

# Bulletin of the COUNCIL of UNIVERSITY CLASSICAL DEPARTMENTS



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## Common Tongues

Editors shouldn't say this kind of thing, but I'm rather chuffed with this issue, and not solely because this time most of it's been written by other people. When I took over the Bulletin last year, I only had two real ideas about where it ought to go. The first, and first to be implemented, was "online"; the Bulletin is now an electronic journal on the World Wide Web at <http://www.rhbnc.ac.uk/Classics/CUCD/> - where some of this issue has appeared months ahead of its paper incarnation. The electronic edition is still a rather poorer relation than I would have wished by this stage - among other delinquencies, I still haven't been able to face converting last year's graphics-packed language teaching survey - but it's already a useful resource, and by the time you read this it will be accompanied at the same address by the updated electronic edition of the Classical Association's Classicists in British Universities.

The second place I wanted the Bulletin to go was "international". Most British classicists, myself included, have only the haziest notion of how professional structures and pressures in this country compare with those experienced by our colleagues abroad. (To this end, the theme of the 1997 CUCD panel at Royal Holloway will be the comparison of classicists' experience of the profession in the UK with the situation overseas - a subject on which there is plenty of anecdotal awareness, but little attempt to pull the fragments together.)

But one thing especially missing in British classics is the kind of open self-examination widespread in the US of the profession's aims, structures, and goals, both internally and within the larger academic and national communities. The difference is frankly less one of culture than of national politics and resourcing. If British classicists spend so much less time than their north American colleagues in discussion of professional issues, it is largely because they spend so much more of their time teaching. (This would only be an arguable sign of healthy priorities if it were the result of choice rather than necessity.) Understandably, they thus tend to regard professional debate as at best a luxury reserved for those who can think about something beyond mere survival, and at worst a symptom and potential tool of provenly-sinister government policy. (Witness the uncomfortable political second-guessing presently attending the preparation of answers to the ingenuous-looking questions posed by the Dearing committee.) But it does mean that there is a tendency for debate to happen first on the other side of the ocean.

So it's especially gratifying to kick this issue off with a powerful contribution from just this international perspective. Judy Hallett's article on graduate education in the US began life in the 1995 CUCD panel on postgraduate teaching in St Andrews. But as her discussion shrewdly shows, the issues extend far beyond local concerns (well addressed by the two UK contributions, published in last year's Bulletin), and the particular US initiatives here reported, to much larger questions of the structure of the profession both nationally and globally, and ultimately to awkward issues of pedagogic ethics themselves. How far can professional experience be compared across national boundaries? In what ways is our profession really an international one, and are all aspects of academic globalism necessarily a good thing? Above all, what can we (as opposed to government) do to improve the quality of life for the next generation in the profession? As her companion paper on postgraduate "acculturation" shows, we ought to think not only about the external resourcing issues that preoccupy us in the UK, but about internal matters of professional culture over which we do, for once, have some control.

The other thing I'm especially pleased to have in this issue is the trio of papers on University language teaching, which should be compulsory set texts for all involved in the activity. Of all the debate on this topic, a continuing theme of recent Bulletins, the work that has excited me most in recent years is David Langslow's trailblazing experiments in Oxford with new ways of teaching, and of assessing the teachability of, classical languages, drawing on published research and personal expertise in linguistics. But no less galvanising was Barbara Bell's report on the realities of classical language teaching in a range of UK schools; while Anthony Bowen's account of the success of the Cambridge beginners' Greek programme offers a powerful practical paradigm of what can be achieved (as well as of what is needed to achieve it).

Lastly and very much leastly, but still on the subject of language acquisition, a small update on this page last year: Georgia's first word was "damn!" (The views expressed, &c...)

## **CUCD Conference Panel on Language Teaching, Nottingham 1996:**

### **Notes on Some Aims and Assumptions of Classical Language Courses at University**

*D.R. Langslow*

Under this rather pretentious title, I offer some brief thoughts on three related topics bearing on the teaching of Latin and Greek at university, which have occupied a number of us at Oxford over the last few years.[1] In the first two sections, I have tried to make my remarks as far as possible generally applicable to any classics degree-course with a language-based element. There is some straightforward description of current Oxford practice but, this apart, these notes should be read as a set of purely personal reflections, the reflections, moreover, of one who is in no sense an expert in these matters, who has indeed less experience in them than most of his audience/readership, and who hopes for feedback, both positive and negative, on any of what follows.

#### **1. Language Aptitude Testing**

An attempt to measure the ability to learn one of the classical languages quickly and accurately has since 1994 played a part in Oxford admissions-tests for single-language part-one classics courses ('Lit. Hum. Course II').[2]

In the public domain, language aptitude testing is about 70 years old and has been a major industry for more than forty years, its chief investors and consumers being the armed services and government departments, especially in the United States.[3] The LAT industry is driven by a desire to avoid more the spending of money on, than the causing of unhappiness to unsuccessful students; it rests on the long-held belief that 'facility in learning to speak and understand a foreign language is a fairly specialized talent (or group of talents), ... relatively

independent of those traits ordinarily included under intelligence" (Spolsky [n. 3], p. 128). In the inter-war years, intelligence tests had been relatively unsuccessful in screening for language-courses. Teachers in schools and universities reported significant numbers of failures in language-courses among the most intelligent students. On the other hand, special prognostic tests tried in the 1920s and 1930s, which generally correlated quite highly with intelligence tests, were often reasonable predictors of learning to read and translate. Their reported shortcoming, of being less good at predicting success in learning to *speak* a language in an intensive course, is probably not of serious concern to teachers of Latin and Greek. These early prognostic tests generally took the form of mini-lessons in an unfamiliar language followed by questions in or about it.[4]

In the view of one of the gurus in the field, John Carroll, expressed in 1960,[5] language aptitude consists of four distinct and measureable abilities:

- a. phonetic coding - the ability to code and remember an auditory phonetic signal
- b. grammar handling - the ability to recognize functions of words in sentences
- c. rote memorization - the ability to recall foreign-language items
- d. inductive language learning ability

(of which the Oxford test aims to test (b) and (d)). It is not immediately clear how one can cheaply and easily test (a), which is, in any case, probably irrelevant to an ability to learn to read and write Latin and/or Greek,[6] although it seemed important to include the (for English speakers) exotic phonological feature of distinctive vowel-length. The testing of (c) requires careful invigilation of candidates but can in principle be incorporated.[7]

Of course, success in learning a new language will depend on more than aptitude. We can all think of other factors which will crucially help or hinder the enterprise. There are, I think, no surprises in the set of factors listed and discussed by Carroll in a slightly later article,[8] three attributes of the student and two aspects of the teaching-situation:

- a. individual variables:
  - i. verbal intelligence
  - ii. aptitude (time needed to learn)
  - iii. motivation (time and concentration applied to learning)
- b. instructional variables:
  - i. adequacy of presentation
  - ii. time allowed for learning.

There is the further point - which amounts almost to another 'individual variable' - that aptitude generally increases with *experience* in language learning. This may be inferred from, *inter alia*, the fact that success in learning a first foreign language appears to be a good predictor of success in further languages, provided that the languages are of the same linguistic type. In our case, this means, of course, of inflectional type and with Indo-European grammatical categories.[9]

At this point it is quite reasonable to object: if a number of factors are relevant to success in language-learning, some of them uncontrollable and unmeasurable, and if verbal intelligence and success in a first foreign language may predict future success no less well than an LAT, then is the LAT game really worth the candle? This is a serious objection if resources for

administering tests are limited, and it is probably true that, if, for whatever reason, a separate LAT cannot be used, the careful use of a combination of other indicators will be a good, perhaps equally-good, way of admitting to, or streaming within, language-courses. I would, however, make two points, neither of them original, one as a qualification of one of these 'other indicators' and the second in favour of a separate LAT.

First: the definition of past 'success' in a foreign language is obviously crucial. Few here, I believe, would see much value as an indicator of future success in intensive language-learning in even a starred 'A' grade in GCSE French, although this may be all that we have to go on by way of evidence of linguistic attainment. Crazier but true is the fact that even an 'A' grade in 'A'-Level Latin is, in itself,[10] of very limited value as evidence of successful learning of the Latin language and hence as a predictor of future successful engagement with, say, Greek.

Second, a positive point in favour of a separate LAT: an aptitude test can to some extent counteract differences in attainment occasioned by heterogeneous backgrounds, it can, so to speak, level the playing-field, or make it, if not level, at least sloping rather than terraced. It may even reveal unrealized potential within *prima facie* homogeneous sets, if, say, teaching-/learning-styles in the first foreign language are uncongenial and cause under-performance in certain individuals.

In this area, in which the inexactitude of the 'science' is heightened by a lack of time and other resources for testing and assessment, Peter Green's conclusion in the excellent preamble to his *University of York Language Aptitude Test* [11] is both sensible and practicable:

"The sensible approach to pupil placement in foreign language courses would seem to be to base it on as much information as possible - previous attainment in a foreign language, general academic ability, available IQ information, language aptitude and not least the pupils' wishes".

In the 1950s, the United States Air Force used a two-stage LAT programme: a four-hour LAT (the Carroll-Sapon test: see n. 5) was used to screen applicants for a trial language-course (three days intensive), which was used in turn to screen for the full eight-month course. Notwithstanding the difference in scale between the USAF in the Cold War and a British university classics department today, this procedure may be applicable to those classics degree-courses in which language-based components are optional, for the purposes of attracting students to, advising against and streaming within language-courses.

