College Teaching Fund 2012
Report 6 Months

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<th>Title of Project</th>
<th>Language Learning through Theatre and Translation</th>
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<td>French; German</td>
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**PROJECT DETAILED**

**Outputs:** What has been produced thus far?

At this stage in the project we did not expect to have any specific outputs.

**Outcomes/Impact:** To what extent are you achieving the original aims of the project? Please include examples where possible.

The original aims of the project are being met, and, in some ways, surpassed. The project has run consistently from September 2012 through first and second semesters and will continue to run during the exam term. At the beginning of the project we decided to form a company, which we have called ‘King’s Moving Theatre Company’ so that students have a real sense of belonging to a project to which they all contribute in their own ways and according to their own strengths, while building the confidence to move beyond these into areas in which they formerly felt weakest. As proposed when the project was accepted, we immediately opened the project up to students from all modern languages, and now have a company that crosses Spanish, Portuguese, French and German (although we have also incorporated Farsi, Italian and Luxembourgian). The original goals of working with translated texts, developing awareness of cultural difference and making students agents of a rigorous process of learning have all been achieved through the workshops. In these, we work, through theatre techniques, on creating a shared space of mutual confidence and trust. In this way, we create an environment for experimentation, and each week we have developed new techniques for thinking of translating and therefore thinking as being in movement, so that language and the understanding of cultural difference is understood as lived and understood through the corporeal. This means that we have created a set of resources for future development, which include: language translation games; improvisation techniques; translated texts; video evidence for future development. There is a core of 15 students every week, and we have a good body of work to build on for the future.
**Supportive factors:** What are the main factors that are contributing to the successful progress of the project?

There is one key factor that contributes to the successful progress of the project: commitment. Students turn up every week, and are prepared to work hard and be challenged. They prepare interesting work that relates to topics or texts that they are studying in their degree, or to experiences they have had. One student has been involved with PEN and brought along a poem by an imprisoned Cameroonian poet; others have translated from work they have read in classes and see as interesting for the company; others have devised exercises for improvisation and translation.

**Challenges:** Have you experienced any barriers or challenges in developing your project? What could be done to support innovation in the curriculum?

The main factor is always time. Our project is very ambitious, and in order to achieve all aims, especially those of dissemination, we will have to continue next year.

**Recommendations:** Based on your projects, what recommendations would you make for improving the curriculum and student experience generally? Are there any wider implications of your project for the College/University undergraduate and/or postgraduate curriculum? In particular what would be the implications of introducing your innovation on a large scale across a range of disciplines?

At the moment, I would not want to suggest anything concrete, since I haven’t written up a full account of the project. However, it is clear from the project that students respond very well to thinking about their learning, and languages in particular, as something that has to do with their active and physical engagement with the environment in which they are learning and developing their skills. What I want to have gained by the end of the project is a real sense of how to distil this into skills and approaches to knowledge and learning. And that is what the writing of a methodology will do.

**Dissemination:** Has the project been shared with colleagues within and beyond the institution yet? What are you plans to do so?

Our first key sharing will be with K+ students on 24 April, when we will do a workshop based on our ideas and work over the last 6 months. We have worked with Widening Participation on this, and will develop more activities, including going into schools. We will also organise our ‘festival’ for later in the year, and through it engage with teachers and pupils through both showcasing our work and sharing our methodology.