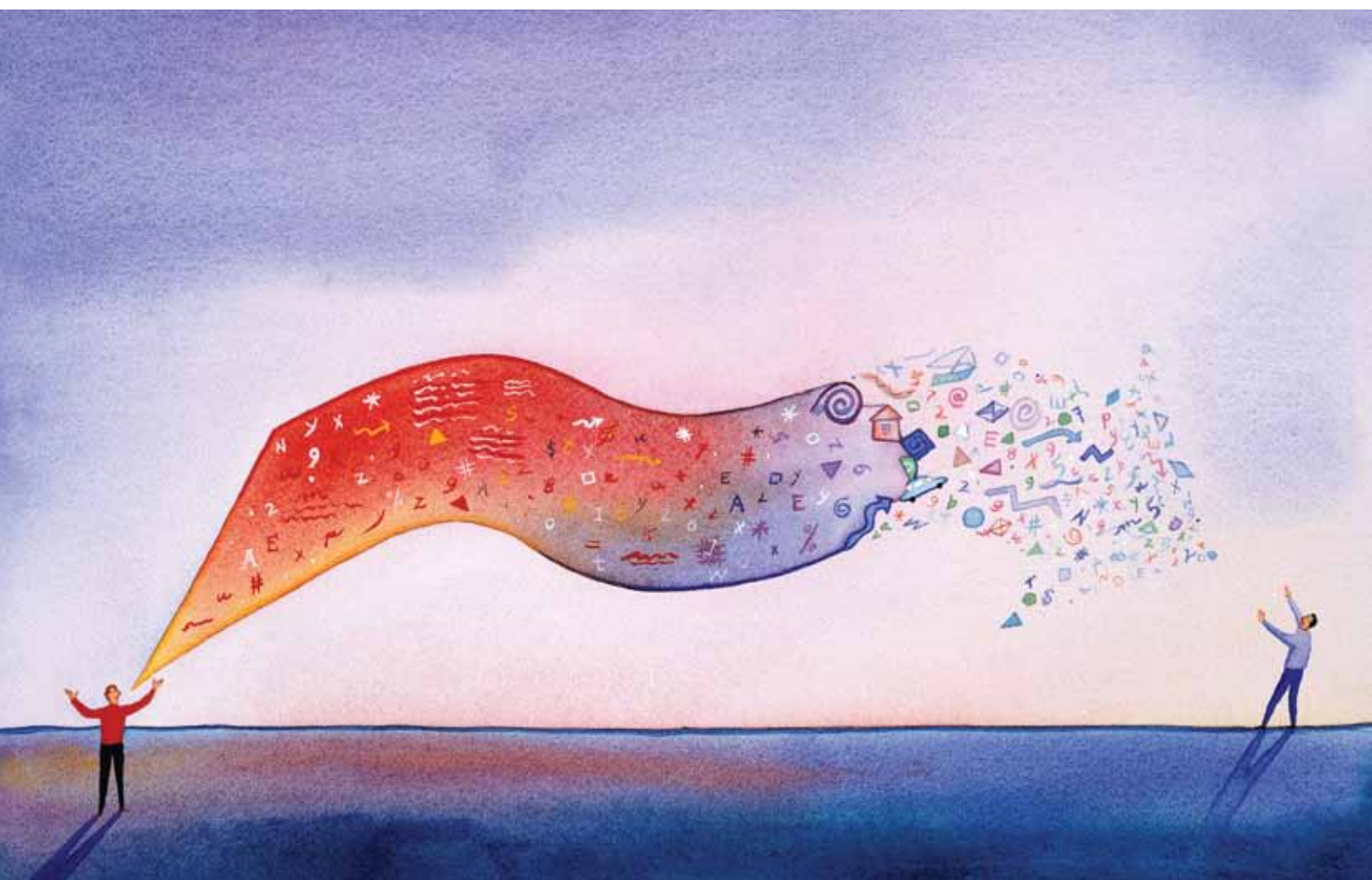


Liaison

Magazine

Issue 3 : July 2009



features:

From Kennedy to Obama:
an interview with Philip Davies

teaching:

Podcasting

viewpoint:

Something open this way comes

students:

2009 student essay
competition winner

teaching:

Gaelic to *ab initio* students

700 words:

On globalisation

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 2010. We welcome contributions. If you would like to submit an article, propose a book review or respond in a letter to an article published in *Liaison*, please contact the editor, Paula Davis (pd2@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

Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies
Avenue Campus
Highfield
University of Southampton
Southampton
SO17 1BF

Phone: 023 8059 4814

Fax: 023 8059 4815

Email: llas@soton.ac.uk

Web: www.llas.ac.uk

LLAS team:

Jackie Bailey	Web and Publications Administrator
Dr Lisa Bernasek	Academic Coordinator (Literature and Culture)
Teresa Birks	CILT Higher Education Adviser
Kate Borthwick	Academic Coordinator (e-Learning)
Jo-Anne Bryan	Links into Languages South East Regional Administrator
Dr John Canning	Senior Academic Coordinator (Area Studies)
Carol Churchouse	Administrator (UCML)
Dr Erika Corradini	Academic Coordinator (Projects)
Paula Davis	Subject Centre Assistant Manager
Alison Dickens	Assistant Director (HE Programmes)
Angela Gallagher-Brett	Senior Academic Coordinator (Languages and Related Studies)
Dr Graham Gilchrist	Senior Web Developer
Jessica Hawkins	Routes into Languages Assistant Programme Manager
Zena Hilton	Links into Languages South East Regional Manager
Liz Hudswell	Assistant Director (Operations)
Mandy Jeffrey	Links into Languages National Programme Administrator
Becky Jennings	Web and Publications Manager
Prof Michael Kelly	Director
Rebekah Mann	Administrator
Fiona McConnon	Links into Languages Programme Manager
Heather McGuinness	Routes into Languages Programme Manager
Sue Nash	Senior Administrator
Matt Reynolds	Web Developer
Dr Sarah Rule	Academic Coordinator (Linguistics)
Marie Weaver	Administrator
Claire Wilkins	Routes into Languages Programme Administrator
Vicky Wright	Deputy Director

Editors: Paula Davis and Lisa Bernasek

Design: Becky Jennings and Jackie Bailey

Cover image: Stockbyte Illustration ©veer.com

Welcome

Issue 3 : July 2009

Summer's here and the time is right for reading issue 3 of *Liaison*, the biannual magazine from the Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies (LLAS). Our bumper holiday edition is packed with news and features about our subject areas and, as usual, much of the content is provided by our readership. Thank you to all our contributors.

We kick off this issue with Mike Kelly's timely update on the difficult choices faced by our constituency in light of the RAE and the current economic downturn, a topic which is guaranteed to provoke debate.

In the second of an occasional series of interviews with colleagues who have made a substantial contribution to our subject areas, we talk to Professor Philip Davies who reflects on a long career in American studies and predicts the historical impact of President Obama.

Across the pond and beyond, Michael Cronin gives us 700 words on globalisation, which is complemented by Fiona Hyland's piece on staff and student experiences of internationalisation and Graeme Roberts' consideration of whether the UK is falling behind its competitors in the creation of a European Higher Education Area.

Closer to home, Catherine Watts tells us about the development of languages strategies in the south east

Liaison is printed on FSC Mixed Sources grade paper containing 50% recovered waste, and printed using vegetable inks.

of England, Sheila Kidd focuses on teaching Gaelic literature to ab initio students, Susana Lorenzo-Zamorano shares her experiences of enquiry-based learning,

while Helen Shaw gives us her perspective on being a successful language graduate. We also publish the winning entry from this year's LLAS student essay competition which we hope you will find as inspirational as we did!

Several of our articles have an e-learning theme: David Millard argues the case for open educational resources, while Rose Clark and John Wrigglesworth suggest ways of using podcasting in teaching, and Antonio Martinez-Arboleda identifies a need for change if we are to make the best use of new technologies.

To finish, our regular "A taste of..." feature will be of particular interest to those of you jetting off to faraway destinations such as Indonesia, Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand this summer. Wherever you may be, the team at LLAS wishes you a happy summer holiday!

As always, we welcome contributions and suggestions for future editions. If you would like to write an article, comment on issues raised in the magazine, or suggest a new feature or topic you would like us to cover, then please get in touch. You'll find our contact details inside the front cover:



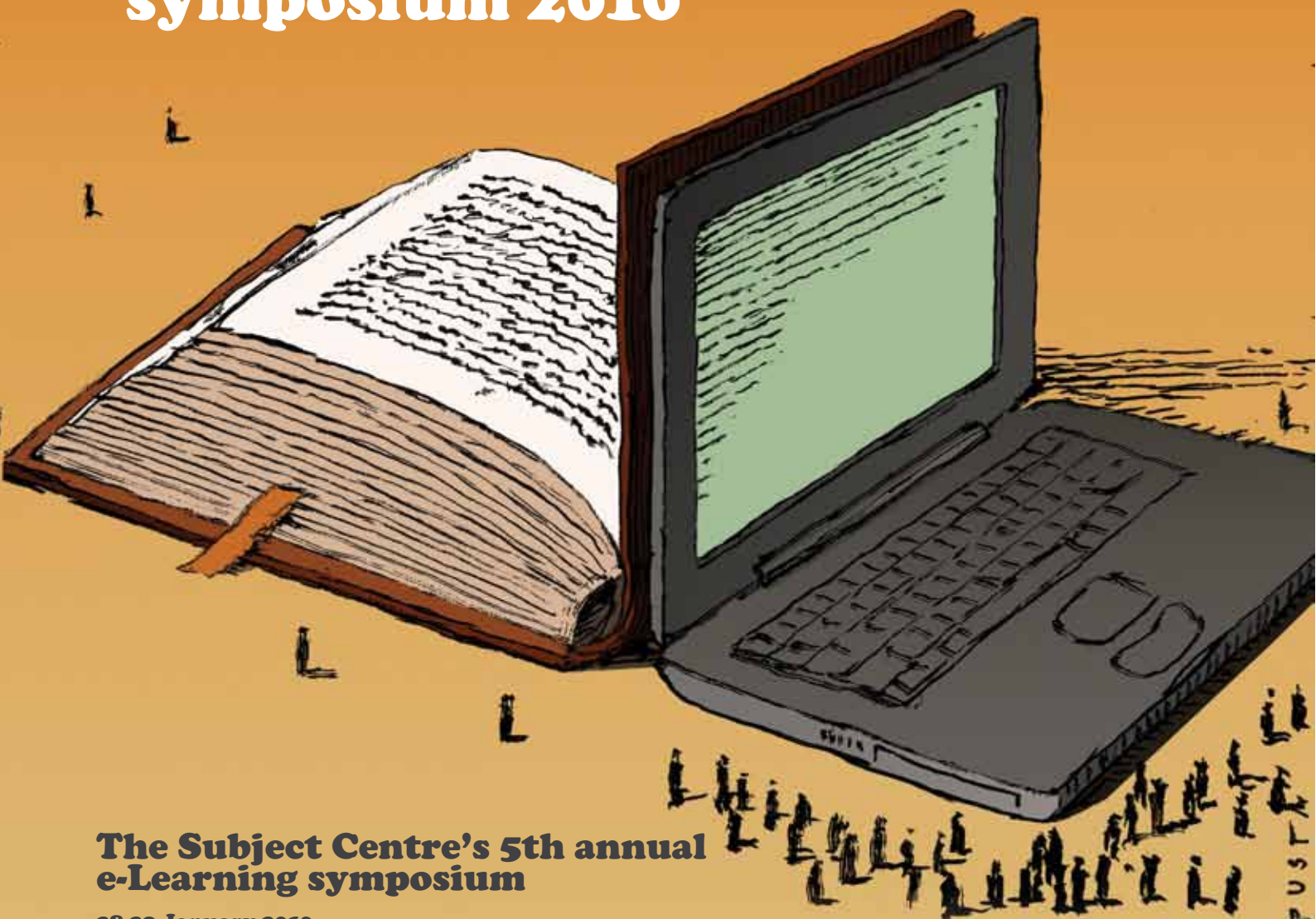
Paula Davis, Editor



When you have finished with this magazine please recycle it.

e-Learning

symposium 2010



The Subject Centre's 5th annual e-Learning symposium

28-29 January 2010

University of Southampton

www.llas.ac.uk/events/3251

This popular symposium combines practical activities and guidance with inspiring ideas to fuel the imagination.

- Attend our pre-conference workshop for discussion, guidance and tips on teaching and learning with technology
- Attend the main symposium event to hear about the latest research and developments in technology-enhanced learning

e-Learning symposium 2009

See videos and information about our last symposium at: www.llas.ac.uk/events/archive/2985



QR-code: try this on your mobile phone

Contents

Issue 3 : July 2009

Foreword

- 4 Choosing our future
Michael Kelly

News

- 5 LLAS news
6 Links into Languages
7 Routes into Languages

Features

- 12 From Kennedy to Obama: an interview with Philip Davies
John Canning
- 21 Listening to staff and students discuss internationalisation
Fiona Hyland
- 24 My career in languages
Helen Shaw
- 27 Something old and something new: EBL in languages and the construction of a more creative and integrated curriculum
Susana Lorenzo-Zamorano
- 44 700 words on... globalisation
Michael Cronin
- 47 A taste of Indonesian
Teresa Birks



38 A year abroad in Peru

47 Get a taste of Indonesian



21 Internationalisation discussions

Viewpoint

- 17 Something open this way comes
David Millard
- 20 Bologna ten years on
Graeme Roberts

Teaching

- 29 Using new technologies on content modules in modern languages
Antonio Martinez-Arboleda
- 32 Introducing ab initio students to literature: the Scottish Gaelic experience
Sheila Kidd
- 34 Podcasting@Portsmouth
Rose Clark and John Wrigglesworth

Students

- 38 From the River Tyne to Lake Titicaca
Laura Gent

Reviews

- 40 Listening in the language classroom
Review by Sarah Rule
- 41 Born Digital
Review by Scott Windeatt

Choosing our future



In the middle of a generational economic crisis, it is not difficult to see that higher education is facing challenging times over the next few years. The configuration of those challenges is being debated by almost every institution, professional association and thinktank in the country. It is not always easy to draw attention to the importance of the arts, humanities and social sciences, broadly understood, and a *fortiori* to the value of languages, linguistics and area studies. In this stormy environment, our academic community has two broad options.