## 2. The relation between active and passive competence

In both teaching and testing, the balance between active and passive use of a language will depend to a large extent on the purpose for which we are teaching the language. The key question here is of course what sort of linguistic competence are our students to have when they finish our course: (a) a smattering, (b) a reading knowledge or (c) the competence to read and write as far as possible like an educated native speaker? My guess is that most of us would go for (b), some for (a) and none for (c). I regard 'a smattering' and 'a reading knowledge' as rather subjective terms but as referring to different (sets of) points on the same scale.[12] The essential difference between these two and (c) is the presence/absence of active competence as an aim of the course. An insistence on (in some cases the possibility of) teaching and testing in *active* use of the language(s) is something that we classicists have by

and large given up. Spolsky ([n. 3], p. 139) reports a similar development in modern-languages departments in US universities during the 1930s and notes:

When war began, the needs of the armed forces for soldiers fluent in the spoken languages of enemies and allies had showed up the major gap left by the decision of American schools and colleges in general to go along with the Modern [Foreign] Language Study's proposal[13] ... that the main objective should be the ability to read the language ... This literary goal was reinforced by the fact that language teachers in US colleges and universities were on the whole trained in, and carried out their own research on, the literature of the language they taught.

The question of the relation between the nature of language teaching/testing in a university and the research interests of its language-teachers, or rather decision-makers, is an interesting one for us as well. For whatever reasons, we, too, by and large are satisfied 'on the language side' if our students demonstrate some level of proficiency in reading. Don't worry: I am not about to ask, 'What will we do if there's another war?' This is just a roundabout way of raising the question what we mean by 'a reading knowledge'. Those of us who would admit the phrase in describing the main aim of their language course would possibly give a variety of definitions of what 'a reading knowledge' actually is. Spolsky ([n. 3], p. 86) quotes some interesting definitions of reading knowledge offered just before the war by thirty modern-languages departments in American universities to a questionnaire, the results of which were published in 1939:[14]

The main answers were: 'ability to read or translate with understanding or give the accurate rendering of a relatively difficult text, or a reasonably correct translation of a typical text without the excessive use of a dictionary' (seven responses); **'ability to read and understand without using a dictionary a given passage ... of normal difficulty'** (four responses); 'ability to get the sense of a moderately difficult passage ... to read a text of average difficulty at sight ... to get the main ideas of a paragraph with its essential connotations ... to read with understanding texts of both narrative and of content' (eight responses); 'ability to use language as a tool' (three responses).

I have highlighted the second answer because, although there is room for debate on the meaning of 'normal difficulty', I think it is a good, concise definition of a reading knowledge of natural languages (Latin or Greek, for example!), and because it is, in a sense, the answer that we give as a professional community insofar as we teach and test passive competence by means of unprepared translation. But only in a sense, for the highlighted phrase implies to me a natural activity, something one does whenever the occasion arises, while writing an unseen is commonly a slow, artificial, unnatural exercise, and even a reliable producer of good unseens may not have the confidence to follow up a reference to a classical text of which no translation is ready to hand (it may not even occur to him that this is an appropriate use of time and of his knowledge of Latin or Greek). This kind of reading knowledge is very tentative, context-dependent, very passive, and it is easy to see why: Latin and Greek are difficult languages, the standard prescribed texts are difficult examples of difficult languages, and, even if the hard work necessary for learning the grammar has been done at school, not enough time is available at university for practising reading.

This is all leading to the paradoxical (though again not new) suggestion that, *although our aim is to teach passive competence and we have insufficient time to do so, we should spend some of that precious time teaching and testing some elements of active competence*. I believe

this because I believe two propositions to be true (although I have no better than anecdotal evidence for either):[15] (a) active use of a language automatically improves reading knowledge; (b) active use is the *quickest* way of instilling secure recognition skills. In other words, (I am suggesting), *using* Latin or Greek will not only not divert our students from their goal of some level of reading knowledge, it will get them there in fewer hours.

In practical terms, I have in mind not lessons devoted to translating sentences from English into Latin/Greek but rather a constant intermingling of calls on active and passive skills, a steady shower of little tests in the active use of the language(s) against the background of a standard reading course. I mean tests or problems such as the following:

- a. supply the correct form of each word in brackets:  
Laetos (DIES) plures quam (TRISTIS) uidimus.  
(SVVS) (QVISQVE) (IVDICIVM) est (VTENDVS).
- b. fill the gap so as to give the required meaning:  
*Altam fossam fecimus .....(so that nobody)..... possit transire.*
- c. transform the sentence in the manner indicated:  
*Ad urbem eo ut panem emam:* **make this refer to past time**  
*Fratrem occidit et in siluas fugit:* **replace the first verb with a participle**
- d. rewrite this ungrammatical sentence so as to make it grammatical:  
*\*Pollicebat pecuniam reddere.* (He promised to return the money.)
- e. arrange the following words in a meaningful order and translate:  
*canebat est qui puella secuta hominem*

For illustrative purposes, these few examples deal with isolated sentences - actually, I do believe that isolated sentences have their place, e.g. when a particular construction or point of grammar is being taught, practised or tested. But, given our goal of a reading knowledge, little problems of this sort are probably at their best when incorporated in 'doctored' passages for reading, whether in class or for homework. Such texts may also contain e.g. ten deliberate errors for the students to spot and correct, or a section in which subordinate clauses have been turned into main clauses, or a section in which the order of the words has been altered and needs to be reconstructed in the light of patterns learnt last week/at the beginning of the present piece, and so on. Or again, in that all-important reading-skill of being able *to group the words in sense-units in the order in which they appear on the page*, I have found that good instruction and useful practice is given by using passages without punctuation (and capital letters!).[16] Then there is the cloze technique, and variations on it, illustrated in (f) with a short passage from Caesar which is missing most of its verbs. The task to fill the *n* gaps can be carried out either from a supplied list of *n* or *2n* words, or from the student's own imagination:

(f) Interim ad Labienum per Remos incredibili celeritate de uictoria Caesaris fama ..... , ut, cum ab hibernis Ciceronis milia passuum circiter LX ..... ,  
eoque post horam nonam diei Caesar peruenisset, ante mediam noctem ad portas castrorum clamor ..... , quo clamore significatio uictoriae gratulatioque ab Remis Labieno ..... . Hac fama ad Treueros perlata, Indutiomarus, qui postero die castra Labieni oppugnare ..... , noctu ..... copiasque omnes ..... . Caesar Fabium cum legione ..... in sua hiberna, ipse cum tribus legionibus circum Samarobriam trinis hibernis hiemare ..... et, quod tanti motus Galliae ..... , totam hiemem ipse ad exercitum manere decreuit.

I am arguing, I suppose, for the development and use of various sorts of 'super-unseens', to the end of making our students alert and critical readers of a 'live' text and more than mere passive receivers of a text that is straightforwardly given, and of training them to a level higher than that required by the writing of a weekly unseen, so as to achieve in a fuller sense the stated aim of reading and understanding without using a dictionary a given passage of normal difficulty.

If, finally, the course or module contains the option or requirement of writing complete sentences (connected or not) in Latin/Greek, it may be that practice in *retranslation*, ideally from prescribed texts/authors, will be useful preparation and have the advantage over invented sentences of serving a double purpose: (i) obviously, of testing active use of the language: a straightforward English version may fall back into straightforward Latin (which naturally earns full marks); (ii) of relating the exercise more closely to the development of a reading knowledge and the appreciation of the tendencies shown and liberties taken by the classical authors (and also (iii) of holding students' keen attention when the 'fair copy' is worked through: they love to see the original versions). The retranslation of complete sentences can, of course, grow out of gap-filling problems such as those in (b) and (f) above. It seems reasonable that students who have little or no experience in using a foreign language are best encouraged by being taken gradually from supplying endings and single words, through transformations, to unaided translation of whole clauses.

### 3. The training of graduate students to teach undergraduate language-courses

In Nottingham, at the CUCD's suggestion, I gave also a brief description of the Oxford seminar-course[17] which offers training and practice to graduate students in the teaching of 1st-year language-courses.[18] I reproduce the relevant section from my handout, for information on the way things have run over the last four years and on two areas where further development is felt to be necessary.

#### **The pattern to date:**

**(a) week** one 90-min. session to meet colleagues, set the tone, banish nerves; talk by **1** course-leader on the basic ingredients of a good language-class; discussion of general and local aims and assumptions.

**(b) weeks** three 90-min. sessions, one each in 'Latin Syntax', 'Greek Syntax', 'Latin/Greek **2-8** Reading Skills' [the primary aim of the last being technique].

**(c)** 2 x 30-min. simulated classes given in week 2 by the course-leader and Language **sessions** Instructors from previous years, and then in weeks 3-8 by new 'trainees', those wishing to be Language Instructors in the coming winter terms (usually 1st-year graduate students); followed by group discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of each simulated class.

**(d) July** Language Instructors are selected on the strength of their performance in these practice/training sessions, and engaged to teach language-consolidation classes in the coming October/March.

#### **Desiderata identified:**

- a. monitoring: *at present* solely through feedback from students, informally through College Tutors, formally on two end-of-term confidential questionnaires; *proposed introduction* of classroom observation by suitably-qualified senior members to give encouragement and constructive criticism to Language Instructors and reassurance of ongoing quality control to Sub-Faculty.
- b. more authentic classroom-simulation: *at present* 'trainees' and course-leader are the pretend-class and give nearly always correct answers;
- c. *possible introduction* of undergraduates to the training sessions (or, failing this, of 'actors' aiming to simulate imperfect, unresponsive audience).

