

REPORT ON WHITMAN ITL “LANGUAGES4KIDS: LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN WALLA WALLA AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS”

INNOVATIONS IN TEACHING AND LEARNING 2014-2015

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1. Did recipients complete what they set out to complete?
 - Yes. Explanations follow.

2. What are the products of their efforts in terms of content, format, and public dissemination?
 - Former LLC director Jen Mouat and I spent ~40 hours/ea in June of 2014 designing the infrastructure and oversight pattern for the Languages4Kids program and internships, including detailed descriptions of the responsibilities of each role (designated roles are Student participant, Lesson leader, Languages4Kids intern / team leader, Language assistant, Coordinator, and Faculty advisor).
 - These descriptions have had a dramatic, positive impact on the quality and effectiveness of the teaching experience for Whitman students participating in the program. They've reduced the stress load for all participants, clarified expectations and responsibilities, improved the quality of the teaching experience for all concerned and provided a mechanism for reflection, adaptation and documentation. Student participants find the program both more educational (with respect to its function as a teaching apprenticeship) and more personally gratifying with the clarity and direction of the new guidelines.
 - Part of the job of the paid intern is to ensure documentation of lesson plans and reflections on the lesson afterwards. Last year this resulted in two binders full of lesson plans, sample materials and commentary. The binders themselves are proving to be a valuable teaching resource for subsequent iterations of the program, providing students and student interns with concrete examples of previous approaches and narratives about their success. Since continuity is an ongoing concern in this program, the binders are a vital link in a chain that is occasionally fragmented.
 - In our application, we claimed that by creating an internship, with compensation, we would not only provide team leaders with a significant opportunity for experiential leadership and learning in education, but also officially recognize their contribution in a way that can be used outside Whitman. This has proven to be true. A 2014 French major graduate indicates that her experience with French4Kids was the key element in getting a summer job in youth education while she was still a student and a year-long job in youth education following graduation. Furthermore, both of the interns for French4Kids for AY2014-15 are applying to MAT programs this year.

3. Do any of these have potential long-term positive effects on the curriculum or academic program more generally?

- In the absence of an education program at Whitman, and in the context of a school that produces a significant number of educators, programs like Languages4Kids provide essential opportunities to not only have contact with elementary education, but to have a role in shaping the curriculum of that contact, and gain the vital experience such a responsibility entails.

4. How many students were directly involved or indirectly impacted by the grant?

- French4Kids AY 2014-15 involved 2 Student Interns, 2 French Language assistants and 4 Student teachers. The program went on hiatus in fall of 2015 because of student availability, but looks to go forward in spring of 2016 with a team of 6 students.
- Walla Walla elementary students – since its inception, French4Kids has worked with over a hundred elementary school students in the valley. AY2014-15, approximately 40 Sharpstein elementary Campfire students had contact with the program, some for the third year in a row.

5. Did the project enhance the quality of learning experiences offered to students? What evidence do you have that demonstrates impact on student learning (if applicable)?

- At the end of each semester of F4K, students complete a more general reflection (as opposed to the brief “what worked/what didn’t” notes they attach to weekly lessons). I have provided the questions below. Student response has been uniformly positive. They comment favorably on the importance of experience working with elementary kids in the context of their plans for the future. They also frequently remark positively on the perspective they gain on the different stages of the learning process by working with different ages of kid, comparing the child’s process to their own memories and current experience of language study. They appreciate the curricular experience they gain from creating lessons in French4Kids, and contrast that favorably to some of the more formulaic teaching experiences they may have encountered in other tutoring contexts. They concretely reflect on how the program worked, didn’t work, and what the causal factors for each of these elements might be. They also uniformly recommend the program to future participants, and say that it was often the highlight of their week.
- *What have you learned about teaching from your experience with French4Kids? You might think about specific pedagogical moments or techniques, student-teacher interactions, lesson-planning, issues specific to language instruction, a particular age of kid, etc. Give examples.*
- *How has your experience in the program impacted your own relationship to French/English/language? (What have you learned about French?)*

- *What aspects of the program were particularly valuable for you?*
- *What aspects of the program seemed particularly effective for the kids?*
- *What changes would you make, if any, if you were to do it again, or continue another semester?*
- *What would you say to a fellow student thinking of volunteering for French4Kids?*
- *What's the point of participating in a project like this? For the kids - and for you?*
- *How does this experience compare to other, similar kinds of experiences you may have had?*
- *How do you hope to apply this experience to your personal or professional future?*
- *Has this experience had any impact on how you approach or reflect upon your own coursework at Whitman?*
- *Thinking about your own personal and site-specific experience, what are some "dos and don'ts" for this kind of project? What worked? What didn't?*

6. What were the limitations or failings of this project, and how, in retrospect, might they have been better addressed or remedied?

- F4K has been pretty successful. Each group encounters things about their own experience that they wish to change, and these come out in the reflections at the end of the semester, but this iterative process is in fact one of the goals of the project and not a sign of a problem.
- In our original proposal, we indicated that a psychology class was going to study our project for their methods example; this proved not to be feasible because our sample was too varied (kids with some experience, no experience, lots of experience, etc.).

Challenges that face the program as it moves forward include the following:

- Continued funding for the student interns. This is vital.
- How/If the faculty supervisors or program coordinator should be compensated. Thanks to the documents developed by Sarah Hurlburt and Jen Mouat in summer 2014, the program is able to function a great deal more autonomously than previously. At the same time, a dedicated oversight function seems like an important safeguard and guideline, and one that should be maintained.
- Continuity in the program from one semester to the next. This year, we are able to maintain the rule that the F4K intern be a student who has previously participated in the program, despite our fall semester hiatus. Should there be a time when student interest is strong but no experienced interns are available, the oversight function of the faculty supervisor and the program coordinator will go back up significantly for that semester.