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Applicant Personal Details

Title: [Redacted]
Forenames: [Redacted]
Surname: [Redacted]
Preferred Name: [Redacted]
Initials: [Redacted]
Fellow: No
Address: THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
        HILLARY PLACE
        THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS
Town: LEEDS
Postcode: LS2 9JT
Email Address: [Redacted]
Telephone (work): [Redacted]
Co-Applicants:

Applicant Career Summary

Statement of Qualifications and Career:

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Present appointment: [Redacted]
Present employing institution: UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS, SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
PhD confirmation: Yes
Unpublished research:


Personal Statement:

Where did you hear of this scheme?: RESEARCH SUPPORT AT THE UNIVERSITY

Previous support dates:

Previous support description (title of project):
BARDA - 53134 LANGUAGE AND CHANGE IN DEAF EDUCATION: IMPLICATIONS FOR LANGUAGE CURRICULA. JUNE 2009 - NOT FUNDED.

Proposal

Subject: Education / Teacher or Other Professional Education

Title of project: Critical Thinking and Reflective Practice in Deaf Education
Abstract: This collaborative project will plan and develop ways of enhancing reflective practice and critical thinking for Teachers of the Deaf (ToD) in training in the UK. Representatives from the five ToD training providers in the UK will identify and evaluate Masters Level teaching and learning activities which promote the development of teachers' critical thinking and reflective practice to enhance the effectiveness of their work. This will involve an analysis of the evidence from research which will inform the selected learning and teaching materials across all the provision. A series of workshops will enable the programme providers to share their ideas and analysis and agree principles and practice. The two key outcomes of this project provide the basis of a larger study: The first is an agreed set of skills and experiences that ToDs require to be reflective practitioners and critical thinkers. The second comprises a set of learning and teaching activities identified to promote the above skills to be trialled and evaluated across the different provision.

Proposed programme:
Providing Masters Level courses for teachers implies the need to develop critical thinking and reflective practice. Uniquely, this study applies these principles to the mandatory teacher of the deaf training (ToD) which currently happens in 5 centres in the UK, drawing evidence from the existing literature. Whilst the main focus is in developing research informed teaching and learning for ToD students it is also envisaged that there will be two other major benefits. i) The reduction of professional isolation for the course providers and ii) the grounding of career trajectories for ToDs which will include research and/or further study and leadership potential.

All 5 institutions that provide ToD training in the UK are participants in this project. Each programme has its own method of delivery (campus, on-line, distance, blended) and area of specialism (e.g. audiology, sign bilingualism, early years) but all providers work to a common training framework with specified and externally identified outcomes, which are based on professional understanding, knowledge and skills.

As a group of providers we have identified that although we work to the same competencies we also share a much broader training agenda which is to enhance the abilities of our teachers in training to engage in reflective practice and critical thinking. ToDs are often the lone specialist in multi-disciplinary settings and need to be able to analyse and develop educational practices which draw on the unique resources that deaf children bring to the learning context to enhance their educational achievement.

This implies the ability to reflect on their work in classrooms and develop the academic assertiveness required to question thinking and approaches in deaf education, to challenge established views and to and innovate. Thus are ToDs appropriately equipped to meet the challenges of working within this field. This includes the ability to engage with and address both the social and medical models of deafness; to adapt to the very fast pace of changing audiological technology and the subsequent changing communication needs of deaf pupils and to critically navigate the often polarised deaf education research from allied fields (psychology, linguistics, audiology) and apply this to the educational context.

Our challenge therefore as trainers is to combine the development of teacher 'know how' and expertise with these critical and reflective skills. This has engaged us in critical reflection on our own training practices which we plan to take forward in a more systematic manner with the support of this planning and development grant.

The planning phase of this project will involve a review of the literature to establish a framework for identifying learning activities across the 5 programmes which have potential to promote these skills. Through a series of three workshops we will then i) analyse these activities against the framework, ii) improve and develop the activities and then iii) agree a set of common activities that that we will embed in 5 programmes to evaluate in follow-up work.
Planned research outputs:

We intend the outputs from this project to be interactive as well as informative with a view to fully engaging the deaf education community in the research process and the development of best practice. This includes the students and the stakeholders as well as academics and others involved in professional training. This will be achieved at a national level via the routes specified below and at a local level through specific engagement with the educational community associated with each programme. For example with regard to the Leeds programme (this is distance and blended learning provision) students will be involved in feedback and evaluation of the learning activities and their impact on practice via the blogs and discussion forums set up in the Virtual Learning Environment developed for this programme. Stakeholders will also be asked to evaluate impact on practice and to contribute to the development of training initiatives via the programme web page but also in face-to-face regional and national meetings.