#### 4. Summary

I said at the beginning that the three topics would be related. They may have seemed quite disparate as things went along, so let me close by summarizing some of my main points and letting the linking thread emerge which I did not have time to spin in Nottingham.

1. For many, but probably not all, branches of classical studies, a reading knowledge of the languages is important, and in many, but not all, classical degree-courses a language-course is either required or available.
2. It is in the interests of all concerned to make some estimate in advance of the language-course of the likelihood of a student's speedy success in learning Latin or Greek from scratch.
3. To this end a short written language aptitude test can probably furnish useful evidence to complement other indicators (such as verbal intelligence, motivation, earlier success with intensive language-learning).
4. The language-course itself needs naturally to have a clear set of aims and objectives in terms of the linguistic competence that it can be reasonably expected to give in return for students' commitment to it.
5. The all-too-little time available, especially at university, for learning and practising reading in Latin/Greek is, paradoxically, most efficiently used by developing a combination of passive and active linguistic skills, even if the stated aim of the course is some level of purely passive competence.
6. If it is true that *some* active skills are necessary for effective language-teaching, at any level, then it is doubly important that they be taught in university courses, since increasingly university teachers of Latin and Greek will have had their first contact with (one or both of) the classical languages as undergraduates.

David R. Langslow  
*Wolfson College, Oxford*

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#### Notes

[1] I am grateful to the editor, Nick Lowe, for accepting what is little more than a hasty write-up of my Nottingham handout and marginal notes made for oral delivery. I should like to thank also the CUCD standing committee, especially Alison Sharrock, for the invitation to be part of the panel; John Richardson, for his hospitality on the day and for chairing the session so catalytically; my fellow-panellists, Barbara Bell and Anthony Bowen, and all who contributed to the informative and thought-provoking discussion.

[2] A recent 60-minute Oxford LAT is appended to these notes. In '94 and '95, the test was set in 30-, 60- and 90-minute versions; from '96 a single 60-minute paper will be set. It is, of course, much too early to assess the predictive value of this test. I am very grateful to Peter Green, formerly of the University of York (see the end of 1. below), for commenting on these tests: he is generally encouraging about section II but expresses doubts, which I share, about section III, which needs further development. Section I is just a friendly loosener.

[3] For a recent history see Bernard Spolsky, *Measured Words* (Oxford 1995), chapter 7.

[4] Quite independently, this is the pattern of section II of the Oxford LAT.

[5] J.B. Carroll, 'The prediction of success in intensive foreign language training (final revision)' (Graduate School of Education, Harvard University 1960): this is the report submitted at the end of about eight years of research on aptitude testing at the Laboratory for Research in Instruction, at the Graduate School of Education at Harvard University; see Spolsky [n. 3], p. 128. The work yielded, among other things, J.B. Carroll - S.M. Sapon, *Modern Language Aptitude Test*, New York 1959.

[6] This may be quite wrong - and I certainly do not mean to question the value as a teaching-aid of reading aloud in an ancient language.

[7] It appears, for example, in Paul Pimsleur, *Pimsleur Language Aptitude Battery*, New York 1966.

[8] J.B. Carroll, 'The prediction of success in intensive foreign language training', in R. Glaser (ed.), *Training Research and Education*, Pittsburgh, Pa 1962, 87-136.

[9] The invented languages in the Oxford LAT are, for all their barbarous appearance, very like Latin and Greek in their relevant features.

[10] Much will depend on the options taken, the course used at school, the extent to which the nitty-gritty of the language has been confronted or avoided.

[11] In Swedish, for use in the middle school years.

[12] I intend no disrespect at all by 'a smattering' - quite the reverse: as a comparative philologist, I know this level of linguistic competence at first hand and value it highly. A smattering is surely the right aim if time-constraints render unrealistic the attainment of a reading knowledge. I take it, though, that the essential feature of a *good* smattering is the enabling of the student to learn more of the language with confidence in private when the language-course is finished, and that this in turn depends on a nodding acquaintance with the whole grammatical system and on practised familiarity with the basic tools (dictionaries, grammar-books, collections of texts, etc.), especially those relevant to any special purpose (e.g. inscriptions, coins, mediaeval history) that may have prompted the student to take a short language-course with this sort of aim.

[13] As the result of an enquiry conducted from 1924 to 1927. See Spolsky [n. 3], pp. 41-6, esp. 42: 'the members of the Committee of Modern Foreign Language Study appear in recent language testing histories as the villains who discarded the direct method rather than as the realists who saw no way to increase the amount of time students would give to language

learning, and as the researchers who established the basis for empirical study of language teaching and testing.'

[14] A.L. Frantz, 'The reading knowledge test in the foreign languages: a survey', *Modern Language Journal* 23 (1939), 440-6.

[15] I should be very grateful for references to relevant published research in this area.

[16] I owe this idea to Nick Lowe.

[17] A most valuable and effective initiative (I hope I may say so), devised by David Raeburn and led by him each summer term from 1993 to 1996.

[18] These are courses in revision and consolidation for post-'A'-Level students, offered to Colleges and administered by the (Sub-)Faculty. The four courses, in Latin / Greek Syntax / Reading Skills, run each for an hour a week for the first two terms (= 16 weeks) and are taught mainly by graduate students, in streamed groups of about 10 for syntax and about 5 for reading skills; undergraduates sit a short written test in accidence and syntax at the start of their third term, i.e. after the consolidation course *plus* the Easter vacation for revision.

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## THE COLLEGES OF OXFORD UNIVERSITY

### 'Mode N' Test for Entrance in Classics 1995

LANGUAGE APTITUDE TEST (1 hour)

Time allowed: 60 minutes

Please write your name and college of first choice at the top of this page.

1. The problems below are in roughly ascending order of difficulty and you should work your way through them in this order. Credit will be given for all work done even if the paper is not completed
2. Read very carefully all the information you are given.
3. Write your answers in the spaces provided on the paper. (You may if you wish write your rough work also on the paper.)
4. Write very clearly.

I. The following sentences are in This Language (an invented language). Isolate the individual words and work out their meanings. Your analysis should be such that every segment of every sentence is assigned to some word; that is, when a sentence is broken up into words, there should be no residue:

- a. **hi-tiacumya-?** 'Is a cat listening carefully?'
- b. **hi-tisno-sist?** 'Is the little girl listening sleepily?'
- c. **mya-tsno-hi-ti.** 'The cat is listening sleepily.'
- d. **sisacuhi-ti.** 'A little girl is listening carefully.'

How does one express the following in This Language?:

1. 'cat'? \_\_\_\_\_
2. 'little girl'? \_\_\_\_\_
3. 'carefully'? \_\_\_\_\_
4. 'sleepily'? \_\_\_\_\_
5. 'a'? \_\_\_\_\_
6. 'the'? \_\_\_\_\_
7. 'is listening'? \_\_\_\_\_

II. In This Language (the same one as in problem I) there are two classes of nouns and two classes of verbs. In sentences, each member of each class of verbs and nouns behaves according to exactly the same pattern as every other member of its class but the pattern may vary from class to class.

One class of nouns and one class of verbs is characterized by the presence of a long vowel (**a-e-i-o-u-**) in some or all of its forms; the other class of each is characterized by the absence of a long vowel.

The only other thing you need to know is that the order of words is much more flexible in This Language than it is in English.

Now proceed by studying the examples that are translated for you and then translating the sentences that follow:

- a. **cunmati kid.**  
'A child is coming.'
- b. **go-ti kid't.**  
'The child is going.'
- c. **mu- kid'n go-pi.**  
'A cow and a child are going.'
- d. **cunmapi ben mu-'t'n, la-pi'n.**  
'A boy and the cow are coming and singing.'

Translate into English:

8. **kid't mu-'n cunmapi, sno-'n go-pi.**

Translate into This Language:

9. A cow is coming.
10. The boy is singing.
  - e. **ner't ge-'t'n spi-pi benun mu-f'n.**  
'The man and the girl see a boy and (some) cows'.
  - f. **ge-s benus'n neruf't lunkapi, stri-n't'n bungapi.**  
'(Some) girls and (some) boys are watching the men and annoying the woman'

Translate into English:

11. **mu-n sisuf'n spi-ti stri-'t.**

Translate into This Language:

12. A woman is watching the man.
13. The children are annoying the women.

- g. **kid't spit ho-n't.**  
'The child saw the house (his home).'
- h. **wuf't cumat stri-n't.**  
'The dog came to the woman.'
- i. **benus't bugap mu-n't, gop'n ho-f't.**  
'The boys annoyed the cow and went to the houses (their homes, home).'

Translate into English:

14. **spip neruf't lukap'n mya-s't.**

Translate into This Language:

15. The children sang and the man went home.
16. The boy came home and annoyed the women.

III. In each of Questions 17-31, you find an English sentence containing a word UNDERLINED IN CAPITALS: let us call this word "the model". There follows in each case at least one other sentence **in bold type**.

For each question, consider the function that the model has in the structure of its sentence -- the job that it does in relation to the other words in its sentence -- and then underline in the **bold sentence** the *single word* which most closely matches it in terms of this function within its sentence.

If you find that two (or more) words match the model equally closely, underline them both (all). In questions with more than one **bold sentence**, do not expect to find a match necessarily in *each* sentence; there may be one in each sentence but there may not be.

