



## **TIES: Teaching Improvement and Equipment Scheme**

### **Large Grant Application Form: Teaching Improvement Progress Report<sup>1</sup>**

#### **Project Title**

Internationalizing Pedagogies of Academic Communication and Generic Skills Through Virtual Exchange

#### **\$ Amount Awarded**

\$50,054.12

#### **\$ Amount Expended**

\$17,260.

#### **Brief Project Description**

Duration: Two Years

This project was inspired by Susan Thomas's current participation on a Cross-Cultural Communication project with Stanford University, funded by a Wallenberg Global Learning Network grant: (<http://daily.stanford.edu/article/2007/11/13/pwrStudentsTakeWorkInternationally>). It is modelled on the Stanford program, which features the use of webcams and 'live' conferencing contexts within 'local' writing classrooms, facilitated by Marratech software. In this state-of-the-art learning environment, students collaborate on written tasks not only with their own classmates in a 'physical' classroom situation, but also 'live' with peers in the United States, Europe and Asia in a 'virtual' classroom. The project aims to introduce an international context to 'local' writing practices and teaching environments, while supporting the University's three overarching generic graduate attributes: scholarship, lifelong learning and global citizenship. The project would offer students who, for whatever reason, are unable to take advantage of 'traditional' study abroad programs, many of the benefits of study abroad without the travel and expense, and would situate 'local' learning and teaching practices in a global context by transcending the 'physical' classroom.

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<sup>1</sup> This form is to be sent to the Executive Officer (Learning and Teaching) by the 30 January 2009.

**Progress to date**

To date, we have conducted two 'virtual exchange' sessions between classes at Stanford University and classes at Sydney (ENGL 3615 Page to Screen and ENGL 1000 Academic Writing), as well as numerous virtual conferences between teaching staff at Sydney and Stanford.

With the assistance of Arts Digital, we have established a more regular and formalized arrangement for this semester, which will involve at least 5 'virtual' meetings between Stanford and Sydney classes in Arts Digital.

Student and staff responses have been overwhelmingly positive, and we are confident that by the end of 2009, we will have developed a workable model for a virtual exchange program that can be used in any classroom in any discipline.

**If Project completed, list project outcomes**

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**List any publications or seminar/conferences reporting on this project**

Susan Thomas has two book chapters in press which discuss this project and its findings thus far. She is also working on an article for the next issue of *Synergy*. Susan Thomas and Rebecca Johinke have had an article accepted for publication which discusses the history of the writing program at Sydney, which includes the virtual exchange project and our many collaborations with Stanford University. Susan Thomas reported on the Virtual Exchange Project during her keynote address at the Council of Writing Program Administrators Conference in Denver, Colorado in July 2008.

**What is the next step? How may project be replicated and best practice spread across the University?**

The project sponsors are planning for a 2009 e-learning forum to discuss the findings of the project and to introduce the virtual exchange model to the wider University community. They will also document their findings in journal articles, including *Synergy*.

**Project Representative**

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| Name      | Susan Thomas |
| Signature | Via Email    |