

Teacher training and development ...

Graduate Teacher Programme



A case study

Shireland Language College is an 11–18 mixed comprehensive of over 1,000 students in Smethwick, West Midlands. Sally-Ann Tomkins, Teacher of German, here pays tribute to her colleague, Mohammed Parviz, and the Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP), which enabled him to continue working at the school while achieving Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).

Our local community is linguistically and culturally diverse and Shireland Language College has been offering Urdu to students for over ten years. The success and rigour with which this provision has been developed has been greatly due to the contribution Mohammed Parviz has made to the World Languages department since joining in September 1995. To give a detailed history and profile, he relocated with his family to the UK from Pakistan in 1986, partway through a degree course. He started working for Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council as a community worker where he developed Urdu and English interpretation and translation skills. In 1989, alongside this job, he took up a post at a primary school as a part-time community languages teacher. Parviz also organised playgroups for the Asian community for children aged from 7 to 15 in the summer holidays.

In order to further his teaching skills, Parviz successfully completed an RSA diploma in teaching community languages¹ and then, in 1995, he began working as an Urdu teacher at both Holly Lodge and Shireland Language

College. He wanted his teaching career to lead to promotion and a more financially secure future, as well as professional recognition for his teaching experience, but he was unable to apply for any route to QTS without recognised graduate status. After consultation with UK NARIC², he spent two years of rigorous study to gain a top-up qualification for his unfinished degree course via the (now Chartered) Institute of Linguists³.

In the meantime, Shireland High School became Shireland Language College and provision for Urdu was expanded to include Key Stage 4, so Parviz began teaching full-time at Shireland. He devised new schemes of work and learning targets for each module, as well as a rich bank of teaching materials, often adapting French and German resources. Parviz also integrated the use of ICT into his teaching, making regular use of the Tandberg multimedia centre and he is currently working on Urdu materials for the interactive whiteboard. His room display creates a superb learning environment, bringing together students' work with maps of Pakistan in a mix of eastern and western culture. He encourages his students to be proud of their language and culture and to produce their best within realistic contexts. His examination results over consecutive years confirm this.

Having explored the different routes to gaining QTS, in 1999 Parviz put himself forward for a GTP programme at the University of Wolverhampton with the recommendation of the MFL department and, following a successful interview, he was accepted. To complete the programme, which was spread over a number of years, Parviz built up a portfolio of evidence and attended in-house ICT training and sessions for Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) as he worked towards meeting the Standards for QTS. Shireland appointed a mentor to Parviz, who, through weekly meetings and regular lesson observations, supported him in producing his portfolio. Parviz also sat numeracy, literacy and ICT skills tests at a local test centre – a requirement for all qualifying teachers. These were a real challenge

initially, but Parviz persevered and, after a couple of attempts, passed them all.

Parviz's determination, energy and commitment have ensured that Urdu is a successful and vital aspect of the World Languages curriculum at Shireland Language College. Achieving QTS has given him more self-confidence and a better sense of professional worth among his colleagues. He provides an excellent role model for our students and is an outstanding colleague and hard-working teacher who richly deserves his full professional status.

Sally-Ann Tomkins | Teacher of German, Shireland Language College

¹ RSA has since merged with UCLES to become OCR. Unfortunately, this certificate is no longer offered.

² UK NARIC www.naric.org.uk

³ Chartered Institute of Linguists www.iol.org.uk

The GTP: An employment-based route

The GTP leads to the award of QTS on successful completion. It usually lasts a year and combines on-the-job training with professional duties in the school. It is for graduate trainees who have the maturity and relevant experience to cope with an important teaching load at the same time as their training. GTP trainees receive a monthly salary usually based on the unqualified teachers' scale, depending on the amount of teaching they are undertaking. The GTP takes many different forms; the way to get started may be to speak to your current school, identify a local Employment-Based Teacher Training Provider (EBTTP) or Designated Recommending Body (DRB), or to approach a school which teaches your language.

Consult the Training and Development Agency for Schools. Tel: 01245 454 444. E-mail: grtp@ttainfo.co.uk. www.tda.gov.uk