Here is an example:

("model") Anne is cutting up APPLES.  
**Ben is growing up fast.**  
**Maria is throwing the dogs sticks.**

The answer is sticks in the second sentence. Like APPLES, and unlike any other word in the bold sentences, sticks names what is directly acted on by the action of the verb: sticks are being thrown, just as APPLES are being cut.

Now answer the questions that follow:

17. This Act was the first to legalize the UNIONS.  
**I know my parents shared a love of music.**  
**The other week, friends we visited told us the same story.**

18. Diaries and memoirs have not caused ME much interest.  
**One Sunday I rang to see what they would offer Dad.  
Her look made you first freeze and then move as fast as you could.  
Dad told us to come and watch the man giving the dolphins fish.**
19. A fresh START was the crux of the idea.  
**Small wonder John and Sarah found life a heavy burden.  
Not one of them escaped the consequences of that conflict and each in turn  
became part of that movement of peoples.**
20. WE apologize for any inconvenience that this may cause.  
**Will anyone notice the difference?  
Why doesn't he just sit down and get on with it?**
21. With a sinister tearing noise the large package SPLIT apart.  
**He shrugged his shoulders, wrinkled his face and shook with laughter.  
Sometimes they open quite easily but usually you need a knife to split them.**
22. Under the stairs was found the missing PIECE of cake  
**A new car was offered as first prize.  
He was handed a shovel and given two hours to finish the job.**
23. My father, SEARCHING for a job, had left Manchester and his parents in 1912.  
**The acres had remained intact, growing in value and not decreasing in number.  
John Thomas Salt, whose friends seemed to relish using both his forenames, had  
married Mary Jane Jones from North Cheshire.  
To us, accustomed to such upheavals, it would seem natural to leave home for a  
safer haven.**
24. Without exception it was a time of EMBRACING new cultures and rejecting the past.  
**In the unhealthy conditions surrounding heavy engineering and mining, working  
and holding on placed many pressures on dwindling family resources.**
25. Small wonder John and Sarah found life a heavy BURDEN.  
**He shifted his weight nervously from foot to foot.  
Recent legislation has made it an offence to fail to disclose  
such details.**
26. But these farms and bits of ground had gone again BEFORE our time.  
**It was not easy to resettle in lands supposedly fit for heroes to live in after over  
twenty million souls had perished.**
27. I must write BEFORE the mists of time obscure the clarity of my recollections.  
**Before 1914 life had gone on at a very different pace.  
Even when the battles began, change was slow to come.**
28. Some left FOR the colonies or journeyed to the Americas.  
**He married his sweetheart and they set up home outside Coventry.  
During the early days of his high hopes he had become used to her presence.**
29. I knew the day would EVENTUALLY arrive when I could sit down and take stock.  
**Naturally, conditions in 1960 were still a far cry from those we enjoy today.  
How he got in was little short of a miracle.**
30. He'll PROBABLY recommend that we wait another SLY months.  
**Predictably, the previously mentioned grand-daughter resisted this fiercely.**
31. What I am loath to do is SCRIPT a narrative about myself.  
**Editing the Bulletin is a difficult task, since copy arrives at three of the busiest  
times of the year.**

**END OF PAPER**

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# LANGUAGE TEACHING IN SCHOOLS

*Barbara Bell*

I am very pleased to have the opportunity to share with you some thoughts on the present state of language teaching in schools, just as I am always pleased to learn more of the issues which currently affect University teachers of Classics; our mutual interdependence for the survival of our subject needs no further comment.

I am extremely fortunate to be teaching at Bristol Grammar School, where I have a large amount of Greek teaching, where I am in a department of 6 and where the Headmaster is a great supporter of Classics and of the Classics Department. By contrast, many JACT members who I meet around the country are struggling to keep a little Latin on the timetable, or are even giving up lunch-hours for forming after-school clubs (without pay), in order that Latin will not die in their schools. Yet whatever the status of the Classical subjects in our schools, we all face the same three major problems, to a greater or lesser degree.

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## I. THE PROBLEMS

### 1. Linguistic (un-)awareness of pupils

We must make absolutely no assumptions about the linguistic knowledge of our pupils. This came home to me some years ago, when I was urging my Latin beginners (aged 11) to begin a Latin sentence by *finding the verb*. A sea of polite but glazed faces was looking up at me, until it finally dawned on me that the majority had no idea what a verb was! To those of us who spent many an English lesson doing clause analysis, this may seem unbelievable, but I'm afraid it is all too true (and mine is a highly academic, selective Independent school!) You only have to read some of the recent reports on Primary Education in this country to discover the poor literacy skills of our younger pupils, compared with those of their European counterparts. It is the Classics teachers who will teach the children basic parts of speech and in this we are performing a vital service. As one Sixth-former said to me recently, "It's only because I did Latin and Greek that I know what an abstract noun is; no-one else in school was going to tell me."

For a third of my timetable I also teach English and of course some of one's English colleagues do teach grammar, but my experience of it is that it is patchy. If and when the exam boards decide to test grammar, we will find it becoming more important. The fact that GCSE exams in all subjects have a few marks allocated to the use of English (including spelling and punctuation) is, I believe, an important step in the right direction.

From my teaching of English I have also learnt that many of our pupils have no notion of what constitutes a sentence; they do not understand the boundary-job of the full-stop. This explains something that I have found baffling for years - namely why do pupils take words from one Latin sentence and join them to words in the previous sentence? It's because it might as well be written as one!

## 2. Time Pressures

The teaching of the Classical languages and grammar is an important part of our job - but it is only one part. The teaching of literature and civilization are equally vital to the survival of the subject. Pupils will not choose to continue with Latin and Greek if they do not feel reasonably confident about handling the language and a few may pursue the subject at A level because they are longing to discover the rarer uses of the subjunctive - but they will be a rare species. The majority of our sixth-formers will be there because they are fascinated by the ancient world (both its similarities to and differences from our own) or because the literature that they have sampled at GCSE has been of the highest quality and has whetted their appetite for more or both.

## 3. The Competitive Market - selling the product

Pupils who are capable of tackling Classical subjects at GCSE will usually be studying a total of 8, 9 or 10 subjects at GCSE. Of these approximately 7 will be prescribed for them by the National Curriculum - English, (often examined as 2 separate subjects, language and literature), Maths, a Modern Foreign Language (usually French) Technology, and Science. (Schools will differ in the way they arrange the Science periods but it will usually count for 2 subject choices.) In addition, in State schools (and most Independent schools follow the pattern of the National Curriculum to a large extent) pupils must also follow non-examination courses in P.E., Religious Education, Personal and Moral Education and Vocational Education. So our pupils will have at worst 1 and at best 3 slots for their own personal subject choices at GCSE. Classical subjects (and here I include Classical Civilisation - a big growth area) will thus have to compete with Music, Art, History or Geography (or both), Economics, and Religious studies and often a Second Modern Foreign Language. To promote our subject is therefore vital; many pupils would like to continue with a Classical subject but just can't squeeze it in.

Classical teachers will therefore be busily engaged throughout the school year in maintaining a high profile for their subject - display areas are very important here, as are reading competitions, Classical play competitions, Roman Days, Classical lectures, outings to Classical plays (grateful thanks to the London Festival of Greek Drama, Bradfield and the Oxford and Cambridge Greek plays) and of course site visits, both in this country and abroad.

*In summa*, for a pupil to be studying a Classical language in the Sixth-form, he or she will have chosen a *difficult* subject, which will stretch him more than anything on the GCSE timetable; in many cases he will have had to make some hard choices in order to pursue Classics and he will have had to formulate careful arguments (or develop a thick skin) to combat the ignorance and pressure against the subject from his peers who are opting for the trendy Business Studies, Media Studies, Environmental Studies etc (a misnomer if ever there was one - I can't see a lot of *studying* being done).

So much for the problems - how are the languages taught? It would be impossible to present an accurate National picture, since there will be so many variants within individual schools. What I have chosen to do therefore is to describe what happens in 3 schools. I have taken for my case studies 3 rather different types of schools, in the hope that they represent the National spread. The first 2 schools wish to remain anonymous ; for the third , I am writing about my own school, since I obviously have a better idea of what is taught at Bristol Grammar School than anywhere else.

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## II. CASE STUDIES

A small glossary may be helpful :

**Year 7** 1st year (age 11-12)

**Year 8** 2nd Year (age 12-13)

**Year 9** 3rd Year (age 13-14)

**Year 10** 4th Year (age 14-15)

**Year 11** 5th Year (age 15-16)

**Year 12** Lower Sixth (age 16-17)

**Year 13** Upper Sixth (age 17-18).

**ppw** periods per week

**ppf** periods per fortnight

**NC** the National Curriculum

**MEG** Midlands Examination Group

**NEAB** Northern Examination and Assessment Board

*CLC* the *Cambridge Latin Course*

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Case Study A:

A Girls' Independent School

Pre-Sixth Form Pupils choose a 2nd language in year 8 - Latin/Spanish/Russian. 4 year course to GCSE. Exam Board MEG. For GCSE candidates will read some Virgil (usually from books II, IV, or VI) and some Pliny letters; they will have to tackle an Unseen and a Comprehension.

Their teacher says:

**"There is no time for any English into Latin at GCSE".**

(Please note, all the teachers' quotes will be boxed in bold.)

The girls' results are good - they have very few failures BUT (and it is a big but) it is perfectly possible to achieve an A grade at GCSE without having much idea of how Latin really works.

