Doctorate in Professional Practice

Assignment 3: Practitioner Learning Project

BMDP7002

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**INCLUDING AND SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS:
ARE TEACHING ASSISTANTS THE ANSWER?**

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Introduction

TA will be used as a comprehensive label that encompasses the various titles and roles as described by Bosanquet et al. (2021).

The acronym ALN(s) will be used to refer to Additional Learning Needs, as defined by the Welsh Government (2022).

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Reflections

Policymakers must draw on best practices to ensure optimal provision for future generations

Insufficient research on TAs' roles, which is a critical gap that needs to be addressed

Blatchford et al. (2012) and Webster et al. (2013)

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Reflections

The role, impact, and training requirements of TAs are significantly under-researched (Frater 2023)

This is particularly important in Further and Higher Education (Frater 2023)

Student needs should guide the practical implementation, utilising well-trained, confident, and enthusiastic TAs (Webster et al., 2021).

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Reflections

All staff should be involved in discussions and developments related to inclusion (Webster et al., 2021).

To help students progress in their learning, staff should receive training in strategies for offering support to pupils (Welsh Government, 2021)

Is the extra £20 million be sufficient (Welsh Government, 2017).

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Reflections

There has been a significant reduction in funding In the FE sector (ATL, 2017).

There are significant gaps in understanding the effects of the ALN Bill in Wales, particularly concerning its design and implementation

Need for more comprehensive studies Webster (2024)

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Source Analysis

Diverse range of sources (Mahrool, 2021)

Assess the credibility, relevance, and biases of each source, but this was not always possible (Galvan & Galvan, 2017).

I questioned whether the results were generalisable or if there were any potential conflicts of interest in the research (Hempel, 2020).

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Comparison and Synthesis

Compared differing and complementary viewpoints (Luft, et al., 2022).

The literature review was organised thematically Dunleavy (2017)

Identifying and discussing key themes (Cohen, et al., 2018)

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Acknowledging Biases

I reflected on my own assumptions (Adu & Miles, 2023)

I had not previously considered that the TAs that were working alongside me might be underprepared for the classroom setting

As a direct consequence of my research, my own practice will alter

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Insufficient Research & Critical Questions

There is a notable lack of literature assessing the impact of the new Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales and the Curriculum for Wales

Limited scope in this study as I was unable to undertake the collection of primary data

An under-reported and important area for further research

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Insufficient Research & Critical Questions

As a lecturer who works alongside TAs, I may be compromised when collecting primary data (Aburn, et al. 2021)

Potential imbalance in the power dynamic between myself and potential participants (Moss, et al., 2020).

I could enable me to complete a high quality piece of research using a hermeneutic phenomenological approach (Cohen, et al., 2018)

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Conclusion

My conclusion reflected:

- A balanced view of the literature presented (Dunleavy, 2017)
- I acknowledged both strengths and limitations of the use of TAs in an educational setting (Hempel, 2020).
- I critically reflected and presented a finding using the data available
- I recognise further research is necessary.

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