The first option is to batten down the hatches and ride out the storm. The logic of this is that our place is in the higher levels of society's hierarchy of needs. We may be neglected or forgotten when survival is threatened or when bread and butter issues predominate, but our role of cultural enrichment will once more be valued when things are calmer. The logic also suggests that, when the storm abates, we shall need to rebuild from a depleted base.

In some respects, we are already seeing this option being played out. Every university is reviewing its portfolio of disciplines, and several departments in our subject areas are being closed or restructured. Higher education policy makers at national levels are reviewing their portfolio of subjects and asking searching questions about whether to continue to support or protect particular subjects, especially in our areas. The outcome of the RAE has raised questions about the relative quality of research in languages, linguistics and area studies, and about the viability of current disciplinary configurations. It has also noticeably reduced the level of research funding to the LLAS subjects.

The second option is to attempt to ride before the storm. The logic of this is that our subjects are important at all levels of society's needs. They may be crucial factors

in survival and have a key role to play in addressing bread and butter issues. The logic also suggests that, when the storm abates, we will be able to rebuild from a broader social base.

This option is also being played out in some respects. The broader imperative of higher education is to develop its international roles, and the creation of partnerships of institutions, agencies and associations across languages and cultures has never been more energetically pursued. The emergence of powerful countries outside the western comfort zone means that communication and cultural understanding are now critical success factors in strategic development. The rapid increase in international students

coming to study in the UK has raised questions about the linguistic and cultural adequacy of traditional approaches to learning and teaching across all disciplines.

Faced with the current difficulties, it is unlikely that all of our subject communities will make the same choices. Different strategies are emerging within institutions, within groups of institutions and within the four home countries. The ways in

which subject groupings understand their identity and priorities are beginning to change. The Subject Centre will remain alert to these shifts. We will help all parts of our community to reflect on their place and their options in the difficult conditions we all face. We shall hope to keep dialogue open, so that colleagues taking different strategic directions will nonetheless understand and respect the value of each other's choices.

“It is unlikely that all of our subject communities will make the same choices”

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

news

Teresa Birks, John Canning, Angela Gallagher-Brett, Zena Hilton and Paul Rowlett highlight just a few recent activities within languages, linguistics and area studies.

New umbrella association for linguistics

The learned societies and professional associations in descriptive, theoretical and applied linguistics have formalised their strategic collaboration in promoting their disciplines within UK higher education. The new University Council of General and Applied Linguistics (UCGAL) has grown out of an earlier informal collaborative forum dating back to 2005. The Council has recently undertaken a detailed analysis of the recent RAE results (available at www.philsoc.org.uk) and shown that, despite quantitative and qualitative evidence, UK research in linguistics has not been duly rewarded.

UCML Scotland

Modern languages departments from eleven universities across Scotland have re-established UCML Scotland, a branch of the University Council for Modern Languages.

The group will provide a collective voice on the strategic opportunities and challenges for modern languages departments in Scotland. In line with the objectives of UCML, it will represent the views and opinions of scholars and professionals to the government, the funding councils and other bodies at national level. A delegate from UCML Scotland will join the executive of the University Council for Modern Languages. Dr Peter

UCML UNIVERSITY COUNCIL OF MODERN LANGUAGES

Davies (University of Edinburgh) has been chosen as Scotland's delegate to the UCML executive.

Professor Andrew Ginger (University of Stirling) has been named chair of UCML Scotland. Professor Ginger said: "UCML Scotland provides a forum for modern languages departments to work together where there is common ground in pursuit of the highest aspirations for research and teaching."

Internationalisation in Scottish FE and HE

LLAS has commissioned a qualitative research study in order to investigate the ways in which current internationalisation strategies in Scotland impact on further and higher education to develop modern language and intercultural skills.

The study has the following key aims:

- to identify the main policy documents related to "internationalisation" in

Scottish FE/HE and to assess in what ways, if any, they involve the development of students' language and intercultural skills

- to explore the ways in which "internationalisation" is presented on Scottish FE/HE websites with respect to the development of modern language and intercultural skills
- to explore the views of senior

managers in Scottish FE/HE with regard to internationalisation and what ways, if any, current internationalisation strategies at individual institutions offer opportunities to indigenous students to develop language and intercultural skills.

The research report will be available in September 2009.

Islamic studies

The Higher Education Academy (HEA) has been asked by HEFCE to set up a network for teaching and learning in Islamic studies. Funding has been awarded to the HEA to scope such a network and develop a three-year "business plan". LLAS is working alongside the Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies to map activities in the teaching and learning of Islamic studies across the full range of disciplinary contexts. This exercise will help to inform the development of a network which is inclusive to all practitioners teaching and researching in the field. More details are available at: www.heacademy.ac.uk/islamicstudies

14-19 Diplomas

Following the Line of Learning Statement consultations, the name of the Diploma has been changed to "Diploma in Languages and International Communication". Line of Learning Criteria were drawn up and "toured" the country for consultation during April and May – so far responses have been very positive.

LLAS is represented on the Diploma Development Partnership Steering Group and LLAS advisory groups have and will continue to play an important part in consultation and input into the Diploma. Both the languages and linguistics advisory groups have already made significant contributions. The new website is at: www.diploma-in-languages.co.uk

Links into Languages is launched: professional development for teachers

New CPD courses for teachers

On 3 April 2009, at the Association for Language Learning's (ALL) annual "Languages World" conference at the University of Leicester, delegates gathered at the pre-dinner drinks reception for the launch of Links into Languages. Professor Mike Kelly, director of the project, addressed the group, along with Dr Lid King, National Director for Languages and Professor Robert Burgess, Vice Chancellor of the University of Leicester.

This event marked the start of

two years of activity to support all those involved in languages education at primary, secondary and further education levels. Funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and managed by a consortium including LLAS, ALL and the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT), Links has been modelled on its sister project, Routes into Languages, which aims to encourage language study beyond KS4. Like Routes, Links will have nine university-based regional centres that will coordinate a broad range of activities in each government region. The Links centres will develop networks of local centres to ensure that there is equal coverage and access across England, so that people can meet for professional



development opportunities, information-sharing and networking sessions. From core courses, which will be the same in Brighton, Bristol and Birmingham, to localised projects for small groups of teachers, Links aims to reach out to all.

For more information about events, where the regional centres are based and to join the mailing list, please visit www.linksintolanguages.ac.uk

Routes into Languages snapshots

Three of the Routes into Languages regional consortia present snapshots of outreach activities in their region.

East of England

www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/east

Routes East is a consortium comprising Anglia Ruskin University, the University of Cambridge, the University of Bedfordshire and the Open University. With a programme for the period 2008-2010, the consortium's main aim is to promote language learning throughout the eastern region, focused primarily on the 14-19 age group. A secondary aim, in conjunction with Aimhigher and widening participation initiatives, is to give school students of this age group experience of university campus life and facilities, and to encourage them to consider tertiary-level language learning after school.

In common with the other eight regional consortia in England, Routes East organises a wide range of activities to promote its aims. These include training language ambassadors from the undergraduate population of Anglia Ruskin, Cambridge and Bedfordshire Universities, who mix with school pupils either on campus or at events in schools. Routes East ambassadors are native English speakers and foreign nationals from among the many students studying degrees in English language and other subjects in the region. Language activity days provide a range of on-campus activities, including taster sessions, dance and music experiences, and culture and cuisine presentations. Summer schools in July and August offer on-campus three-day beginner

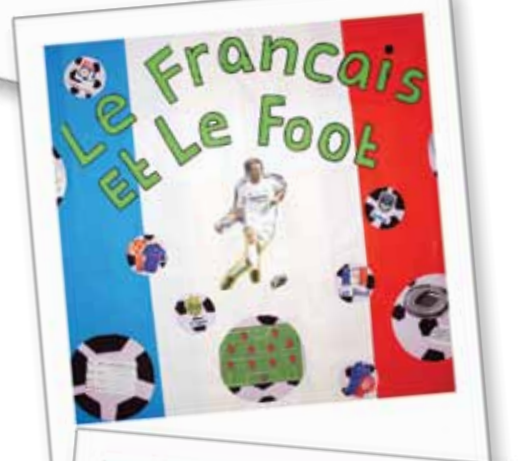
courses in various languages (popular with parents seeking a vacation outlet for bored young minds!). Saturday GCSE revision classes in French, German and Spanish are a popular way for students from various schools across the region to get to know each other and a university campus. Other

“The goal for the culmination of the three years is a ‘World’s Got Talent’ competition”

on-campus activities include language tasters during the annual Cambridge Arts Festival, the European Day of Languages, and single-language focus events such as the planned Chinese Day. The University of Bedfordshire also runs successful Language for Culture and Business courses, pairing students and employees from local firms. The goal for the culmination of the three years is a “World’s Got Talent” competition for secondary language pupils from the region.

The distinctive feature of the Routes East programme is its concentration on spreading Cambridge’s Junior CULP (Cambridge University Language Programme) to schools across the region. This offers a unique blended learning package of online study, in-

school twilight classes and on-campus intensive days, totalling some 60 hours’ exposure in one of five languages (French, German, Spanish, Italian and Chinese) at beginner or intermediate level. Having started in the Cambridge region, the programme is now spreading across the east, to centres in Suffolk, Bedfordshire and Essex, with more locations planned. The objective during the three years of the programme is to offer a Junior CULP experience to up to 1,000 secondary pupils.



Routes into Languages: East Midlands

www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/eastmidlands

The Routes East Midlands consortium became operational in January 2008. Shortly afterwards, diverse and innovative language projects began to be delivered across the region.

The projects have been well received by pupils and teachers alike; in particular, the consortium's

followed by the presentation of certificates.

Last July, one partner institution organised a themed family language supper to open its e-mentoring scheme. The e-mentees, pupils from local schools, were invited to come to the university with their families. After

projects designed to support year 10 and 11 students of GCSE languages throughout their two years of study via a bespoke language programme, which is delivered on campus and focuses on attainment, cultural awareness raising and the use of teaching and learning methods required for university study. Participating pupils who opt to continue to study languages beyond GCSE will receive further programmes of support at both A1 and A2, along with a guaranteed place on Eurostars, a two-day summer residential programme aimed at year 12 students who are continuing on to A2.

The virtual foreign language assistant project enables schools which do not have a foreign language assistant to access one via webcam. The project is available regionally and supports pupils studying at GCSE, A1 and A2 levels. Equally, schools may wish to access the consortium's web-based resources to support teaching and learning at GCSE and beyond. Initially the resources, which will be available shortly, were created to support the study of French, German, Italian and Spanish. However, the consortium has extended availability to Mandarin, Polish, and Russian.

Radiolingua, a project which operates in Lincolnshire, is about to be extended to reach other counties in the region. Radiolingua offers one-day taster or enrichment sessions, and cultural awareness-raising events which enable the pupils to record their own radio programme in a foreign language. The programmes are aired at a later date on Siren Radio, the University of Lincoln's community radio station.

“The highlight of the celebratory events is the school performances, where pupils perform a short sketch in a foreign language”

internationally themed family language suppers have been a huge success, enabling school pupils to celebrate their achievements by showcasing their work portfolios to parents and to a wider audience. Alongside the pupils' work, displays of international and cultural interest are also on show and a campus tour is organised to give a flavour of what it is like to study at university. The highlight of the celebratory events is the school performances, where pupils perform a short sketch in a foreign language,

attending a presentation about the scheme, attendees enjoyed a buffet of international food and participated in language tasters and salsa sessions. Pupils and their families were able to meet their undergraduate e-mentors while enjoying ice cream produced in situ using liquid nitrogen.

One of the consortium's strengths is that the diverse range of language projects it offers is transferable to any location and language. It has created a suite of projects of more sustained intervention, rather than concentrating on one-off events. Schools in the region can participate in



Routes into Languages activities taking place around the country.

Routes into Languages: London

www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/london

The Routes London consortium has been running for one year with its project, Capital L. A partnership between SOAS, UCL, the University of Westminster, London Metropolitan University, the Open University London, Birkbeck, Goldsmiths and the London School of Economics (LSE), the consortium draws on the expertise of its partners to reach secondary school pupils and inspire them to engage in language learning with renewed vigour.

Our activities are delivered across four overlapping thematic strands:

- progression;
- influencing the influencers – where “influencers” refer to teachers, parents, and policy makers;
- language in action (employability);
- and sports and culture.

We work in close partnership with 15 schools spread across London, which have agreed to monitor the impact of interventions and to contribute towards an increased knowledge of what works in language teaching. But we also offer activities far and wide, thanks to the support of London Aimhigher coordinators.

Highlights of the past year include our official launch at the House of Lords with an opening speech by David Lammy, Minister for Higher Education – an event that would not have happened without the support of the late Lord Ron Dearing, and which brought together schools, embassies, employers and language professionals from across the sector. More significantly, our Easter workshops and revision classes attracted pupils from Barking to North Harrow, from Enfield to Mitcham. You may not recognise these place names, but let me assure you, those young people travelled far!

And on their school holidays, too!

We carried out a baseline survey of all language teaching in our eight partner HEIs and of the various undergraduate, postgraduate, elective and open programme courses offered. The findings remain an excellent source of information for

“Our message is simple: languages can help you go further”

course developers and a baseline for monitoring future changes in higher education. The survey will also support the development of an informative brochure for young people thinking about studying languages.

To those young people and their colleagues our message is simple: languages can help you go further; if you choose to study a language degree, the offer of courses is as exciting as it is diverse. If you opt to study a language as part of or alongside your degree, your insights will be wider, and your understanding deeper. And your employability rating will soar!

Next year promises to be exciting, busy and challenging. Our role in reversing negative perceptions about learning

languages is mammoth. It requires creativity and resources, but also the sort of focused effort facilitated by collaborative working. The Capital L project, where HEIs work with schools, with each other and across subjects demonstrates what is possible.



