



## Teachers as Researchers: **REAL Learning Projects for Schools**

**REAL Learning Projects for Schools** are professional development opportunities which are firmly classroom based, addressing the needs of the school, teachers and pupils. The project focus is likely to be one which is of particular relevance in meeting the development needs of the school. It may well be influenced by educational issues that have been identified in the School Development Plan, the School Evaluation Form (SEF) or even as the result of an OfSTED inspection.

**REAL Learning Projects for Schools** are run in partnership with Bath Spa University and provide a funded route for teachers to undertake school-based professional development which can be accredited on a Master's programme. This TDA funding can provide resources for the teachers in a school to engage in reflective teaching.

**REAL Learning Projects for Schools** create real educational networks:

*Networks are purposeful social entities characterised by a commitment to quality, rigour, and a focus on outcomes. They are also an effective means of supporting innovation in times of change. In education, networks promote the dissemination of good practice, enhance the professional development of teachers, support capacity building in school,...*

David Hopkins

**REAL Learning Projects for Schools** are 'real' because the learning is the result of professional development which meets the real needs of the school, the real professional needs of teaching staff and has real learning outcomes for pupils. They are real because projects inhabit the fabric of the school over a period of time; are systematic in their approach to practical classroom issues and benefit the whole educational community. Most importantly, **REAL Learning Projects for Schools** enable school policy to be fashioned by what happens in classrooms rather than being imposed.

*It is teachers who, in the end, will change the world of the school by understanding it.*

Lawrence Stenhouse

### WHAT WILL I LEARN?

- How to identify a specific interest, or area for development, within your professional practice;
- How to draw up an action plan and choose suitable research methods that will enable you to explore this interest;
- How to carry out and keep a diary of your school actions;
- How to monitor and evaluate what happens;
- How your findings are informing and improving your professional life and the pupils you teach.
- Understand the ways in which your research might have wider professional significance and how to communicate this with colleagues and the wider educational community.

## WHAT WILL I DO?

- Teachers who are involved in **REAL Learning Projects for Schools** are given resources, training and time to reflect on their own practice and CPD within the school context
- Teachers, who engage in **REAL Learning Projects for Schools**, work on small scale action research projects based on their day to day teaching. The work is financed by the TDA and is professionally supported by a team of experienced CPD tutors

## TALES FROM THE CLASSROOM

*Increasingly, I felt that in order for the school community to truly buy into our mission statement ( Learning and Growing Together) we had to be seen to be engaged in constant reflection on our practice- a school that talks about learning , learns!*

*Having the chance to think outside the box has given me a much needed boost and reinvigorated a love of learning for myself as much as the children. It provides a mixture of fear and thrill as some new ideas feel like flying without a parachute - but each new experience leads to another!*

*Having a sustainable approach to the provision of MFL is vital to the development of the subject and the ongoing professional practice of a forward looking school. None of this was happening before I started this project.*

(Taken from teacher evaluations 2006 – 2007)

## WHAT WILL I EARN?

Work-based enquiry is a feature of this programme from which participants may obtain a 'Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Learning' or a Bath Spa University 'Certificate of Participation in Professional Development'.

## WHEN AND WHERE DO I GO?

Nowhere; with **REAL Learning Projects for Schools** the university comes to you: ... *a university is more than a collection of buildings. It's about people, ideas, inspiration, knowledge and critique. Bath Spa reaches out beyond its campus to be the university in your school or setting: to support you and to bring the ethos of research and critical reflection which will improve the future for children.*

(Professor Stephen Ward: Dean of the School of Education)

## HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

**REAL Learning Projects for Schools** provides a realistic and practical route to a Masters degree at no cost to the teachers or the school. Schools, in fact, receive £150.00 per teacher enrolling on the programme to facilitate their work; an attractive package in the light of potentially meeting the needs of the school, the teacher and supporting the CPD budget!

## Find out more?

Further information can be obtained by contacting:

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### **Examples of potential *REAL* Learning Projects**

- Embedding Assessment for Learning
- The use of intervention programmes to improve writing
- Developing the role of the subject leader
- Forging cross - curricular links with Literacy and ICT
- Embedding critical thinking skills into everyday classroom practice
- Increasing pupil and parent involvement in developing Numeracy in Year 2
- Using Design technology to improve Boy's achievement
- Embedding 'Pedagogy and Practice'
- Establishing a culture of coaching and mentoring
- Individual teacher projects identified through Performance Management
- Mainstreaming G&T provision in the classroom
- Any specific area related to the professional standards for teachers