**Summer Holidays** Those who have chosen Latin A Level will be set sentences from English into Latin from "The Latin Language" (produced by the Scottish Classics Group; published by Oliver & Boyd in 1989, ISBN 0 05 004287 4). This attractively produced, clear language book is becoming very popular in sixth form teaching.

**A Level Course:** 6 ppw of 40 minutes.

## **DIVISION OF TIME**

### **Lower 6th**

2 ppw Verse Set Text

1 ppw Course on Roman History, with essays (1 term only).

**"Pupils who have followed the CLC may well be knowledgeable about the Empire, but may well not realise that Rome had a Republic."**

1 ppw Read some unfamiliar type prose - Caesar/Cicero.

2 ppw A double language lesson, using *The Latin Language*. They work through the book, which is supplemented by Kennedy. 12 principal parts are learnt and tested every week. All irregular verbs and nouns will need thorough revision. They also continue with the English - Latin sentences begun in the Summer Holidays, supplemented by *Brevitas*. Also a weekly unseen - "Scenes from Roman History". After approximately 1.5 terms they will move onto other unseen material.

**Summer Term:** Possibly some proses if they can cope, as a reinforcement activity only.

**"There is a very big need for a good prose reader."**

### Upper Sixth

**3**  
**ppw** Prose set text and 1 Verse unseen per week

**2** The verse topic for paper 4. (This imaginative paper, an alternative to prose **ppw** composition, involves wide reading on a theme, both in English and Latin.)

**1**  
**ppw** An unseen and a comprehension per week. Go through these.

With 2 unseens per week and a comprehension, plus preparation of both a prose and a verse set texts, there is little time for further reading.

**"We teach a little in depth. They will not read much beyond the set texts."**

NB Additional limitations:

- a) Beginning of Spring Term - 2 weeks' missed lessons for mock exams.
- b) Modules in other subjects - pupils miss Latin lessons to do exam models.
- c) Oxbridge - a week lost for the exams, plus disruptions for the interviews. (This will of course change for the future.)
- d) Field courses - those Lower-Sixth Latinists who do Biology or Geography may well miss a week of school for a field course.
- e) The Summer Term of the Upper Sixth is only 5 weeks before pupils disappear for study leave.

What are the main problems in the 6th form language?

1. The leap from GCSE to A Level is huge.
2. Very little is really stretching them - even in sciences. Why should girls who can cope perfectly well with A Level maths and geography be reduced to tears when coping with A-level Latin?
3. Ciceronian periods.
4. Limited vocab - not much general reading.
5. Difficult unseens - only the author's name is given (no context) The momentum test used by some Exam boards now is a much fairer test
6. Dictionary skills need teaching. A vocab list of 2,000 words is now prescribed for A Level.
7. They gain little linguistic help in English or modern foreign languages. In French they merely learn to order cups of coffee and airline tickets!

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Case Study B: A Mixed Selective Comprehensive

**General set-up:** there is no entrance exam; pupils come from a very mixed catchment area. When Latin was compulsory, it was taught to many pupils of weak linguistic ability. Now that pupils have to choose Latin, the weak ones do not opt for it.

**Pre-sixth Form:** Pupils begin Latin as an option in year 9. They have 3 years to GCSE, with 1/2 ppf (1-hour periods, on a fortnightly timetable.) In the GCSE year, 4 ppf. They used *Ecce Romani* then moved to the *CLC* (unit 3a) and finally the MEG exam.

Main Problems (below sixth form)

The school impress a minimum class size of 10. Last year 7 pupils wanted to do GCSE Latin. Therefore lessons had to be in lunch hours or after school.

**"Of these 7 pupils, 4 chose to do A level (the first time for 8 years). Their predicted grades this Summer are A B C & C. They had to fight to have A Level Latin on the timetable; the pupils went to see the Head themselves. This is very pleasing."**

Sixth form: What are your problems?

1. Such a lot to get through.

2. A big gap between GCSE and A Level.
3. The *CLC* is a very long reading course, with not enough grammatical input.

**"In the Sixth form it's the grammar that must be squeezed."**

**Lower Sixth:** 5 ppf (5 x 1hr).  
**2 ppw** on Tacitus (Annals xv)  
**2 ppw** revision of language. Basic revision is essential.  
**1 ppw** practice Unseen (prose & verse alternating.)

**Upper Sixth:** 8 ppf (8 x 1 hr.)  
 Lower and Upper Sixth have to be taught their Tacitus together; this is tough for the Lower Sixth, who are much less confident.

Linguistic understanding:

**"You can't make any links with French these days. I am pleased that a bit more English grammar is being taught. They have to bring vocab books to every lesson. We build up vocab on a thematic basis."**

Any other difficulties?

**"Yes - the interruptions! 2 weeks are lost for mocks. The school has 5 INSET days for teachers, which are all on Mondays or Fridays. Last year all the A Level Latin classes were on Mondays and Fridays ! Then there are Open Days and University interviews; of course both are vital, but it is difficult to get the whole class together at any one time. Then there are Careers conventions and PSE lessons. Last year's GCSE group had to have 2 long lunch-hour lessons of 1.5 hours each. This is not an ideal way to learn a language. The group coped, though - and they also had a parent aged 40 who got an A!"**

The head of department retires this summer. She is hopeful that Latin will continue, thanks to the support of the Head.

Case Study C: Mixed Independent School (BGS)

We have a 5-year Latin course to GCSE and we use the *CLC*, leading to the NEAB exam.

In 1990, a painful curriculum review led to Greek being squeezed in Year 9, from 9ppw for Latin and Greek (4+5) to 4ppw for both. A new course was thought necessary; we were certainly ready to scrap Wilding!

I was asked to devise a combined Latin and Greek course. I decided it should be called "Classics" since both languages were to be equally important. It was also essential, in a rushed course, for all the lessons to be taught by the same member of staff. This would allow flexibility and from time to time we could concentrate on one language if there was a crisis of morale.

In addition to the 4 language lessons, the Headmaster agreed that we could use 2 periods of activities time which the whole school does on a Thursday afternoon. So if pupils opt for my course, they must follow the Classical activities programme.

I sell the course as "An Integrated Study of the Ancient World" - its language, literature and civilisation. All 3 elements are crucial if the course is to succeed.

It is in Activities time that we mainly explore the civilisation side: what we do is not a lesson but complements the work in the language lessons. This year we have visited Bath, Caerleon & Cirencester (all pleasingly accessible from Bristol); we have worked on inscriptions in the City Museum Roman Gallery (and our work was featured in an English Heritage article); we examined the making and shapes of Greek pots, also at the City Museum; we tried to recognise a collection of Roman artefacts; we walked around Bristol identifying neo-Classical architecture; in groups we researched Greek myths and presented them in different forms (drama, poetry, pop songs) to the rest of the group. We were visited by the Ermine St. Guard and made our own models of Roman soldiers; we saw *Frogs* in Cardiff, *Hecuba* and *Thesmo* in Oxford, and used slides, videos and Classical Board Games. We walked on Hadrian's Wall in the snow in February and hopefully will be basking in the sunshine in Crete in October.

Planning the activities programme was obviously a lot of work, but it is on these Thursdays that the group learns to mix and get on with each other. We have *no syllabus* and can pursue whatever interests us.

How do you teach the Classical languages in those conditions?

The basic pattern of the course is 3 lessons Greek and 1 of Latin per week until Christmas, to get them moving quickly in Greek. For the rest of the year, we divide the 4 lessons equally.

To save time, in Greek lessons I constantly refer to Latin and vice versa. E.g. if *pollavki* is forgotten, I do not prompt them with "often" but "*saepe*". If they say "oh, that's 'always'", I say "No, the word for 'always' is *semper* and in Greek *ajeiv*," etc.

We use *Athenaze* and the *CLC*. I think *Athenaze* is the best course available for young beginners, but it does have its problems, not least the American case order. The revised edition has put things in correct British order - but we can't afford the new edition!

On the plus side, I very much like the way that it arranges all vocabulary in each chapter according to parts of speech, and introduction of a past tense is delayed considerably. This means that pupils come to terms with present tenses (active and middle, including contracted verbs) present infinitives, imperatives and participles. Within 3 months of starting Greek they can identify participles, whereas it took them 2 years in Latin.

When they first met *tiv*", one of the brightest girls said, "But that must be an indirect question; why isn't there a subjunctive like in Latin?" Constructional and etymological leaps across the languages have always been a feature of the Classical languages, but I am pleased at how often they occur in this course.

Any particular problems?

This year we have had a very unhelpful timetable, as 2 of our 4 lessons have been period 9 - one of them on a Friday! How do you drill pupils in the subtleties of Greek grammar when it

is the 45th period of the week? The pupils came to the rescue. We have had a very cold winter and when we recite our paradigms, the pupils suggested a system of Greek aerobics! Of course it is no fun if the teacher doesn't join in, so I find myself running on the spot while reciting nouns, and jumping up and down for the verbs. But I did draw the line at star-jumps.....

#### The GCSE course

Pupils are not obliged to take either language through to GCSE. In practice, since the course began in 1990, 100% of the pupils have continued with Latin and almost exactly two-thirds of each set have continued with Greek. This has led to very healthy GCSE sets, especially in Greek where the average number is around 17. The beginners in year 9 have twice been as many as 33; it is of course totally draining but totally rewarding to teach Greek to such a large class, and it does wonders for the image of the subject. No longer can colleagues sneer and say "Oh it's OK for you, you teach such small sets."