The Brighton and Hove City Council Languages Strategy

Catherine Watts explores the development of a local languages strategy and discusses the role such initiatives can play in helping to establish, foster and cement collaborative networks of relevant stakeholders across the country.

The Routes into Languages South consortium involves ten universities working on the SCULA project (South Central Universities Language Alliance). Project activities can be divided into two main areas: networking and discrete language events/projects. One of the networking activities is the development of four languages strategies within the region. Brighton and Hove City Council's Languages Strategy (2003), detailed below, is currently serving as a model for two other local authorities, namely Southampton and Portsmouth City Councils.

The purpose of developing the Brighton and Hove Languages Strategy was "to transform language teaching and learning. It is also to formulate our own vision, highlight good practice, audit needs and devise action plans which address the key issues".

(Brighton and Hove City Council Languages Strategy, 2003: 3). Thus, a languages strategy can be seen as a formal document written by a range of parties, including local employers, to discuss and promote languages for all within a local context. More specifically, the original Brighton and Hove City Council Languages Strategy (2003: 4) aimed to:

- make language learning more accessible for all ages
- improve the range and quality of language learning opportunities
- make links between language skills and job opportunities
- make sure language skills are valued by the city as an economic benefit

- enable the city to play a leading role in, and benefit from, national developments in language learning
- ensure that Brighton and Hove develops as a city with a European identity and a global perspective.

Background

In 1997 Brighton and Hove became a unitary authority and was awarded city status in 2001. In 2002 the City Languages Forum was founded by the

spectrum of stakeholders who met on a regular basis at the Council offices to discuss language-related issues in the local community. Key bodies at each of the meetings, which took place four times a year, were representatives from local authorities; the two universities within the Brighton area; post-16 colleges; primary and secondary schools;

“A languages strategy can be seen as a formal document written by a range of parties, including local employers, to discuss and promote languages for all within a local context”

then-Head of the Children, Families and Schools department at Brighton and Hove City Council. This was an important move, as it gave Council support to the meetings, and the minutes and other documents could be placed on the Council's website under a dedicated section. It was fortuitous that this Head had a strong background in foreign languages and was able to impart the vision of language learning for the whole community in the form of the City Languages Forum and subsequently in the Languages Strategy itself.

The City Languages Forum was a voluntary body comprising a wide

community language schools; school governors; private language providers; and the business community. City Languages Forum meetings had a rotating focus, with participants from the different sectors presenting a summary of the role languages play in their work and prioritising areas for action or change. Speakers were also invited, e.g. a representative from the British Sign Language Association, and a speaker from the Sheffield and South Yorkshire Multilingual City Forum who helped the group in Brighton and Hove formulate the first draft of their own City Languages Strategy. Key professional relationships were





forged through the body and many collaborative local networks promoting languages became established.

The Forum also helped people from the different sectors represented work together to produce successful bids for languages-related funding. For example, Brighton and Hove City Council became one of 19 national Primary Languages Pathfinders as a direct result of the City Languages Forum meetings and the collaborative networks established through it.

However, by 2004 many changes had taken place in terms of staffing and the nature of individual jobs and workloads. The Head of the Children, Families and Schools department had moved to a different department, leaving firstly the local specialist languages college, Hove Park School, and then the University of Brighton to convene, host and lead the meetings. The City Languages Forum continued in various guises until 2007 when it sadly fizzled out due to time pressures on individuals and perhaps a feeling that a tighter framework was needed. Its legacy however was the City Languages Strategy.

The Brighton and Hove City Council Languages Strategy

In terms of content, the Brighton and Hove City Council Languages Strategy is a very simple document, comprising

16 pages endorsed by the Council. Each participant in the City Languages Forum was responsible for writing a one-page “strand” in the document, with the Council writing the introduction. The basic format of each strand was an initial statement about the position of the sector in question at the time of writing (“where we are now”). This was followed by a second statement about where that sector is heading in terms of foreign languages (“where we want to be”). At the end of each strand, the sector considered priority areas for future action (“what to do to make a difference”). The bullet-point format and style of the whole document make the main messages easily accessible. The main contributors are acknowledged on the final page, as are details of the Council’s web address and contact details.

Current developments

Three of the four languages strategies that have been pledged are currently in progress. Work on these has not been wholly smooth, which is perhaps surprising given the apparent simplicity of the document outlined above. One main issue to emerge has been the practicalities of arranging meetings with the relevant stakeholders. These have to be organised up to six months in advance given the time pressures on the individuals concerned. During those six months jobs change, and people are redeployed or leave their posts, delaying the creation of the languages strategies for a further six months while replacements are found. The new individuals may then not have the same enthusiasm for languages or general understanding of the project as their predecessors, which further add to the delays.

However despite these difficulties, which although time-consuming to resolve are not overly detrimental

to the actual development of the documents, much progress has been made and many new networks of interested and enthusiastic parties have been forged. Having a formal statement of commitment to community-wide language learning endorsed by the local authority is a worthwhile legacy for the Routes into Languages initiative.

Conclusion

The vision of the original Brighton and Hove City Council Languages Strategy (2003: 4) is perhaps most pertinent as a conclusion, as it underlines the many positives that the development of such a document can bring to the local community. The vision for Brighton and Hove is that it will become a city where:

- skills in all languages are valued and all languages are seen as equal
- language learning is accessible, encouraged and supported
- being multilingual is celebrated everywhere – not just in academia
- through learning languages, people become more outward-looking, open-minded, confident and cosmopolitan.

It is the Languages Strategy document which cements this vision, formally raises the profile of languages and underlines their importance in the global economy of the 21st century.

Reference

Brighton and Hove City Council (2003) *City Languages Strategy*. Brighton: Brighton and Hove City Council.

Dr Catherine Watts is a principal lecturer in the School of Language, Literature and Communication at the University of Brighton where she teaches German, English and Education.

From Kennedy to Obama: living American studies



We recently caught up with Professor Philip Davies, Emeritus Professor of American Studies at De Montfort University, to talk about what inspired him to take up American studies, changes he has witnessed in his subject area, his personal experiences of leadership, and Barack Obama.

Philip Davies arrived at Keele University in the late 1960s to study mathematics and geography. Thanks to the Keele tradition of joint honours degrees and flexible courses, and a year at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania, Davies graduated with a degree in sociology and American studies. After a Masters degree in American politics at Essex he studied and taught at the University of Maryland, College Park, Lanchester Polytechnic (now the University of Coventry) and the University of Manchester before becoming Head of the International Office at Leicester Polytechnic in 1991, just as it was becoming De Montfort University. As well as writing and editing numerous books and articles on US politics, he has served as Chair of the British Association for American Studies (BAAS), the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Benchmarking Group for Area Studies and the UK Council for Area

Studies Associations (UKCASA), and is currently Chair of the American Politics Group of the UK. Now Emeritus Professor of American Studies at De Montfort University, he is Director of the Eccles Centre for American Studies, hosted by the British Library.

How did you first become interested in the United States?

I was born in 1948 at the time of the Cold War so you really couldn't ignore the US. I came from a fairly working-class background but my family was very politically aware. My generation lived through Kennedy getting shot; I do remember exactly where I was and it was the first time I had seen my father cry. Although I discovered American studies at university I was ready for it. As a school kid in Shropshire I was always at the town library. You could borrow books from the American Embassy by post and I was doing that. I was reading books about obscure jazz musicians, and

politics books only available in the US. I won a school essay competition with an essay on the aftermath of Kennedy's assassination. I had no idea you could study American studies at university. At school I studied history, geography and mathematics. I knew I didn't want to do a single honours degree. I think that there were only six universities in the whole country where it was possible to do degrees of the kind I wanted. I was brilliantly lucky to go to Keele.

And then there was American studies. David Adams gave this lecture on the St Valentine's Day Massacre and it was just superb. I thought "If you can do this at university, why am I still doing maths?" In those days they gave you four years to do your degree and you had to study a subject you had never done before. All the departments knew that they had the opportunity to take you away from your original subjects. I was always brilliant at maths at school, but I got



to university and found that there were 40 other people who were just as brilliant, if not better. I knew American studies would be hard. I had not studied A-level English literature. I wasn't very good at languages but I was interested in foreign countries, interested in America and interested in history, and there it was. With some trepidation about the literature I decided to give it a go. I think that's where the extra year was so important. It gave me the time to work out how literature works. I'm not sure whether it is the politics or history which interests me most - if you live long enough the politics becomes history!

Student exchanges were competitive and I won one to Swarthmore College in Philadelphia. In those days they didn't transfer credit which meant that you could experiment. I did courses which were more challenging and offbeat than I would have done if the marks

had been transferred. In the end my degree took five years, but I had two years' more reading than most students. On my first visit to America I arrived in Chicago the Saturday before the 1968 Democratic convention. I thought politics was very exciting and ended up getting into a barney with police outside the convention!

What changes have you seen in American studies over the years?

When I was a student and when I first started teaching, American studies was a fairly well-formed tripod of history, literature and politics. You had Dick Pear who was professor of American politics, Dennis Welland in literature, and Peter Marshall in history. There has been a slippage away from politics and social sciences in American studies. As I got involved in UKCASA I learnt that this was not true in all area studies. I may be wrong but in my mind European studies has this very solid social science basis which even includes economics (you don't get this

much in American studies). Cultural studies, media studies, film studies are a big part of American studies now. The political science element seems to have diminished in undergraduate teaching, though not necessarily in the research culture.

Part of that is student demand. Even when I was at Manchester the vast majority of students had English literature and history A-level and very few had politics. When they arrived they were mostly interested in literature, but by the final year when they had choice they were divided roughly a third each way. Over time programmes have responded by becoming more arts and humanities focused, including subjects like cultural studies and media studies, which didn't exist or barely existed when I was young. International relations (IR) has grown and a huge part of IR programmes is American foreign policy. There are many other opportunities to study America.

In the 1960s English departments, history departments and to a lesser extent politics departments didn't do a lot about America. Many literature departments were very snooty about American literature, several Nobel prizes notwithstanding - they still didn't believe Americans could write! Now all these subjects have increased their coverage of America and in newer areas such as IR, film studies and media studies American content plays a big part. American studies is competing against these

Have you noticed any changes in the type of people who choose to do American studies?

When I first started at Manchester we did surveys of student background and 100% would have either English or history A-level and about 80% had both. Just 5-10% had politics. I don't sense that has changed. If anything the proportion of social sciences was getting lower in the last couple of years I was teaching.

The American politics A-level is really popular. We run events for the

American Studies Association which involves 25 different nations - a great experience.

In the early 90s after I had got to De Montfort, I decided to become more actively involved in the professional side. I was lucky to be chair of BAAS while the Subject Centre was being set up. Many people forget there are Anglophone area studies. The first QAA subject list did not have area studies on it and they included American studies in English literature. BAAS created a noise about that.

I discovered American studies at university, I have lived American studies throughout my career and it has given me a *raison d'être*. I've lived in America, I've got American friends, and my kids' godparents are Americans. I'm locked into the country and I'm from a working-class background where nobody left Stoke, so I feel I owe a lot of the pleasure I've got out of life to American studies and now at the Eccles Centre I have the best American studies job in the country.

What attracted you to that role? What does being Director of the Eccles Centre involve?

It's brilliant. The job came up just as my time as chair of BAAS was finishing. We organise a lot of events. We do a research conference with the Institute of the Study of the Americas and sponsor lectures and conferences, and we do politics conferences for A-level students, undergraduates, and their teachers. For the general public we work with the Fulbright Commission and Benjamin Franklin House. We've had Timothy Garton Ash and David Cannadine is coming soon. The British Library has its own events so we work with them on topics which have an American spin. We do publications and several books have come out of our conferences so there's editorial work, chasing authors, etc.

“I believe there is virtue in studying an area in a multidisciplinary way which is not achieved through a single discipline approach”

subjects and the number of students applying to study for a discrete degree in American studies has been in decline for a long time, though it has gone up this year. I believe that the number of undergraduates studying America as part of their degree is bigger than it has ever been because of all these other options. It's great that literature, politics, history and so on now contain American options. However, like all area studies people, I believe there is virtue in studying an area in a multidisciplinary way which is not achieved through a single discipline approach. You know more about the literature if you know the history and politics of the place, you know a lot more about the politics if you know the history and about the cultural artefacts including literature and so on. Area studies gets squeezed, underused or undervalued because of the nonetheless valuable inclusion of the area in more single disciplinary areas.

students here at the Eccles Centre and we have hundreds coming. We have given them the American studies CD¹ but very few are considering American studies; they are thinking politics or IR or PPE (philosophy, politics, economics).

You are currently Chair of the American Politics Group of the UK, you have been Chair of BAAS and UKCASA and you chaired the first QAA Benchmarking Group for Area Studies. What motivated you to be involved in the leadership of these groups?

I think it was Ben Franklin who said something like "don't join anything unless you can run it" - I'm sure he would have said it a lot more eloquently. I was chairman of my kids' parent teacher association as well. I like running things and it has generally been a pleasure. I enjoy the way it introduces you to people with a wide variety of experiences. Now I am on the committee of the European

¹The Discover American Studies CD was produced by LLAS with funding from the US Embassy. See www.whystudyamerica.ac.uk for further details.

We have Eccles Fellows money so people from North America and outside London can come to the British Library and use the North American collections. The Eccles Centre is also tasked with adding to the Americas collections. We fund the acquisition of items which are so expensive that the Library would have to go fund-raising for them and which are important enough that the general public can understand why they are special. We recently purchased the first map of the Americas by an English cartographer. He did a set of four continental maps. The Library already had the other three and the American one came up at an auction. We got it very cheaply - within a few months a similar map at a different auction sold for more than three times the price. We have purchased a couple of very early American books, notable not only for their quality and early production, but because they are about the contemporary 17th and 18th century debates on theology and government. In both cases no copies existed outside North America.

Is there anything you miss about working in a university?

One misses particular colleagues of course, though I still do have connections with De Montfort. In a university your actual teaching hours are a small part of what you do, but talking to colleagues is a substantial part of the job. I ask myself whether I miss the teaching. I don't miss the marking and I don't miss setting the exams. I don't miss the meetings, except for the conviviality of the meetings. I give a few guest lectures at De Montfort and I'm still doing a modest amount of research. I don't get the consistent relationship with a group you get throughout a year or a complete degree, so that body of people I proprietarily think of as "mine", I don't get anymore.

So when I look at the television and see Richard Lister, the BBC Washington correspondent, I can say "he's one of mine!", or I listen to the radio and hear that it was produced by Sally Flatman, I say "she's one of mine". Even Boris Johnson's media adviser was one of mine – all this stuff about how these left wing professors politicise their students, it never worked for me!

Campus experiences are nice, but the British Library is a bit like a campus. In many jobs you would say you miss the library, but I've got The Library!

“If in four years’ time the Obama administration is perceived as even moderately successful, the impact will be seen for a number of elections”

As an expert in US politics and US elections in particular, people inevitably ask you about the election of Barack Obama as America's first black president. Do you see Obama's election as something particularly historic?

Even if it tarnishes it will be significant because of the number of people emotionally affected by it at the time. When you see a big swing in one election, the people who voted for the first time in that election tend to maintain that bias. Obama brought new people to the polls. The turnout went up a bit, about 1%, but there was a significant dropout among conservative and evangelical voters - they weren't going to vote for Obama and they weren't happy with McCain. 19% of black voters



had never voted before and there was also an increase in the Hispanic vote. These voters are more into governmental action and more liberal on social issues. If they continue to vote it would suggest a swing in those kinds of directions. I expect

that if in four years' time the Obama administration is perceived as even moderately successful, the impact will be seen for a number of elections. If it is seen as very successful it could continue like Franklin D Roosevelt. I was there for the last few days of the election campaign and people were very moved. Even if the administration cannot cope with the great problems they face, there is now no barrier to a non-white person becoming president of the United States - that's hugely significant. The barrier has just gone. If Hillary Clinton had got in a woman would have done it - that barrier has probably gone too.

Philip Davies was interviewed by John Canning.



Come share with us!

The Subject Centre warmly invites you to join the HumBox community. Help us to explore:

- how open educational material can be stored and presented
- the implications for copyright and IPR
- quality control measures and methods of peer review
- issues of trust for teachers and students using openly available material
- how open content can encourage collaborative working

HumBox is an online space for sharing Humanities resources managed by four Subject Centres: Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies; History, Classics and Archaeology; English; and Philosophical & Religious Studies.

Find out how you can get involved at:
www.llas.ac.uk/humbox



Something open this way comes

We should all be contributing to the development of open educational resources argues David Millard.

Prepare for disruption

In 1995 Harvard Business School professor Clayton M Christensen coined the phrase “disruptive technology” to refer to technologies that take the market by surprise and overturn established business models and methods (Bower & Christensen 1995). Both the motorcar and the telephone started in this way, as fringe technologies that eventually changed the world.

The internet is the greatest modern source of disruptive technology, and yet it is consistently underestimated as an agent of change. Online shopping, digital music and massive public projects like Wikipedia have revolutionised the retail, music and publishing industries. TV-on-demand and file sharing now threaten the television industry.

So why is it that higher education still sees the internet as a fringe technology?

Sure, we market our institutions via websites, and talk to our students with email and through the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), but in what ways are we truly embracing the internet? Might it fundamentally change what we do? Will it change education?

The world wide web in particular is transforming the way that our society operates. The web abhors control, and instead rewards openness. We are already seeing students escaping the confines of their university IT systems for the vast public spaces of Wikipedia, YouTube and Facebook. You may

have escaped yourself. Teachers are increasingly using sites like iTunesU and SlideShare to share their materials.

It seems that the web is changing the balance of power. In the future universities will no longer be seen as the primary custodians of public wisdom, and there is a need for us to reinvent ourselves as voices of authority in a more open information world.

The growing movement for Open Education Resources (OERs) is one attempt to rise to this challenge (Caswell et al 2008). OERs are

lecture material available, making a clear statement about its position on the academic landscape. National bodies are also beginning to promote OER. The Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) recently launched a £2m OER programme to support institutions in publishing course materials, and is preparing JorumOpen (www.jorum.ac.uk), an open national resource bank of teaching materials. There are also well-established commercial sites for helping groups develop open teaching materials, e.g. Connexions (<http://cnx.org>), which

“It is a wonderful feeling to receive a thank you from a distant colleague or from a stranger who has enjoyed your work”

teaching materials that have been released into the public domain, normally through one of the Creative Commons licences that makes it free for public or educational use as long as the original author is acknowledged.

The argument is simple: by developing OERs higher education institutions are able to contribute to the public information space, share new ideas, raise the profile of teaching, and give individual academics a more public voice.

Several high profile institutions are already embracing OER. Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) has made great swaths of its course and

allows users to assemble bespoke chapters and exercises from its collection and can even supply them as printed books at a fraction of the price of a traditional textbook.

In our own work at the University of Southampton's Learning Societies Lab, we have been exploring how we can reinvent teaching and learning repositories to help teachers and students share their everyday materials. Working with the language-teaching community we have developed a community repository site, called the Language Box (Millard et al 2009), which aims to learn from recent Web 2.0 sites like YouTube, and

enables users to easily put all sorts of multimedia content online.

Barriers to OER

Working closely with the community on the Language Box has also given us an insight into the fears that people have about OER. There seem to be three major issues: quality, competitiveness and copyright.

The concern about quality is double-edged: teachers are concerned about the quality of materials that their students may find online, but they are also concerned that their own materials may not be good enough. The web contains a lot of material – some of it junk – but we have become familiar with a number of ways of filtering it out, such as using comments, hit counters, ratings and author identity. These are used by visitors to make judgments about the value of resources, and can also be used by system software as recommenders that steer visitors towards higher quality materials. As teachers we should have more confidence in our ability to stand out from the rest; this may mean becoming less self-conscious and accepting that our materials may be judged by others, but in the positive context of sharing.

The worry about competitiveness is actually a fear about giving away what are seen as valuable resources. Our teaching resources do represent a substantial personal and institutional investment, but did any of your students choose your institution because of the quality of your notes? I would argue that teaching resources are the least valuable of our teaching assets, coming a long way behind staff, facilities and reputation. By sharing our resources we draw attention to the excellence of these other factors, and help to distinguish ourselves in the eyes of potential students who routinely search the web in search of guidance.



Of all the factors that teachers have voiced to us during the development of the Language Box copyright is the main reason users are unprepared to share. There is uncertainty about what copyright laws apply with online materials, and this is not helped by institutional rules that are vague or untested. This is a difficult fear for individual academics to overcome, and institutions need to be much more supportive of staff who want to use OER. Hopefully in the UK the JISC initiative will help with cultural change, and the positive experiences of other institutions (like MIT) will set a good example. In the meantime common sense will steer us well: we should respect other people's work, not knowingly break copyright restrictions, and always give attribution so that the right people get credit for their work. And we must not forget that copyright

also protects us: even free and open licences like Creative Commons protect our status as authors, and can restrict the ways that others use our resources (e.g. by declaring whether they can alter them or use them for commercial purposes).

Is this a fad?

It is easy to dismiss fashionable technologies as a fad, but this is to miss the underlying reasons that are driving the trends. OER needs to be understood in the broader context of higher education institutions realigning themselves with the way that society views knowledge and community. Individual tools will come and go, YouTube will not last forever, but we have passed a point where it is now easy for anybody to create and distribute multimedia content and there is no going back - podcasting is



not just for Christmas.

The web is a disruptive technology because it changes the value of information. What was once scarce is now common, what was once expensive is now cheap. OER is a good approach because it allows higher education institutions to begin the process of opening up, and gives them a way to participate in the public information space as contributors and curators (rather than custodians) of knowledge.

First footsteps

Of course OER raises personal challenges for all of us who are involved in teaching – we cannot all be digital natives, and most of us do not have the time to experiment with new technology. But there are ways we can contribute, and small steps we can take that will add up

to make a difference.

By incorporating good web materials into our own teaching we will not only reduce our own overheads, but also begin to teach our students about quality sources of information on the web. We can participate by leaving feedback for authors, and use comments or email to thank them or tell them how we have used their materials. It is a wonderful feeling to receive a thank you from a distant colleague or from a stranger who has enjoyed your work.

We can also better manage our own digital materials and try to use them as effectively as we can. This does not necessarily mean changing our workflows; it could be as simple as sharing the original Word or PowerPoint files that we have developed. Where we can we should be generous with these assets by

putting them on sites like SlideShare or adding them to community sites like the Language Box. If there is a decision that needs to be made at a departmental or institutional level for this to happen then we should start the discussion.

There is a good reason why the impact of the web is often compared to the printing press – both technologies democratised information; the printing press brought reading to the masses, the web is doing the same with writing. Adapting our teaching to these new technologies through initiatives like OER is not about staying cool with the kids; it is about adjusting education to a new landscape, and making it relevant – not to new technology – but to a changing society.

References

- Bower, J.L. and Christensen, C.M. (1995) Disruptive Technologies: Catching the Wave. *Harvard Business Review*. January-February 1995.
- Caswell T., Henson S., Jenson M., and Wiley D. (2008) Open educational resources: Enabling universal education. *The International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning*. 9 (1).
- Millard, D., Howard, Y., McSweeney, P., Borthwick, K., Arrebola, M. and Watson, J. (2009) The Language Box: Re-imagining Teaching and Learning Repositories. In: *International Conference on Advanced Learning Technologies: Riga, Latvia: 14-18 July 2009*.

Dr David Millard is Senior Lecturer of Computer Science in the Learning Societies Lab at the University of Southampton. His website, publications and blog can be found at: <http://users.ecs.soton.ac.uk/dem>

Bologna ten years on

Is the UK falling behind in meeting the demands of the European Higher Education Area? Graeme Roberts shares his views.

This year sees the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Bologna Declaration by 29 countries, including the UK. This committed them to the adoption of a system of “easily readable and comparable degrees”, based on two (later three) cycles, the establishment of a system of credits, the promotion of mobility, European cooperation in quality assurance, and the European dimension in higher education. Every second year the ministers responsible for higher education in the Bologna countries (now 46) review progress and agree priorities for the next stage. This year’s meeting on 28-29 April at Leuven was particularly critical, since it looked back over a decade of Bologna-related reforms and set the agenda for the next 11 years. It found that progress towards the creation of a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) has been substantial though uneven and that full realisation of the Bologna objectives will require greater commitment and effort beyond 2010¹.

Scotland emerged particularly well from the 2009 stocktaking exercise, which examined progress in ten key areas related to the original action lines. Most of these, however, were already part of the Scottish higher education system (such as the three cycles) or were introduced as a result of separate developments (such as the creation of a national qualifications framework and a quality assurance system). The rest of the UK, however,

performed less well in regard to the levels of student and international participation in quality assurance and the implementation of the Diploma Supplement and European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS).

“There is still a very long way to go before a significant proportion of our students gains the knowledge, skills and attributes that a period of study or work experience in another country promotes”

There are other priority areas, not covered by the stocktaking exercise, where the UK performance is not quite so hot: in student mobility, for example, the “hallmark” of the EHEA. The Leuven meeting set a target for 2020 of at least 20% of European graduates to have been mobile during their studies and called for the creation of “mobility windows” in the structure of all degree programmes within each degree cycle. In 2006/07, 7235 UK students out of a total enrolment of about 1.8 million took part in the Erasmus study abroad scheme, a drop of more than 30% in a decade. True, numbers rose by 4% in 2007/8 (42% if one includes work placements) and there are, of course, other ways of gaining a mobility

experience, but there is still a very long way to go before a significant proportion of our students gains the knowledge, skills and attributes that a period of study or work experience in another country promotes. Moreover, as more of our European counterparts

create “mobility windows”, particularly in the new Masters qualifications (often taught in English) which in many countries remain the preferred entry route into higher level careers in the civil service, business and industry, or as they seize the opportunity to develop joint degree programmes with integrated mobility under the new and well-funded Erasmus-Mundus II scheme (which now includes joint doctoral programmes), we risk losing our competitive edge as the destination of choice for international students.

Graeme Roberts is a Senior Associate at the Higher Education Academy.

¹Information about the ministerial conference and copies of the documentation and final communiqué can be found at www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/conference

Listening to staff and students discuss internationalisation

Fiona Hyland reports on progress in the field of internationalisation and highlights the challenges still faced by staff and students.

Last year, as part of a project funded by the Higher Education Academy (HEA), I facilitated some focus groups on the internationalisation of UK higher education. In terms of getting participants to talk they were probably the easiest groups I have ever run; staff and students had a lot to say! Reflecting now on the issues participants raised, many were not "new", especially to those in academic circles. Many issues, such as problems with group work, had been described previously in the literature with suggestions for good practice. Why then were they still being raised as issues by staff and students in 2008 if solutions had already been presented? Before tackling this question, let me first outline the key findings from this project.

The HEA, seeing the need to support the internationalisation of higher education, funded a collaboration between the Subject Centres for Education (ESCalate) and Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies (LLAS) to investigate views of staff and students on the internationalisation of HE. The full report is available at: <http://escalate.ac.uk/4967>.

In 1999 the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defined internationalisation as the integration of an international or intercultural dimension into all of the activities of a university, including



the teaching, research and service functions (OECD 1999). Much has been written about the internationalisation of higher education (e.g. Knight 2008), and international student numbers have increased greatly in the UK with the Prime Minister's Initiative (PMI), originally launched in 1999 and expanded in 2006, being a major driving force for recruitment (Trahar 2007). There are, however, very few in-depth investigations of the interactions and experiences of students and academics (Brunner 2006), especially in the UK. Thus, the aims of the project were to explore perspectives of students and staff on the extent of internationalisation within their institutions, the effects of internationalisation on teaching and learning, and the challenges they faced as well as their success stories.

Fifteen focus groups were run between February and May 2008 in five locations (Birmingham, Bristol, Leicester, London and York) with students and staff from institutions around the UK and from a range of disciplines in HE (e.g. engineering, psychology, business, mathematics). Six groups were held with staff participants (N=31), five with international students (N=19) and four with home students (N=13). Verbatim transcripts were produced from recordings of the focus groups and qualitative content analysis was used to develop categories and themes that linked with the aims of the project. Five key themes emerged.

