

Liaison

Magazine

Issue 1 : July 2008



features:
an interview with
Keith Marshall

students:
what makes a good
lecturer?

viewpoint:
a multilingual Europe -
ideal or reality?

teaching:
visual arts in
modern languages

teaching:
Arabic: the view from
the United States

700 words:
on internationalisation



Liaison Magazine
Issue 1 : July 2008
ISSN 1472-6432

Liaison Magazine is published twice a year by the Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies (LLAS), part of the Subject Network of the Higher Education Academy. We are a publicly funded service, providing UK-wide support and services for higher education in languages, linguistics and area studies. Details of all our activities are available on our website: www.llas.ac.uk

As well as updates on LLAS work, *Liaison* features a wide range of articles on topics relating to languages, linguistics and area studies. The next issue will appear in January 2009. We welcome contributions. If you would like to submit an article (of between 300 and 3,000 words), propose a book review or respond in a letter to an article published in *Liaison*, please contact the editor, Shoshannah Holdom (S.Holdom@soton.ac.uk).

Views expressed in *Liaison* are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of LLAS.

Website links are active at the time of going to press.

You can keep in touch with LLAS by joining our mailing list (www.llas.ac.uk/maillinglist), coming to our workshops, seminars and other events (www.llas.ac.uk/events) or exploring our website. *Liaison* is distributed to languages, linguistics and area studies departments across the UK and is available at www.llas.ac.uk/liaison. If you would like extra copies, please email llas@soton.ac.uk

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Welcome

Issue 1 : July 2008

Welcome to the first issue of *Liaison Magazine*, the new publication from the Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies (LLAS). Launched to coincide with the 2008 Languages in Higher Education conference, *Liaison* aims to keep you up-to-date not only with news from the Subject Centre, but also with broader issues affecting the disciplines of languages, linguistics and area studies.

We were delighted that Keith Marshall, now retired from lecturing in French at the University of Wales, Bangor, agreed to be interviewed for our first issue. His reflections on over 35 years of working in modern languages are sure to resonate with colleagues across the sector.

We intend *Liaison* to be a forum for discussion, and as such you'll find a number of articles that we hope will generate debate. Mary Anne Ansell assesses the impact of the privatisation of teaching English for Academic Purposes; Glenn Fulcher casts a critical eye over the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR); and Karen M. Lauridsen argues that multilingualism remains out of reach for Europe in general.

Elsewhere in this issue are articles relating to specific areas of teaching and learning within our disciplines. Matthew Treherne and Thea Pitman offer examples of innovation in content modules; Abi Matthewman describes new approaches to providing assessment and feedback; and Lisa Bernasek's overview of teaching Arabic in the United States will highlight some interesting comparisons with current UK provision. Further food for thought comes from the winners of our student essay competition (2008 and 2007), who discuss what makes a good lecturer and life after university.

We also present the first in a series of regular features: in this issue, Elspeth Jones takes up the challenge of writing exactly 700 words on the topic of internationalisation, and Elwira Grossman offers us a taste of the Polish language.

Liaison is very much a collaborative effort and we would like to thank all the contributors, whose enthusiasm and generosity have made this publication possible. If you have an idea or would like to write for the next issue – for example an article, a book review, or a letter responding to a piece from this issue – please do get in touch (see the inside front cover for our contact details).

We hope you enjoy the magazine, and we look forward to hearing from you or seeing you at one of our events.

Shoshannah Holdom, Editor

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e-Learning symposium

January 2009

University of Southampton

www.llas.ac.uk/events/2985

The fourth e-learning symposium organised by LLAS will bring together practitioners from a wide range of disciplines and institutions. We are looking for examples of e-assessment in language teaching to help inform this symposium, and are interested in anything from high stakes testing to low stakes informal online assessment that you might use during your course. If you use some form of e-assessment in your teaching, we would be pleased if you could contact **Kate Borthwick**, e-Learning Project Officer (kb2@soton.ac.uk) so we can build a picture of what people are doing in this area.

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Strategically important but still vulnerable



Subject associations have urged policy makers for a long time to recognise that our subjects have special value and need to be protected. LLAS has been pleased to provide research, information and ideas in support of those arguments. Recognition has been secured in different measures across the UK, especially for languages and area studies. It may be a good moment to reflect on the results.

Three years ago, the government in England accepted the Roberts Report, and declared languages and area studies to be strategically important but vulnerable subjects. This has been followed by a range of initiatives, including the establishment of Centres of Excellence in language-based area studies and the Routes into Languages programme. Most recently, the English Funding Council has announced that it will protect these subjects from the reduction in support for students who already hold equal or lower qualifications, and that it will make additional funded undergraduate places available for languages and area studies. It is also studying proposals for an initiative in Islamic studies.

The governments in Wales and Northern Ireland have recognised the need for a strategy to develop languages, though Scottish politicians still remain to be convinced. The Welsh Funding Council has put up funding for cooperation between universities in languages, and is currently considering proposals for an initiative to increase the take-up of languages. The Department of Education in Northern Ireland has established a Centre for Excellence and has funded a project to develop proposals for a language strategy, linking with a recent Policy Profile report on Language Education in the Irish Republic, produced by the Council of Europe.

As a result of this activity, the UK is now at the forefront of policy development in languages and area studies. What is less clear is whether the various initiatives have been

successful in protecting these vulnerable subjects. With the long lead-in times for educational planning, it is still too early to judge whether a new generation of students has been drawn into study. But it is certainly true that the initiatives have energised the academic communities involved and have begun to create partnerships between universities, colleges and secondary schools. Few HE institutions have not been touched in some way, and all institutions have potentially benefited from the flow of ideas and information that has been generated.

Ideas and information are key assets for the next round of development. It is important that associations and other

**“The UK is now at the forefront
of policy development in
languages and area studies.”**

organisations with an interest in languages, linguistics and area studies should continue to investigate projects that will potentially strengthen their subject. The British Academy’s new initiative on “Languages Matter” is an example of partnership between organisations to achieve this. And as the momentum of recent initiatives builds up, new opportunities will emerge to bid for further support.

There is evidence of continuing interest in our subjects among policy makers and funding bodies at local, regional, national and European levels. But it will require continued commitment on the part of the academic community to develop ideas and arguments and to engage with different bodies that can help us take them forward. We have established the strategic importance of our subject areas, and with goodwill and creativity, we can hope to make them less vulnerable in the future.

Professor Michael Kelly,
Director of the Subject Centre for Languages,
Linguistics and Area Studies

LLAS news

Subject Centre activity continues apace, with much to report on and much to look forward to. Here we highlight just some of our activity – events, resources, projects and publications – from the past year.

events

The LLAS calendar has been busy and diverse of late, with events taking place in venues across the UK and speakers addressing capacity audiences. Bringing people together at workshops, conferences and seminars, to discuss key themes in teaching and learning in higher education, is at the heart of what LLAS does and described below is just a taste of our events from this academic year.

A series of pedagogic research methods workshops have been held in London and Glasgow, designed to introduce colleagues to both theory and practice in this area. Coupled with this, we have now commissioned a cycle of action research projects (action research being “a practical way of looking at your own work to check that it is as you would like it to be”), which are due to report next year.

January saw the one-day event *Texts in Translation* take place in Sheffield, organised in collaboration with the English Subject Centre. The day was opened by Professor Peter France of the University of Edinburgh, who gave a masterly overview of the history of literature in translation, followed by a range of speakers addressing theoretical and practical issues relating to using translated texts in literature classes. Many issues were raised, including ways to use electronic texts to engage students with reading in a second language, and translation from text to screen, or from film to stage; topics that could usefully become the focus of future LLAS events.

In April, LLAS organised a day-conference in conjunction with UCML, Agendas for Research in Modern Languages, which reported on the Review of Modern Languages Research commissioned by the AHRC in 2006. The conference examined new and continuing agendas for modern languages research and also focused on raising the international profile of UK research. The report itself is available here: www.ahrc.ac.uk/images/modern_languages_review.pdf



In partnership with the University of the West of England and Bristol City Council, LLAS ran a two-day conference *Intercultural Dialogue: the Way Forward* (11th-12th April). Aimed at academics, community workers, voluntary organisations and other interested groups, the conference drew on research and practice in the field of intercultural communication. The conference also coincided with the launch of Bristol's Abolition 200 Legacy Commission which took place on the evening of 11th April.

Around 15 recently appointed lecturers attended a workshop for new academic staff on 15th April at Clare College Cambridge. The workshop took a holistic view of the academic career; examining teaching, research and service to the university and broader subject community. The workshop will run again in the 2008-9 academic year.

Student employability is now a major topic within HE, and is a named priority for the Higher Education Academy. As such, LLAS organised a CETL dissemination event on this very theme, which took place in April at Sheffield Hallam University. The aim was to provide CETLs the opportunity to present their work in this area and network with colleagues. The well-attended day saw a broad range of presentations - including some excellent contributions from students – that discussed such topics as: the shifting meaning of employability; subject-specific endeavours; theoretical approaches to resources development; and innovative employer engagement.

All LLAS events are listed here: www.llas.ac.uk/events

projects

LLAS is engaged in a broad range of projects, both nationally and internationally. On an international level, we are coordinating a three-year project under the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Erasmus Network programme.

The Language Network for Quality Assurance (LanQua) is developing a European quality benchmark in five areas of languages and involves over 60 partners across Europe. More information can be found here: www.lanqua.eu

Back in the UK, LLAS has now completed the pilot phase of development for the Learning Object Creator (LOC) software, developed in collaboration with the University of Southampton and funded by the Higher Education Academy and JISC. This easy-to-use piece of software is specially designed to help teaching staff develop high quality e-learning materials. The LOC tool is built on sound pedagogical principles and incorporates a template that guides developers through the process of building a learning object (a self-contained, stand alone unit of learning). Training in the use of the tool is provided in the form of a one-day workshop and accompanying training pack. Further support is offered by LLAS staff and all users are invited to join a community of developers that has its own mailing list and online discussion space. Currently all users can share their learning materials via the Subject Centre's Materials Bank which, as part of the next phase of this project, will be developed as a repository in which items are deposited and from which they can be searched and downloaded.

To obtain a copy of the tool colleagues must first attend one of the workshops that LLAS will be running. We are currently looking for institutions willing to host workshops so please get in touch with us if you are interested. The next workshop is due to take place at the University of Sussex on 3rd October 2008.

The LOC tool has been a key element of another very successful LLAS project, which has developed a suite of continuing professional development resources for staff



working with international students. The resources comprise six

units tied to the UK Professional Standards Framework which are delivered as follows:

- A Teaching Pack, containing guidance for the running of six workshops (one per unit), links to the relevant readings and portfolio activities for the six units of work.
- A Learning Pack containing the readings and portfolio activities.
- Six online learning objects containing all the materials from the learning pack together with extra activities to replace the workshop tasks.

The materials can be used as part of a learning and teaching course or module (M level), as one or a series of CPD workshops, or for independent study online. The resources may be downloaded from the LLAS website and can be freely used for non-commercial purposes:

www.llas.ac.uk/resources/mb/2968

In partnership with the Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies (PRS), LLAS staff Lisa Bernasek (research fellow), Michael Kelly (project director) and John Canning (project manager) contributed to the team that authored the report *International Approaches to Islamic Studies*, commissioned by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). The report examines Islamic Studies in eight countries and will inform HEFCE's work on Islamic Studies in view of its designation by the UK government as a strategically important subject. It is available at: www.hefce.ac.uk/aboutussis/islamic

Last but not least, LLAS has commissioned Scottish CILT to carry out a survey of cross-sector collaboration in modern languages, which will map collaborative activities involving universities and the secondary and further education sectors in Scotland. This project is due for completion in the autumn of 2008.

For more information about the diverse projects LLAS both commissions and supports, please visit: www.llas.ac.uk/projects

resources

LLAS offers a range of freely available resources designed to support and promote language learning in UK higher education. We are particularly proud of our latest resource: the *Discover American Studies* CD-ROM, which was launched at the British Association for American Studies conference in Edinburgh on 29th March. Funded by the United States Embassy in London, the content was authored by Sara Wood and Dick Ellis from the Department of American and Canadian Studies at the University of Birmingham, and designed and published by LLAS. Featuring presentations, essays, video clips and interactive features, the CD-ROM demonstrates the benefits of studying for a degree in

American Studies and is designed to be used for promotional purposes in schools, further education colleges and at university open days. A new poster is now available from the Subject Centre's "700 reasons" suite of materials. This poster is accompanied by a set of post-it notes which can be used by learners to write down their own reasons for studying languages and which can be stuck onto or alongside the poster. More reasons can be found in LLAS's 700 reasons database, www.llas.ac.uk/700reasons, which is based on Angela Gallagher-Brett's 2005 research report.

More resources and information, together with the LLAS Materials Bank, can be found here: www.llas.ac.uk/resources

publications

The past year has seen a number of new publications from LLAS. In

September 2007, we published *Here be Dragons? Enterprising Graduates in the Humanities*, by Karina Croucher, John Canning and Jane Gawthrope. This report presents the findings of a small-scale study of enterprising humanities graduates, determining the circumstances and

motivations that led to their embarking on particular careers. Graduates from humanities disciplines are often perceived as having more ambiguous (or at least less-defined) career paths compared with those graduating from vocational subjects, such as law or medicine. Having a more open avenue offers a range of career opportunities, including

branching out and setting up a business, or becoming self-employed, either through choice, necessity or fortune.

November 2007 saw the publication of three interdisciplinary reports: *Disciplines in Dialogue: Disciplinary Perspectives on Interdisciplinary Teaching and Learning*, a series of discipline-specific essays edited by John Canning; *Interdisciplinarity: A Literature Review*, by Angelique Chettiparamb; and *The Impact of the Internal Economy of Higher Education Institutions on Interdisciplinary Teaching and Learning*, by Neill Thew. All publications may be downloaded from the LLAS website.

Finally, our most recent publication is John Canning's *Five Years On: the Language Landscape in 2007*, which examines the take-up of languages in schools and higher education since the publication of *A New Landscape for Languages* (Kelly and Jones 2003). *A New Landscape* was the result of research into the health of modern languages in schools and universities and offered possibilities for how the language landscape might look in 2007. Using the most recent statistics, *Five Years On* revisits the report and compares the actual landscape with that thought possible five years ago.

Browse through all LLAS publications and order copies (where available) here: www.llas.ac.uk/publications

The Language Café

LAS is coordinating the Language Café project, funded by the European Community Socrates Lingua I programme. The project builds on the concept of café culture in order to provide an informal, supportive environment in which language learning can take place. Language Cafés are being set up all over Europe in real cafes, bookshops, libraries and other public and social venues.

Gillian Gain reports on her experiences of attending the Spanish Language Café at Burgess Road Library in Southampton.

Spanish Café Southampton

We have been attending the Spanish Café since its inception in October. The group has expanded from the original six, to more than a dozen enthusiastic Spanish speakers. Before this group started, it was difficult to find Spanish conversation and the hour we spend together weekly is just what we need.

While the Café is not for absolute beginners, and the timing is difficult for parents with young children, nevertheless the present group of people is

quite diverse both in age and in ability. I am the oldest at 75 and the youngest is in her early twenties.

Why are people attending? The reasons are as different as the age range. One is going cycling in Central America, another has Spanish relatives, another goes climbing in the Spanish Pyrenees and a couple more have a house, or an interest in Spain. So everyone is a serious learner.

The Library provides the facility and the coffee but the Language Café project provides the funding, for which we are all very grateful as language learning is very expensive normally.

