

# Teacher training and development ...

## Modern Languages extension course opportunities

**Many teachers interested in gaining QTS find it hard to get a place on a teacher training course because they cannot offer a second language. If a trainee teacher (on either PGCE or GTP) has only Urdu, for example, the school(s) may not have enough classes for them to teach in order to gain sufficient teaching experience. A trainee teacher of a community language who can also teach French, German or Spanish has a better chance of gaining a training place and is also more employable once qualified.**

Modern Languages extension courses are of fourteen weeks' duration, full-time and intensive and develop skills in French or German to a level sufficient for teaching in Key Stage 3 (pupils aged 11–14). Course participants are paid a bursary during the course and must hold an offer of a PGCE or GTP place to be accepted. There is a fully funded two-week study course in France or Germany included. Mohammed Barrie and Shirley Ting have already benefited from such a course, read about their experiences below.

### Mohamed Barrie, Arabic and French trainee teacher

After a few years of teaching children and families within community schools, a role I found very interesting and rewarding, I decided to pursue a career in education. I began my research on the TDA website, which I found extremely useful as a first step in finding information relevant to me. I subsequently made an application to Goldsmiths College, University of London – the only institution offering PGCE Arabic (Community Languages). At the same time, I applied for the French extension course at London Metropolitan University (LMU), as all language trainees are expected to have, or to be developing, a second language.

I received a conditional offer from my ITT provider (Goldsmiths College) in April after all initial arrangements had been put in place and was ready to start the French extension course. My level of French was really very basic, but I was assured that the course was structured to meet the needs of beginners. In addition, an intensive 60-hour *ab initio* course was offered to absolute beginners prior to the main programme.

The French extension course lasted fourteen weeks – from 30 May to 1 September – and included a two-week language and culture course in Bordeaux, France. The course was quite intensive and demanding, but I benefited from a great deal of support from the staff at LMU, which made my learning a very enjoyable and fulfilling experience. I was particularly excited to speak French while in Bordeaux and this

boosted my confidence in realising how much I had learnt!

I realised the benefits of the course almost immediately. Once I started training and had joint seminars with trainees on PGCE MFL courses, I was able to participate in any French-based activities and share resources and ideas. During my school placement I had the opportunity to observe and participate in French lessons too. I have benefited immensely from the extension course and, through this experience, have discovered new ways of improving myself in order, with luck, to become a good Arabic and French teacher.

**Mohamed Barrie** | bililo2@yahoo.com

### Shirley Ting, Mandarin Chinese and French trainee teacher

After visiting a couple of Teaching Fairs and consulting with TDA and CILT I decided to apply for a French extension course, but the London Metropolitan University course was nearly full and could not accommodate another complete beginner. Therefore, I applied to Portsmouth University. The journey, was slightly longer, but pleasant. After an assessment test and two interviews, they started me on a three-week *ab initio* course. With a subsequent offer from a PGCE provider (Goldsmiths College), I was able to continue onto the full programme, from May to August 2006.

As I had no background in the language, the seventeen-week course was intensive. I also had lectures on professional studies and French music,

literature, politics and history. My classmates and I met almost every day for at least five hours, including tutorials, so we got to know each other quite well. With some classmates having studied French at university or secondary school, it was an interesting mix and I found studying this language very interesting and enjoyable.

The study trip to France was the highlight of my course. I went with a group of nine to Rouen, a lovely town in Normandy, for formal study and to be immersed in French life. The challenges of speaking French on the streets, in the shops and with our home-stay hosts were very different from being in the classroom: it was like going on stage to perform! I also took some tours, to Monet's House and Giverny. My short essays started to make more sense and some of my speech finally came along.

I would like to thank TDA for this precious opportunity, I found the experience essential for any trainee teacher. It was great to reverse roles and learn a completely new language from the perspective of a student. To see how our teachers coped with the needs of such a diverse group was an eye-opener. At a human level, as well as a language skills level, it was a very rich experience. This extension course has not only strengthened my prospects for finding a better job, but without this experience, doing my PGCE course would be like walking around with just half my body.

**Shirley Ting** | tingshirley@hotmail.co.uk