In years 10 and 11 the course splits into two "proper" subjects with two separate teachers. Inevitably, my colleagues have to sort out a lot of linguistic muddles when they inherit my Classicists, and they have to fit in the GCSE texts and unseen and comprehensions too. Nevertheless the very pleasing results show that it can be done. Our first group are now at university, including Oxford and Cambridge.

#### The Sixth Form

8ppw, 35 min periods, for both the Upper and Lower Sixth. Hitherto, no set texts have been read until the Upper Sixth, to encourage wider reading. This will change, because the Upper Sixth "year" is becoming so truncated and pupils lack confidence when set texts have to be read in a hurry.

#### **Grammar books used:**

*The Latin Language*, the *CLC* grammar, and I personally favour *The Millionaire's Dinner Party*. With this book, pupils meet their grammar via a first rate story (Trimalchio) and it gives me the opportunity to introduce them to Petronius, satire and the Bay of Naples. (The illustrations, though all black and white, are excellent).

Regular learning and testing of paradigms and principal parts is best done in a crash language course at the beginning of the Lower Sixth, in my view.

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#### SOME CONCLUSIONS:

1. The above is not typical but may be a way to preserve Greek below the sixth form.
2. Each school will depend heavily on the support of the Head.
3. Good numbers and good results are essential if Classics is to survive.
4. Carefully structured and imaginative language teaching will boost confidence.
5. A differentiated approach will often be necessary, to cater for the mixed abilities (especially below Sixth form).

6. A typical undergraduate will have done extremely well to have reached university. Assume nothing and please build his/her confidence. Dictionary work and learning vocabulary may well be skills which need to be taught.

Grammar that has been learnt in a hurry will always be shaky. The main stumbling blocks will be -mi verbs; contracted verbs; irregular principal parts in Greek and Latin; the optative; participles; conditionals; gerunds and gerundives.

How do you judge success?

I was asked to be challenging and this is my bit of heresy! If my pupils no longer compose Greek and Latin verses, or even proses, I shed no tears. Nor do I worry if they cannot immediately give me the Aorist optative of  $\iota\{\sigma\theta\mu\iota$  - they can look it up in a book. I am immensely encouraged when my pupils fall in love with the ancient world and want to go on studying it. On a recent postcard from a former pupil, I was so proud when David (aged 20 reading Classics at Oxford) said: "On my tour of Italy we had Greek architecture lectures. I was the only one who could follow them, because of the Classical Activities course!" Is this not real Education?

Barbara Bell

*Bristol Grammar School*

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## *AB INITIO* Greek at Cambridge

### **ANTHONY BOWEN**

The programme for learning Greek *ab initio* at Cambridge is, as we found in discussion at Oxford in September 1994, not typical of such programmes at other universities, and not even, strictly speaking, *ab initio*.

Cambridge colleges offer places to about 50 people a year who have no A level or equivalent in Greek. An A grade in Latin is virtually required. (What it is worth is another matter.) The candidates are told that if successful they will be asked to come up early for a week of pre-term teaching (10 hrs, 2 a day), and it will be assumed that they already know at least the first six sections of Reading Greek and preferably the first ten; they will need therefore, if they are complete beginners, to attend a summer school or equivalent. The faculty, fortunately endowed for just this sort of thing, will defray the costs. The JACT Greek summer school, now in its thirtieth year, is strongly recommended, and to it they go, virtually without exception. (Some, having gone, then find that they have not made their grades, alas. The faculty does not reclaim its grants: they are regarded as bread upon the water, and the candidate may well pursue Greek elsewhere, which is good.)

You will see why I say that strictly speaking Cambridge does not teach Greek *ab initio*, at least not to classicists. (Beginners' courses in both Greek and Latin are run by the faculty every year, starting in October, for non-classicists, but their pace is different, and the courses are not in my remit to teach or organise. In this too, Cambridge is different from other universities, where the separation of classical and non-classical students often cannot be

made.) At Cambridge we deliver 80 hours of intensive classes to each student, four per week spread over the year. At summer school students get about 30 hours of classes in a fortnight. Before our lot come up they will thus have had one third of the teaching they get, 30 + 10 out of 120 hours. And that first third is the most important third, and is delivered to students congregated in a special atmosphere and unpressed by work in Latin, Ancient History, Greek vases, Theory of forms, etc. The worth of it is enormous; but then, our aim is high. At the start of term proper, students are sorted into six or seven groups of six or seven each, and they start to read the set texts, Lysias i (in which almost every item of Attic syntax is to be found, right down to dat. of agent with perf. pass. and - three times!- i{na + impf. for unfulfilled purpose), *Odyssey* x, Plato *Crito*, and Euripides *Troades* choruses and all. Many members of the faculty do a stint of this teaching during the year, including post-doctoral students and others; few directors of studies don't have first hand experience of intensive Greekers, which is good.

Students are examined on the texts at the end of the first year; in the paper are also two unseen passages, chosen from two of the set authors: thus they are also tested on their vocabulary and general understanding of the language as well as on their determination to mug up set texts. In addition to their two hours a week on set texts they have one hour's teaching which their college is expected to supply (writing some Greek and/or reading further authors is common here) and another hour in which they come in their groups to me for stuff on the language.

No course existed when I started at Cambridge six years ago; I made it up as we went and have continued to amend it every year. I start with items of syntax and associated morphology; those who were not beginners at summer school are often less secure in such things than those who were (sixth form crash courses seldom deal effectively with the linguistic nuts and bolts, and students' vagueness can be very persistent), and some re-covering of items supposedly known does no harm at all. Knowledge of the verb is at a premium in dealing with indirect speech, conditionals, indefinites, and use of participles. As far as possible I draw examples from the texts being studied: hence my desire that Lysias i shall be a set text for ever! *Reading Greek* is by now something for the student to consult privately. A session on the scansion of the Homeric hexameter precedes the start of *Odyssey* x; then back to syntax, to some extent according to demand and need - the programme is not inflexible in sequence or substance, but I do need to remember what I've done with who - and then to the use of cases, and a study of the prepositions. The reading of Plato requires sessions on the particles; that of Euripides more on metre. Word order, so important and so seldom treated in course books, where it would be difficult anyway, I try to expose by preparing for translation into Greek a piece of English based on the texts: such a piece minimises the problems of vocabulary, morphology and syntax so that emphasis can be studied with some clarity of focus. Otherwise I use translation into Greek very little. But I do run a separate weekly class for elementary prose writing, in both Latin and Greek, and it is now possible for intensive candidates to offer Greek prose in prelims. and in pt. I translating a piece specially set for them. After sessions on crasis, duals and accents I finish the course with classes on word-formation, mindful of the fact that vocabulary is hardest of all to learn and that most prefixes and suffixes have functions which can be easily and usefully laid out: prag-, pra'go", pra'gma, pra'xi", pragmatikov", prhkhthvr, pravttein etc. leads to levgein, levxi", lovgo", logikov", lovgimo", logivzesqai and so to genevsqai, gegonevnai, givguesqai: root variation needs study; sing/sang/sung/song deserves a context. How far I take these things depends to some extent on the capacity of the group; within the year I aim to reveal all of the language at least in outline to everyone.

Size of group, at six or seven members only, is at first sight a luxury. To maintain it requires considerable manpower. But it is at the same time an economy. Since we require intensive students to attend their classes in Greek, the experience must be different for them from that of a lecture: they must take part. The fewer there are of them, the more they can. I want eye contact with each student most of the time; I want to question them and to receive their questions and comments; I want them to be learning there and then, and not at some future moment when they may (or may not) read up their notes. Indeed, the fewer notes they take, the better: the more they will be using the occasion.

I do a very little fourth term teaching; otherwise, apart from college support, students are largely on their own. I think they could all manage Xenophon, were he on the syllabus, quite comfortably; most read their Homer, Herodotus, Euripides and Plato without too much trouble; I tend to warn weaker candidates off Aristophanes and Sophocles, with regret but from experience. At the end of the first year they are mostly fairly self-propelling (I stress both adverbs). How much better were we in our generation? But theirs is a much thinner competence, and it is liable to a much quicker fade.

How well do they fare? Intensive candidates are to be found amongst the firsts in fair proportion, overtaking many who arrived with a top grade in A level Greek; they are also to be found among the weaker ones, though they are not always the weakest. A fair number find our philology papers an attractive option; others simply have no eye and ear for an inflected language, and have long passed the age at which its acquisition would have been easier. I would like to find a larger number in the solid centre of our class lists; the ambitious nature of the programme may cause some dispersal to either end. What I can say with great assurance is that their competence in Greek will match their competence in Latin; which is not comforting. Some are to be found re-learning, or just plain learning, their Latin morphology and syntax on the basis of their work on Greek, and there are students with A level Greek who beg to join the intensive classes. If their A level was got in one year, we tend to let them. The signs are increasingly that, if we could staff it, the intensive programme could usefully be extended to students who are not officially so designated; Bob Lister offers support classes in Latin already.

Our programme thus has a fairly set form with variable content; the set texts change from time to time, and I vary my language classes to suit the group. But the situation in which we teach continues to change. More classes for more people seems inevitable, and when we start to teach both languages to students unskilled in either, then their rate of progress must be expected to slow down. Pressure on manpower and class size will increase. I hope we can resist the latter for a long time.