Supporting staff

While staff were positive about the internationalisation-related changes occurring within their institutions there were discussions about:

- differing ways of defining internationalisation and other similar terms ("the very word makes

me kind of shiver" said one staff participant)

- the "British" degree and what this meant in the global marketplace
- the PMI agenda and financial motivations for increasing international student numbers.

At the heart of these concerns was an expressed need to support and encourage all staff to enable high standards of teaching and learning.

Entry requirements for students

Concerns were expressed by some participants that the entry requirements of English language tests such as the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) were, in their view, not the best measures of future academic success and that some students were being admitted onto courses with insufficient English language skills to succeed.

Internationalising the curriculum

Staff described various ways in which their curriculum was being developed. Interestingly, engineers in one focus group felt the topics in their curriculum were not conducive to internationalisation. However, one engineer went on to say that instead they used appropriate pedagogy to allow their students to become engaged in the process of internationalisation, e.g. in organising group work. Some staff said that accreditation by professional organisations made adjustments to their curricula more difficult since these were often controlled by the professional body.

Teaching and learning

Lecturers described numerous strategies which they used to teach multicultural and mixed-ability classes. Many staff and students also

spoke about the personal challenges and personal learning they had experienced as a result of being in an international HE environment.

Enabling students to take advantage of their international learning environments

Many participants reported the following barriers to students getting to know one another: cultural cliques, language, cultural differences in socialising, and institutional and degree-course barriers. For instance, some international students expressed disappointment that they had not met many home students. One lecturer referred to this as the "ghettoisation" of international students: when courses were created to appeal to international students and therefore recruited very few home students, this potentially limited the international learning experiences of those who enrolled. (This is perhaps an unintentional barrier)

Internationalisation at Home (IaH) is the idea that most students are not mobile and so their intercultural competencies have to be developed locally at home (Crowther et al 2000). Home students were the most difficult group to recruit for the project; however, those who came were positive about their experiences. In the largest focus group of home students there was general agreement that they did not take advantage of their international learning environments. It was evident from the study that work needed to be done to encourage IaH and the development of cultural capability in all students.

"We don't do it actually (make the effort to get to know international students). I mean that's the problem... we find so many excuses, like 'I have to do this, and this, and this'"
(Home student)

“It was evident... that work needed to be done to encourage... the development of cultural capability in all students”

Conclusions

As this summary shows, internationalisation in UK HE presents a complicated picture. This perhaps indicates the answer to my initial question about why the same issues keep being raised by staff and students (both in the literature and in this study). These challenges are not the same for every person or every institution, and this project was only a snapshot to illustrate some of the current issues. Progress is being made across the UK but since internationalisation affects the whole of HE it is perhaps not surprising that attempts to enhance the student learning experience are taking time to embed; internationalisation is, after all, a “process” (Killick 2008, p2).

Working within a Subject Centre I have the impression that the speed of progress and change is increasing. I often hear of new initiatives within institutions and numerous events and conferences that all contribute to awareness-raising and debate about the process of internationalisation, as well as to changes on the ground.

At ESCalate we are now turning to look at ways of developing

intercultural competencies in staff and students and are holding a free event in September 2009 to explore this further (see <http://escalate.ac.uk/5749>). Additionally, as part of our exploration of Web 2.0 technology we are using the social bookmarking site Delicious to share our bookmarks (<http://delicious.com/escalate>). The internationalisation folder now has a considerable number of websites listed, to which readers may want to refer or even add - suggestions are very welcome!

The project team

Dr Fiona Hyland (ESCalate), Sheila Trahar (University of Bristol), Dr Julie Anderson (ESCalate) and Alison Dickens (LLAS). Further enquires can be directed to Fiona Hyland at fiona.hyland@bristol.ac.uk or Alison Dickens at a.m.dickens@soton.ac.uk

References

- Brunner, B.B. (2006) Student perceptions of diversity on a college campus: scratching the surface to find more. *Intercultural Education*. 17 (3), 311-317.
- Crowther, P., Joris, M., Otten, M., Nilsson, B., Teekens, H. and Wachter, B.

(2000) *Internationalisation at Home: a position paper*. Amsterdam: European Association for International Education.

Killick, D. (ed.) (2008) *Hands-on Internationalisation*. Leeds Metropolitan University.

Knight, J. (2008) Internationalization: A decade of changes and challenges. *International Higher Education* [online]. 50, 6-7. Available from: www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/soe/cihe/newsletter/Number50/p6_Knight.htm [13 May 2009].

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (1999) *Quality and Internationalisation in Higher Education*. Brussels: OECD.

Trahar, S. (2007) Teaching and Learning: the International Higher Education Landscape. *ESCalate Discussion Paper* [online]. Available from: <http://escalate.ac.uk/3559> [13 May 2009].

Dr Fiona Hyland is Research Assistant at ESCalate, the Subject Centre for Education hosted by the University of Bristol.

My career in languages

Helen Shaw explains how the skills she developed as a languages student inspired her to set up her own company



Learning a language has been the most daunting, exciting and rewarding thing I have done. It has opened doors and led to opportunities and experiences that have directly shaped the person I am today.

However, I would never have imagined that the path I chose at an early age would find me running a business. But more of that later..

I was blessed with an excellent memory, an aptitude for words and grammar and a crippling shyness as a teenager. Languages brought me out of myself in helping me to express myself not only in my native English, but also in French and German. I had an amazing French teacher at school, to whom I owe my love of languages today. She really inspired me, filled me with confidence, and her passion for her subject shone through.

Consequently, I took A-levels in English, French and German and then went on to read French and Criminology at Keele University, spending a very character-building year in Limoges, France. This is where my French was really tested and perfected. I made some great friends and really immersed myself in the French way of life. It is heartwarming how many people will open their doors to you for Sunday lunch or take you out for the day if you're far away from family and are making the effort to communicate with them in their own language.

My degree prepared me for hard work, a need for organisation, prioritising workloads, as well as the importance of relaxing and having interests outside of the work arena. As a member of the ERASMUS club, I was meeting and helping to organise events for foreign students at Keele.

“It’s nice to dispel the myth that languages are impossible to learn!”

My brief foray into the world of the Japanese language also saw me befriending Japanese students on their exchange visits to England. I learnt to look on life as a series of challenges, which has stood me in good stead throughout my career.

After graduating, I had no idea where my career was heading. I had always planned to do voluntary work abroad, so I spent some time in Cyprus as a volunteer on a Youth Information project, learning a little Greek while I was there. Living abroad on your own is absolutely the best experience for learning about yourself and becoming independent. I believe that everyone should spend some time in a different country and really live the culture and the language. It teaches tolerance, patience, communication skills and a general understanding of people and relationships. These skills have assisted greatly in my work and personal life.

Arriving back in England, I embarked

on a teacher training course to teach languages in secondary school. Ironically, I didn't feel that I had the right personality to go into business. I found that I enjoyed being in the classroom and was a good teacher; but the constraints of teaching to a syllabus and the lack of interest

in languages shown by the pupils (particularly when they became non-compulsory at GCSE) led me to explore other paths.

During this time, I decided to explore my German again, which I had left behind at A-level. Language teachers are often required to have two or even three languages, so in order to enhance my career potential, I studied with the Open University. This was a great experience, and I attended two summer schools in Germany. It really is true that once you have learnt one language, it is much easier to learn a second.

In 2004, with the government talking about compulsory languages in primary school and primary teachers having guaranteed planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time, I had a “light bulb” moment and the idea for my business was born.

HS Language Services was launched in August 2005, originally with the aim of taking languages to primary schools.

The business included covering PPA time in primary schools, one-to-one tuition and running adult classes in Lincolnshire.

Four years on, I employ a team of tutors who deliver tuition in languages as diverse as Mandarin, Dutch and Polish! Our range of services is as varied. We pride ourselves on providing flexible and bespoke language solutions to all. We currently work with local businesses, individuals and schools, with learners from age five to 75. Our international work includes translation services and online tuition.

What I love about my job is that every day is different. In fact, every hour is different. I can teach an adult one-to-one in the morning, a class of children in the afternoon, and go to a business networking event in the evening. Another day, I will be doing teacher training, teaching an adult language class and coordinating translations.

I have a fantastic team of tutors of different nationalities, and I love working with staff who have such diverse experiences and knowledge. I also meet a tremendous number of people and spread the word about languages on the way. Everyone has a story to tell about a time abroad when they really wish they spoke the language and it's nice to dispel the myth that languages are impossible to learn!

I find the primary school tuition the most rewarding. The children are so enthusiastic and love exploring different languages and cultures. We sing songs and play lots of games to reinforce the vocabulary and they can all join in. Hopefully, I will inspire in them the passion for language learning that my teacher gave to me.

Setting up and running my business has been very challenging, with many highs and lows. There is so much to learn and to organise – you can never know enough. A little like languages really: the learning never stops. Finance, marketing, human resources, website design and building are all things I have had to take on board.

On a personal level, I am an active member of our village twinning association and my language skills have enabled us to integrate well into our local community, as well as enjoying visits to stay with our French friends.

Soon HS Language Services will become a limited company, and the sky's the limit. Languages have taken me on a journey, and it doesn't look like it's about to stop at any point soon!

Helen Shaw is the owner/managing director of HS Language Services www.hslanguageservices.co.uk, based in Lincolnshire.



Meeting the current challenges: the humanities and employability, entrepreneurship and employer engagement

23 October 2009
Woburn House London

The Subject Centre and Routes into Languages are among the partners for this major conference.

This event will interest lecturers in all of our subject areas, paying attention to the contribution made to student employability by language content, linguistics and area studies as well as language skills.

To register go to:
www.llas.ac.uk/events/3226

“The ping-pong effect:
I motivate you and you
motivate me”



Something old and something new

Susana Lorenzo-Zamorano writes about enquiry-based learning (EBL) in languages and the construction of a more creative and integrated curriculum.

Enquiry-based learning (EBL) has always been an intrinsic part of science teaching and learning and, although it is not a completely new approach in the humanities, it is now starting to gain visibility here as well. This results from the progressive development of its theoretical framework and an ever-present demand for creativity in the humanities curricula across all sectors, not least in languages. Within the University of Manchester, the Centre for Excellence in Enquiry-Based Learning (CEEBL) has been supporting the introduction of EBL in several disciplines, including languages. With its support, and in partnership with LLAS, the School of Languages, Linguistics and Cultures (SLLC) at the University of Manchester hosted a conference in September 2008 on EBL in languages, with the broad aim of disseminating evidence of practice through this mode of learning and thus of enriching its theoretical background.

One of the many outcomes of this conference was the realisation by many of the participants that EBL was a label they could already apply to some of their own practices. However, the discussion also recognised the need to conceptualise EBL more accurately in contrast with other approaches such as problem-based or

task-based learning. So let's start by defining EBL.

EBL can be defined as a modality of learning driven by a process of research on the part of the student. The starting point is normally a scenario with a research topic in the form of a question which can vary widely in its nature and be more or less open ended. This approach is student centred as students themselves take an active role in identifying the issues at stake, possible resources and methods to resolve those issues together with solutions. Teachers act as facilitators of knowledge and strategies and they may provide students with a series of "triggers" and "milestones", in the form of deadlines and examples of each stage, in order to structure the learning process. Embedding EBL efficiently into the curriculum thus involves careful planning. What is more, creating the right learning conditions is central to giving students the confidence to be able to construct their own knowledge, which is why the importance of careful design of any EBL task should not be underestimated.

EBL very much promotes collaborative and interdisciplinary learning and, as a result of this, facilitates the acquisition of key

skills that will assist students in the professional world. Among these, critical and analytical skills must be fostered in our language curricula more strongly than they are at present. In other words, it is important that students are trained not to be the passive recipients of knowledge but to develop an enquiring mind that, at the same time, will contribute to motivating us, as educators, to a greater extent. This is what I call the "ping pong effect" (I motivate you and you motivate me).

What is known as problem-based learning (PBL) necessarily overlaps with EBL and can be considered as one of its many variants. As Norman Jackson has pointed out:

EBL is perhaps more open to divergent ways of thinking about problems, more open to exploring and understanding different ways of perceiving the world and less concerned with providing solutions to problems that do not have simple or unique solutions. (Jackson 2003, p1)

In this sense a typical example of EBL applied to Spanish language and culture would incorporate elements of PBL but would also cover other approaches, as the following example shows:

EBL SCENARIO:

Assignment title: “El problema energético de Chile: ¿industrializar la Patagonia?”
(The energy problem in Chile: to industrialise or not to industrialise the Patagonia?)

Chile is experiencing a severe energy crisis because of drought, a sharp reduction in natural gas imports from Argentina and the global escalation in oil prices. *Hidroaysén*, proposed by Endesa Chile, is a project to build five giant dams in Chilean Patagonia, a pair on each of the region’s two biggest rivers, the Baker and the Pascua. The dams would damage Patagonia, one of the Earth’s wildest and most beautiful places, and they would also have an impact on its people, including its indigenous communities.

Chile’s National Environmental Commission is yet to approve an environmental impact study carried out by the project’s authorities, and many other groups are working to ensure that it is not approved.

YOUR ROLE: Carry out a study that incorporates an economic, environmental, social and technological analysis from various perspectives. In a final simulation, which will consist of a meeting with all the people concerned, you must negotiate and suggest realistic solutions to the problem and reach an agreement.

Each student adopts a different role and thus takes a different perspective. On the other hand, a typical example of a PBL activity would have a more concrete solution and might be phrased like this:

PBL SCENARIO:

A friend of mine was doing some shopping at a department store in Manchester when, all of a sudden, she heard two children speaking some kind of familiar language. This language was very similar to old Castilian and the two boys were wearing Jewish skullcaps or *kippot*.

What language were they speaking and where does this language come from? What do you know about the history of this language?

The above example encourages research on the part of the student on the Sephardic Jews that were expelled from Spain in 1492, and the survival of the language they spoke, i.e. Judeo-Spanish or Sephardi.