We are now able to divide into two groups one of which is led by Shoshannah Holdom and the other by a native Spanish speaker. This is a real bonus. Both leaders make sure all the students are catered for, whatever their ability. Some worksheets are provided,

along with games and exercises. But in general there is guided conversation dealing with subjects as diverse as the environment, corruption in politics, and information for tourists.

We all enjoy meeting at the Spanish Café and most of us have made progress. The informality of the group, where one is under no pressure to attend or to do exams, is very welcome and we hope the project will continue in the future.

We especially thank Shoshannah for her presence every week. This has certainly kept the momentum of the group going. "Suerte!"



To find out more about the Language Café project visit:
www.languagecafe.eu

Gateways into Languages

Throughout 2007-2008, CILT, the National Centre for Languages, has been working in partnership with Higher Education Institutions, professional bodies, employers and sector skills councils to develop the Gateways into Languages project, funded as part of the government's £6 million Gateways to the Professions Development Fund.

Following Sir Alan Langlands's Gateways to the Professions report in late 2005, this funding was made available to support projects that "tackle the full range of issues and barriers faced by people seeking to enter the professions through higher education". The four key themes arising from the report were recruitment and retention to the

professions; student finance/debt; widening participation and collaborative working.

Provision for languages was among the recommendations made by the Langlands report, which noted that: "Lack of protection of the title linguist is the biggest single barrier to entry into the professions which can include translators, interpreters, bilingual

practitioners of other professions and trainers and teachers of modern foreign languages." The report also observed that: "There is competition from graduates from EU and non-EU countries who can offer not only their own language and English but also mainstream skills such as law and accountancy." What is more: "Closure of language departments in universities and other HEIs due to lack of finance will mean even fewer linguists in the future."

CILT's Gateways into Languages work has progressed in two phases: the first focused on the translation and interpreting professions; the second developed language curricula linked to the vocational context of Engineering and the Built Environment degree programmes.

Phase one – Language Professions

Focusing on the translation and interpreting professions, this collaboration between professional bodies, universities and translation companies has worked on three key areas: the production of materials for outreach activities in schools, colleges and universities; the production of materials for use with potential mature recruits; and the development of a model for structured placements in translation companies for postgraduate students of translation.

The placement programme created six local partnerships between HEIs and translation service providers in order to improve the work readiness of postgraduate students of translation. By the end of the project, nine successful placements had taken place and all partners reported positively on the benefits of the scheme.

Commenting on the success of the project at the launch of the graduate apprenticeship handbook, Lord

Dearing stressed the importance of translation to the UK economy and welcomed plans to roll-out the scheme at national level. The expanded placement programme will be hosted by the Routes into Languages National Translation led by the University of Salford.

Phase two – Embedding Languages in Vocational Curricula

This project saw the development of four 20-hour courses with contextualised materials for students on Engineering and the Built Environment degree programmes. The courses were designed and delivered by the Universities of Bristol, Kingston, Loughborough and Salford in collaboration with the Engineering Council UK and the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors as well as employers such as Airbus UK, Bechtel and Thales.

Kingston delivered two separate week-long intensive *ab initio* French language courses for students of both Aerospace and Aeronautical Engineering in the first and second semester. Loughborough ran a week-long intensive *ab initio* German course for students doing a Masters in Civil Engineering, which included a two-day trip to Berlin.

Salford's *ab initio* Arabic for the Built Environment was delivered over a period of six weeks. The challenge of learning a new script did have an impact on the use of contextualised materials in this course, but students'



motivation remained high throughout. Bristol's course in

French for Aerospace and Avionic Engineering, delivered over a period of ten weeks, was the only course not aimed at *ab initio* students; those entering the course were required to have at least A-level standard in French.

A number of issues arose during the project including accreditation, work-load, language retention and progression as well as the challenges of employer engagement. The latter will be addressed in a report by CILT based on the experiences of the project (disseminated in June 2008).

The Building Skills: Languages for the Built Environment, Engineering Success: Languages for Engineering, and Making Sense: a Career in Translation or Interpreting factsheets and case studies are all available from: www.languageswork.org.uk/resources/factsheets.htm

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Routes into Languages



Routes into Languages is an £8 million HEFCE-funded programme working to increase participation in language learning after the age of 14, and to encourage students to continue beyond GCSE with their language study. The programme team is hosted by the Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies (LLAS) and directed by Professor Michael Kelly.

The funding has enabled nine regional consortia to be established across England. Each regional

consortium consists of several universities working with other stakeholders, schools and colleges, Comenius regional managers working with CILT, Aim Higher, and regional language and development agency networks. Two national networks have been established, for translating and interpreting respectively. These networks comprise a group of universities working together, not necessarily geographically co-located but offering similar postgraduate programmes.

The programme is also commissioning research into language learning and language provision. The first two projects – “Languages and Enterprise”, and “Community Languages in Higher Education” – were completed early in 2008. The “Languages and International Events” project report will be completed in the summer of 2008.

Some of the Routes consortia have now passed the one-year mark and to celebrate, Routes Programme Manager Heather McGuinness interviewed Ruth O'Rourke, Project Manager of Routes into Languages North East. Ruth has an MA in Professional Translation from Newcastle University, and her six years' experience in youth work has stood her in good stead for this key consortium role.



HMG: How has the first year of the project gone for you so far?

ROR: The project reminds me of a toddler, running around bumping into things. It is educational, exhilarating and eye-opening.

On the educational side, I've been impressed with the breadth and diversity of people I have worked with: school pupils, parents, teachers, academic staff who are active researchers, tutors, and community representatives who run promotional activities for languages. Often these people discovered others working to promote languages in different sectors.

HMG: Did anything in particular strike you?

ROR: Secondary language teachers commented to me that they didn't realise higher education cared about what was happening in schools and colleges. Working in this way, a greater understanding was achieved, and we became more sympathetic to each others' needs. If you haven't got kids or if you are not a school governor, then you may not know how obsessed schools can be by the league tables, and you may not be aware of the pressures that school staff are under. There are time pressures for teachers and so much of their work is curriculum focused.

HMG: If you were the National Director for Languages at the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), what would you do?

ROR: I would introduce a compulsory gap year or two abroad, in between school and university. I've met so many people who've said to me “wow, you studied languages. I really wish I'd done that.” How can you know what you want to do at 17? The year abroad was the best year of my life, mainly because I learnt to snowboard in Chambéry. I wouldn't make languages compulsory at school.

HMG: Describe one of the high moments this year.

ROR: At our language festival in March, we ran a Linguavision song contest with primary children. One of the teachers taking part (incidentally not from the winning school) said they had so much fun preparing for the festival that the head teacher had agreed to establish a French choir at the school.

HMG: And one of your low points?

ROR: This has to be when people appear to lose sight of the spirit of Routes into Languages, when there are unrealistic expectations. In my experience, this happened when competition entrants could only think about winning. We'll run our competitions differently in future.

HMG: You've recruited and trained a number of student ambassadors from

all the partner universities in Routes North East (Durham, Newcastle, Northumbria, Sunderland and Teesside), including a day's training in November. How did that go?

ROR: This was very successful and without a doubt it is the reason that Routes into Languages will thrive. Ron Dearing said "Let youth speak to youth." He's right. Next year we aim to recruit higher numbers of students and we will have our core of experienced ambassadors, too. Students who are outside the project and who thought they were too cool to apply, now say to me, "What can I do to apply to be an ambassador?" Don't underestimate what students can do. The project wouldn't work without student ambassadors: they're joyous, honest and have a passion for learning languages.

HMG: Would you say that students are role models?

ROR: Definitely. Learning languages means you learn about yourself, you develop your life philosophy. Working in the north-east, in some of the most deprived areas in the country and statistically low in numbers for take-up of languages, I am aware there are challenges here for kids who have little life experience and that in meeting our Routes ambassadors they'll learn so much more.

HMG: Finally Ruth, what is your favourite catchphrase for language teachers and students?

ROR: Keep it fun.

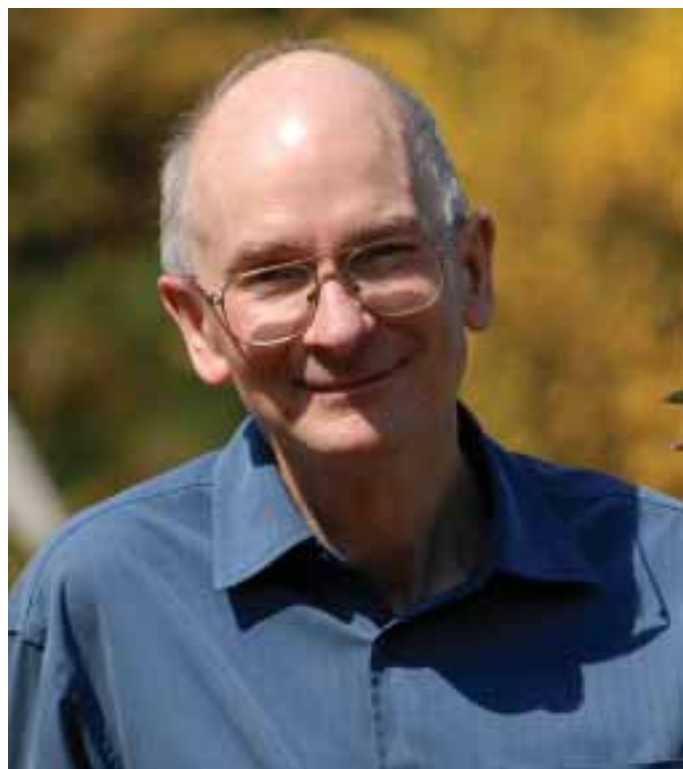
Sign up to our mailing list at:
www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk



Chinese / Japanese Day
Routes into Languages West Midlands
Photos: www.edwardmoss.co.uk

Selling languages

Keith Marshall will be well known to many in the Modern Languages community, as a lecturer in French at the University of Wales, Bangor, and through his involvement with CILT Cymru. Now retired from higher education, we asked Keith to reflect on his career and many years of working in modern languages.



K eith Marshall was educated in Scotland at Morrison's Academy Crieff and St Andrews University, and spent most of his working life at the University of Wales, Bangor. He served as a lecturer in French from 1970 to 2005, and as the Coordinator of Languages for Non-Specialists from 1995 to 2005. From 1990 to 1993 he was seconded to direct an Enterprise in Higher Education Programme. He is also known for his work at CILT Cymru, where he was Director from 2002 to 2004 and Assistant Director for Higher Education from 2004 to 2007.

So what attracted you to modern languages?

No blinding road-to-Damascus experience. In the early years of secondary school I was better at French than any other subject, passable at Latin and rotten at Sciences and Maths. The school allowed me to drop Science and take

up German at about age 14.

Family circumstances also played a part. My father was killed before I was born in World War II, and my paternal grandfather made friends in France where his only son was buried. To his credit, rather than being bitter and hostile towards Germans, he supported efforts to build peaceful understanding between all nations. In this spirit and to improve my languages, he arranged for me to spend summer holidays with families in France and Germany. They opened my mind, and by age 18 I loved French and German language and culture.

Going to university to study languages was a natural progression. At St Andrews, by good luck, my personal tutor was Professor Sam Taylor. He not only helped me out when I misbehaved, but drew me into the French 18th century Enlightenment and inspired me to carry on with it at postgraduate level. It has been at the heart of my professional life ever since. The last course I taught was on Laclos's *Les liaisons dangereuses*, to

which I was still adding refinements - and to the best group of students I had ever had.

What are the major changes that you have observed in language teaching in Higher Education (HE) and other sectors in the course of your career? What do you think has been the greatest challenge that the discipline has faced in past or recent years?

Decline in numbers

The biggest change has to be the decline in the numbers of students doing languages.

In Bangor, a temporary dip affected French in the early 1980s. The serious decline, however, began across the UK in the mid-1990s and affected an increasing number of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) until 2005. The educational roots of this were in the schools, where the number of Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) A-levels began to fall after 1994 (49,920) and continued till 2005 (33,894). This was uneven geographically and socially, with

Photos: www.geraphoto.com

the private sector holding up. This fall was all the more shocking since the National Curriculum had made an MFL compulsory. The number of successful GCSE entries rose to over 500,000 in 1994, where it stayed until 2004, and MFL grades compared well with those in other GCSEs.

Single market con

In the 1980s the UK joined in the evolving single market of the EU. The government and a number of businesses accepted the argument that, for us as a nation and as individuals, language skills were a necessity and should be taught at school. In practice, in the early 1990s, most businesses and employees found they could get by, calling on and reinforcing the myth that abroad, "they all speak English". The fear that many businesses would go under and people would be unemployed turned out to be exaggerated. I think the public felt that the case for languages had been oversold, and that they had been conned.

Communicative teaching

These changes were compounded by the drastic revision of MFL teaching to make it "more communicative" and to get away from teaching grammar, which was considered to be too elitist and abstract for a compulsory subject designed for pupils of all levels of ability. In practice, courses were usually based on social contexts, and exams on learned responses to set questions. Too often, language structures were obscured. A few bright pupils would see patterns in the sequences of words, but most would not. At the same time, especially in primary and secondary school, the process of learning by heart was played down across the curriculum, and spontaneous creativity played up. Both are essential, but this has led to a reduction in learning poetry, mathematical tables, vocabulary lists and verb structures.

Languages perceived to be difficult

In stark contrast to the UK, nearly all other European countries have

compulsory MFL through primary and secondary, with more hours teaching per week. As a result of these and other factors, UK 16-year-olds' language ability, even as a communicative tool, is below that of their European contemporaries. This, in turn, discourages these young Brits from using their normally limited language ability and encourages them and the public generally to perceive language learning as difficult.

MFL optional at Key Stage 4

The government decision, in the light of this public perception and the demands of a minority of schools on behalf of a minority of pupils, to make languages optional at Key Stage 4 from 2004 was disastrously destructive. We warned them that GCSE numbers would fall and they ignored us. They have fallen sharply, panicking the government into calling in Lord Dearing. Instead of destroying GCSE they should have reformed it. Making MFL optional at Key Stage 4 from 2004, and all primary pupils starting an

MFL in KS2 by 2010, is a serious mistiming. It has created a gap of 10 years between the removal of compulsion and the arrival of a full KS2 MFL cohort (2014) at the moment when pupils choose GCSEs or alternatives. In this disastrous timing gap the MFL professional resource is shrinking.

With fewer GCSE pupils to teach (very many fewer in some schools), vacancies are not being filled, teachers are leaving or being sacked, and (in some cases) second language departments are being closed. This was all so predictable that the government must have known it was going to happen.

The conclusion must be that by not delivering a young nation of self-confident, competent linguists through compulsory GCSEs, and exaggerating the need for languages in the global market, we have turned off public, business and government. Efforts to turn the government back on are bearing fruit, but public and business are more entrenched.

Schools and HEIs coping with decline

In sixth form AS and A-level teaching, there has been some remedial work, but HE language departments have had to cope with a decline in numbers

BA, MA, MPhil and PhD levels.

Individual academic careers and promotions are still based on research, but a greater emphasis has been placed on teaching, facilitated by the marvellous work of the Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies (LLAS).

As in schools, the drop in student numbers in HEIs has been very uneven. In some departments the drop has been so acute that it has led to closure, particularly in the post-1992 group, even though some of them have been the most professionally productive in course and materials development. Most departments are now engaged in student recruitment. Staff and students visit schools; help teachers to persuade pupils to opt for MFL at GCSE, AS and A-level; organise workshops for pupils in HE departments; and mentor pupils. Such activities by fashionable universities, many of which have also lowered their entry requirements, exacerbate the unevenness of the drop across the sector.

