

Bath Spa University: School of Education
Application for Research Centre Funding: Centre for Educational Innovation and Technology (CEIT)

Title of proposed activity

Joint bid for EU funding for an e-learning project between CEIT, University of Cadiz and the University of Malta.

A summary of the proposed activity

Members of CEIT will travel to the University of Cadiz for the following purposes:

1. To work with Prof. Rabasco at the University of Cadiz and Mario Camilleri and/or Dr Leonard Bezzina from the Department of Mathematics, Science & Technical Education, University of Malta to develop a substantial proposal (up to €250K) for a project to develop trans-European professional masters modules in e-learning for teachers/trainers, for consideration by the Leonardo EU funding stream.
2. To identify a specialist EU funding application writer from either of the collaborating universities to assist with the assembly of the bid.
3. To give a joint research seminar/workshop at the University of Cadiz on our research into the role of 'e-learning to support teachers' critical and creative thinking' in the school, further and higher education sectors.
4. To audit the role that e-learning plays in supporting CPD activity in the University of Cadiz and identify common development needs that can become the focus of the EU project proposal above.

A list of the staff involved in the proposed activity and their roles

Dr Steven J Coombs – To lead the project and develop the contact network across EU partners and recruit key contacts from Portugal to become members of CEIT and participate as joint research stakeholders. To help prepare any joint collaborative EU bid.

Professor Francisco Pavon Rabasco – To develop joint elearning project rationale and help with the bid writing. Also to help identify and recruit EU funding application support within the University of Cadiz. We would also seek to nominate Professor Rabasco as a visiting professor to the CEIT under any future recognised BSU protocol that allows this academic knowledge exchange to happen.

Geoff White – To help develop the e-learning project rationale with potential partners from the University of Malta and support them in any joint bid writing tasks.

Jim Crawley – To also help to develop the e-learning project rationale and advise on CPD design of any joint modules developed and also their application for FHE targets.

A detailed rationale for the proposed activity

The role of e-learning to support teachers' critical and creative thinking in the school, further and higher education sectors has been a focus of international research for over a decade. This has been the case ever since the government of Singapore announced a national initiative in 1997 entitled 'Thinking Schools, Learning Nation' that sought to integrate critical and creative thinking into the national curriculum underpinned by the use of ICT and novel pedagogical assessment approaches linked to project work – see <http://www3.moe.edu.sg/bluesky/tllm.htm>. The approach is to transform teaching with new pedagogical approaches that seek to integrate educational technologies into the classroom in an innovative way through new e-learning strategies. Likewise, there have been similar policies in the US (via their ISTE standards), UK (DfES e-learning strategy) and across other European countries. Thus, developing e-learning systems to support teacher professional development as part of accredited professional development is timely given the UK's recent commitment to develop a Master's in Teaching and Learning for the entire teaching profession that includes e-learning as a key curriculum strategy to improve the quality of teaching and learning in general. The Professional Masters Programme (PMP) at BSU offers a wide range of Awards including one entitled Learning and Knowledge Technology that would be developed through this partnership for EU-wide CPD career access across all partner institutions aligned to the Bologna agreement for credit transfer and module compatibility.

The proposed bid for funding from the EU requires a minimum of three EU countries as key collaborative partners. This requires considerable prior contact building and networking. A number of EU funds usually operate upon the basis of scoping projects with an initial small grant in order to act as a catalyst for a larger proposal. Our existing links with the University of Cadiz via Prof. Rabasco and with the University of Malta through the close links built up there by Geoff White will be built upon with the aim of developing such a proposal.

The Head of the CEIT has had successful previous experience of writing research grant bids in the area of e-learning at this and other universities (£5K from ESCalate in 2007-8, \$3M in matched funding with the IT industry from the US 'Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers to Use Technology' in 2001-2, S\$125K from Singapore's Ministry of Education in 1999-2000, S\$478 from Singapore's Ministry of Education in 1997-2000). This experience will be combined with the expertise of Professor Francisco Pavon Rabasco, who also has extensive bid writing experience in the field of e-learning research projects; details of his National project across Spain can be found on the BSU CEIT website at:

<http://www.bathspa.ac.uk/schools/education/research/docs/ceit-e-learning.ppt>

A breakdown of resources required and their cost

Funded Activity	Est. Cost
Return travel Bath to Cadiz x 3 @ £140	£420
Accommodation in Cadiz x 3 people x 3 nights @ £70	£630
Subsistence x 3 people x 3 days @ £30	£270
Car hire to visit schools in Spain and University campus at Cadiz etc 3 days for 3 people @ £40/ day	£120

Administrative support to complete future EU bid x 6 days @ £150	£900
Total Requested Grant:	£2,340

Statement of expected outcomes from the activity

The expected outcomes from this activity are as follows:

1. An EU research project proposal to be submitted by the end of 2009 relative to the deadline for application to the EU Leonardo funding stream
<http://www.leonardo.org.uk/>
2. Closer academic and strategic links between CEIT at BSU and Cadiz University in Spain, enabling us to bid jointly for future research funding from EU and other potential sources.
3. Enhanced understanding across the members of CEIT of the nature of how critical and creative thinking activities can be embedded in e-learning courseware platforms and become a 'community of practice' for CPD sustainable life-long learning.. This knowledge exchange can be enabled through developing resources for our mutual respective research centre websites and participating in research seminar discussions and where relevant to organise visits to meet practitioners in schools/universities etc.
4. To enable CEIT project participants to engage in research activity and shared opportunities for dissemination.

A statement on how the activity will promote future activities of CEIT and enhance the reputation of research at the university.

The proposed activity will promote the future activities of CEIT in the following ways:

1. If the EU grant application is successful, the centre will expand to take on paid research staff and project managers with additional administrative support and will be fully engaged in a major collaborative EU-wide research project likely to enhance the reputation of BSU through publicity and several joint academic publications.
2. It will strengthen CEITs links with other similar university research centres in Spain and Malta.

The activity will enhance the reputation of CEIT as follows:

1. Presenting a research seminar at Cadiz University will raise awareness of CEIT's expertise and range of activities, including the innovative PMP and its academic adaptation to the Bologna protocol. This will reflect well upon the status of applied pedagogical research at BSU as well as increase potential demand for EU enrolment onto the PMP in general.
2. If the EU Leonardo funding application is successful, the publicity generated will benefit CEIT and BSU both locally, nationally and across the EU in general.

A statement of support from the head of the centre indicating how the bid will contribute to the aims and aspirations of the centre.

As head of CEIT I wholeheartedly support this initiative, which builds upon our growing body of research in the field of 'e-learning' and would help us to forge stronger strategic links with other international university research centres across EU member states. It will also help CEIT to attract new external members from other universities with similar research interests and thereby enhance the reputation of BSU as a centre of excellence within this growing research field.

A statement of support from the relevant Head of School

TBA