Common EBL tasks in language teaching and learning include translation tasks, feedback interpretation on the part of the student, or reading for critical comprehension, something which involves looking through the text for context clues on ideas, aims and approach, including iconic, syntactic, grammatical, lexical and cultural clues. However, the potential of EBL for language learning has not been fully explored and there is now a demand for more creative and imaginative approaches. More specifically, there is a need to create more integrated proposals in which language and culture are more in balance and the cultural dimension of language is clearly exposed. According to Byram, “empirical research has shown that the educational potential of language-and-culture teaching is not being fulfilled” (Byram & Morgan 1994, p3). EBL brings us the opportunity not only to do this but to incorporate essential cross-curricular topics that have to do with global education. It thus contributes

to promoting students’ awareness of global issues including fair trade, moral responsibility, economic solidarity, the impact of globalisation on indigenous peoples, etc. This linkage to real life is an important motivational factor that takes the student beyond the target language into a wider realm where they definitely have a role to fulfil.

Finally, as a language teacher educated in a teacher-centred context, I find that language teaching can always benefit from more of the inquisitiveness that content courses here in the UK have traditionally used. If applied appropriately, EBL encourages intellectual curiosity and independent learning, develops valuable transferable skills and increases motivation. Additionally, EBL involves a personalised learning approach, nowadays so strongly encouraged by the government and extremely valuable within the mixed-ability classes which are so common in tertiary language teaching.

Although language learning and teaching is not new to EBL, there is clearly a need to devise more creative and varied approaches that can maximise the full potential of this method. In fact, at the moment we are merely touching the tip of the iceberg.

References

- Byram, M. and Morgan, C. (1994) *Teaching-and-Learning Language-and-Culture*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd.
- Jackson, N. (2003) Learning Based on the Process of Enquiry [online]. LTSN Generic Centre. Available from: www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/resources/resourcedatabase/id328_a_personal_perspective_on_enquiry_based_learning.rtf [27 April 2009]
- Further information
 Centre for Excellence in Enquiry-Based Learning [online]. University of Manchester: www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/ceeb/ [27 April 2009]
- Kahn, P and O’Rourke, K. (2005) *Understanding Enquiry-Based Learning* [online]. University of Manchester. Available from: www.aishe.org/readings/2005-2/chapter1.pdf [27 April 2009]
- Robertson A. (ed) (2008) *Practice and Evidence of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* [online]. 3 (1) (special edition on EBL). Available from: www.pestlthe.org.uk [27 April 2009]

Dr Susana Lorenzo-Zamorano is a Senior Language Tutor in Spanish Studies at the University of Manchester.

Using new technologies on content modules in modern languages

Following on from his presentation at the LLAS e-Learning conference, Antonio Martínez-Arboleda demonstrates how to use new technologies to engage with a broader base of students.

The increased availability of pedagogically attractive new technologies is one of the strongest driving forces of change in learning and teaching in higher education. There are no data available as to the levels of adoption of these technologies in modern languages and cultures, but many practitioners who are committed to e-learning have the impression that content modules, covering subjects such as French literature or German society, do not appear to be benefiting sufficiently from this educational revolution.

Whether we agree with this negative opinion or not, in my view there are serious limitations to the potential for success of social e-learning tools such as wikis, discussion boards, podcasting or videoconferencing in our existing content modules. This is due to the fact that, in general, student interaction is not sufficiently valued as a component of the learning process. In the perception of the vast majority of our students, all they need to do in order to learn and obtain the best grades is to concentrate on their readings and lectures, to try to get some preliminary guidance on their essays from their tutor and to organise their time well.

The need for a methodological transformation in content modules

Interestingly, course evaluation

questionnaires do not show any signs of student dissatisfaction with the above state of affairs in content modules. In general, our students have a high regard for the work that we do and for their learning experiences.

However, in addition to all the pedagogical and practical arguments put forward by a wealth of studies and papers produced in the last 15 years supporting the case for social learning and e-learning, there is one very powerful reason why we should move forward methodologically: it remains to be seen whether modern languages and area studies are prepared to widen our appeal to a broader base of students. Our situation is paradoxical: more people are expected to take up university education nowadays but, sadly, modern languages in secondary education are in crisis.

Social e-learning

At the 2009 e-Learning Symposium, organised by LLAS and held in Southampton, I presented a methodological proposal for an existing literature module, "Innovation and experimentation in 20th century Portuguese literature", which is taught in my department by one of my colleagues (Martínez-Arboleda 2009). In my presentation, I discussed the use of online assessment methods in content modules, focusing in particular on how assessed e-debates, role-plays and other tasks can enhance students'

learning experience. I also advocated that increasing motivation, enhancing the student learning experience, raising academic standards, improving employability and attracting more students are all possible if we socialise the student learning experience and if we attach recognition to student work throughout the learning process.

The methodology shown in my proposal can be applied to almost any existing arts module. One of its virtues is that it enhances the reading of primary and secondary sources as well as writing essays by making these activities part of a teacher-supported social experience. Another advantage is that throughout the course, students can acquire skills such as leading, negotiating or communicating tactfully but effectively better than in a traditional learning situation.

Crucially, despite the increased control exercised by the tutor in some aspects of the module, students acquire in turn greater control of key aspects of their learning, since they assume some of the responsibilities that tutors usually hold in modules taught following a more traditional methodology.

As this proposal has a very strong socio-constructivist flavour, there are almost no limitations to the successful introduction of any kind of e-learning tools: in the presentation I mainly concentrated on students communicating through discussion boards, but wikis and podcasts would

also be feasible.

Although the methodology proposed could work perfectly well with no e-tools, the synergies between technology and methodology are extremely powerful because student communication and interaction are not optional. For instance, it is widely recognised that online asynchronous communication tools encourage reflective learning seminars, as students have time to read other students' contributions and think through their

feedback to be expected from the tutor.

These kinds of activities have been tested in the last two academic years in my module on Spanish politics and the results are encouraging: in a recent survey students said, overwhelmingly, that they are a good way to learn, that assessed discussion boards are enjoyable, and that they feed well into the existing structure of the module, where lectures, reading and essays, alongside other forms of

politics module in 2001, the levels and the quality of student participation were much lower. This created a situation in which it was not possible to be positive and thorough with the students without lowering the standards.

Authenticity

Authenticity is another element that can improve motivation and, definitively, employability. Students should have the opportunity to perform other roles when they learn, apart from the role of trainee-academic, which is the one that all of them are unknowingly given when they write an essay. They also need to explore non-academic situations and non-academic writing genres, making use of the wealth of situations that life outside universities can provide for us.

For instance, in one of the role-plays in my Spanish politics module, some students take the role of representatives of different regional governments and some others take the role of representatives of the Spanish central government. As they negotiate the allocation of an emergency financial package for all the regions, they learn about their socio-economic and political reality.

Competitive role-plays are not the only type of authentic task that I have explored. Collaborative assignments can also be very useful. In one of the discussion boards for my politics module, students are given the role of advisers and have to elaborate a report on a proposed BBC documentary series on national identity in Spain. They have to negotiate, among other things, the names of personalities that would have to be interviewed, the spirit of the series, and its structure. In this activity the use of academic sources is as necessary as in an essay. The demands in terms of critical and

“Practitioners should have the option to dedicate time to experiment with new methodology and technology”

responses. The practicalities and benefits of other social e-learning tools that could work well in my proposal can be appreciated in a recent study on the effective use of social software in further and higher education in the UK funded by the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) (Minocha 2009).

One step at a time: assessed discussion boards

For those colleagues who want to try simple but effective e-learning social tools in their content modules there are three possibilities: online seminars, online role-plays and online collaborative assignments, all of them through assessed online discussion boards. The latter two require an extra effort in terms of task design, whereas the online seminars are inspired by traditional classroom seminars and do not require so much pedagogical effort. In any of the three cases it is fundamental to set clear guidelines as to word limit and deadlines for contributions as well as the type of

written production, play a crucial role. Regarding the question of whether these online activities should be assessed or not, the results of my survey are not surprising: the vast majority of students declared that they worked as hard as they did in their online discussion boards because they were going to be given a mark that counted towards the final mark for the module (15% of the total).

Many of the students said in the questionnaires that they would have contributed to the online discussion boards even if the activity had not been assessed, which proves that the activities were interesting. However, they also confessed that they would not have committed themselves as much as they did. In my experience, the quality of the student learning experience and the levels of professional satisfaction of tutors are higher when students are fully committed. If students take things seriously, tutors can give good marks. When I first introduced non-assessed online discussion rooms in my Spanish

Introducing *ab initio* students to literature: the Scottish Gaelic experience

Sheila Kidd outlines an integrated approach to the teaching of Gaelic that introduces *ab initio* students to the language through the medium of songs and short stories.

As a lecturer involved in teaching both language and literature to *ab initio* students of Scottish Gaelic, I find myself, along with colleagues, regularly revisiting the question of how best to introduce this cohort to literature. The way we currently approach this is informed by a number of factors, such as: progression to more advanced study of the language; integration with native- and fluent-speakers of Gaelic in third and fourth year; and indeed sometimes issues as basic as availability of texts. In common with the Universities of Aberdeen and Edinburgh, Glasgow's cohort of first year students studying Gaelic includes the full range of language ability, from complete beginners through to those who have a Learners' Higher, semi-native speakers, and fully fluent native speakers. Some students have received primary, and part of their secondary, education through the medium of Gaelic, and even within this cohort there are varying degrees of language competence. All these levels of fluency have to be accommodated in our degree programmes, and these

universities'
Celtic

departments have developed their own strategies for dealing with this.

At Glasgow we offer three separate level one courses: one for *ab initio* students; one for those with a Learners' Higher in which we conduct some of our teaching through Gaelic; and one for fluent speakers where all teaching is through the medium of Gaelic. By second year these become two streams, with those who were *ab initio* students in first year in one stream and those who came in with a Higher Gaelic, whether learners or fluent speakers, in the other cohort and being taught entirely through the medium of Gaelic. The *ab initio* students who progress to second year are gradually introduced to being taught through the medium of Gaelic, with increasing emphasis on this as the year goes on. For those who continue to third and fourth year in the Gaelic degree programme, and currently without the benefit of the year abroad which is available to students of many other modern languages, the challenge is to adapt to the Gaelic medium of teaching and assessment for most of their classes.

Given the route which these students follow, and the need to support their language learning at every possible

opportunity, we consider it vital that *ab initio* students' exposure to Gaelic literature is integrated into their language learning. While what I am saying is based on my experience of teaching at the University of Glasgow, much of this holds true for the University of Edinburgh as well. The main focus of the first year *ab initio* courses is language teaching, and to that end there is no specific literature element at all in the first half of the year. We do, however, consciously make regular use of literature, in the shape of songs, to reinforce language teaching. Very often it is music and song which have drawn students to study Gaelic in the first place, and so using songs not only reminds them of why they chose to study Gaelic (and brings welcome relief from relentless grammar), but the right songs can in themselves reinforce the grammar they are learning. The songs we use at this stage are well-known, and some students may in fact be familiar with them before joining the course; they tend to be repetitive and the repetitive elements reinforce some of the basic points of grammar being covered in the early stages of the course. The song *Brochan lom* (Bare Porridge), with its repetition of "*Brochan lom, tana, lom, brochan lom is sùghain*", emphasises, with some laughter, the common noun-adjective word order in Gaelic, while *Tha bean agam* (I have a wife) reinforces, again with repetition, both verb-subject word order and the structure used to



express “to have”.

In the second semester the *ab initio* courses at both Glasgow and Edinburgh devote one hour a week to reading texts. At Glasgow we use a collection of graded texts produced in-house; Edinburgh currently uses a recently-published short novel. This reading hour is as much about reinforcing and introducing grammar and vocabulary as it is about reading literature, and we try to strike a balance by discussing texts after ensuring that students understand what they have read. On a practical level, there is little scope for the students to study English translations instead of the original versions as Gaelic stories and novels are rarely translated into English; poetry, on the other hand, is available in English translation more often than not. The lack of a parallel translation to fall back on undoubtedly can cause some students a degree of anxiety, but we ensure that they are provided with an extensive glossary for each text and explanation of points of grammar and idiom as they arise.

The novel used at Edinburgh, Catriona Lexy Chaimbeul's *Samhraidhean Diomhair* (2009), may on the face of it seem a rather daunting first text, being a novel, but not only is the book short – 172 pages – it also contains a fair amount of English in it, making it an ideal first novel for *ab initio* students. In class they read and translate some sections of the novel, and outside class, with the support of the glossary, students read the other parts and then have an opportunity to discuss problems with comprehension in the next class. At Glasgow our approach is similar; but we study a range of texts, from traditional tales and short stories to poetry. Texts are translated and discussed in class while also ensuring that there are no unresolved difficulties with what has been read

by students outside of class. Tales from oral tradition are read early in the semester. By their nature, being for the consumption of listeners, they have a degree of repetitiveness which helps to reinforce structures, but at the same time they allow us to discuss aspects of oral narrative. The short stories read in the second half of the semester are generally ones by Iain Mac a' Ghobhainn (Iain

“Very often it is music and song which have drawn students to study Gaelic in the first place”

Crichton Smith). There are a number of reasons for choosing to study his writing beyond their literary value. Of all modern Gaelic writers his is the least verbose style; his writing is notable for its simplicity and clarity of language – although not necessarily simplicity and clarity of meaning – and is free from strong dialectal features. In addition, Mac a' Ghobhainn was not only a prolific writer in Gaelic, but also published short stories, novels and poetry in English, so he is a writer with whom some of our students are already familiar. Usefully in this context, there are a number of his stories where similar versions, albeit not translations, exist in both Gaelic and English. All these factors make him a relatively accessible writer for *ab initio* students. We do include some discussion of the literary side of these texts, but the main focus of these classes, quite deliberately, is ensuring that students understand what they are reading, and that grammar and vocabulary are reinforced.

Reading Iain Mac a' Ghobhainn's short stories in first year at Glasgow is also intended to ease the transition for those proceeding to level two, as we then study one, and sometimes two, of his novels in second year.

