

Statement of Purpose

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"Education isn't filling a bucket, but lighting a fire", these immortal words by W B Yeats embody the essence of education. From a Freelance language trainer to an English language instructor at the British Council Division, my professional journey has been a medley of paths less travelled by. Disregarding raised eyebrows, and resisting conventionality to pursue my passion for education, I have chiselled my own path to excellence. It was during my interaction with a batch of teachers I was training at the British Council, that I realised the crippling effect of anxiety in the teaching-learning domain. Their anxiousness about feedback and the inability to maintain a work-life balance in the highly demanding teaching profession intrigued me. Reading 'Language teacher Psychology', Mercer and Kostoulas (2018) gave me further insights, while podcasts and articles by Dr.Christina Gkonou on anxiety, psychological well being and social and emotional learning in education concretised my desire to pursue my PhD in anxiety issues amongst teachers. As an avid educationist, I am keen to unravel the conundrum of anxiety issues in the realm of teaching-learning; a PhD in Education from your prestigious university will empower me with profound knowledge, research skills and fortitude to give wings to this dream.

Always a frontrunner in all walks of life, whether academics, co-curricular or social, my educational journey began with a Bachelors Degree (Honours) in Geology from the University of Delhi. My love for teaching and flair for the English Language found me working with Speak On- An English Home as a Freelance English Trainer. Moving on to NIIT Ltd as a Full-time English Faculty, I taught a range of adult classes from Elementary to Advanced, including preparatory classes for IELTS and BEC. Learning and growing on the job, I was instrumental in designing course material for a corporate course, 'Certificate in English Communication for the Workplace'. Simultaneously, I pursued a Post Graduate Programme in Advertising and Public Relations from the coveted Mudra Institute of Communications to hone my communication skills. The fall of 2016 presented me with a transformative opportunity to study at International House London, UK, for CELTA, (Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) as well as King's College, London for MA TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages). This invaluable learning experience laid a sound foundation for a career in education, delving deep into Language teaching Methodology, Analysing English for Learning and Teaching and Research, Theory and Practice of Second/ Additional Language Learning. I also gained invaluable international experience as a Volunteer English Teacher at Cardinal Hume Centre, London. Covering classes for absent teachers and teaching a nominated student (adult) with English learning (reading, writing, and speaking) for the ESOL Entry 3 Level exam, gave me practical insights into the ESOL curriculum. The MA program gave me a taste for research, where the dissertation thesis was based on teachers' attitudes towards CPD (Continuing Professional Development) in Indian ELT settings. My case study focusing on individual learner differences and the interplay of social factors in the process of language learning established the

relationship between learner motivation and anxiety in teaching English as a second/ foreign language. Perhaps the proudest moment was earning a distinction (71%) for the same. My MA experience at Kings has been inlaid with rich experiences; knowledge imparted by the professors, learning from the rich diversity of the class and the seminal research work during the dissertation. The most valuable takeaway was the opportunity to develop critical thinking and unleashing creativity. It has transformed the way I approach teaching, research or communicate. The last two years have seen me work as a Freelance English Instructor, working with Institutions of merit like the British Council Division, British High Commission, New Delhi, BC Examinations and English Services India Pvt Ltd. and ILSC India Private Limited. As a trainer, I have taught a wide range of adult and young learner across all levels, effectively using ICT to enhance learning, ensuring team spirit and better learning outcomes. I also assisted the Academic Manager in reviewing the Spoken English course at the British Council Teaching Centre in New Delhi. Based on our recommendations, the course was strengthened with detailed notes, special language focus, contextualizing vocabulary and set learning outcomes, resulting in a (???%) increase in re-registration. Another action Research focussed on reducing anxiety and promoting positive emotions in the language classroom (60 participants from DLF Foundation including Caddy, F&B Staff, firemen, security staff, stewards, ball boys and locker attendants).

At this juncture in my career progression, today I find myself poised on the cusp of change, ready to explore the different facets of education through a PhD. I am keen to achieve a critical understanding of teaching theories and to obtain a solid grounding in research methodology. My interests lie in plumbing the depths of teacher emotions, emotional labour, teacher burnout and wellbeing, the oft-neglected areas of teaching-learning. My educational experiences in the UK give me the confidence that a PhD from the University of Stirling will be indispensable for achieving my long-term vision to delve into advanced interdisciplinary research in this field.

The UK is a pioneer in the field of ELT research and is thus an ideal platform for my specialisation in TESOL research. The University of Stirling is a trailblazer in the field, a catalyst for change, a harbinger of a brighter future. It wouldn't be hyperbolic to say that what makes the University so momentous is its people. The university is a melange of exceptional academicians, a diverse student community and altruists. It will provide me with an unparalleled opportunity to learn from preeminent professors and its flexible course structure will enable me to develop research on my own chosen topics in ways that are deeply connected to my professional interests. Transcending international borders, I look forward to broadening my horizons with insights into global advances in teaching-learning methodology and normalising research skills with my existing teaching methods. I am especially excited at the prospect of working under internationally renowned academics in the TESOL unit of Education Studies such as Adrian Blackledge, Angela Creese, and Dr. Fiona Copland. Prof Copland's research in language teaching pedagogy aligns with my interests and her vast experience in supervising doctoral students on topics surrounding the psychological

dimensions of language learning and teaching will only enhance my research.

The educational pedagogy and vision of Stirling align with my philosophy of 'education with a purpose'. I bring with me rich experiences in the domain of education, live case studies to research and explore, apart from the hunger to make a positive difference in the world of Education. I am confident that a PhD from your illustrious university will set me on the path to becoming an autonomous researcher in TESOL, proficient in the use of different research methods, making an impactful contribution to scholarly knowledge and professional practice.