Anthony Bowen  
*Jesus College, Cambridge*

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## Discussion

*some points from the Nottingham session*

### **Oxbridge and Beyond**

There was much discussion of the differences between the Oxbridge experiments discussed by the panellists and the somewhat different set of problems and pressures faced in provincial

universities, where it is often necessary to scale down the ambitions of what can and should be achieved in a first-year beginners' language course. The Cambridge model has many parallels, for example, with the Edinburgh system originally instituted by Prof. Beattie; but this has now had to be modified as too demanding, and in any case most institutions simply don't have the resources to support the kind of intensive pre-course activity on which the Cambridge pattern relies. Thus in Bristol students are required simply to do three years of one language; while a widespread pattern reported from Liverpool is for students to Latin in the first year (the minimum requirement), and then move on to a range of other subjects - including things like Japanese - at which they may well do better, since the skills learned with a classical language are highly transferable.

### **Testing and Screening for Ability**

What kind of role might LATs, and other means of screening for language ability, play in practice? David Langslow's own view was that LATs may have only limited predictive value, and would perhaps be best used between teacher and student as a way of determining course strategy in relation to student potential. Certainly there are all kinds of problems in any attempt to screen for language ability at admissions. GCSE is no longer the indicator GCE once was, yet in a course where the language requirement is a full third of the assessment for the year, letting the wrong person on to the course can cripple their year's results. On the other hand, simply offering an escape route carries its own dangers: if a non-linguistic option is available, most will take it in preference, because 95% of students believe that they are hopeless at language. Here LATs might have a role simply as a confidence-booster.

### **Tradeoffs**

Increasingly, we face a stark tradeoff: it is becoming difficult to add much value to a student who arrives without much grasp of the language, short of a proportionately high investment of course load. Meanwhile, increasing scrutiny of the economics of teaching will in any case make it harder to teach in the small-group environments assumed by the Cambridge model. The suggestion has been aired that there might be a linguistic equivalent to the class-civ approach, and there was some discussion of "smattering"-based approaches at both school and University levels. Given that only a minority of students will ever read a real text, and probably not much of that, the enduring value of a language course may be an understanding of how the language works, how it expresses ideas, and the light it can shed on English. But a GCSE based on such principles would merely risk making the GCSE/A-level jump still higher. Nevertheless, the Leicester experiment has shown that modest-ambition courses on limited resources can have considerable value, especially (for example) for historians - a view echoed from other English departments, though the much more "all-or-nothing" Scottish system would make such courses difficult to institute there.

### **Degree Structures**

Modularisation, here as in other areas, has impacts for worse and for better. On the one hand, it makes it easier to design degree programmes with escape routes for the linguistically weak; on the other it makes intensive courses virtually impossible. A low-intensity course is now the model to which everyone inevitably tends - unless ways can be found of running short courses cheaply, and making the package attractive to both Universities and students.

Special thanks for a vigorous discussion to John Betts, Michael Bulley, Gillian Clark, Geoffrey Eatough, Lynn Fotheringham, John Godwin, John Richardson, Christopher Rowe,

Jim Roy, Alison Sharrock, Graham Shipley, and the panellists - and apologies to all whose contributions escaped reporting.

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## **CLASSICS AT BRITISH UNIVERSITIES, 1995-96: STATISTICS**

*Geoffrey Eatough*

There has according to Table A apparently been a slight decline in the numbers of Honours students in Classics departments, of all students in Classics departments, of staff and of first year honours students, with a slight increase in the staff/student ratio. At the moment 1994 would seem to represent a peak, albeit a slight one, and slighter in regard to 1993 than the figures indicate, since the 1994 figures included for the first time an institution with some highly significant returns. (See CUCD Bulletin 24 (1995) p.13). The table shows between 1994 and 1995 a 2.1% fall in the number of Honours students with a 5.1% fall in the FTE figure. FTE figures in institutions which practice extreme forms of cost centre devolution are the more important of the two kinds of figures, though clearly the number of students who can be identified as Honours students in Classics departments is also important. In the figures for all students in Classics departments the fall is again slight and the FTE figure is almost identical with the 1993 figure, though the 1993 figure does not offer a sure basis of comparison, because of the institution newly included in 1994. There has it would seem been a sharp fall in the number of staff. The numbers of students who are identified as first year honours students is more or less the same in 1995 as 1994, but there is a fall of about 3.9% in the FTE figure. This may be a reflection of modularisation, with increasing numbers of students taking courses outside their parent department, a trend which can perhaps be detected from a comparison of the 1993 and 1994 first year figures where a significant increase in the 1994 student number yielded a FTE figure which was almost identical with the 1993 figure.

So much for appearances. The figures which I present are dependent on the will and vagaries of departmental correspondents. Some are acutely aware of all the activities which are taking place in their department, and I have received returns which look like a page from a Renaissance book, with an intricate text surrounded by a mass of commentary. At the other extreme are those who use a broader pen, who are for example not too concerned whether there might be people from other departments doing courses within Classics. Within a department one type of correspondent might succeed the other. There are also problems of demarcation, whether a topic should be classed as Classical Studies or Ancient History, and increasingly, with modularisation, whether a particular group of students should be classed as Single Honours, Joint Honours or for the moment as Other. One of the constant problems is Ancient History. It can be located in non-Classics departments, and if there is some local antipathy between the Classics and Ancient History sections there can be problems. There has been one very recent case of Ancient History being hived off to another department, and the return from that department was minimal and difficult to use. Classical Ancient History also becomes entangled with other forms of Ancient History, and it becomes hard to determine what should be included. This is at the heart of this year's problems. A change of correspondent in one major university has led to a radically new perception of what might be called the legitimate activities of that department. Last year we were told that they had 107

Single Honours and 23 Joint Honours Ancient History students. This year they merely have 24 Single Honours Ancient History students. The staff numbers have gone down from 23 to 9. This is a conscious decision and represents the new truth for that department. We could therefore remove, on a rough basis of comparison, 106 students from the figure for Honours students in Classics departments 1994 to give us a figure of 5625 which is very close to the 1995 figure.

On the student front there seems then to have been little change. The staff figures are much more problematic. Besides the drop of 14 in staff returns for the institution just noted, the institution where Ancient History has been hived off now returns a staff figure of 10 instead of 18, and another institution has returned a staff figure of 10 instead of 16, and the new figure does indeed look the more plausible figure. This does however represent a drop of 30 staff in those three institutions, whereas the decrease overall between 1994 and 1995 was merely 17.4, which might suggest that elsewhere there has been an increase in staff.

I have in the past been happy to write about percentage changes in the various categories. There seems to be little point in doing that amid the present turbulence. I shall merely draw your attention to places where there is apparent major change. In Table B there is evidence of fairly sharp drop in Classics, Greek, Latin SH which is not really compensated by the rise in JH in those categories. In the Classical Studies, Ancient History and Archaeology category the drop in SH is almost balanced by the rise in JH though this not the case with the FTE figures, but obviously these figure are affected by the different policy of return by the institution mentioned above, and the underlying movement may still be upwards.

From Table C it can be seen that the drop in Classics, Greek, Latin SH is mainly because of a steep drop in the numbers being returned as SH Latin and SH Greek, though there are increases in both Latin and Greek in the JH categories. There is a steady and quite strong movement upwards in JH Classical Studies, but the Ancient History figures for reasons which will now be clear are much more volatile. The 1992 figures in last year's bulletin support these last two statements.

I suspect that we are for the moment on a plateau, but what the underlying structure of this plateau is, is difficult to assess. The competition for students in some parts of the sector is becoming fierce. There is evidence from this summer's university entrance exercise that departments are accepting students with lower grades. They have of course over the years been accepting students with lower linguistic achievements. My reasonable guess is that the present figures also include an increasing number of foreign students and perhaps we should try and elicit this figure from the departments. As always the returns from the individual universities, which must remain confidential, offer some of the most interesting facts. Departments whose futures were uncertain are solidly recruiting in areas where students are available, departments whose interests may have been mainly linguistic, are insuring themselves with Classical Studies and Ancient History. This is leading to increased competition in those areas. There are huge disparities in the staff/student ratio. Some major departments are now operating on ratios of 25:1 and above. This could lead to quite dramatic effects in two or three years' time.

I end this year as last year with postgraduates. There has apparently been a sizeable increase in the number of postgraduates counterbalanced by a severe fall in the number of Taught MA students. This may be the results of careless accounting, but it probably points to a real

problem and one which we may have to address, since Taught MAs should play an important role in the new scheme of things.

Geoffrey Eatough

*University of Wales, Lampeter*

## KEY TO TABLES

C = Classics

G = Greek

AH = Ancient History

ARC = Archaeology

BG = Beginners' Greek

BL = Beginners' Latin

NC = Non Classical

PG = Postgraduate

TM = Taught Masters

The top figure in the columns or tables referring to students is the number of students irrespective of whether all their time, or only a proportion of their time is spent in Classics departments. The figure in brackets is the Full Time Equivalent (FTE); that is two students, each spending 50% of their time in Classics, equal one FTE Classics student, ten students spending 90% of their time in Classics equal nine FTE Classics students. The Staff/Student Ratio is reached by dividing the FTE figure for all students in Classics departments by the number of staff.