Again, we provide notes to help with potential language problems and vocabulary to help with the discussion of the novels in class. Students are required to write an essay on Mac a' Ghobhainn, their first essay in Gaelic about literature. They are invited to submit a draft version of their essay so we can highlight repeated mistakes with grammar and vocabulary; they then incorporate

these corrections into the final version, thus we provide formative as well as summative assessment. Our approach to teaching literature to our *ab initio* students is, therefore, to integrate it to a great degree into the teaching of language so that it supports and reinforces students' language learning. This is informed by the fact that after two years students will be taught and examined entirely through the medium of Gaelic alongside native speakers, without the benefits of a “year abroad” to hone their language skills. Therefore we perhaps place more emphasis on the linguistic aspects of literary texts than may otherwise be the case.

The Gaelic literary landscape has changed rapidly in very recent years. With the creation of a new publishing scheme, *Ùr-Sgeul*, some 15 new novels have appeared in print in the last six years, more than were published in the entire 20th century. The challenge for us now will be to respond to this and to ensure that we adapt our teaching of literature accordingly.

Dr Sheila Kidd is a Lecturer in Scottish Gaelic at the University of Glasgow.

Podcasting@Portsmouth

As a follow-up to their successful LLAS-funded “workshops to go”, Rose Clark and John Wrigglesworth provide some practical examples of using podcasting to enhance teaching and learning.

Podcasting gets a mention at the end of almost every media item these days. Some of you will have downloaded or subscribed to a podcast, perhaps from a favourite BBC programme or a noted newspaper commentator. As you may have seen, the internet is peppered with audio and video clips: from those made by parish councillors to publicise the village fête to academics at major universities supplementing their students' learning.

You may have wondered about using a podcast for your own educational purposes. But if you have not got round to actually making your own podcast or feel that it might not be for you, then read on.

Podcasting has been made possible by bringing together three ideas: affordable video and audio recording software; broadcasting over the internet; and social networking sites (in education, Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs)). This bundle of technology started to work in concert three or four years ago.

In 2007 we applied for LLAS “workshop to go” funding to run two day-long events on making and using podcasts. Our initial preparation led us to the literature on software, broadcasting and educational techniques related to podcasts. But we also started to research what others had experienced and how they described the transition from entertainment to educational uses of podcasts. Although social networking tools such as podcasts are relatively

new, there was still a small but developing literature about making and using them for higher education teaching purposes.

However, as with many innovations, educators have a tendency to “do as they did before” and not fully exploit the possibilities of the new technology. This conservative inclination can lead some educators to feel replaced rather than empowered by computers and the internet. Thus much of the early literature focused on how a podcast could replace a lecture along with the attendant concern about whether students would continue to attend classroom-based lectures.

Fortunately, not everyone was sceptical. The Impala Project run from Leicester University (Salmon and Edirisingha 2008) contributed to the current debate and has shifted the emphasis away from lengthy podcasts to those which last three to five minutes – perfect for the modern media-savvy audience. But despite this refreshing change, Impala still kept the focus on overcoming the technical aspects of making a podcast.

It was at this juncture that the 6Ps Podcasting@Portsmouth model started to emerge.

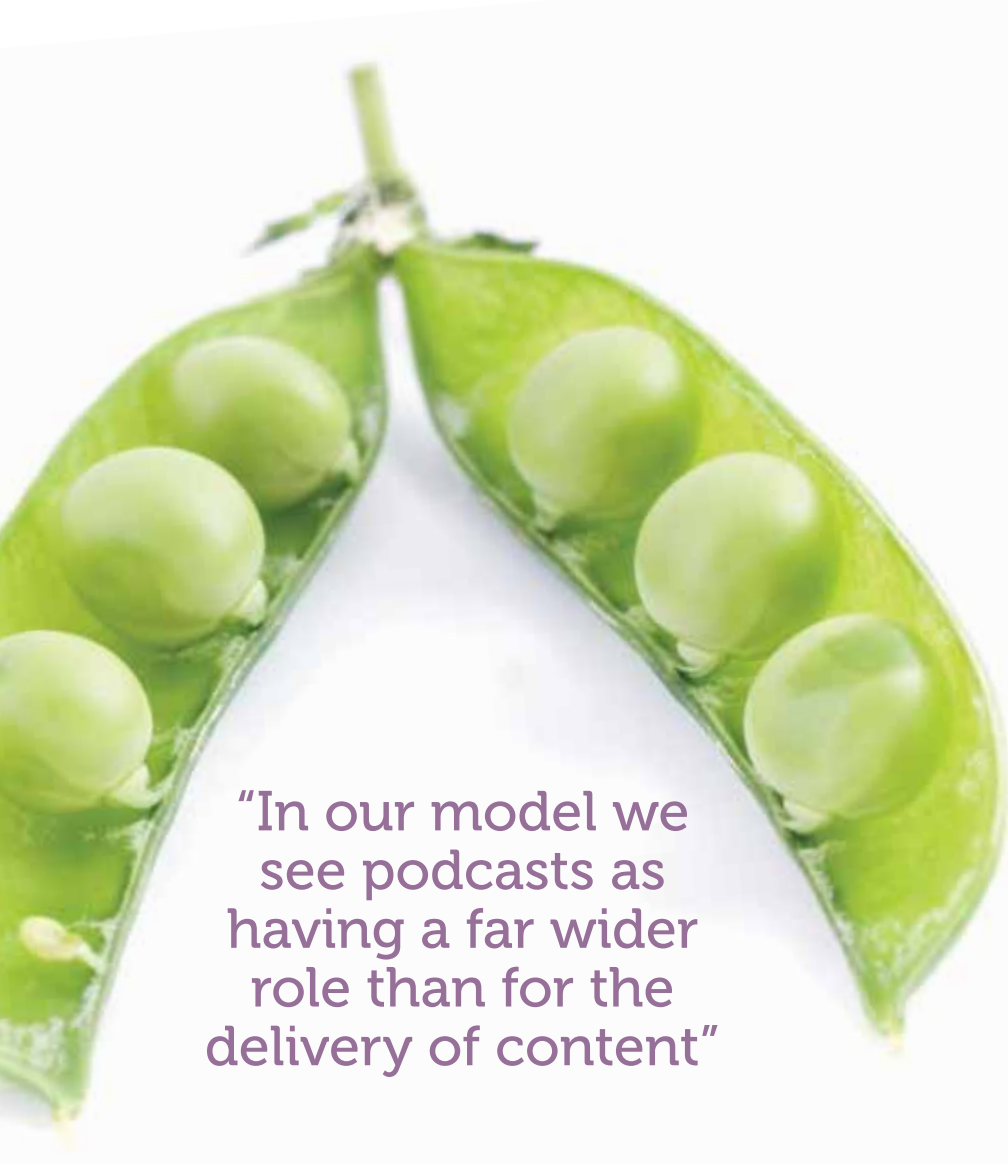
Our own experience and initial findings from a research project involving data obtained from interviewing other members of staff who had already made podcasts, suggested that educational podcasts challenged lecturers in ways that other research had not captured. Those

members of staff that we interviewed were extremely competent users of ICT in the delivery of their courses. But they were not entirely comfortable with how they might come across in this new environment. They were concerned that they did not have the right broadcasting skills to realise their expectations of how they should sound in the podcast. Educational podcasting was not just a matter of learning how to use the software, plugging in a microphone, and recording your ideas.

The 6Ps model has as its constituent parts: purpose, pedagogy, planning, participation, positioning and production. These are represented diagrammatically in Figure 1 (on page 36). As you can see from the figure, participation is embedded into pedagogy and positioning is part of planning. The model is both dynamic and interactive in the sense that decisions made in one aspect of the model impact the other parts.

As we have already mentioned, the most obvious choice of purpose for a lecturer is probably to replace existing content. But in our model we see podcasts as having a far wider role than for the delivery of content. Examples of purpose might be related to time management, study skills, and issues relating to supporting widening participation.

The second P, pedagogy, draws on the growing body of research on e-pedagogy. Lecturers' understanding of what computers can and cannot



“In our model we see podcasts as having a far wider role than for the delivery of content”

do range from the dismissive (a fad) to the wondrous (they can read and extract meaning from student essays more reliably than us). What is clear is that pedagogical decisions relating to classroom-based courses will have to be re-examined in light of technology, including podcasts and other social networking tools, as it takes on a more and more prominent position in the HE sector.

The next P in our model is participation. As part of pedagogy, it is defined as the extent to which the podcast allows for communication between its author(s) and its audience(s). As we are based within the School of Languages and Area Studies, interactivity is an important factor in encouraging language proficiency and cultural understanding. Participation can be achieved by embedding a lecturer-made podcast

into a wiki, blog or other discussion forum and accompanying it with a pedagogical task which requires a response from those who listen to the podcast.

The challenge for HE staff is to provide an incentive for students to listen to their podcasts. Under the umbrella of participation, we have encouraged student-created podcasts. These include student-generated content designed for a specific and known audience. For example, students returning from their year abroad can offer advice in a podcast to those who are considering their placements. In addition, podcasts can and have been used to assess oral proficiency. A number of student-generated podcast projects have appeared in the literature and they have all mentioned positive student feedback. In an age where forms of communication

become diverse, it seems expedient for language graduates to be able to present themselves effectively in this new medium.

The next P is positioning, which is essentially about how one comes across either in audio format or in a multimedia (video) clip. This is perhaps the aspect of podcasting which challenges lecturers the most. For example, one of our interviewees was used to tutorials and group discussions. But becoming a podcaster removed him from his lecture and seminar room environment and placed him staring down the barrel of a microphone. With the loss of a familiar audience and the non-verbal cues he was used to, he found himself talking to “no one in particular” and feeling baffled and tongue-tied. His topical examples became stale. And even the jokes that he used as ice-breakers or cheerful examples sounded inappropriate. Finally, the fact that podcasts are stored and archived meant that he feared his words might come back to haunt him or be cut into embarrassing mash-ups.

For several of the staff we interviewed the newness of podcasting had made them more cautious about what they said and more self-conscious about how they sounded. Who are our models in education? If we aspire to the same quality as BBC broadcasting, then we need to look to their media techniques for some help.

A first step in getting over podcasting nerves is to understand your role. As a lecturer you write the script, maybe share it with colleagues, and edit it, first for content and then for a script that works well spoken aloud. A spoken script works best when it is formatted into bite-sized chunks of language that you can get your teeth around and the listener can easily understand.

This is the part of the model we have called planning and it involves

carefully organising a script so that the podcast achieves its purpose efficiently. For those making a podcast for the first time, a good starting point may be actually writing down what you want to say as a script. Of course, the script needs to be read out. A common mistake is to fail to take account of the differences between written and spoken language. Podcasts do not respect full stops and capital letters. They are organised through chunking language into tone groups in order to sound natural. Broadcasters – and those making effective podcasts – speak in small “chunks” where each chunk is a new idea.

Not everyone needs to write an actual script. There are some who are able to use a series of bullet points or work more freely from cue cards. Whichever method is chosen, the script becomes a reusable learning object which, if saved, can be modified and updated for subsequent recordings. The podcast can then easily be re-recorded for contemporary cohorts of students and to take into account current

developments in the field.

During the planning stage, the process of making the podcast can be broken down into a variety of different roles. The advantage of doing this is that any positioning concerns can be overcome by bringing in someone else to actually be the voice on the podcast. The lecturer does not need to be the presenter. But at the same time, the lecturer has full control over the content as (s)he has maintained control over the editing and scriptwriting. One of our interviewees, for example, found a student willing to present his material and the student even lightened up the script with a few jokes and student-friendly asides.

The final P in our model concerns production. This is the technical aspect of the model. Again, other colleagues or students with more expertise in this area can be seconded. An audio podcast can be enhanced with Flash graphics, by using avatars, or by adding copyright-free music. A series of podcasts can be attached to a website or social space and can be regularly distributed via RSS feeds to a student's

PC or MP3 player. They can be added to social spaces such as blogs which incorporate software to show how many visitors have been to the site.

In thinking about production, the key thing for us was that technical issues should not dominate educators' thinking about podcasting. Just as important is the process of becoming a podcaster and the issues and challenges that lecturers are facing in moving to the multi-media world.

We may not all be charismatic presenters ripe for the age of 24-hour education. But we all have a role to play in the new pedagogical world. And our students just might learn something from us in that world.

Reference

Salmon, G. and Edirisingha, P. (2008) *Podcasting for Learning in Universities*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Rose Clark and John Wrigglesworth are Senior Lecturers in the School of Languages and Area Studies at the University of Portsmouth.

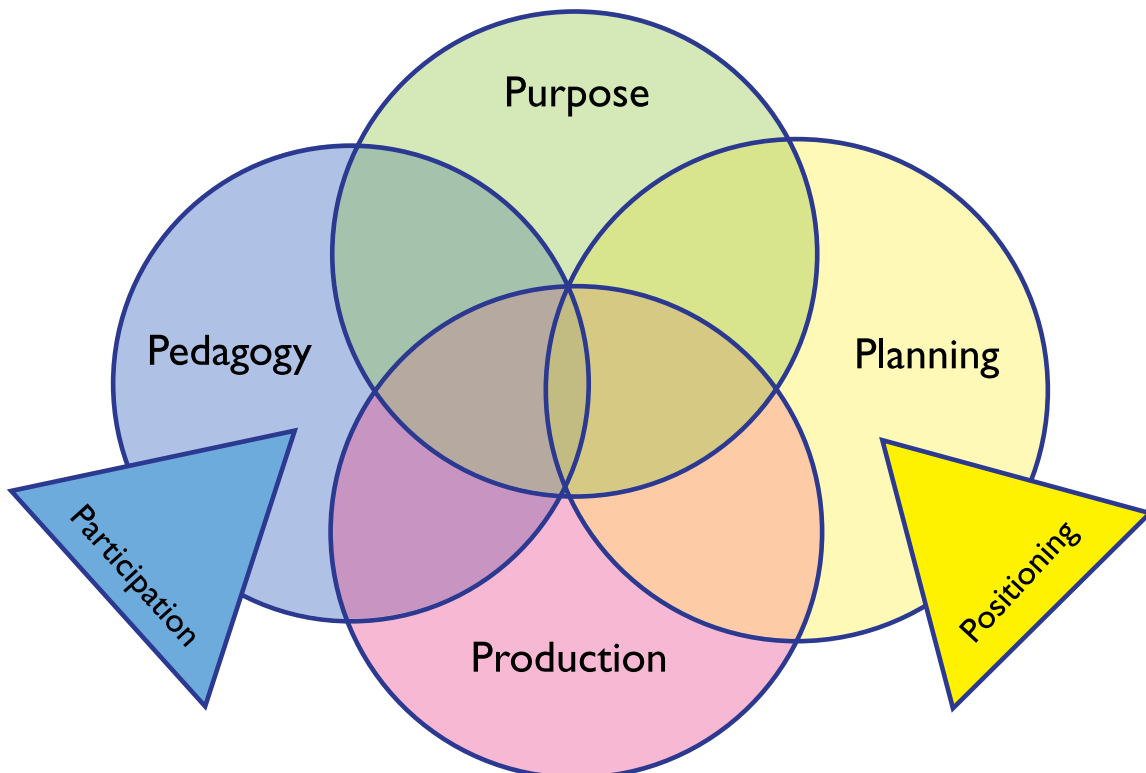


Figure 1: The 6Ps model of podcasting



Début

The Undergraduate Journal of Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies

Début is a new online journal aimed at showcasing scholarship and research carried out by undergraduate students. The first issue will be published in 2010.

