

ESRC Meeting of Minds Fellowship: Report

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From: Paul Warmington

To: James O'Toole

1 Details

TLRP MOM Fellowship
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Amount: £300

2 Key aims/ specific training and development needs

- a. opportunities for ongoing dialogue with more senior academics, in order to explore ways in which research proposals can address complex social science problems through interdisciplinary approaches and dialogue with partners and stakeholders
- b. guidance on identifying appropriate research sponsors
- c. guidance on approaches to complex project management
- d. identifying ways to integrate appropriate quality processes and safeguards into research proposals
- e. direction in building upon my current body of publications, with a view to future collaborative writing and producing monograph publications
- f. the 'social practices' work of enhancing my networks with academics, researchers and research users, with a view to future research collaboration

- g. developing understanding of research leadership skills that go beyond day-to-day management concerns and include e.g. development of research communities
- h. identifying future professional development opportunities (beyond the life of the mentorship programme).

3 Outcomes of the MOM Fellowship

My reasons for applying for the MOM Fellowship were to:

- provide opportunity for structured, mentored reflection on how to take forward my key research interests as my four year role managing the TLRP project, *Learning in and for Interagency Working* (directed by Harry Daniels and Anne Edwards) drew to a close
- to develop networks with HE researchers who have similar research interests
- ultimately to develop a small grant research proposal for submission to ESRC.

September – December 2006

I have a particular interest in bringing together two strands of my research interests: activity theory informed research into work-related learning and research into race, ethnicity and education. In summer/ autumn 2006 I drafted a research plan for a study of diversity in the professions, specifically how BME professionals' personal social networks might form a resource/ space for work-related learning. I presented this to Harry Daniels in our initial meeting. He was excited by the plan and confident that it addressed an existing gap in sociocultural/ activity theory research into work-related learning.

Having identified this research interest for development into a full research proposal earlier than I had envisaged at the time of application to MOM enabled me to begin activities designed to broaden my approaches to research design, interdisciplinary approaches, budgeting, locating potential partners and dissemination. I began building networks with academics with similar research interests. This led to productive, sometimes unexpected outcomes. I organised two meetings with researchers from Manchester Metropolitan University's Education and Social Research Institute, Lorna Roberts and Lisa Mazzei. They expressed interest in working around emergent critical race theory. Our meeting led to two initiatives a well reviewed but unsuccessful application for an ESRC seminar series and a **successfully submitted keynote symposium that was presented at 2007's BERA Conference**. This fruitful relationship enabled me to begin developing a conceptual framework for the proposed research.

January – June 2007

I produced a paper drawing together conceptual ideas on race, ethnicity and education for presentation at the Discourse Power Resistance Conference in March 2007. Following the conference, I was asked to develop the conference paper into a **chapter for an edited collection: J. Satterthwaite, M. Watts, H. Piper (Eds.) *Discourse Power Resistance: talking truth to power* (London: Trentham)**.

In May 2007 I submitted a paper that built on these ideas to the journal, *Race, Ethnicity and Education*. **That paper was accepted for publication at the beginning of 2008.**

I built further academic links in a series of meetings with members of HEA's Centre for Sociology, Anthropology and Politics (C-SAP). In particular, my meetings with Shirin Housee (University of

Wolverhampton), Kevin Hylton (Leeds Metropolitan) and developed into an informal peer forum for testing out new concepts and draft papers on race, ethnicity and education.

July 2007 – December 2007

In September 2007 I successfully presented a paper as part of the **BERA 2007 Critical Race Theory symposium** and a second paper at the **Birmingham 'Teaching Race' conference organised by HEA's Centre for Sociology, Anthropology and Politics (C-SAP)**.

After the C-SAP event I was invited to contribute a **paper to C-SAP's new online journal *Enhancing Learning in the Social Sciences (EliSS)***.

2008

I used MOM funding to travel to C-SAP's Race-ing Forward Conference at the University of Northampton in February 2008, which was another important networking opportunity. I also used MOM funding to attend the inaugural conference of Leeds Metropolitan University's Centre for Research into Diversity in the Professions; I have since been invited to present a future paper to the new centre.

Throughout this period I continued to develop my ESRC small grants proposal, which is close to being ready for submission. I intend to meet once more with Harry Daniels at the University of Bath.

4 Use of funding

The MOM Fellowship funding has enabled me to attend meetings with my mentor at the University of Bath, to attend networking meetings with colleagues at MMU, attend the Northampton C-SAP Conference and Leeds Met's inauguration of the Centre for Research into Diversity in the Professions in February 2008. In doing so, I have refined my key concepts, research design and, importantly, have identified potential partners, steering group members and interviewees and research users. The structure of meetings/ consultations altered somewhat from that envisaged in my original MOM proposal but this was due to pursuing unforeseen opportunities for research, networking and conference paper development. Initial outputs have exceeded my original expectations and only the research proposal remains to be completed.

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