Since 2005, the numbers doing A-levels and entering specialist degrees have stabilised, with, in fact, slight rises. With a caveat about unevenness, the credit for this can be attributed to the

for England (HEFCE) in England and CILT Cymru and the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) in Wales. In the immediate future, the impact of MFL being made optional in Key Stage 4 is still to be felt. However on the positive side, there are the potentially enormous benefits of the HEFCE-funded Routes into Languages programme.

Non-specialist departments

Alongside specialist departments, and normally independently, Languages for Non-Specialists departments have grown up. In some HEIs they are an outstanding success. Some have never had one. Some have closed them, because other subject specialist departments need the fee income from their students. Some run them on a purely or partly self-funding basis, with the students paying. Their purpose is to give students the chance to add a generally low-level language skill to their main degree subject, for career purposes or simply for pleasure.

Have you noticed any changes in the students in the course of your career; e.g. who is studying languages, what is their motivation?

Social background of students

Back in the 1950s, in universities across the UK, the small proportion of the nation in MFL and other departments came from private sector and grammar schools. The former were almost entirely highly privileged and most of the latter from middle-class backgrounds. However, the 11-plus allowed a small number of children from the lower classes to ascend the educational ladder. By the time I started lecturing in 1970, the comprehensive system and university expansion had opened up secondary

“Making MFL optional at Key Stage 4 from 2004, and all primary pupils starting an MFL in KS2 by 2010, is a serious mistiming.”

and in basic language knowledge. Since the early 1990s there has been a flood of innovations. This has brought upgrades in teaching methods and learning materials, imaginative degrees, and *ab initio* language learning combinations with other subjects at

joint efforts of school teachers and HE staff, working through and in collaboration with LLAS, the University Council of Modern Languages (UCML), CILT (the National Centre for Languages), and the Higher Education Funding Council

and higher education to a larger proportion of middle and working-class students. Nonetheless, entry was still competitive in Bangor and all other universities.

In the 1980s and 1990s, with the expansion of MFL and other subjects in polytechnics and the conversion of practically all of them to universities post 1992, the situation changed. As the number of departments increased and the number of students began to decrease, more and more departments stopped selecting and started recruiting, and more students started selecting.

From HESA data gathered in the last few years, we have proof that (as we always suspected) across the university sector as a whole in England and Wales, fewer MFL students come from the lower social classifications than students in other subjects. Of course, this varies from one HEI to another across the UK but Welsh MFL departments can take a sovereign off the mantelpiece for recruiting a higher proportion than the Welsh average for all subjects.

Motivation at A-level

In 1999, I gathered data from approximately 3000 Year-12 students – some doing A-level, others not – to establish what motivated their choice. In a sample of that data, a recurrent explanation for not continuing was the narrow choice at A-level (three for most). Asked what subject they would choose if they had had a fourth option in Year 12, roughly one third chose a language. This provided strong support for the AS, still under discussion at that time.

Since then, the introduction of an extra subject through AS has increased MFL numbers continuing beyond GCSE, but not into A-level.

Other surveys of motivation confirm the positive importance of enjoying the subject. On the negative side, especially once the national and individual necessity of language skills are cast aside, the question arises of what you do with a language degree. In the mid-1990s, the answers I got

from audiences in all schools and most careers advisers, business managers and parents were the same: teaching and translating. This narrow range of professional opportunities clearly turned off a lot of pupils and those advising them.

Financial return from a degree?

When I was an undergraduate, liking a subject was enough. Since maintenance grants have been replaced by loans, and fees have been introduced for the great majority of students, the financial return from a degree is more important. Surprisingly, from my experience, the great majority of students are not concerned with what they are going to do after their first degree. They are having a good time, are caught up in their studies, and staff judge them only in academic terms. Despite the best efforts of university careers advisers, many, encouraged by academic staff, focus exclusively on their degree classification. After graduation too many students have no idea what to do and waste time, initially at least, in pointless jobs.

I have a horrible memory of two of our Bangor students, who had worked hard, got firsts and received praise all

round. I met them both separately the day after graduation on their way to see a careers adviser for the first time. Neither had a clue what to do next. Since then I must confess I have had very little success persuading students to give some thought to their careers while still undergrads!

“Welsh MFL departments can take a sovereign off the mantelpiece for recruiting a higher proportion than the Welsh average for all subjects.”

What would you say have been the high points of your career?

Teaching

From the beginning I enjoyed teaching and the company of students. Whereas most academics make research the cornerstone of their lives and fit the teaching round about it, I concentrated on teaching. In the 1970s this was not encouraged, but allowed. Currently, I would get sacked within a year!

Course development

To counter the dip in French applications at Bangor in the early 1980s, I coordinated the development and introduction of an option-based system. It allowed students to choose between two degrees: one, a mix of options with a bias towards a traditional pre-20th century degree, and the other a new post-1900 degree, “French Language and Modern France”. This model, borrowed from colleagues in the Bangor German Department, worked right away to solve the admissions problem.

Three language honours

In 1994, in response to the deepening recruitment crisis, I put together a

niche-market degree, for which I had observed a demand in visits to schools as an oral examiner. It catered for students who wanted to do only language and have no formal literature teaching. Joining up language elements, which are one third of single honours degrees, created a three-language honours degree. It has attracted many first-class students to Bangor and has been picked up by a few other HEs.

Enterprise in Higher Education

The Enterprise in Higher Education Programme, which I helped devise and direct in Bangor, was productive locally across the institution, and nationally across the UK. Established by Margaret Thatcher to persuade universities to be more enterprising, the Programme funded about 20 UK HEs to the tune of £1m each to develop pedagogical rapports with employers, raise the profile of teaching in HE, and introduce practical skills courses. At Bangor, for example, it created a Languages for Non-Specialists unit.

CILT link

In the same year, I also got Bangor linked up to the Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC) and the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff (UWIC), both part of a network of Comenius Centres set up and supported by CILT, which evolved into CILT Cymru. Although I didn't realise it at the time, this was the most important step in my professional career. It led to involvement with CILT UK, LLAS and UCML. This unusual combination of activity, in different areas of the MFL world, transformed my life.

Publicity campaign

On sabbatical leave in 1994-5, with funding from the university, I set up an MFL publicity campaign. This entailed visits to about 120 schools and mail shots combining leaflets and research on secondary MFL.

On the negative side, the questionnaires to schools revealed very worrying advance indications of falling numbers registered for MFL A-levels. However, this served to stir up action in the MFL world to fight a decline that threatened to send MFL the way of Classics.

Statistical data for selling languages

On the positive side, thanks to solid data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), I was able to show how employable MFL graduates are in comparison to those in other subjects, as well as the wide range of jobs they enter.

Put in contact by Lid King of CILT with Hilary Footitt of UCML, I agreed to put together data on MFL numbers at secondary and HE levels. As part of that project, I produced a numerical report on non-specialist provision in HEs. To my surprise, the piece of work which was received with most enthusiasm by MFL colleagues in higher education were the two little tables on employability of MFL graduates. With so much gloomy news and such an uphill battle to preserve specialist language learning, it seems colleagues were glad to have simple evidence which they could use to effect in recruiting students.

How would you like to be remembered professionally?

Process of selling languages

I reckon I'm already being forgotten. A couple of years ago a "Keith Marshall" Google search would bring me up near the top of the list, but now you have to add in "MFL". The work I did was transitory in that the figures had to be updated regularly, which I no longer do. It is more the process of selling languages that I would like to be associated with. While not claiming to be the first and certainly not the only academic to go out into schools to

make the case for languages, I would like to think I helped make the job of doing this respectable. I was both extremely surprised and flattered when my work of little intellectual merit was found useful by so many colleagues and interesting by the media.

Professional data collection

Part of the tools of the trade of language selling, not just to schools, but to Vice Chancellors, Funding Councils and government are figures which present the facts. I started collecting and interpreting these, but like a one-eyed man in the land of the blind. Luckily, at CILT, UK MFL has a professional linguist and statistician in Sarah Joy, who is carrying on what I started clumsily with an expertise that carries weight. We need another half dozen like her.

Now that you have retired, how are you spending your time?

Part of my life in Bangor has been involvement in local politics, building bridges between town and gown. However, I reduced that to a minimum in the 1980s to spend more time with my family after my young son told me I was never there and he hated me. Now he is starting work as a dentist and my three daughters are all independent professional women, so I'm having a go at joining my wife on the local county council. What I do for the next four years depends on May 1st.



In the local elections held on May 1st

2008, Keith and June Marshall won seats in the same ward and are now Gwynedd County councillors. Congratulations to both!

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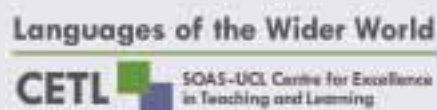
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The privatisation of English for Academic Purposes teaching in British universities

As an increasing number of universities are working with private companies to provide EAP, Mary Anne Ansell considers the impact this will have on higher education.

Most UK universities have a centre or unit, usually part of an academic school, which teaches English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Although related to English as a Foreign Language (EFL), EAP does not focus primarily on language teaching but on teaching international students the academic skills required for success in higher education in the UK. EAP staff are Applied Linguists, actively engaged in designing and developing courses; in testing and assessment; and in researching aspects of teaching academic literacies. The level of scholarship of EAP practitioners is reflected in the thriving membership of the British Association of Lecturers in English for Academic Purposes (BALEAP), which has over 80 institutional members, a biennial conference and extremely well attended Professional Interest Meetings three times a year.

In recent years, senior university managers have become increasingly aware of EAP as a commercial enterprise. Given the challenging economic climate in UK HE, attracting international students in larger numbers has become vital to balancing the books. Furthermore, the national and international environment has become more intensely competitive, with more countries teaching English and trying to attract international students. Where formerly the income from teaching pre-sessional and foundation students was usefully applied to supporting Modern Foreign Languages (MFL), in some universities, focus has increasingly been on income

generation and EAP as an entrepreneurial rather than an academic activity. A consequence of this development has been the de-professionalisation of EAP teaching, with staff being effectively downgraded.

Over the last three years, the sector has also proved vulnerable to being outsourced or privatised, with a number of companies emerging. It is not easy to obtain accurate

seven other universities, which have considered and rejected them. In other words, it is clear there are reservations in the sector about privatisation.

The major players listed above are very different in character, with two main approaches. The first is the “bolt on”, where the company offers an “International College” or equivalent, guaranteeing progression into the university. Numerous issues emerge

“In some universities, focus has increasingly been on income generation and EAP as an entrepreneurial rather than an academic activity.”

information about progress, but to date these currently include the following: the first, IBT, an Australian company, now also called Navitas, has worked with two universities for several years and is currently in discussion with two others; Kaplan, owned by the Washington Post, is working with four universities and in discussion with, probably, two others; Study Group, owned by the Daily Mail, works with three universities and is in discussion possibly with another three; INTO, owned by a property developer, is working with three universities, and in discussion with four others; finally, Cambridge Education Group is a newcomer which has just started working with two universities. Despite the concerted hard sell from so many operators, however, the total number of universities now working with private companies is around 18 currently, with another possible eight. Kaplan, for example, has approached

with these operators, particularly concerning quality and standards. For example, as BALEAP members have reported, “the whole operation is numbers driven; X is owned by private equity who, while investing in X also expect a big return... (University managers) have targets of huge increases in international student numbers”; similarly, “Y University have agreed to lower standards on most points for course admission than we accept...”. Students may be given entry to a foundation course with IELTS 3.0-3.5, which is far lower than the usual 5.0 entry to such courses. The same students may typically have only GCSE-equivalent, rather than an equivalent to AS-level (year 12) or higher. They are then guaranteed entry, after only two years preparatory work, to the second year of an undergraduate degree programme. Often students do not take an internationally recognised test, such as

IELTS or TOEFL, but the company's "own" test. It is early days for most of the operators, however; the effect of academically and linguistically weak, under-prepared students going into undergraduate work is potentially disastrous, not only for a university, but for the reputation of British education in the longer term. Moreover, terms and conditions of employment within these companies are generally considerably less favourable than those typical in EAP units. The work is teaching only; 20 hours a week or more, with no allowance for scholarship or research. Clearly enterprise has overtaken academic quality. These purely commercial operations generally target only the most lucrative parts of delivery, usually foundation courses. Characteristically, the private companies make overtures to the university senior management, promising delivery of huge additional numbers through an impressive marketing operation with global reach. The reality is frequently quite different! Given the pressures on senior management to increase international student numbers, it is heartening that

the number of privately delivered courses in UK universities remains relatively low and there is currently little sign of headway.

One company, INTO, takes a somewhat different approach from the rest. It enters into a partnership with the university, rather than being an adjunct, and is apparently very focused on the international student experience. It provides substantial funding for new international student accommodation and facilities and, through increased recruitment, is creating more full-time rather than hourly paid teaching posts. Their track record to date (which is only a year in all but one case) shows an improvement in the EAP unit's profile within the university. Although the impact on staff work experience is relatively less negative, terms and conditions seem generally poorer, including loss of USS pension rights, and, as with other operators, the academic work of EAP teachers has been substantially de-professionalised.

The initial rush to privatise, under less than academically sound conditions, has at least been stemmed.

Universities are wise to sit back and assess the impacts for those who have privatised their EAP teaching. However, currently, some private companies are starting to have an impact on recruitment, which in turn may create further interest in privatisation. Admissions criteria and the quality of courses being offered are severely compromised. Staff are under huge teaching workloads, unable to engage with vital development work and research. Even more important is the ultimate impact that privatisation of the EAP sector will have on the reputation of British education. Once lost, reputation is hard to win back.

Mary Anne Ansell is Academic Development Director for Student Affairs, Marketing and Internationalisation at the International Centre for English Languages Studies (Westminster Institute of Education, Oxford Brookes University). She is also Chair of the BAELAP Accreditation Committee.

Note from Professor Michael Kelly

Mary Anne Ansell's article points to one of the ways in which higher education is changing. The private sector has until recently operated largely in parallel to the publicly funded sector; but in the last two or three years private providers have engaged actively with public universities in the way she describes.

It is outside of the Subject Centre's remit to argue for or against these changes, though we know that there are strong and conflicting views on them across the sector. We are keen to provide information on developments of this kind, and also to address issues of quality and standards that might arise from them. We would welcome suggestions on how the Subject Centre might provide academic support for colleagues in higher education who are engaged in this area.

Please write to *Liaison's* letters page (forthcoming in Issue 2, January 2009) at the address listed on the back cover; or email llas@soton.ac.uk

What do you think? Email us at llas@soton.ac.uk, or continue the discussion on the LLAS forum: www.llas.ac.uk/forum

Testing times ahead?

Adoption of the CEFR is becoming widespread across Europe but Glenn Fulcher questions whether it is right for UK higher education.

Critical appraisal of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) is only just appearing, even though it has been institutionalised in much of continental Europe. Its impact on UK HE is imminent, so it is timely for language professionals to consider carefully whether the adoption of the CEFR is the right step for them.

Much is at stake. This article argues that the CEFR is emerging as a tool in standards-based language education, serving a philosophy in which language is no longer the key to understanding culture, humanity and communication, but rather the means to ensuring economic prosperity. I describe the power of standards-based systems, and then show how the CEFR fits into standards-based language education. Finally, I consider its most powerful use as a tool for the alignment of language curricula and tests.