The outputs from this project will include two publications as well as two national conference presentations and five regional/local seminars. In additional to this, the outcomes of the project will be made available on the web pages and the intranet of each institution to include a forum for feedback and discussion.

Plan of action:

Months 1-4: Phase 1 grounds the project in current research and educational practice. It entails a literature review and synthesis of features of reflective practice and critical thinking relevant to this context and the identification of ways in which they can be evidenced in professional training. This will provide a development and analysis framework for phases 2-4.

Months 5-8: Phase 2 involves analysis at individual programme level. Participants will identify and collate evidence from teaching and learning activities specific to their programme and delivery method which promote reflective practice and critical thinking skills according to the framework above. Workshop 1 will enable participants to share and discuss these individual and contrasting approaches and agree specific focus activities for analysis in phase 3.

Months 9-12: Phase 3 involves analysis of focus learning and teaching activities. Participants will use the framework developed in phase 1 to evaluate and analyse the impact of the agreed focus activities in their programme. This evaluation will include the views of students in training across all of the programmes. Outcomes from the analysis will be shared with the group at Workshop 2.

Months 13 – 16: Phase 4 involves development of the learning and teaching activities and research project planning. At Workshop 3 participants will agree a number of learning and teaching activities to be trialled and evaluated across all of the programmes over the next academic year. This will form the basis of a bid for a follow on grant to expand the project in terms of the participation and methodology.

Months 17-18: Phase 5 involves the wider reporting of these training goals, strategies and outcomes with Heads of Schools and Services for Deaf Pupils and also with colleagues involved in the leadership of parallel training provision beyond the UK. These dissemination plans are described in full in the section below.
1. Active involvement of the research users will be managed through the individual institutions' webpages and intranet for project feedback, discussion and user engagement with the follow on study.

2. The findings and outcomes will be disseminated to the local and national networks associated with the deaf education and training through:
   a. Two national annual conferences which directly reach the Deaf Education Community the i) Heads of Schools and Services for Deaf Children and the ii) British Association of Teachers of the Deaf (BATOD)
   b. The regional stakeholder and professional networks associated with each individual training programme via a research seminar in each setting.
   c. Publication in the professional and research journal (Deafness and Education International).
   d. An evaluation and overview on the national professional BATOD website and in the BATOD magazine

3. Outcomes and implications relevant to the wider field of professional training will be disseminated through:
   a. Individual institution-based seminars for the relevant academic groups or learning and teaching development programme as appropriate (e.g. the University of Leeds 'Talking about Teaching' seminars; web based case studies and annual Learning and Teaching Conference)
   b. Publication in a National Journal to reach the wider field of professional training at M Level in Special Education such as 'The Journal of Special Educational Needs' or 'Reflective Practice'.

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Other participants:

1. Project Team (5 in total)
   - [Redacted] (lead applicant) - University of Leeds
   - University of Hertfordshire
   - University of Manchester
   - Oxford Brookes University and University of Wales
   - University of Birmingham

2. Research Assistance (33 days over the 18 months)
   One part-time research assistant to be recruited on a part-time basis for phases 1 and 5 of the project to undertake the specific role outlined in the section below.

3. Project Associates
   - University of Hertfordshire
   - Moray House - University of Edinburgh
   - University of Birmingham
   - University of Manchester
   Of the British Association of Teachers of the Deaf

4. Student Cohorts
   Student cohorts for 2010 entry across all 5 programmes (recruitment numbers vary but this will amount to approximately 90 students in total)

5. Programme Stakeholders
   The stakeholders (funders and employers of the students) associated with the 2010 cohort of students. Numbers will vary but equate overall to the cohort numbers above.

Role of other participants:

1. Project team
   The core project team consists of the programme leaders of the 5 institutions offering teacher of the deaf training in England. This team, to be coordinated by the lead applicant, will work together on all aspects and through all phases of the project. Each programme leader brings different skills and experience to the project in terms of style of programme delivery (campus, on-line, distance, blended) and also area of expertise within deaf education (curriculum, language, literacy, audiology, attainment, sign bilingualism).

2. Research Assistant (RA)
   The RA will be employed for 33 days in total over the 18 month project for two of the five project phases. The job will be split into two blocks of time to coincide with a) the research planning phase and b) the analysis and reporting phase. They will work under the close supervision of the PI whose time commitment encompasses direct project involvement and mentoring of the RA for the role below:

PHASE 1 Project Planning and Literature Review
- To work with the PI to plan and coordinate the working plan for the project
- To set up a project web page and collate contact details
- To liaise with the project team to organise schedule of workshops
- To undertake the preliminary literature and data base search to review key research in the area
- To collate the key references and review materials
- To synthesise key issues in the literature
- To provide summary reports for the project team to present the information at each stage
- To contribute to development of the analysis framework
PHASE 5 Project Outcomes Analysis and Reporting
• To contribute to the analysis of the project data
• To collate and enter project outcomes information onto the project web-page
• To coordinate the reporting of project outcomes to participants and organisations involved
• To organise the practical aspects of the final dissemination workshops

We have not identified a specific individual but the detailed job specification requires:

Qualifications:
A relevant degree which demonstrates the ability to engage in analysis, research and scholarship.