**TABLE A**

	<b>All Hons students in Classics depts.</b>	<b>All students in Classics depts.</b>	<b>UGC figure for Hons. students in Class.</b>	<b>Staff in Classics depts.</b>	<b>Overall Staff/Student</b>	<b>1st yr. Hons. students</b>	<b>UCAS total admissions in Class.</b>
<b>1986</b>	3032	6415	1671*	354.6	9.3	1059	567
	(2153.2)	(3291.3)				(684.2)	
<b>1987</b>	3287	6284	1699*	334.3	9.9	1276	557
	(2258.4)	(3301.9)				(753)	
<b>1988</b>	3117	6142	1157	326.5	10.0	1052	591
	(2232.4)	(3276.6)	1680*			(700.5)	
<b>1989</b>	3740	7396	1240	353.5	10.6	1419	698

	(2534)	(3750.3)	1782*			(865.1)	
<b>1990</b>	3935	7378	1329	355.7	11.4	1443	737
	(2744.1)	(4049.1)	1869*			(911.9)	
<b>1991</b>	3998	8206	1466	348.3	12.4	1437	813
	(2970.6)	(4306.1)	2006*			(1011.5)	
<b>1992</b>	4649	8911	1638	347.4	14.2	1692	
	(3445.6)	(4924.7)	2178*			(1194.7)	
<b>1993</b>	5214	9549	1790	351.8	15.1	1939	659
	(3848.3)	(5316.1)				(1338.5)	
<b>1994</b>	5731	9731	2310§	378.6	14.4	2168	669
	(4010.8)	(5445.4)				(1340.2)	
<b>1995</b>	5606	9356	2420§	361.2	14.7	2152	643
	(3804.3)	(5317.1)				(1287.9)	
<b>1996</b>	5647	9269	2552§	364.5	14.0	2122	
	(3812.3)	(5095)				(1271.7)	
<b>1997</b>	5762	9219	2596§	356	14.9	2109	999
	(4006.4)	(5288.6)				(1350.6)	
	[including	16616		363			
	OU figures]	(6252.1)					

<b>1998</b>	5610	9878	2678§	350.7	14.7	2071	1012
	(3898.3)	(5148)				(1290.6)	
	[including	16610					
	OU figures]	(6118.6)					
<b>1999</b>	5869	8882		342.7	15.3	2275	1012
	(4120.9)	(5233.4)				(1405.4)	
	[including	18922					
	OU figures]	(6961.4)					
<b>2000</b>	5499	8665		360.3	13.9	2125	
	(3802.7)	(4996.3)				(1361.8)	
	[including	16634		370.3			
	OU figures]	(6475.3)					

\*It was considered that through a change of practice a substantial body of students were being miscategorised in the official statistics and an attempt was made over the years to calculate what could be considered the proper figure. It seems best on reflection to present the official figure, even if it is unfair, in its simplicity.

§These are figures supplied by the Higher Education Statistics Agency for student enrolments at all publicly funded HE institutions in the UK for subject code Q8 Classics.

TABLE B

	<b>Classics, Greek, Latin</b>	<b>Classics, Greek, Latin</b>	<b>Class. Stds., Anc. Hist., Archaeology</b>	<b>Class. Stds., Anc. Hist., Archaeology</b>
	<b>SH</b>	<b>JH</b>	<b>SH</b>	<b>JH</b>
<b>1986</b>	1187	276	819	750
	(1045.6)	(138.1)	(623.4)	(346.1)
<b>1987</b>	1327	211	1030	717
	(1136.8)	(101.9)	(684.9)	(334.8)

<b>1988</b>	1231	224	779	883
	(1069.7)	(107.3)	(647.5)	(398.9)
<b>1989</b>	1253	251	1057	1179
	(1101.1)	(124.7)	(799.9)	(508.4)
<b>1990</b>	1256	290	1148	1241
	(1175)	(139.2)	(926.4)	(503.5)
<b>1991</b>	1278	288	1416	1016
	(1199.8)	(135.3)	(1162.9)	(472.6)
<b>1992</b>	1294	328	1648	1379
	(1210.1)	(153.7)	(1472.6)	(609.2)
<b>1993</b>	1345	269	1813	1787
	(1263.6)	(139.2)	(1629.7)	(815.8)
<b>1994</b>	1335	307	2370	1719
	(1197.9)	(148)	(1888.5)	(776.4)
<b>1995</b>	1234	323	2099	1950
	(1162.2)	(139)	(1661.1)	(842)
<b>1996</b>	1165	299	2011	2172
	(1098.1)	(129.7)	(1703.9)	(880.6)

<b>1997</b>	1243	263	2207	2049
	(1158.5)	(117.8)	(1822.3)	(907.8)
<b>1998</b>	1241	333	2001	2035
	(1181.4)	(155)	(1710.6)	(851.3)
<b>1999</b>	1178	298	2375	2018
	(1073.7)	(119.5)	(2036.2)	(891.5)
<b>2000</b>	1109	219	2068	2103
	(1019.4)	(96.8)	(1823.9)	(862.6)

TABLE C

	SINGLE HONOURS						JOINT HONOURS					
	C	G	L	CS	AH	ARC	C	G	L	CS	AH	ARC
<b>1992</b>	1160	12	166	854	712	82	63	42	223	548	713	118
	(1063.6)	(12.0)	(134.5)	(786.5)	(609.9)	(76.2)	(33.2)	(19.1)	(101.4)	(257.5)	(288.7)	(63)
<b>1993</b>	1193	21	131	970	761	82	47	28	194	604	1063	120
	(1134.1)	(14.7)	(114.8)	(867.6)	(682.7)	(79.4)	(31.5)	(13.7)	(94.0)	(291.3)	(464.0)	(60.5)
<b>1994</b>	1124	50	161	1173	974	223	76	39	192	813	768	138
	(1065.1)	(22.3)	(110.5)	(982.4)	(778.4)	(127.7)	(53.2)	(11.9)	(82.9)	(396.2)	(325.8)	(54.4)
<b>1995</b>	1133	19	82	1070	791	238	64	54	205	912	939	99
	(1071.7)	(14.1)	(76.4)	(925.1)	(649.9)	(86.1)	(34.2)	(19.5)	(85.3)	(441.0)	(347.9)	(53.1)

<b>1996</b>	1063	22	80	1121	809	81	72	43	184	885	1246	41
	(1009.9)	(17.7)	(70.5)	(921.6)	(701.3)	(81)	(35.9)	(14.3)	(79.5)	(430.3)	(433.3)	(17)
<b>1997</b>	1163	16	64	1226	931	50	56	37	170	762	1230	57
	(1087.7)	(13)	(57.8)	(1013.3)	(759)	(50)	(28)	(13.9)	(75.9)	(356.4)	(530)	(21.4)
<b>1998</b>	1078	54	109	1038	807	156	93	67	173	890	1022	123
	(1031.3)	(49)	(101.1)	(897.8)	(712.6)	(100.2)	(47.6)	(32.1)	(75.3)	(401)	(405.3)	(45)
<b>1999</b>	1072	24	82	1353	933	89	54	84	160	729	1159	70
	(1000.6)	(15.4)	(57.7)	(1107.9)	(844.3)	(84)	(27.2)	(21.2)	(71.1)	(353.1)	(487.7)	(50.7)
<b>2000</b>	1039	17	53	1179	791	98	53	30	136	627	1180	216
	(953.4)	(17)	(49)	(1066.9)	(685.2)	(71.8)	(26)	(11.9)	(58.9)	(292.4)	(497.8)	(72.4)

**OTHER**

	<b>C</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>CS</b>	<b>AH</b>	<b>ARC</b>	<b>BG</b>	<b>BL</b>	<b>NC</b>	<b>PG</b>	<b>TM</b>
<b>1992</b>	55	125	179	1259	1009	38	256	382	501	348	110
	(11.7)	(42.7)	(59.4)	(375.7)	(291.1)	(11.7)	(61.7)	(96.8)	(139.9)	(306.6)	(81.8)
<b>1993</b>	37	139	219	1484	640	93	257	375	560	364	167
	(18.3)	(40.5)	(60.3)	(428.0)	(168.4)	(25.5)	(49.1)	(79.7)	(140.8)	(317.8)	(139.4)
<b>1994</b>	24	135	195	1093	649	133	251	389	542	408	187
	(19.5)	(35.9)	(56.2)	(293.3)	(180.8)	(39.6)	(48.4)	(95.7)	(142.3)	(350.8)	(172.1)

<b>1995</b>	25	107	134	1079	549	94	208	356	608	445	145
	(17.3)	(29.1)	(44.7)	(271.2)	(159.1)	(26.1)	(44.7)	(79.5)	(164.8)	(395.5)	(125.1)
<b>1996</b>	19	96	144	852	640	56	228	330	646	452	159
	(15.9)	(25.4)	(42.4)	(196.8)	(160.5)	(18.1)	(53.3)	(84.7)	(163.4)	(378.2)	(144)
<b>1997</b>	12	50	126	2303	492	142	790	449	5917	381	192
	(7.3)	(12.9)	(29.2)	(769.1)	(124)	(32.7)	(219.4)	(157.9)	(403.8)	(327.1)	(162.3)
<b>1998</b>	46	45	84	2568	296	63	773	314	1010	555	246
	(18.9)	(9.5)	(19)	(945.3)	(78.8)	(17.2)	(181.2)	(83.2)	(216)	(465)	(186.2)
<b>1999</b>	41	98	109	8865*	249	121	665*	1211*	992	534	168
	(18.1)	(23.1)	(27.4)	(1431.6)	(75.8)	(32.4)	(148.1)	(286.6)	(202.3)	(449.5)	(145.6)
<b>2000</b>	9	48	105	7449*	318	140	626*	1206*	495	420	319
	(6.7)	(20.4)	(32.9)	(1354.8)	(75.3)	(37.8)	(133.6)	(269.6)	(133.6)	(363.1)	(244.8)

\* figures marked with an asterisk include Open University figures.

Geoffrey Eatough  
*University of Wales, Lampeter*