There is a clear warning about the potential misuse of the CEFR in our universities, which would open the doors to unprecedented levels of external control. This is contrasted with its alternative use as a starting point for discussion of assessment issues, a mere heuristic, enjoying no special status above other similar models.¹

The normalising gaze

Language education in Europe is lurching toward a harmonised standards-based model in the interests of so-called competitiveness in global

markets. The rhetoric is one of progress and change, but as John Stuart Mill (1859: 79) argued in his analysis of earlier attempts at European harmonisation, "it proscribes singularity, but it does not preclude change, provided all change together". Today's tool of proscription and change is the CEFR, made effective through institutional recognition of only those programmes or tests that are "CEFR-aligned".

Standards-based systems, in which assessment is the tool of accountability, are increasingly being adopted by bureaucracies as a cheap and simple solution to achieving global competitiveness (Brindley 2008). Centralizing authorities see control and standardisation as the means to tackle perceived failings of education in comparison with competitors. Education is less concerned with individual growth than with a collectivist solution to perceived economic problems, as this extract from a popular magazine illustrates:

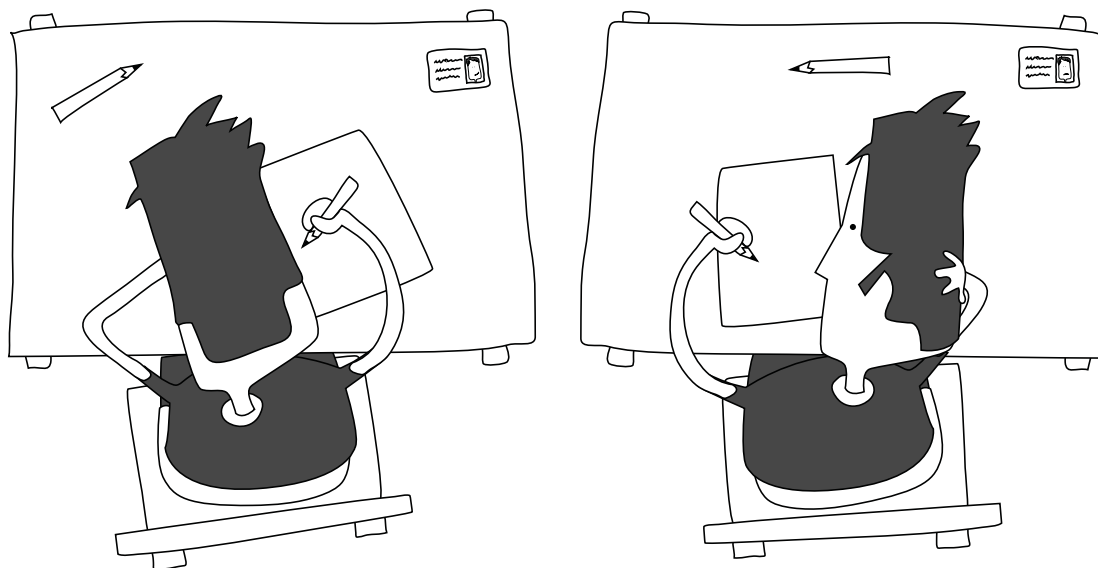
Recently, education has been made the subject of public discussion from the point of view of economic usability. It is seen as some important human resource and must contribute to an optimisation of location in a global competition as well as the smooth functioning of social partial systems. Whereas education in former times was associated with the development of individuality and reflection, the unfolding of the muse and creativity, the refinement of perception,

expression, taste and judgment, the main things today are the acquisition of competence, standardisation and effective educational processes as well as accreditation and evaluation of educational outcomes. (Swiss Magazine, June 2007; translation provided by the magazine from the original German).

Standardisation is driven by the belief that educators stand in the way of progress; the chosen method of change is standards-based testing, which brings control through accountability. Mansell (2007: 3) describes how "hyper-accountability" is achieved by using assessment outcomes to rank institutions, local authorities and teachers; close schools or award performance pay; set targets; and judge the likely economic productivity of the education system. Standards-based assessment successfully imposes a high level of surveillance upon the sector (Foucault 1975: 184-194).

The CEFR, despite the original intentions of the authors, is now being adopted as a tool in standards-based education in Europe. As other countries and transnational organisations seek collectivist solutions its adoption beyond Europe testifies to its usefulness in centralised language education policy. It is therefore not surprising that there is pressure to adopt the CEFR, for in the wake of adoption comes the requirement to align curriculum and assessment to its scales, and be held accountable for outcomes.

¹ See for example the more comprehensive Canadian Language Benchmarks, available at: www.language.ca



Reification

Since its inception, the CEFR has been a tool for harmonisation of language learning and assessment. Trim (1996: 415) frames early contributions in terms of the Council of Europe's "work for increasing European convergence" and "language learning for European citizenship". Although couched in the language of linguistic and cultural diversity, the intention was to make possible the recognition of language qualifications across state borders, driven principally by the problems between Swiss cantons (Saville 2005: 279). Unsurprisingly, the "validation" of the system designed to achieve this goal was interpreted as institutional recognition (Trim 1996: 416-417). As this is achieved, we see emerging calls for "the policing of the CEFR levels" across Europe (Alderson 2007: 662; Bonnet 2007: 671) with the explicit purpose of removing the principle of subsidiarity from education, and moving toward "a common educational policy in language learning, teaching and assessment, both at the EU level and beyond" (Bonnet 2007: 672).

The rapid uptake of the CEFR can be accounted for by the ease with which it can be used in standards-based assessment, and form the basis for

requirements in policy areas such as immigration. Malone (2008: 225-226) compares the influence of the CEFR to the No Child Left Behind legislation in the United States, despite the fact that the CEFR is not mandatory. As the CEFR is "manipulated unthinkingly by juggernaut-like centralizing institutions" (Davies 2008: 438), it is predicted to have the effect of "reducing diversity and experimentation" as teachers and learners have to meet externally imposed standards.

The authors of the CEFR had no intention that it should be used in this way. Trim (in Saville 2005: 281) says:

[...] there is no intention of prescription on the part of the authors. But among the users there will be many who might well have a very strong intention of prescription; but that is not the authors' intention.

The indiscriminate exportation of the CEFR for use in standards-based education in non-European contexts, such as Hong Kong and Taiwan, shows that Trim was correct when he observed that "there will always be people who are trying to use it as an instrument of power" (282). The problem, as Fulcher (2008: 170) puts it, is:

It is a short step for policy makers, from "the standard required for level X" to "level X is the standard required for...", a step, which has already been taken by immigration departments in a number of European countries. This illegitimate leap of reasoning is politically attractive, but hardly ever made explicit or supported by research.

For this step to take place, a framework has to undergo a process of reification, or "the propensity to convert an abstract concept into a hard entity" (Gould 1996: 27). The CEFR scales assume the role of constants in our linguistic and communicative universe, at the heart of the system.

The only significant survey undertaken (Council of Europe 2005) adds to the evidence that use of the CEFR is being taken as a directive. This is not in keeping with North's (2007: 656) view that: "the CEFR is a concertina-like reference tool, not an instrument to be applied."

Construction

There is a widespread, but mistaken, assumption that the scales have been constructed on a principled analysis of language use, or a theory of second

² Switzerland does not have a central Ministry of Education and the idea for the CEFR grew out of the attempts to force each Canton to recognize the language qualifications of the others.

³ The principle of subsidiarity is that matters that can better be dealt with at the level of the individual state should remain at that level, and not be taken over by the central European bureaucracy.

language acquisition. However, the descriptors were drawn from existing scales in many testing systems around the world, and placed within the CEFR scales because teacher judgments of their level could be scaled using multi-faceted Rasch (North 1996). The steps in the process are summarised in Fulcher (2003: 107-113).

The selection of descriptors and scale assembly were psychometrically driven, or as North (1995) says, based entirely on a theory of measurement. The scaling studies used intuitive teacher judgments as data rather than samples of performance. What we see in the CEFR scales is therefore “essentially a-theoretical” (Fulcher 2003: 112), a critique which North and Schneider (1998: 242-243) accept. It has been frequently repeated since that the scales have no basis in theory or SLA research (Hulstijn 2007: 666).

These Frankenstein scales need to be treated with care. It is not reasonable to expect them to relate to any specific communicative context, or to provide a comprehensive description of communicative language ability. Most importantly, we cannot make the assumption that abilities develop in the way implied by the statistically determined hierarchical structure of the scales. It has long been known that the assumed linearity of such scales does not equate to how learners actually acquire language (Fulcher 1996; Hulstijn 2007: 666). The pedagogic notion of “climbing the CEFR ladder” is therefore naïve in the extreme (Westhoff 2007: 678), and so attempts to produce benchmark samples showing typical performance at different levels inevitably fall prey to the critique that the system merely states analytic truths (Lantolf and Frawley 1985: 339), which are both circular and reductive (Fulcher 2008: 170-171).

The reification of the CEFR is therefore not theoretically justified. Further, given the diverse origins of the CEFR descriptors, it is questionable to claim that the scales are a “specifically” or “genuine” European invention, as promulgated by Alderson (2007: 660), and attempts to label critics of the CEFR as “Eurosceptics” (660) is little more than the familiar political tactic of argument by labelling.

Alignment

The use of the CEFR for harmonisation has commitment only to system. Harmonisation needs reified models that exist independently of the effects of a test on its users and their needs, whereas a commitment to effect requires variable frameworks

“We cannot make the assumption that abilities develop in the way implied by the CEFR scales.”

and tests for different user populations and needs (Davidson and Fulcher 2007: 232-233). This interpretation coincides with Trim’s (1996: 417) view that a model like the CEFR deliberately lacks the detail necessary for local decision making and action, which is rightly the domain of the practitioner. It is precisely when the CEFR is seen merely as a heuristic model which may be used at the discretion of the practitioner that it may become a useful tool in the construction of tests or curricula.

Notice we have now moved from calling the CEFR a “framework”, to calling it a “model”. The purpose of a model is to act as a source of ideas for constructs that are useful in our own context. Language testing rightly prioritises purpose as the driver of test design decisions. The context of

language use is therefore critical, as it places limitations upon the legitimate inferences that we might draw from test scores, and restricts the range of decisions to which the score might be relevant. The constructs are articulated in a test framework that provides a theoretical rationale for the relevance of the constructs to the specific context, and the operationalisation of these constructs is embodied in the test specifications (Fulcher 2004; Fulcher and Davidson 2007). These are referred to as three levels of architectural documentation in test design (Fulcher 2006: 5; Fulcher and Davidson, in press).

The CEFR is not a framework in this sense, but is a high-level generic model. Yet, the term “framework” in its title suggests that it is capable of

generating test specifications, or being the medium by which existing tests and specifications can be compared. Originally, Trim had intended it to be called the Common European Model, but the use of the term “model” was vetoed at an early stage by the French representatives on the Commission because “modèle” implied an ideal (Trim, in Saville 2005: 282-283). Trim was correct that in English, “model” is precisely the correct term for the CEMR, whereas the use of the politically correct “framework” has encouraged the fallacy that its applications are immediate and specific.

The clearest example of this fallacy is the assumption that by mapping the specifications of an existing test onto the CEFR one can demonstrate linkage between the two, a fallacy

reinforced by the production of a manual to guide researchers to do this. The conclusion that a test specification will contain only a small part of a model (or under-represents the model) is as inevitable as the conclusion that the model does not contain the detail that is needed for an operational test specification. The two documents are at different levels of the architectural test documentation and cannot be compared. The illogicality of this position is made clear in Kaftandjieva (2007: 35), which argues validity is a question of alignment, and that “the main goal of this linking exercise is to demonstrate compliance with a mandate”. Indeed. When we are told to align our teaching or assessment with a standards-based system, we are taking the first step in compliance with a system that will increasingly encroach on our liberty to teach and assess in ways that are ecologically sensitive to our particular learning environments and educational goals.

In her analysis of a reading test, Kaftandjieva discovers that the match between the test and the CEFR reading descriptors is approximately 27%, which is accounted for by the suggestion that the CEFR descriptors are very general, and that the test is not long enough. The author argues that linkage can be improved “simply by adding a few more items based on short texts whose discourse type is expository, argumentative or instructive” (40) and by combining categories in the CEFR that judges cannot agree upon, such as “make straightforward inferences” and “interpret and integrate ideas and information”.

This advice is not burdened at all with any concern that the machinery of alignment ignores the context of language use, the purpose of

assessment, and the concept of validity as making sound inferences and claims. Context and complexity, individual needs and communicative purpose, are far too messy for the world of alignment and accountability. One system is needed to classify everyone. But as Krumm (2007: 667) puts it:

[...] in a world of social, cultural, and individual heterogeneity, one instrument and approach can neither address all situations and contexts nor meet all needs. Although the CEFR is not intended to be applied uniformly to everybody, in some cases it is applied in just such a fashion [...]

Conclusion

Testing and assessment can have a useful place in language learning and teaching. However, standards-based assessment is the result of a breakdown in trust between the bureaucracy and language educators. We are perceived as being traditional, of avoiding change to our comfortable lives. We are seen as putting the economy and our rank in the globalised market place in jeopardy. Boyle (2000: 47) lists this as one of his paradoxes: “Numbers replace trust, but make measuring even more untrustworthy.” First, standards-based assessment creates an accountability system where the statistics, comparisons and league tables tell the truth about performance. Poor performance can be policed, and can result in severe penalties. Yet, what is being measured is not always what is important; this in itself is a value judgment, which is inherently theoretical and political. Second, accountability always has unintended consequences. In secondary education, meeting standards is now more important than learning, leading to the kinds of bizarre practices in language

teaching described by Mansell (2007: 83-90).

Aligning our teaching and assessment practices to the CEFR is not an ideologically or politically neutral act. And the consequences should not be underestimated. It would be the first step toward the external control and monitoring of content and outcomes in language education. Do we believe that the standardised outputs of centrally controlled standards-based language education will serve the primary economic needs of a superstate, competing for its place in the global economy? As Kelly (2004: 1) writes:

Higher education provides a microcosm of the broader picture as Europe attempts to respond to global changes by creating a European Higher Education Area, capable of matching the US and Japan by 2010. That is a tall order and, as the EU Commission has warned, unlikely to be met without urgent reforms. In response, the package of changes known as the Bologna Process is likely to be accelerated, with resulting opportunities and threats.

Or with von Humboldt (1854: 48), do we believe that language education is primarily about “the absolute and essential importance of human development in its richest diversity”, which provides a sounder basis for success than the perceived needs of the collective?

These are far from being trivial questions. How we address them within our institutions, and the decisions we make, will affect language education well into the new century.

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A multilingual Europe – ideal or reality?

Multilingualism is a key concept in European policy, but Karen M. Lauridsen questions how close we are to the target of mother tongue plus two foreign languages for all Europeans.

Since the end of the 1980s, more than one million students have taken advantage of the ERASMUS and other European Union mobility programmes, and have spent a semester or more at a university in another European country. They have thus immersed themselves in foreign cultures and, more often than not, in countries whose languages are different from the students' own first language. From the very beginning, and integrated into the student mobility programmes, has been the idea that students would learn the language of their host country as part of the experience.

Now, twenty years later, the reality is clearly different from what was originally intended. While many students have studied and learned the language of their host country, at least to a certain level of competence, others have preferred to go to English-speaking countries in Europe

and beyond, or to universities that have offered courses taught in English rather than in the official language of the university (and host country). This is not least the case in the small European countries whose languages are less taught abroad.

The dominance of English

This situation should be seen within the general socio-economic developments in Europe and what has become known as the globalisation process. Technological advances that, among other things, have facilitated communication, trade and travel across the world, have contributed to the fact that English is today the dominant language of international business, trade, travel, research and – to a very large extent also – education.

Why have so many universities changed their language of instruction to English, at least for some of their

programmes and modules? First of all, the researchers are members of scholarly communities that communicate with each other and publish in English. European universities compete with each other, and one of the benchmarks of a high-quality university is international publication in peer reviewed journals via internationally recognised publishing houses – in English. The EU student mobility programmes and the Bologna process have enhanced student exchanges. And in order to attract national students, universities must be able to offer them exchange places abroad. That, in turn, is only possible if the same universities can attract a sufficient number of exchange students from top universities in other countries. And if courses are then all taught in the less widely taught languages, such as Danish, most foreign students will go elsewhere. Therefore, universities in



the small European countries have no choice but to offer courses taught in the major European languages, English primarily, as an integrated part of their internationalisation process. What is more, the commercialisation of the higher education sector has been another major factor that has very much set the languages agenda at European universities.

The flip side of the coin

All of this has been to the detriment of other European languages, large and small. In some European countries, there is still an interest in learning both English and other foreign languages. In other countries, however, young people – and their parents – are convinced that English is enough, and the interest in learning other languages is declining rapidly. An example of such a country is Denmark. Why is that a problem?

First of all, a language is our most important means of communication within a given culture. If we all communicate in anything but perfect English, we completely lose the cultural dimension of language and end up communicating in what might be called a cultural vacuum. This may be acceptable in some international contexts, but not so when we are dealing with people, business partners, and so on from another (non-Anglophone) culture. For instance, Germany is Denmark's largest export market, and Danish industries and businesses are desperately trying to attract employees with German language skills because they know that interaction with German business partners is facilitated if the Danes speak German – even if it is not perfect. Several surveys have in fact shown that business is lost because of lack of foreign language skills and cultural intelligence (ELAN 2006; Fjord et al. 2007).

Second, it is only possible to have a flexible and mobile European work force if the people moving out of their own country are able to communicate in or willing to learn the language of their host country. Furthermore, a rising number of European businesses and organisations are increasing their co-operation with partners in the emerging markets outside Europe, which has led to a rising need for people who speak Chinese, Hindi, Arabic and so on.

Which languages and how many languages?

The most recent Eurobarometer survey shows that while 44% of Europeans say they do not have a language other than their mother tongue in which they are able to have a conversation, 56% claim that they have at least one foreign language, including 28% that have at least two foreign languages and 11% that have three or more. Not surprisingly, language skills are unevenly distributed over geographical areas and socio-demographic groups. However, the following figures should be food for thought: 38% of the respondents – by far the largest group – have English as a second language; 14% have German; and 14% have French. All the other European languages, with considerably fewer foreign language speakers, follow after these three major languages on the list (Commission of the European Communities 2006).

These figures speak volumes. As Europeans we need to learn languages other than English in order to communicate across national and cultural borders within Europe and beyond. The political goal, set as part of the Lisbon Agenda, is that all Europeans should have the opportunity to learn two or more languages, and as we have just seen, less than one European out of three

lives up to this goal at the moment.

The European Union has supported the learning of languages as part of or in addition to the Education and Culture mobility programmes for more than a decade. Since 1 January 2007 we have had a European Commissioner with multilingualism as his portfolio, and it is expected that a new Framework Strategy for Multilingualism will be published by Commissioner Orban later this year. However, while the EU may support language learning, the main responsibility for facilitating this rests with the Member States. Are there, within the educational systems from primary through secondary up to and including tertiary education, structures in place to ensure that children and young people learn a range of languages? Do the educational systems ensure that children and young people learn languages, and are there structures in place to facilitate lifelong language learning for all? Many European countries will have trouble responding in the affirmative to these questions. In other words, there are still major challenges ahead.

Motivation

Finally, even with the structures in place, we may not necessarily see an increase in the language learning. As with any other subject, students must be motivated to learn.

However, many schools and higher education institutions find it difficult to motivate their pupils or students to choose to learn and continue to learn languages. Therefore, a group of universities and schools has joined forces in the MOLAN project, the aim of which is to bring about, on a large scale, a positive attitude among young Europeans in formal education towards language learning as well as towards other peoples and cultures. The method to achieve this is to

collect and disseminate case studies of successful practice from which others may learn, thereby enabling a larger group of schools and universities to enhance student motivation. The project should therefore be seen as one of many factors that may enhance the ability and willingness of Europeans to learn languages.

Concluding remarks

Globalisation and other socio-economic developments in Europe and beyond make communication across national and cultural borders more important than ever. In order to achieve this, we need foreign language communication skills. While the European Union has supported activities to enhance multilingualism for the past couple of decades, there is still some way to go before reality meets the ideal situation of mother tongue plus two for all Europeans.

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transitions and connections

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“Learning to think and write clearly about art works that do not naturally lend themselves to being written about; examining unfamiliar images from a foreign time and place on their own terms; seeing through overblown and unverifiable language – these have always been skills we wish our students to develop.”



Teaching visual arts in modern languages

Good examples of content innovation in languages degree programmes can be found across the UK. Here, Matthew Treherne outlines the rationale for introducing visual arts into the curriculum, and discusses the associated challenges and positive outcomes.

University teachers should always be careful not to assume that their own experience as students is normative. But my own first steps in the study of art, over the course of my modern languages degree, have in many ways shaped my commitment to teaching visual topics. I first became interested in art on my year abroad: living in Rome, I knew there was a whole cultural world in the galleries and churches of the city, and – without understanding much of what I was seeing – I set about discovering as much of it as I could.

Returning to the final year of my languages degree, and with guidance from my tutors, I started seeing ways in which even a little knowledge of art could enrich the subjects I was studying. Futurist theory looked a whole lot more interesting when I thought about it alongside Futurist painting; it seemed to make sense to think about Renaissance poetry alongside the art which helped shape the imagination of readers and writers. A range of exciting possibilities suddenly opened up.

What I had glimpsed as a student was what I now see as the intellectual and pedagogical rationale for teaching visual arts in modern languages. The relationship between literary and visual culture has been a vibrant research area for some years now: from the use of ekphrasis in medieval and Renaissance poetry, to the twentieth-century *livre d'artiste*, the visual and the literary have been examined together in often highly illuminating scholarship. By introducing art to students, we lead them into this exciting area of research. And academics' research can benefit too: the

Subject Centre recently identified disciplinary undergraduate teaching as a barrier to interdisciplinary research; teaching across the visual-literary disciplinary divide is one way to begin to address this problem (LLAS Subject Centre 2007: 37).

There are excellent pedagogical reasons for teaching visual arts in modern languages programmes. Perhaps most obviously, the year abroad provides great opportunities to discover art: many students will spend, as I did, their year abroad in cities full of art or will at least have the chance to visit those cities. Encouraging students to discover these artworks is an excellent way to enrich their engagement with the culture in which they are living.

It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that visual arts topics appear to be increasingly popular in departments of modern languages. Yet the integration of visual arts into modern languages syllabi is in many ways uncharted territory. It is for this reason that my colleagues Emma Wagstaff (Department of French, University of Birmingham), and Abigail Brundin (Department of Italian, University of Cambridge) and I co-organised a workshop on this subject, which was held in Cambridge in November 2007, and attended by thirty colleagues.

The workshop participants were all concerned with the same fundamental questions. How do we encourage students with little experience of studying art to engage effectively with visual topics? How can we integrate study of the visual arts into modern languages programmes, rather than treat them as an add-on, interesting but

fundamentally separate from the rest of the curriculum? Can we do anything distinctive when we teach art in modern languages programmes, or are we just offering a watered-down version of what is taught in Art History departments?

What emerged in the workshop was a strong sense of the potential value of teaching visual arts in modern languages programmes. As many participants pointed out, modern languages courses offer students the opportunity to study visual arts in their broad cultural and social contexts. Students have the skills to examine relevant foreign language texts alongside visual arts, something which cannot always be taken for granted in Art History departments. Across institutions, different ways were being found to link visual and literary studies: illustrations and texts were being examined together; theoretical concepts in visual representation were linked to theoretical questions in literary criticism; works of art theory were being studied alongside the art works themselves. It was clear that colleagues were using visual topics to stretch students in new directions, whilst developing their existing skills.

Inevitably, there is a downside to all of this. Some participants expressed regret that there simply was not room in modern languages syllabi to engage with the technical details of artistic practice. We were all concerned to make sure that a focus on art enriched language study, rather than replacing it. And there was a sense of frustration that colleagues and students occasionally seemed to perceive visual arts modules as less "serious" than those dealing with

strictly “literary” topics. Yet the overriding sense was one of great optimism for the opportunities that the study of visual arts opened up for students – and these opportunities in no way “dumb down” our programmes.

One of the questions that arose at the workshop was that of the relevance of formal analysis for modern languages students. Can we introduce students effectively to the techniques of art analysis? In my view, we can and should. I have found that students respond admirably when challenged to acquire these new analytical tools. In, say, my final-year module “Experiencing Art in the Italian Renaissance”, I expect students to develop a strong grasp of key aspects of visual analysis, enabling them to engage with works of art as closely as possible. On the basis of this analysis, they can then examine the reception of art, looking at literary, cultural and theoretical aspects of the context in which art was viewed. But the bedrock of that work must be an ability to carry out rigorous analysis of artistic form.

The challenge, however, is to familiarize students with the tools of art analysis within the time constraints of an individual module. To this end, I have developed an independent study course for students, which enables them to study aspects of visual art ranging from colour to medium. The course, used alongside some of the excellent published overviews of formal analysis (such as Acton 1997 or Laneyrie-Dagen 2004), enables students to gain the basic skills independently, so that seminar time can be spent building on, rather than introducing, those skills. Having piloted this resource with students, I am currently in the process of putting it online, where it will be freely available.

Introducing students to visual arts topics has forced me to confront certain problems which I find emerge with particular clarity in teaching art. One such problem is students’ judgment in reading secondary literature. When

students begin to study visual arts, they lack confidence in finding an appropriate idiom. Yet if they turn to unreliable sources for models of how to write – the type of material they might find online, say, or in tourist literature – they immediately encounter a barrage of vague and pompous prose masquerading as art criticism. I find it essential to tackle this problem head-on, in ways which I had perhaps not adequately done in teaching literature, where the problem is no less important, but is more easily masked. For instance, seminar time can be usefully devoted to questioning authoritative-sounding statements found on the Internet. By helping students to puncture the overblown language of so much non-scholarly writing on art, we have a chance to encourage them to become not only better, more critical readers, but also clearer, more responsible writers.

In my own department, introducing visual arts into our curriculum has brought many benefits. Most obviously, it has helped us to recruit students to modules on medieval and Renaissance topics, at a time when other departments report a decline in interest in those areas; and it encourages students to make full use of their year abroad, often by pursuing dissertation research on visual topics.

Having made the visual arts part of our curriculum, we have been able to revitalise our knowledge transfer programme. In autumn 2007 we introduced an annual series of public lectures, the first of which tied in with the National Gallery’s exhibition on Renaissance Siena: Art for a City. We were able to use the high profile of the exhibition in order to attract a broad public to our lectures, which dealt with both art and literature.

Students, too, benefited from these public lectures, which enriched their study on visual arts modules. Seeing students choosing to come along, in their spare time, to lectures on art, alongside

members of the public who might otherwise have had nothing to do with a modern languages department, was clear evidence of the great benefits that art topics could bring. Yet at heart, this emphasis on visual art is doing nothing new. Learning to think and write clearly about art works that do not naturally lend themselves to being written about; examining unfamiliar images from a foreign time and place on their own terms, rather than succumbing to the temptation of passing immediate judgment on them; seeing through overblown and unverifiable language – these have always been skills we wish our students to develop. And when this work is enriched by the study of material in a foreign language, it is entirely in keeping with what a modern languages degree should be all about.

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Further information

The presentations offered in the November 2007 workshop are available online at www.leeds.ac.uk/italian/research/artworkshop.htm. The public lectures on Siena can be viewed at www.leeds.ac.uk/italian/research/sienalectures.htm. The online art analysis tutorial is available at www.leeds.ac.uk/italian/analysingpaintings.htm

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Teaching Chicano/a Studies in the UK: mobilising Hispanic Studies students' empathetic responses to promote equality and diversity

Following a paper presented at the LLAS / English Subject Centre conference, "Borderlands: Themes in Teaching Literatures of the Americas" (18 October 2007), Thea Pitman describes what students can gain from Chicano/a Studies.

Chicano/a Studies, in the fullest sense of the term, encompasses a wide range of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences and is devoted to investigating the experience of the substantial and still fast-growing sector of the US population that is "of Mexican ancestry". In the United States the subject entered university curricula in the early 1970s, largely as a result of pressure from the Chicano Civil Rights Movement and the demands of Chicano/a activists to be allowed fair access to higher education and to be represented fairly in the subject matter taught (Aguirre 1999: 267). It was, and still is, heavily involved in initiatives to socially engineer a more diverse and tolerant society.¹

In the UK the rationale for teaching the subject is quite obviously very different. With no "native born Chicanos/as" in our midst to give it purpose, the subject can (occasionally) be studied as "just another optional content module" on a degree in English or American Studies or, perhaps more often, one in Hispanic and/or Latin American Studies. However, it is my contention that, particularly for students of Hispanic and Latin American Studies, the subject can function as more than "just another content option". Instead, it can offer them an insider's perspective on discrimination with which they are particularly predisposed to empathise,

and subsequently it hopes to mobilise such empathy and indignation to encourage students to approach instances of discrimination in their own society in a more enlightened way. It thus helps promote tolerance and an awareness of social diversity among such students in a much more lateral sense than when taught in the US.

For the last five years I have taught a final-year undergraduate module entitled "Identity in Chicano/a Literature and Film" from within the Department of Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Studies at the University of Leeds. The creation of this module was motivated by the desire to come up with something that would be attractive to students (it is, of course, an optional module). It is hence

predominantly contemporary, dealing with both literature and film produced by Chicanos/as (of a generally more militant than assimilationist nature), and it benefits from the ongoing attractiveness of the topic of identity. However, I also wanted it to be relevant and useful to students in their lives beyond university; that is to say, I wanted it to go beyond the acquisition of knowledge about a different society and culture. However, I equally wanted it to do more than promote standard



transferable skills in essay writing and giving presentations, or even high-level transferable analytical skills with regard to such things as theories of identity. Ultimately, I wanted its core subject matter – marginalisation and discrimination – to be freed from its particular Chicano/a context in order to inform students' attitudes to questions of inter-cultural relations in the UK and elsewhere in the world. What I did not realise at the time of planning the module was that the particular students I teach would substantially facilitate this task.

Currently my students are predominantly white middle-class British young men and women – they hence form the Anglophone majority in the UK context. However, the fact that they are all also from Hispanic Studies programmes of one type or another is, clearly, the key that facilitates their appreciation of this particular minority culture. They have all had experience of living abroad for at least a year and hence know what being an outsider can really feel like.² They also all have relatively good knowledge of Spanish and of Hispanic (in particular Mexican) culture and are generally very sympathetic to this culture and its worldview (they have, after all, studied such cultures in national and regional contexts in which there is no discrimination against them). They thus experience the Chicano/a situation in the US largely as insiders, empathising heavily with Chicanos/as. To my mind, one of the main achievements of the module is that it can facilitate their experiencing this sense of empathy with a minority culture within a

majority Anglophone culture. This is something that the vast majority of them cannot experience in Britain, no matter how multicultural it is, quite simply because they form the Anglophone majority here. It therefore gives them an alternative perspective on themselves as representatives of an Anglophone majority. I thus hope that rather than just talking about racism, discrimination, multiculturalism and tolerance, the module can mobilise students' empathies to have a greater impact than an average "content-based option", working at a deeper level of learning and hence lasting longer in its effects on their lives.

There is some tangible evidence to suggest that this is, indeed, what students take away from the module. When I asked last year's cohort what they thought the point of Chicano/a Studies was after having studied it for a year (this, I think, is an essential question that all students should be asked at the end of their modules in order for those modules' more long-term impact and wider social relevance to be discussed), the responses included the following from one student:

Chicano Studies is all about exploring the relationship between the different cultures [Anglo and Hispanic], and creating an understanding of how and why problems exist. It is about raising awareness, giving the Chicano people a voice, aiming to diminish stereotypical views of immigrants and foreigners, and interpreting their presence in a positive light. [...]

The main point of studying Chicano literature and film is to develop an

understanding of the struggle that ethnic groups face when presented with the challenge of integrating into a new culture (or a culture that is not 100% native to them).

[...] on a more personal level, I could mention that the module has increased my awareness and developed my sense of empathy towards racial tensions in society on a global level.

While the student in question does not focus on the particular reasons for her predisposition to empathise with Chicanos/as, it is quite clear that students do extrapolate from the module's immediate content in a way that ultimately promotes the improvement of community relations beyond the four walls of the classroom. Thus, though not directly relevant to their own lives in the UK, the module offers students a lateral, empathetic experience through which to consider other cases of marginalisation and unfair representation in the UK and beyond.

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¹ The status and role of Chicano/a Studies in US higher education is still the subject of heated debate – see, for example, the recent special issue of the *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* dedicated to Chicano/a Studies (2005).

² Arguably the degree of discrimination experienced by a white, middle-class college student abroad is very different from that experienced by a dark-skinned, semi-literate Chicano/a farmworker in the Southern United States. Nevertheless, the Year Abroad experience can still serve as a stepping stone to empathising with the issues faced by minority cultures.

Teaching Arabic: the view from the United States

As interest in studying Arabic continues to grow in the UK, Lisa Bernasek draws on her own experience and interviews with colleagues to describe the evolving status of Arabic programmes in the US.

In the past ten years the number of American undergraduates studying Arabic has skyrocketed.

Programmes around the country are increasing their capacity, and universities are rapidly adding Arabic to their roster of languages. According to figures published by the Modern Language Association, the number of institutions offering courses in Arabic rose from 264 in 2002 to 466 in 2006 (Furman et al. 2007). This article, based on email interviews with current directors of Arabic programmes in the US as well as my own experience as a student of Arabic before this boom and as a teacher of Arabic since, gives an overview of the current state of Arabic teaching in the United States.

When I began learning Arabic in the autumn of 1992, the first-year Arabic class at my university was held in a room normally used for upper-level seminars. Ten or twelve students sat around a long table in a room with leaded glass windows and carved wooden cabinets set into the stone walls, a setting that evoked earlier generations of students in Princeton's relatively long tradition of Near Eastern Studies. By the second year, our class had dwindled to seven or eight students; in the third and fourth years the remaining students were able to fit around a small table in the professor's office for class. In contrast, in the autumn of 2006, without a significant change in overall student

body numbers, Princeton reported 109 students enrolled in first and second-year Arabic classes, and 24 in upper level classes (Modern Language Association 2007).

This dramatic increase in student enrolments has been mirrored across the country: according to the Modern Language Association, total enrolment in Arabic classes in 1990 was 3,475; by 2006 this number had risen to 23,974. Most of this expansion has taken place since 1998: between 1998 and 2002 total enrolments rose by 92.3%, and between 2002 and 2006 by 126.5%. The MLA's statistics also show that the increase in student numbers is primarily in first and second-year classes, with a ratio of 8 to 1 of students in lower versus upper level classes in Arabic (Furman et al. 2007).

This ratio reflects the flexibility of the American undergraduate curriculum, as the large number of students studying Arabic does not necessarily translate into students graduating with degrees in Arabic or related subjects. These numbers have risen as well in the past ten years, though they are still relatively small: in 2005-06 24 students graduated with a BA degree in Arabic language and literature (up from 8 in 1995-96); and 158 received a BA in Near or Middle Eastern Studies (compared to 84 in 1995-96) (National Center for Education Statistics 1998; National Center for Education Statistics 2007).

Many students of Near or Middle Eastern Studies will have studied Arabic, but they may also have focused on Hebrew, Turkish or Persian.

The size and timing of this increase in students taking Arabic at university reflects the increased prominence of Islam and the Arab world in global events. Although most universities had already finalised registrations for 2001 by September 11, numbers in Arabic classes the following year jumped dramatically. One university reported an almost threefold increase in the number of students enrolling in first-year Arabic in autumn 2002 (Sombuntham 2002). Indeed, interest in less commonly taught languages often follows current events, with Russian having an important following during the Cold War that dropped significantly after the collapse of the Soviet bloc, and interest in Chinese currently on the rise as China becomes an important economic actor (Bollag 2007).

However, according to current directors of Arabic programmes in the US, not all students are taking the language for purely instrumental reasons. Cigdem Balim, director of language instruction in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures at Indiana University, estimates the proportion of students studying Arabic for career purposes, especially government or military jobs, to be around 60% at her

institution. Joseph Zeidan, Director of the Arabic Language Program at Ohio State University, also cites career reasons as a major motivator for students at his institution, but adds that many students are also interested in studying Arabic to learn more about Arab history or literature. In addition, according to Zeidan, students will often begin studying the language to pursue certain career goals but will then develop a deeper interest in or affinity for the language and culture.

Christopher Stone, Head of the Arabic Division at Hunter College of the City University of New York, also noted the fact that Arabic has a reputation for being a difficult language to learn as a motivator among certain students looking for a “challenge”.

Student motivations vary by institution as well. Georgetown University in Washington, DC has the largest Arabic programme at a four-year college or university in the country, with 482 students enrolled in the autumn of 2006¹. Georgetown has a strong tradition of undergraduate degrees in government and foreign service, and many students may take Arabic as part of these degrees. At other institutions, the student body may have slightly different motivations. At Hunter College, according to Stone, there is a significantly higher percentage of “heritage” students than at the small liberal arts college where he previously taught. These students, either of Arab origin or Muslims of non-Arab origin, may see career opportunities in Arabic, but typically take the language for personal interest, to learn more about their family background or to be able to read Islamic texts. Heritage students make up a proportion of students in Arabic

classes around the country, and were cited by Zeidan and Balim as well as students who enrol in Arabic classes primarily to learn more about the language and culture rather than for career-oriented reasons.

Of course, students’ actual motivations are likely to be a mixture of many of these factors. In my own case, it was a combination of (vaguely defined) career goals and the desire to study a different and challenging language that led me to take Arabic in my first year at university. I had studied French and German in high school, and was deciding between starting Russian or Arabic. Current events – the Gulf War and the decline of the Soviet Union – came together with my interest in learning about a “different” part of the world to lead me into the Arabic classroom and eventually to study abroad in Egypt. When I arrived I quickly discovered that the year and a half of Modern Standard Arabic I had been studying so assiduously was not going to get me very far in day-to-day life in Egypt. My training had been focused on reading, writing, and parsing technical aspects of Arabic grammar – skills that made me almost able to read a simple newspaper article, but almost completely unable to carry on a conversation with an Egyptian.

Thankfully many of the techniques and, importantly, the textbooks for teaching Arabic have changed since I was an undergraduate. *Al-Kitaab fii Ta'allum al-'Arabiyya: A Textbook for Beginning Arabic* (Brustad et al. 2004), first published in 1995, is now the predominant textbook for teaching Arabic in the US. Unlike the books used when I started learning Arabic, *Al-Kitaab* develops students’ skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing

from the outset, using a communicative approach that had already been widely adopted in foreign language pedagogy but was applied rather late to the teaching of Arabic (Nielsen 1996). The traditional approach to Arabic teaching was based on reading comprehension and textual analysis, with speaking and listening skills treated as secondary. In part this is due to the particular language situation of Arabic, with Modern Standard Arabic used for written texts and in the broadcast media, and the spoken dialects of each region the predominant language for daily communication. Most textbooks before *Al-Kitaab* had focused solely on one or the other of these realms, whereas *Al-Kitaab* successfully integrates the two, with both oral and written texts in Modern Standard Arabic supplemented by oral passages and interviews in Egyptian Arabic. *Al-Kitaab*, often supplemented by e-resources specific to the university or shared across campuses, now forms the basis of most American students’ training in Arabic.

The complex relationship between Modern Standard Arabic and the regional dialects also complicates efforts to accommodate the needs of heritage students or others who come to university-level study with some previous knowledge of the language. The heads of Arabic programmes consulted for this article emphasised that such students come from a wide variety of backgrounds – some may have spoken a certain dialect at home but not know how to read or write, while others may have learned to read the alphabet in order to read the Qur’an – and a single solution is difficult to find for this variety of experience. At Indiana University,

¹ The largest Arabic programme in the country is at the Defense Language Institute, a two-year institution that provides language training for Department of Defense personnel. In the autumn of 2006 the Defense Language Institute reported 1208 students enrolled in Arabic (Modern Language Association 2007).

Cigdem Balim estimates the proportion of students with some background in Arabic before coming to university to be around 10%. These students are given a proficiency test, and if they have a basic level of proficiency but are not advanced enough to enter a second or third-year course, they may be able to enrol in an intensive first-year course that covers two semesters of Arabic in one semester. This type of specialised course is not very widespread, and most universities integrate students with some prior background into the most appropriate level along with students who are (or who started as) true beginners.

The challenges facing Arabic programmes across the United States

– from increased student numbers to classes that include students with a variety of language levels – mean that many programmes are stretched to their limits. One pressing issue in recent years has been the current lack of qualified instructors to meet the increased demand (Howard 2007). Government spending on programmes to improve proficiency in “critical” languages, including Arabic, has increased but is still considered modest by professionals in the field (Bollag 2007). Some have reacted with suspicion to government funding of Arabic programmes and the clear defense-related agenda influencing this (Geisler 2006). Student numbers indicate an interest in the Arab world that is encouraging, whatever the

reason behind it, but support from both government and universities will be necessary to truly take advantage of current demand and produce students who are proficient in Arabic and more educated about this part of the world.

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<http://arabicwithoutwalls.ucdavis.edu/aww/info.html>

Aswaat 'Arabiyya,
www.laits.utexas.edu/arabic_listening/download.htm

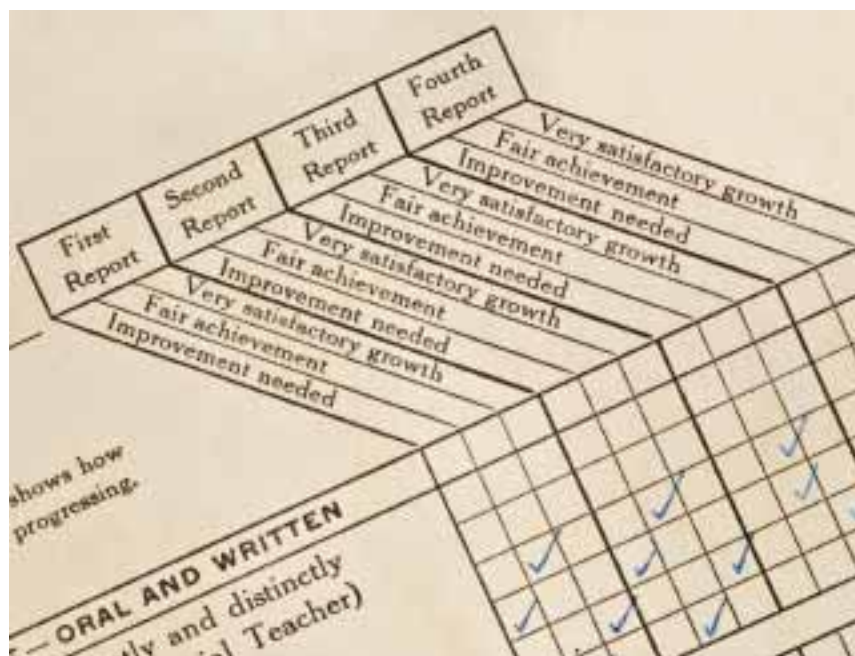
Assessment and feedback in modern languages

Abi Matthewman describes developments in approaches to assessment and feedback, and reports on a LLAS-funded "workshop to go" organised by University of Leeds staff in 2007.

As academics and HE professionals working in languages and allied disciplines, we have, I am sure, always been exercised by the twin themes of assessment and feedback. In recent years, the National Student Survey has focused our minds even more on our practice in this important area. What are we doing; when are we doing it; and what is the result? What sort of learners are we creating with our assessment methods? These sorts of questions will be familiar to colleagues across the country, no matter what their discipline.

At the University of Leeds, and in the Faculty of Arts in particular, we have responded to the National Student Survey (NSS) in a number of ways. In 2006 we began a project to look at the area of assessment and feedback more closely: we were disappointed with some of our results, but we wanted to probe more deeply what those results were telling us. We knew that as a faculty we were fortunate to have many colleagues who were already excellent teachers and who were committed to developing their teaching even further; and we wanted to hear some of their views: how did their perceptions compare with those of our students? The project that resulted, "Fair, Prompt and Detailed" – Matching Staff and Student Expectations on Assessment and Feedback in Light of the National Student Survey, was led by Professor Paul Cooke (Professor of German Cultural Studies) and Dr Elizabeth Pender (Department of Classics).

Indeed, the worry that motivated



the project leaders was the possibility that the real issue at the heart of some of the poor NSS results was a lack of communication rather than a lack of good pedagogical practice. What messages were we transmitting about assessment and feedback, and which were getting through? Even more simply, what did students and staff understand the word "feedback" to mean? Were we talking about the same thing? The project leaders commissioned a series of in-depth focus groups with students and academic staff by the consultancy firm Mouchel Parkman, who in total interviewed 70 students and ten staff. The full report, including the judgments and recommendations of Mouchel Parkman, is available at www.tinyurl.com/j2r92

The results demonstrated that although students' perceptions were sometimes disconcerting – for

example, their overwhelming tendency to focus on their numerical mark over all else, or claims about a lack of consistency between academic departments – there were also encouraging points of agreement between students and staff. In a report for the Faculty of Arts Learning and Teaching Committee (June 2007), Dr Pender noted that:

It was striking to see a number of points of correspondence between lecturers' and students' views. Both groups, for example, would like to see more formative feedback built into teaching and more contact hours...

More broadly, we need to think about how we communicate with students in some areas (e.g. what students see as "conflicting messages" across departments are often simply different – discipline specific – ways of communicating the same messages. Indeed, such differences might be

“We are being transparent about the things that we ask from our students, but we are also trying to increase the opportunities for support and access to feedback in all of its many guises.”

conveyed as a strength, a celebration of academic diversity (in face of a student desire for greater standardisation and harmonisation)).

Even more encouragingly, students themselves suggested enhancements to current practice, and their counsel, although not always new, is worth repeating: to be specific and avoid vagueness; to provide feedback in language that is relevant to them and can be used as a means for improvement; to strive for greater clarity in grade descriptors; and lastly and most interestingly, a suggestion that we as a faculty introduce a way for Level 1 students to “bridge the gap” between school and university assessment.