Experience:
Experience of literature review and synthesis such as for study at Masters or Doctoral Level
Experience of reporting and sharing complex information
Experience of liaising with and coordinating people
Experience of organising and managing meetings

Skills
To be able to make use of standard techniques and methods for literature and data base searches
Well organised, efficient and reliable and able to plan and utilise own time effectively.
Good communication skills: able to communicate organisational as well as more complex information
Able to liaise and network with colleagues and also build external links and relationships.
Ability to take the initiative and work independently and solve problems
Ability to actively participate as a member of a research team

Preferred:
Previous experience of supporting research projects or working in a research team
Familiarity with the literature around professional learning relating to reflective practice and critical thinking
Familiarity with the field of deaf education and training

3. Project associates
The group of project associates comprises deaf education professionals and academic tutors who are involved in teachers of the deaf training additional to the core project team. This group will Work with the students and the materials and contribute to the evaluations and feedback process.

4. Student cohorts
The student cohorts from each training programme will be involved in terms of their participation in the learning activities throughout and they will also be invited to give feedback and evaluate identified teaching and learning activities.

5. Programme Stakeholders
The stakeholders associated with each programme will be informed about and indirectly involved in the early stages of the project as all programme leaders will liaise with them about the research planning. Stakeholders will be more fully involved at the evaluation stage as their feedback on activities and student learning will be sought. They will have a central role at the dissemination stage as the main beneficiaries of the research and consultants for the follow on project.
Added value of collaboration: This project provides a unique opportunity for all of the UK Teacher of the Deaf training providers to work together to identify pedagogical approaches in training which help teachers to become reflective and critical thinkers. This is clearly important for practice in schools but the urgency for this project centres on the pressing need to build a more robust deaf education research community. Currently the group of professionals engaged in teacher of the deaf preparation and research in deaf education in the UK is very small (less than 10) and it is diminishing as more than half of the group are nearing retirement. Recruiting suitably qualified and skilled teachers of the deaf to lead professionally and also to take research and training forward is currently problematic because teachers of the deaf typically lack the necessary experience and confidence to engage in the required academic activities. One of the benefits envisaged for this project is therefore the increased potential within the teacher of the deaf population to contribute to and develop research and pedagogy for the future.

Endangered or Emerging Subject Area: No, there are no special ethical issues arising from this programme.

Ethical approval obtained: Yes, ethical approval for this project will be obtained via the normal University of Leeds application procedures.

Ethical approval (more information): NO

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Total grant requested: 6631.00

Start Date: 01/09/2010

Duration (Years): 2
Justification:
The project requires 33 days of research assistance in total over the 18 months and expenses to cover 3 workshops in Leeds for the 5 core participants.

Year 1 will involve research assistance for phase 1 of the project as outlined in the proposal and 2 project meetings with all participants in Leeds:

a) 22 days research assistance for project planning and literature review = £3088:
   To work with the PI to plan and coordinate the working plan for the project
   To set up a project web page and collate contact details
   To liaise with the project team to organise schedule of workshops
   To undertake the preliminary literature and data base search to review key research in the area
   To collate the key references and review materials
   To synthesise key issues in the literature
   To provide summary reports for the project team to present the information at each stage
   To contribute to development of the analysis framework

b) 2 Project meetings travel in Leeds:
   Two London-based members' return travel to Leeds at £200 pp (same day return) plus £30 subsistence pp x 2 meetings = £920
   One Birmingham-based member travel to Leeds at £90 (same day return) plus £30 subsistence x 2 meetings = £240
   One Manchester-based member travel to Leeds at £22 (same day return) plus £30 subsistence x 2 meetings = £104

Year 2 will involve research assistance for phase 5 as outlined in the proposal and the third workshop in Leeds with all participants:

a) 11 days research assistance Project Outcomes Analysis and Reporting = £1647:
   To contribute to the analysis of the project data
   To collate and enter project outcomes information onto the project web-page
   To coordinate the reporting of project outcomes to participants and organisations involved
   To organise the practical aspects of the final dissemination workshops

b) Final project meetings travel in Leeds:
   Two London-based members' return travel to Leeds at £200 pp (same day return) plus £30 subsistence pp x 1 meeting = £460
   One Birmingham-based member travel to Leeds at £90 (same day return) plus £30 subsistence x 1 meeting = £120
   One Manchester-based member travel to Leeds at £22 (same day return) plus £30 subsistence x 1 meeting = £52

Name of private fund: