stories” from the peer-coaching model will be documented and used to promote fresh questions about individual and collective learning.

### **Success for all: improving Māori and Pasifika student success in degree-level studies**

Project leader: Dr Airini, Associate Dean, Equity at The University of Auckland’s Faculty of Education

*Partnerships: The University of Auckland Faculty of Education; the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences; the National Institute of Creative Arts and Industries, Careers Centre.*

This evidence-based project targets Māori student and Pasifika student success in degree-level tertiary education. The focus is on the ways in which non-lecture teaching and learning helps or hinders Māori student and Pasifika student success in preparing for, or completing, degree-level studies. Good practice will be identified.

### **A school for the 21st century: researching the impact of changing teacher practice on student learning**

Project leader: Michal Denny, Alfriston College

*Partnerships: Alfriston College and the New Zealand Council for Educational Research*

The aims of this project are:

- to investigate whether the innovative approaches to scheduling time for teaching and learning at Alfriston College are having a significant impact on student learning;
- to identify best practice for the use of extended periods of learning time; and
- to widen discussion about the nature of “evidence” of student learning.

### **Strengthening responsive and reciprocal relationships in a Whānau Tangata centre: an action research project**

Project leader: Jeanette Clarkin-Phillips, lecturer from the Early Years Research Unit at The University of Waikato’s Wilf Malcolm Institute of Educational Research.

*Partnerships: Teaching team, parents, and whānau of Taitoko Kindergarten, Levin; General Manager and a senior teacher of the Wellington Region Free Kindergarten; and Professor Margaret Carr*

This project’s aim is to investigate the teaching and learning at Taitoko Kindergarten in the light of the impact of the development of a Whānau Tangata centre. Through action research, the team will address the teachers’ questions associated with teaching and learning as they implement changes in response to establishing a Whānau Tangata centre at the kindergarten as part of a Parent Support and Development Contract.

### **Investigating the impact of whole-school approaches to education for sustainability on student learning**

Project leader: Dr Chris Eames, Senior Lecturer, The University of Waikato

*Partnerships: Experienced Education for Sustainability (EFS) researchers partnered with national EFS school advisers, who are in turn partnered with specified staff at each case-study school. There is also an overarching partnership between the whole team and the Enviroschool Foundation.*

The project aims to build on previous work in action competence and to design a valid and reliable framework for investigating this; and to understand the practice of whole-school approaches to EFS in New Zealand schools, and the impact of these approaches on the school community and student learning. The framework will be used to construct research instruments for collecting research data in five schools as case studies. This approach will aim to build capacity for research within the EFS community and the schools.

## **Teaching and learning in the supervision of Māori doctoral students**

Project leaders: Associate Professor Elizabeth McKinley and Dr Barbara Grant, both of the University of Auckland

*Partnerships: The Capability Building programme within Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga (the National Institute of Research Excellence for Māori Development and Advancement); The University of Auckland; the University of Waikato; Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiarangi; Emeritus Professor, Les Williams; and current practitioners of supervision who are also supervisors of Māori doctoral students.*

The project aims to enhance understanding of the supervision practice of Māori doctoral candidates (from both students' and supervisors' perspectives), so as to improve outcomes for those candidates and their institutions. This project will be framed within kaupapa Māori methodology.

## **One-year contracts**

### **Mathematics: she'll be write!**

Project leader: Dr Tamsin Meaney, Senior Lecturer, University of Otago

*Partnerships: This is a partnership between the teachers at Kura Kaupapa Māori o te Koutu, Tamsin Meaney at the University of Otago, and Tony Trinick at the University of Auckland. Uenuku Fairhall, principal of Kura Kaupapa Māori o te Koutu, is also one of the primary researchers.*

This project aims to document the written mathematical genres that students are currently using, and identify the linguistic features that are associated with the different genres. It will also explore ways to improve students' mathematical writing. This will include investigating different pedagogical approaches, as well as considering other genres that could be used effectively in mathematics.

### **Teachers learning mathematics**

Project leaders: Associate Professor Bill Barton, and Senior Tutor Judy Paterson from the University of Auckland's Department of Mathematics

- *Partnerships: Eight secondary teachers from eight different schools in the Auckland region will work with two researchers from the Mathematics Education Unit in the Department of Mathematics of the University of Auckland, as part of a wider project in collaboration with teams lead by Professor Deborah Ball (The University of Michigan) and Dr Anne Watson (Oxford University).*

This study aims to investigate the development of mathematical knowledge for teaching amongst secondary teachers while they are in the classroom. Each of the eight teachers will examine one aspect of their mathematical knowledge in close detail. This will give an insight into the nature of the mathematical knowledge they need for teaching and their perceptions of the effectiveness and practicality of classroom-based mathematics learning as ongoing professional development.

### **Training on the job—how do home-based co-ordinators support carers to notice, recognise, and respond?**

Project leaders: Tracey Hooker, Frances Bleaken, and Sue Biggar of the Hamilton Childcare Services Trust

*Partnerships: Hamilton Childcare Services Trust and Dr Sally Peters from the University of Waikato.*

The focus of this research is on exploring the impact of training and support that co-ordinators provide for home-based carers in an early childhood service. The aim is to identify what factors seem to be important in helping carers to recognise and support children's learning. At the end of the research period, individual reflective interviews will take place with the carers and co-ordinators about the factors they believe have been influential in improving the carers' practice.

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