Taking this last suggestion seriously, we initiated an extended induction across the faculty (which includes the School of Modern Languages and Cultures, with its 235 Level 1 Single Honours students). As part of these induction activities, we ran a lecture and workshop session addressing the topic “How is university work different from school?”. The workshop gave students hands-on access to the assessed work of their fellow students, together with markers’ written feedback. This opportunity to discuss assessment, marking scales, grade descriptors, feedback sheets and personal tutorials, right at the start of their academic career, was welcomed by students. They valued the open and transparent discussion and began to trust that there was no trickery or witchcraft involved in the marking of their work. These sessions have since

become embedded in the normal, annual activities of the Faculty of Arts and, we think, count as one example of good practice in this area. In fact, the focus groups also brought to light other areas of good practice that had already existed and so, in order to disseminate the findings in Leeds and beyond, we called upon the expertise of LLAS to help fund and co-ordinate two regional staff development events where linguists across the country could engage in this important debate.

Thus, in May and June 2007, the University of Leeds ran two staff development workshops on Assessment and Feedback in Modern Languages funded (with our thanks) by the LLAS “workshops to go” scheme. One workshop took place on 8th May 2007 at CILT in London (our thanks to CILT too), and the other on 27th June at the University of Leeds, with the aims of disseminating the results of the Leeds project; sharing good practice from the University of Leeds that the project had highlighted, in the form of case studies from academic staff from across the School of Modern Languages; hearing from experts in the field of assessment and feedback (Professor Brenda Smith, Higher Education Academy and Professor Phil Race, Leeds Metropolitan University); and lastly, creating a network of professionals who were working in this key area of learning and teaching.

Both workshops proved lively and stimulating and included much discussion from the participants who attended (over 70 in total). The case

studies from Leeds featured, amongst others, Dr Matthew Treherne’s innovative “Experiencing Art” module and Dr Paul Rowe’s “Independent Study Component” which uses peer assessment in a Level 1 French module. The feedback from participants on the day was overwhelmingly positive and many said that they would be taking practical examples back to use in their own teaching practice.

To bring things right up-to-date from the Leeds perspective, our work that began with the project in 2006 in response to the NSS continues, and, as ever, there are no easy answers. Presently, we are using TQEF monies to develop an online, interactive resource which gives students exam feedback and allows them to “feed-forward” to future assessment. We are being transparent about the things that we ask from our students, but we are also trying to increase the opportunities for support and access to feedback in all of its many guises. One of the lessons from the 2006 focus groups – that staff and student perceptions do not always coincide – is apposite: our online resource will include a discussion about the many varieties of feedback – one attempt, at least, to ensure that when we as staff discuss feedback, we are speaking the same language as our students.

Until June 2008, Abi Matthewman was the Faculty of Arts Learning and Teaching Enhancement Officer at the University of Leeds.

What makes a good lecturer?

The winner of the 2008 LLAS Subject Centre undergraduate student essay competition is Siobhan Tebbs Wesley. Siobhan is in the final year of a Combined Honours degree in Arts (Arabic, French, Russian and Sociology) at the University of Durham.



Having been brought up to appreciate the infinite power of information technology, before university I was bemused as to the purpose of live lectures. If all you did was sit there and watch and listen, then surely you could do the module on a computer, in the comfort of your own home? What's more you could repeat the lesson several times at your leisure, without having the distraction of people far more interested in whispering about last night's extravagances with their friends than listening to a lecturer. I expected old, grey, bearded male professors, quietly mumbling about the details of their life's work in an incomprehensible vocabulary to an audience who might as well not even be there.

Since that time I have seen enough splendid examples of captivating lecturing techniques to quash my negative expectations. I have also had various completely soporific lecturers, some of whom were indeed old bearded men and some not at all.

Strangely enough, one's age or amount of facial hair is apparently not a critical factor in the person's ability to motivate me. So what exactly is it that brings a lecture alive and makes leaving your computer screen worthwhile? For me, the value of going to lectures manifests itself in exactly the qualities that set them apart from those cleverly interactive computer modules. This potential value has several building blocks, more often than not partly recognised and attempted, and rarely (but occasionally) all harnessed by the same person.

The first of these essential features is enthusiasm. Someone fascinated with their field, who can infect an entire lecture theatre with a love of their subject, is priceless for securing and maintaining the interest of their students. The people whose faces lighten up at the prospect of sharing their passion, who can bounce into a room full of students with hangovers and infuse them with excitement:

these are the most likely contenders for the perfect lecturer. We need lecturers to have us waiting in anticipation for the next line in the story, the next turn of the wheel. The more natural an attitude adopted by the lecturer; the more instinctively the students will lend her or him their undivided attention. It is a question of creating a unique and energetic atmosphere so that the students will listen harder for fear of missing out.

The next feature is almost always neglected in lectures: facilitating interaction between lecturer and audience and amongst the audience themselves. Having appealed to students' imagination, you must allow them an outlet for it! Many teachers no doubt think this unnecessary in large lectures, leaving it to seminar tutors to listen to the students' ideas. But let me ask you: having lit a firework, would you shut it in a room? Or would you release it into the open air? Use what you have created; exploit the tension by demanding a

“Someone fascinated with their field, who can infect an entire lecture theatre with a love of their subject, is priceless for securing and maintaining the interest of their students.”



display of quick thinking; show your respect for students' opinions by asking them to contribute, even if only briefly. The students will feel honoured and the respect will be reciprocated, encouraging them to take precious note of your every word.

I recently went to a lecture on a French poet. Doctor X cleverly used interaction to help us understand the fusion of sensory perceptions in his writing: calling out a smell or a sound, he asked us what colour we would associate it with. The 250 students were excited to find that many people shouted out the same colour for a particular smell or sound. In this way, interaction provoked by the lecturer rebounded throughout the entire lecture theatre, and after the game was over, brought everyone's attention back to the lecturer himself. We were desperate to hear what his next words would be, how he would explain this phenomenon we had just experienced first-hand, and how it presented itself in the poems we were

reading. The charisma of Doctor X was certainly essential to this experience, but having been able to contribute to our own enlightenment we felt rather pleased with ourselves as well.

Finally, I wish to mention a vital component of a live lecture that is to be found in computer courses: in fact, technology contains perhaps even the most exemplary instances of it. It is of course a logical and coherent structure. The need for a proper structure in a lecture is most notable when it is absent, as I discovered in a module on cinema history. The comedy laugh of Professor Z and her fascinating film reels certainly kept us awake for an hour every week, but what had I ever learnt by the end of it? Evidently not at all lacking in experience and knowledge, she would nevertheless flit from subject to subject, filling us temporarily with ideas but giving us no concept of their progression or relation to the context. She was a mother bird feeding her

chicks with plenty of worms but never teaching them to fly. It was good fun, but what about the future? How could I use this in an exam? If Professor Z had only employed some form of direction to her teachings she would have been well on her way to being the most effective lecturer I have ever had.

My time here has taught me that while technology may be graced with infinite possibilities, the need for compelling, passionately-delivered live lectures is as still as great as ever. Be enthusiastic, interact with your audience, and structure your presentation well. Give us a unique experience; make us part of an indispensable atmosphere which could not be found anywhere else. Create electricity; encourage us to ask questions; love your subject and tell it like a tale: with a beginning, a middle and an end. This will contribute crucially not only to our studies in university but also our development as human beings. Thanks folks, and keep lighting the fireworks!

When I grow up...



Robert McGinty, last year's winner of the LLAS Subject Centre's student essay competition, graduated in 2007 with a degree in English and Russian Studies from the University of Nottingham. He moved to Russia after graduating to teach English and volunteer in non-governmental organisations (NGOs). He will soon return to the UK to start a graduate programme in London.

When was the last time you heard someone ask: "What do you want to be when you grow up?" Chances are it was a while ago. Can you remember what you answered? I'll help refresh you.

The question is a popular topic for newly-graduated, English teachers abroad to discuss with their students – maybe we are looking for some free career advice! Certainly, my younger pupils in Moscow have given some familiar answers. "A businessman", "a footballer", "a teacher", as well as a few welcome, albeit unconventional, ideas: "I want to be a German", "I would like to be older when I grow up", "I want to be a dog."

How is it that very young people have such clear – though sometimes strange – concepts about who (or even what) they want to be, yet so many graduates reply: "I don't know what I want to do"? Personally, I only realised what I want to do after I worked out who I am – think internal journey before external one. That process took a long time.

Coming to Moscow after university to teach was not my first choice. I used the summer after graduation to apply for graduate schemes. I didn't rush into a temporary job. If I had taken one too soon, I think there wouldn't have been time to fill out all the application forms! A trip to Moscow loomed on a rapidly-approaching horizon if all my applications were rejected.

At this point, I want to stress that I had no illusions about companies simply handing out jobs, like students hand out

free flyers. My friends, who graduated a year before me, dispelled that myth: "Yes, you have received, and continue to pay for; a high-quality, expensive education. But that does not mean that someone owes you a job." That's true. All the same, having your application rejected is not pleasant. That's also true.

Fortunately, at the eleventh hour, I made it onto a graduate scheme. However, the idea of going to Moscow had rather taken me by that point and my future employer allowed me to go. I would join the scheme on my return. The Moscow plan involved teaching English to earn money and volunteering at NGOs for experience and valuable language practice.

Many of my peers teach in Moscow for two reasons: as a way to get into the country and apply for other jobs – often journalism; or to travel while also buying time to work out what they want to be when they grow up. You see, in the end, there's this sense that it's a stopgap solution... somehow we have all ended up here. So let's have some fun and

freedom because we are all about to grow up metaphorically and do something – like find a glittering career or answer our calling. Having a job and having a career are two different things. Graduates are those of us who are keenly aware of those differences.

More of us than would like to admit are still waiting for our calling. Incidentally, do you feel like you answered your calling, or just somehow ended up where you are? In a very real sense, the friends and colleagues I have met in Moscow are growing up before my eyes. Some of them have realised that their call may not actually come, and others realise that maybe it's more fun to let the phone ring a while before answering.

After something substantial ends, like university, there is a feeling that it should usher in something else equally spectacular; but those of us who have experienced it know that it does not need to unfold that way.

As for me, I picked up the phone and called my future employer. I was pleased to hear that they were still expecting me.



Japan's Built-in Lexicon of English-based Loanwords

Review by Tessa Carroll

In his new book, Frank Daulton makes the case that the vast numbers of English-based loanwords in Japanese constitute a largely ignored and untapped resource for Japanese learners of English. This is an attractive argument, since the difficulties for Japanese speakers learning English – and vice versa – stem largely from the fact that the two languages are completely unrelated in grammar and lexicon. However, the flood of English words that has entered Japanese since the late nineteenth century, and particularly since World War II, is potentially helpful to the learner, just as recognising that *door* is related to *Tür* helps Germans learning English. But, whereas the role of cognates in language learning between European languages is widely recognised, in Japan, there has been resistance to exploit English-based loanwords in this way, for reasons discussed and, to a great extent, refuted by Daulton.

The book is divided into four parts: Japan's importation of English; *gairaigo* (loanwords, literally "words coming from abroad") and language acquisition; the built-in lexicons; and exploiting Japanese loanword cognates. An epilogue offers more prospects and suggestions for the application of the author's findings in teaching. Around 40 pages of appendices demonstrate the overlap between loanwords in Japanese and the most commonly used English words taken from the British National Corpus and academic words (Coxhead 1998).

Although the book is aimed mainly at English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) researchers, the first

part will also be of interest to teachers and learners of Japanese. Chapter 1 provides a succinct introduction to the Japanese language and writing system, and to EFL and the English language in Japan, followed by an excellent historical and linguistic overview of the complexities of how English words have been adopted and adapted by Japanese speakers. Daulton has spent nearly twenty years teaching English in Japan, and his description is depressingly familiar to my own experience of teaching in Japanese state schools in the early 1980s, since when little seems to have changed: "Japanese EFL is characterized by not only its dependence on grammar-translation and focus on entrance exams, but by large classes of taciturn students." (p.2)

The bulk of the book examines the role of cognates in language learning, focusing particularly on the author's long-term research into Japanese students' understanding and use of loanword cognates. Supporting the argument that errors play an important developmental role in learners' interlanguage, Daulton makes the important point that "[t]he advantage of errors over avoidance is especially stark in the context of Japanese EFL learners", who tend to be passive and reticent to communicate. He goes on to examine in detail common loanword cognates for high-frequency and academic English vocabulary, and quantifies the extent to which they overlap semantically and formally. Daulton notes his astonishment, shared by this reviewer, at the number of high-frequency cognates: "around half of high-frequency [English] word families



Frank E. Daulton
(2008)
Clevedon: Multilingual Matters
ISBN: 978-1-84769-030-2

correspond to Japanese loanwords, as do around a quarter of academic word families" (p.86). Barriers such as the differing scripts and phonological systems are discussed, as are the vagaries of English spelling and additional meanings. The final main chapter is devoted to extending knowledge within word families, a crucial means of expanding vocabulary coverage.

Not mentioned are the differences between British and American English, perhaps because Daulton himself is American, and American English is the variety most widely taught in Japan. I have often been mystified by Japanese speakers using English words and idioms, such as "pinch hitter", that they thought would be familiar to me. Loanwords based on American pronunciation may also pose difficulties for a British listener: Daulton refers (p.106) to *dara* as "the more faithful variation" for "dollar" compared to the usual *doru*, but neither are particularly close to the British pronunciation.

As for how useful English-based loanwords are for learners of Japanese, there are, unsurprisingly, pitfalls. As a beginner leafing through the Berlitz phrasebook many years ago, I was amused to recognise English words in their Japanese form: *hanbāgā*, *handobaggu*, and so on. All too tempting, once one grasps the principles of how the words change, to fill lexical gaps with English words pronounced Japanese-style. But even if these exist as loanwords, comprehension amongst the general public is by no means guaranteed. In one of his research studies, Daulton found that university students, "arguably the group most adept with loanwords", did not fully understand an average of 16.5% of common loanwords taken from two loanword dictionaries (p.32).

Daulton's book is a significant contribution to EFL teaching and SLA research, written in an accessible style and offering practical suggestions based

on solid research. The lists of loanword cognates will be a particularly valuable resource for teachers and learners of both languages. Although the focus is on English and Japanese, by extension, EFL learners from other non-European linguistic backgrounds also have resources on which to draw in the form of English-based loanwords, and Daulton highlights new work on high-frequency English cognates in Malay as an example of this potentially fruitful area for further research (p.86).

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Dr Tessa Carroll is a freelance researcher, lecturer and editor, and formerly a lecturer in Japanese at Stirling University.

Creative Writing Studies: Practice, Research and Pedagogy

Review by Margaret Anne Clarke

Creative writing, both as a practice and discipline, occupies a somewhat ambiguous position within the context of higher education. It is a boom subject in terms of student recruitment, but one that has yet to be completely defined as an academic discipline, and establish its full tenure in the academy. There have traditionally even been doubts as to whether the discipline can be taught at all. The edited collection of essays, *Creative Writing Studies: Research and Pedagogy* addresses as

comprehensively as possible the questions, dilemmas and ideas regarding the ongoing establishment of creative writing as an academic field, and focusing specifically on the university sector.

In the introduction, the editors present an overview of the field of creative writing, and the two fundamental dilemmas that inform present considerations on its current position within higher education. First, creative writing is a practice-led and process-based discipline, the

fundamental characteristic that differentiates it from the study of literature, i.e. the study of finished artefacts with (usually) a named author, and belonging to a specific genre. As such, creative writing as a discipline generates multiple meanings and interpretations concerning its definition, and in particular, the relation between practice, pedagogy and theory.

Second, as the editors point out, the establishment of creative writing at higher education level has, up until now, been focused principally on

undergraduate provision. The strength of creative writing within the academy derives from its popularity with students and its capacity to recruit. Thus the agenda for creative writing has been driven by considerations which are primarily pedagogical in nature: innovations in teaching and workshop-based practice have been the main focus of the discipline. The research agenda is less clear, or has yet to be fully established in certain aspects. This is especially the case at doctoral level, where the balance of theory and practice, and appropriate benchmarks and methodologies for assessing both creative artefacts and research produced by postgraduate students, have yet to be fully defined.

The main body of the volume consists of contributions from individuals based in universities in the UK, the United States and Australia, all of whom are both practitioners of creative writing, and tutors in the university sector. Using concrete examples drawn from their own first-hand experiences as tutors, students of creative writing, authors, translators and administrators, the contributors reflect on their practice, testing the epistemological validity of their evolving theories and ideas against their actual experiences in the classroom and workshop. The contributors also consider both the process of creative writing and the final written artefact, and in what ways this process sheds further light on the nature of composition, the specific formal genres of the novel and poetry, and engagement with an already established literary tradition and canon. All these considerations are components of the material pedagogical practice that enable the students to create a finished artefact, which must then be assessed within the formal requirements of the degree programme. This is not a straightforward process; it may

engender frequent tensions between creative and critical practices, and within departments and institutions, given that any creative writing programme must demand a high degree of personal autonomy and originality on the part of students. Of particular interest in the volume, therefore, are those chapters that integrate accounts of students undertaking a formally assessed creative writing programme and the perspective they themselves may bring to the process. Some innovative approaches are suggested by Nat Hardy in the chapter "Gonzo-formalism: a creative writing meta-pedagogy for non-traditional students", which also explores the nature of the student cohort and the role of the student in the formation of "theoretical praxis". Of interest also is Nessa O'Mahony's chapter, "That was the answer: now what was the question? The PhD in Creative and Critical Writing: a case study". The chapter details her experience of undertaking a Master's programme and the ongoing process of creating an imaginative written piece within the formal educational contexts of a PhD programme, "elucidating the process of writing" while she does so.

While the volume does not pretend to provide a definitive answer to the numerous challenges facing those seeking to embed the discipline further within higher education, it defines what those challenges are in a lucid and readable way, and is recommended for any tutor and administrator seeking to define their theoretical practice further within the field.

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Graeme Harper and Jeri Kroll (eds) (2007)

Clevedon: Multilingual Matters

ISBN-13: 978-1-84769-020-3 (hbk)

ISBN-13: 978-1-84769-019-7 (pbk)

700 words on... internationalisation

In the spirit of both “700 reasons for studying languages” (www.llas.ac.uk/700reasons) and “International Reflections” (www.leedsmet.ac.uk/internat/reflects - daily articles exactly 200 words in length), we invited Elspeth Jones to write 700 words on internationalisation.

In Tokyo and New York conferences, I have been learning what internationalisation means for different universities. Some say it is about being world class, attracting the best staff and students, moving up the world rankings. Some relate it to student mobility and “internationalising the campus” through domestic students returning from overseas. Others view it as transforming minds, offering global perspectives on professional practice and insights into other cultures. Some, such as the University of South Australia, consider the international dimension of the curriculum to be so important that it is incorporated within the attributes they expect their graduates to demonstrate (www.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/gradquals).

In striving to develop cross-cultural capability and global perspectives across the entire curriculum, Leeds Metropolitan University focuses on internationalisation for all. We are seeking to increase the number of students undertaking study and work placements overseas and have invested significantly in international volunteering, last year supporting 148 students undertaking 15 projects in ten countries across six continents. We expect all students and staff to develop “world-wide horizons” and our Vision and Character statement says we intend to be “a university with world-wide horizons where an

international, multicultural ethos pervades our scholarship, curriculum, volunteering and community engagement at home and overseas” (www.leedsmet.ac.uk/the_news/docs/visionandcharacter.pdf).

So where do languages fit into the internationalisation agenda? For universities at the conferences I attended, the only language described as essential was English. Although foreign language study is seen as desirable in many institutions in the English-speaking world, few take the step of making this compulsory. In Tokyo, a group of senior UK academics were brought together with university presidents and vice-presidents from eleven countries. Remarkably, most UK participants had come from a languages background. Were they interested in internationalisation because they were linguists or did they choose to study languages because of their inherent interest in other countries and cultures? This question has always fascinated me. I learned French from the age of seven and can’t remember a time when I did not know words in other languages, or appreciate the differences in structure and nuance from one language to another. Was it this early contact with French which developed my fascination for other cultures, travel, other languages and later linguistics?

For linguists it is often difficult to appreciate how monoglots

"Familiarity with another culture or language does not automatically result in the ability to communicate across cultures."

perceive the ability to speak other languages. A conversation with a mathematician gave me pause for thought. His view was that, with technology developing rapidly, portable automatic machine translation will soon lead to a Star Trek-style universal translator, making language learning superfluous. This view of translation as a purely mechanical activity is difficult for a linguist to comprehend, especially when we hear stories such as "out of sight, out of mind" being translated by machine as "invisible idiot". Any bilingual can give examples of words and phrases which are difficult to translate, or which serve a social function beyond their literal meaning. In the Star Trek episode, "Darmok", the universal translator cannot help with a language based on allegory and metaphor; individual words are understood but cultural references make their meaning impenetrable. Captain Picard's cultural empathy, along with his knowledge of history, literature and anthropology enables communication when direct translation does not.

I have met many monolingual people who demonstrate the kind of cross-cultural capability which we espouse at Leeds Met; people able to communicate across cultures, regardless of linguistic barriers and who relate to other human beings in all their diversity. Without using their language, Michael Palin

communicates easily with nomadic tribesmen or Himalayan yak herders. His handling of unfamiliar situations, however well researched in advance, is an example par excellence of this view of internationalisation. In contrast, I know linguists who depend on their language skills and expect to make themselves understood, finding unfamiliar contexts just as difficult as someone without experience of cultural diversity.

The presence of international students on campus cannot alone develop the global perspectives of UK students. In the same way, familiarity with another culture or language does not automatically result in the ability to communicate across cultures. While language learning can help, we cannot assume our students will inevitably develop cross-cultural capability through international experiences. It is our role to lead and challenge them to ensure that they do.

Elspeth Jones is International Dean at Leeds Metropolitan University and co-editor of *Internationalising Higher Education* (Routledge 2007). She also edits "International Reflections" www.leedsmet.ac.uk/internat/reflects, which have appeared daily since September 2003 on the Leeds Metropolitan website.



Povitica
apple and cinnamon bread



Śledź w śmietanie
herring with cream



Chleb ze smalcem
bread with lard



Żurek
sour soup with egg and sausage
served during Easter



Pierogi
dumplings filled with cheese and
potatoes served with cream



Barszcz (Borscht)
beetroot soup served during
Christmas Eve



Schabowy
breaded pork cutlet, served with
potatoes and lettuce, salad or
pickled cucumbers



Mielony
meat loaf - minced pork cutlet



Tatar
minced fresh raw beef with egg,
onion, pickles and marinated
mushrooms

A taste of Polish

In the first of a series designed to give you a taste of different languages, Elwira Grossman offers an introduction to Polish.



Summer school participants, Jagiellonian University, Krakow, July 2007. Photos: Clare McManus-Czubinska

Polish is spoken by nearly 40 million people within Poland and about 10 million elsewhere in the world, including such countries as Australia, Brazil, Belarus, Canada, France, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Latvia, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Ukraine and the USA. The fact that Chicago is considered the second largest Polish city in the world (after Warsaw) might come as a surprise to some. This statistic, however, might soon be challenged by the growing number of Polish inhabitants settling in Dublin, London and Edinburgh, the cities that have recently experienced the largest waves of post-2004 migration movement from Poland.

Rules and regulations

Unlike English, Polish is an inflected language where case endings – not the word order – define the relationships between words in the sentence. Polish has seven cases, four basic patterns of verb conjugation, two different time aspects and three basic tenses. Its alphabet generally consists of Latin-based letters but some are modified with various marks (diacritics) while others consist of two joined consonants (digraphs) that make just one sound. Polish spelling is highly regularised and

has a straightforward pronunciation key that after a few hours of study presents no mystery to learners. The language uses no articles at all, so learning them in English is a real challenge to native Poles. On the other hand, one of the greatest challenges for students of Polish is learning the official and unofficial forms of address. Polish observes strict rules regarding these forms and any speaker's attempt to discard them suggests lack of sophistication, if not plain rudeness.

Family relations

Polish belongs to the family of twelve Slavonic languages and as such shares many similarities with Czech, Croatian, Bulgarian, Slovak, Slovene, Ukrainian and Russian, just to name a few other widely spoken "sister" tongues. Among them, Polish is the third most common, after Russian and Ukrainian. Like most European languages, Polish has an Indo-European origin, hence some of its nouns (like those describing family relations) share a similar word stem with other European words. For example, the English word sister

is rendered as *siostra* in Polish, *Schwester* in German, and *syster* in Swedish. There are other more direct cognates, such as words that stem from our common Latin or Greek heritage and whose meanings can be easily guessed. Consider, for example, words like *doktor*, *kolor*, *natura*, *proces*, *muzeum* or *religia*. Polish also includes many words borrowed from German, French, Italian, Russian, Ukrainian as well as Turkish and Yiddish, but most of them have been assimilated into Polish so well and so long ago that

Polish native speakers are seldom aware of their origins. The largest pool of newly acquired vocabulary comes from English and covers highly specialised terms as well as very colloquial expressions of everyday use. There is some anxiety regarding the overwhelming tide of Englishness that has flooded Polish over the past few decades or so, but most linguists agree that there is no fear that Polish will ever lose its "magic" sounds created by a row of consonants that appear unpronounceable to foreigners.

Dialects and diminutives

Before Polish developed into the language it is today, it was spoken for over eleven centuries. However it was during the Golden Age of the Renaissance in the sixteenth century that it became firmly established as a separate and refined literary language. Today we can distinguish about six dialects, the major being Great Polish (spoken in the west), Lesser Polish (spoken in the south and southeast), Mazovian (spoken throughout the central and eastern part of the country), Silesian (spoken in the southwest) and Kashubian (spoken along the Baltic

coast near Gdańsk). These dialects can be quite remote from standard Polish, but being clearly different, they often cause less confusion than differences encountered between standard written and colloquial Polish. Many learners find this difference quite demanding, if not annoying. When visiting Poland, they might understandably feel cheated since not a single waiter/waitress uses the proper dictionary form for tea or coffee. Like most native speakers, they use endless diminutives, which in speaking often signify politeness and kindness. Thus,

the ordinary dictionary word for coffee can have at least four different versions with a variety of suffixes attached to its basic core. Oddly enough, such diminutives – when pronounced by native Poles – are not easily recognisable by a learner who has not been warned in advance. Consider the following versions of the basic word *kawa*: *kawka*, *kawusia*, *kaweczka*, *kawunia*. Fortunately, learners can eventually recognise the most common suffixes and enjoy creating diminutives of all other words they just learned.

Literature

Polish, like all other languages, does not exist in isolation and its communicative function must be considered in its proper local context. In order to make this context more familiar to those who are curious or linguistically and culturally minded I can

recommend a selection of Polish literary texts in fine English translation. They offer insights into historical changes and patterns of thought that many readers might find highly revealing and illuminating when compared with their own native milieu. Even

though Polish modern literature is sometimes characterised as being unreadable, our students believe that the following works defy this perception and helped them to understand both Poland and Poles better. Well, give it a try and see for yourself!

Happy summer reading!

1. Andrzej Szczypiorski (1989) *The Beautiful Mrs. Seidenman*. Translated by Klara Glowczewska. New York: Grove Press.
2. Tomek Tryzna (1998) *Miss Nobody*. Translated by Joanna Trzeciak. New York and London: Doubleday.
3. Antoni Libera (2001) *Madame*. Translated by Agnieszka Kolakowska. Edinburgh: Canongate Books.
4. Olga Tokarczuk (2002) *House of Day, House of Night*. Translated by Antonia Lloyd-Jones. London: Granta Books.
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Pirie D. et al. *Kierunki: Foundation Course in Polish* (in-house textbook used at Glasgow University).

Dr Elwira Grossman is Stepek Lecturer in Polish Studies and Comparative Literature Programme Co-ordinator at the University of Glasgow.

Events calendar

More information: www.llas.ac.uk/events

British Sign Language: a modern foreign language?

Date: 9 September 2008

Location: University of Central Lancashire, Preston

This workshop will draw upon a UCLAN project that aims to establish a new online curriculum for the teaching of British Sign Language (BSL) at HE level (there is currently no standardised curriculum for BSL in HE). Participants will see a demonstration of the on-line curriculum and be able to discuss issues surrounding BSL.

6 Ps in Podcast: Planning, Production, Pedagogy Participation, Positioning, Publishing

Date: 11 September 2008

Location: King's College London

This workshop will introduce the basic software required to make a pedagogical audio file. In addition to hands-on experience, the seminar sessions will involve input based on the 6 Ps Portsmouth model and discussion relating to the implications for the teacher of moving to an online/blended learning environment.

Languages of the wider world: valuing diversity

Date: 15-16 September 2009

Location: School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London

This conference will bring together teachers, researchers, educational developers and policy makers to discuss practical and strategic issues relating to languages of the wider world in UK higher education. The aim is to showcase work being undertaken and to facilitate collaboration, raise the profile, and make the case for increased HE provision of "less widely used and lesser taught" languages.

Embedding online learning in current teaching practice

Date: 18 September 2008

Location: The Open University, Milton Keynes

This workshop will introduce Modern Languages teaching staff to current practices and national initiatives related to the integration of online learning with a face-to-face teaching setting. The workshop will be delivered in a blended fashion, with pre- and post-workshop activities taking place online using tools and resources openly available to educators in the HE sector.

Enquiry-based learning in languages

Date: 26 September 2008

Location: University of Manchester

This conference will explore the role of Enquiry-Based Learning (EBL) in language learning and teaching. EBL has been growing steadily across all sectors as a way to enhance students' independent learning, encourage intellectual curiosity, develop valuable transferable skills and increase overall motivation.

Teaching medieval and early-modern culture to students of modern languages

Date: 21 November 2008

Location: University of Leeds

This workshop aims to support the teaching of medieval and early-modern culture in modern languages - an area which is often felt to be in decline. The workshop starts from the premise that the study of medieval and early-modern culture is pedagogically important and intellectually valuable. The workshop will identify practical ways in which we can engage and inspire students in this field.

e-Learning symposium

Date: January 2009

Location: University of Southampton

The fourth e-learning symposium organised by LLAS will bring together practitioners from a wide range of disciplines and institutions. We are looking for examples of e-Assessment in language teaching to help inform this symposium, and are interested in anything from high stakes testing, to low stakes informal online assessment that you might use during your course.

If you use some form of e-Assessment in your teaching, we would be pleased if you could contact Kate Borthwick, e-learning Project Officer (kb2@soton.ac.uk) so we can build a picture of what people are doing in this area.



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