Submissions

Début welcomes scholarly papers written by undergraduate students in languages, linguistics and area studies. Each paper is reviewed by two academics or postgraduate students with expertise in the subject of your paper. Papers could be based on dissertations, year abroad projects, class projects or your own independent research.

www.llas.ac.uk/debut

From the River Tyne to Lake Titicaca

The year's LLAS student essay competition posed the question: How have you been inspired by studying languages, linguistics or area studies at university? The winning entry was written by Laura Gent, a fourth year modern languages student at Newcastle University.

What could be more inspiring than three years in the fantastic city of Newcastle upon Tyne and one life-changing year in the Peruvian Andes?

When I first made my decision to study French and Spanish, I envisaged hours of dull lessons stuck in a drab lecture theatre listening to a boring old professor drone on about the subjunctive and other complicated tenses. I certainly didn't imagine learning about indigenous South American tribes in the deepest darkest depths of the Amazon, or how to say "I like cake" in a Native American language. When I arrive at Newcastle University, I find myself sitting in a lecture room (not drab but very modern and hi-tech), listening (actually paying attention) to the professor, who is very interesting, young and a real Peruvian, as she flicks through her PowerPoint presentation on youth cultures in Latin America. The images are of smiling, cheerfully-dressed groups of children, rosy cheeked and posing with their llamas, deep in the Andes, lush and green in the background. Fast-forward two years, and I'm there in the picture with these children, sharing their experiences and stroking their llamas. I'm dressed in the bright traditional Peruvian dress and I'm laughing. I'm speaking Spanish, and

I'm having the time of my life.

During the two years I spent in Newcastle learning about South American customs, language and lifestyles, and writing essays on the history, culture and geography of Latin American countries, I was overwhelmed by the enthusiasm of the professors and their love for the subjects they taught. They were genuinely interested in the topic, and had an enthusiasm which in turn engaged the students, especially me. I spent hours in the library, reading books that transported me to the tribes of the Amazon jungle, to the shores of Lake Titicaca, or to the traditional carnivals and Inca ruins of the Andes, and I became more and more fascinated and determined to go there in person. I watched endless films and documentaries and I listened to panpipe music over and over again. I also chatted to staff in the Spanish department at the University, which was largely composed of very friendly and enthusiastic South American lecturers. When it came to choosing a place to go on my year abroad, one country which stood out for me was definitely Peru. With the bright colours, the glorious wonder of Machu Picchu and, of course, the best Spanish in South America, it was an obvious choice for me.

To highlight just how inspired I was, I have included below an email I sent to one of my professors during my year abroad:

-----Original Message-----
From: Laura Gent
Subject: Hello!

I just thought I would let you know that I am having a wonderful time in Peru on my year abroad. I was one of your students for the Latin America module last year and I was so fascinated by the culture that I felt I just had to come here. I am living with a Peruvian family in the village of Pisac in the Sacred Valley and having been here for two months now teaching English, I really don't want to leave in a month's time! I have witnessed traditional dancing at the carnivals, just like we read about last year, and it's just incredible seeing it first hand!

I just want to thank you for inspiring me to come here!

Hope all is well in Newcastle.
Best Wishes,
Laura Gent



My unforgettable experience in Peru was largely down to the fact I could speak Spanish, so I could communicate well with the local population. Thanks to my extensive knowledge of cultures and customs in the Andes through my first and second year studies, I was very interested in all elements of their lifestyle, which really helped me enjoy my time there.

I wanted to impart some of my enthusiasm to others, so I volunteered with a company teaching English to Peruvian teachers in association with the Ministry of Education in Cuzco. I thoroughly enjoyed language teaching, and thanks to the excellent tuition I received at Newcastle University, I felt I could really convey the importance of learning a language, using methods I was familiar with from university language classes. Although I didn't have access to the vast amount of technology available in our language labs, I made sure the students were always engaged and motivated in class, and I even learned some English grammar too!

As part of my third-year language study, I had to complete an "intercalary project" on a subject of my choice, but in the language of the country where I was spending my year abroad. While in Peru, with a wealth of resources at

my fingertips, I decided to research secondary education in the Peruvian Andes. I conducted various interviews with Peruvian education ministers and local Peruvian teachers and children, gathering valuable information which would contribute significantly to my project. I read through stacks of documents, becoming so involved in the topic that I was almost tempted to stay there and attempt to tackle the Peruvian education system myself single-handedly.

Sitting among a group of Andean children in the middle of a maize field discussing school and their favourite teachers, it seemed bizarre that all this was going to contribute to my final degree. After completing the project and sending it back to someone in the Modern Languages office back in "The Toon", I suddenly realised that this is what I wanted to do as a career. This time last year I was in the Andes, and this time next year I hope to be in that very same place, with a view to working for a charitable organisation promoting education and improving the school system. I would never have even dreamed of doing this if it hadn't been for Newcastle University's School of Modern Languages, which allowed me to undertake such a diverse and life-changing year abroad.



“I’m speaking Spanish, and I’m having the time of my life”



Listening in the Language Classroom

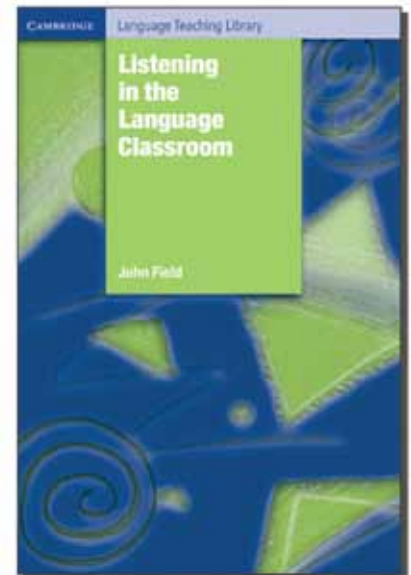
Review by Sarah Rule

The rationale behind this book is that Field feels listening is the most neglected of the four language skills in the language classroom. He claims the current emphasis on assessing listening skills through comprehension-type exercises is both limited and mistaken because teachers do not give any thought to the psychological processes involved in listening. The book is based mainly on his experience in the EFL world, but Field believes it is also appropriate for modern foreign language (MFL) teachers (p4). However, MFL tutors at university level would probably disagree with his claim that listening tasks at this level are based solely on comprehension exercises. The book is primarily a methodology book for teaching listening, and the methodology is informed by the two fundamental psychological processes involved in listening: decoding and meaning-building. Field wants listening to be treated as a form of expertise (p33) and learners to be trained in the different listening skills. His writing is informed by his knowledge of the psychological processes behind listening (Field 2003 and 2004) and the differences between first language (L1) processing and second language (L2) processing (Field 2008). He suggests that teachers would benefit from access to the discussion on listening theory that takes place in academic journals. Throughout the book useful exercises and sample lessons are provided to help the teacher train the learner in the relevant skills.

Initially, Field suggests ways in which the current methodology can be adapted to make it more viable to the learner. In his view it is more appropriate to base programmes on the behaviour of expert listeners (adult L1 listeners), and he argues that current listening comprehension exercises do not match listening outside of the classroom, where there are greater demands for flexibility and a great range of listening types, and where far more participation is required from the listener.

His main emphasis throughout the book lies in understanding the processes of listening in L1 and training listeners to apply these processes in L2 listening. Learners need to learn how to decode the stream of sound in the L2, a process they cannot or do not transfer from their L1 listening skills and processes. In L1 listeners decode automatically and learners need to be trained to decode automatically in L2 listening. In the other process, meaning-building, learners can draw upon processes already employed in the L1 but Field suggests that L2 learners do not automatically do this, as decoding is not automatic. So Field places great emphasis on L2 learners practising to gain automaticity in decoding (p119).

Field goes on to present psycholinguistic information about how decoding works based on research carried out on phonological and lexical segmentation. There is a need to reduce the challenges for the L2 listener by continually providing concrete examples. Phoneme and



John Field
Cambridge University Press
ISBN 978-0521-68570-2

word recognition are major sources of concern for low-level L2 learners. There is also the continual problem of variability within the input for all levels of L2 learner. Again Field suggests focused small-scale practice to deal with these issues.

In discussing the second main process in listening, meaning-building, Field claims that meaning-related processes in L1 are not necessarily transferred to building meaning in L2 listening, as decoding in L2 requires so much effort and clogs up the working memory (p213). Again Field suggests systematic training and exercises that ensure the well-practised L1 processes are applied to L2 listening. Finally he proposes that alongside an incremental approach to building skills, the learner has to learn to cope with

demands outside the classroom and although this is not a new approach, Field strongly advocates the use of authentic texts. Additionally he claims that the learners need to be guided in using compensatory strategies when communication breaks down. These skills are distinctive to the processes “which make up the expertise of the skilled and experienced listener” (p287).

As this is a book for teachers, Field attempts to simplify the theory and sometimes makes claims that lack substantive evidence, but he also successfully avoids using too much technical vocabulary and directs the reader to further pertinent sources at the end of each chapter. It is a useful and informative book which provides evidence of how research

into language processing can inform methodology in the L2 classroom.

References

Field, J.C. (2003) *Psycholinguistics: A resource book for students*. London: Routledge.

Field, J.C. (2004) *Psycholinguistics: the Key Concepts*. London: Routledge.

Field, J.C. (2008) Bricks or mortar: Which parts of the input does a second language listener rely on? *TESOL Quarterly*, Special Issue on “Psycholinguistics and TESOL”.

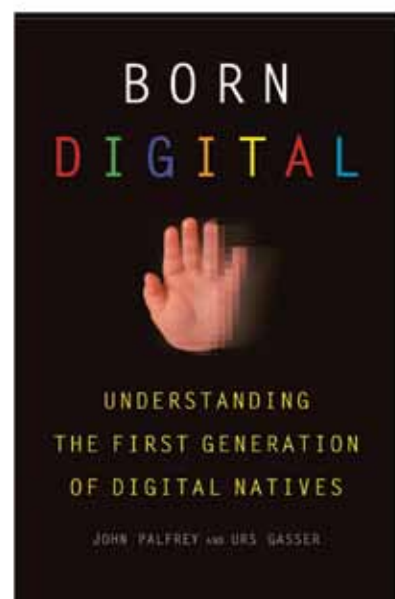
Dr Sarah Rule is a Lecturer in Linguistics at the University of Southampton.

Born Digital: Understanding the first generation of digital natives

Review by Scott Windeatt

My daughter sits at the dinner table giggling occasionally as she eats and carries on a conversation – or multiple conversations – by text on her mobile phone. Later I check some blogs written by my students and notice my son is online so I send him an instant message and get a more or less instant reply. I learnt about instant messaging from my students, who always seemed to have several conversations going in my CALL classes while, occasionally, doing the task I had set them. I learnt about mobile phones from my son, who set me right on the tariff and the features I needed (nothing too complicated for you Dad). I learnt blogging from my daughter - and about Facebook and Twitter (how else would I find out what she was up to?).

You see, my students and my children are “digital natives” (to use Palfrey and Gasser’s term), and I am a “digital immigrant”. “Digital natives” have been born into a world where mobile phones, computers, and, especially, the internet, have been an integral part of their lives, and the book deals with ways of bridging the gap in knowledge and experience between them and their “digital immigrant” parents and teachers. The book is wide-ranging, dealing with topics such as privacy and safety, copyright, information quality, information overload, video games, digital innovation, creativity, and learning. To deal with the issues of privacy and safety the authors recommend the need for corporate responsibility, technical solutions,



John Palfrey and Urs Gasser
Basic Books

ISBN: 978-0465005154

and legal measures, but especially for education. In fact the emphasis throughout the book is on education, with recommendations that parents and schools take responsibility for developing digital literacy among the “digital natives”. They suggest, however, that digital education should be a two-way process, with parents and children, teachers and students, and (because they also distinguish between more and less savvy “digital natives”), students and students, working together to educate each other. Most importantly they suggest that much of what needs to be learnt and taught to survive in the digital world is not fundamentally different from what is needed in the non-digital world. What is written on the web should not be accepted uncritically, and while Wikipedia might be the first port of call, what is found there needs to be cross-referenced against other sources, the authorship of websites should be checked, and digital plagiarism is still plagiarism. Teachers will recognise these as issues to be dealt with in critical reading and study skills activities, whether digital or non-digital, which are carried out at school and university level.

The book devotes one chapter to “learning”, which, for “digital natives”, they characterise as a multi-tasking process that involves “grazing”, a “deep-dive” and a “feedback loop”. Although “digital natives” read less in conventional media, through “grazing” online (e.g. news headlines from a variety of sources) they are potentially exposed to far greater amounts of information than earlier generations, and, providing they combine “grazing” with exploring a topic in detail (“deep-diving”), and reflect on what they have found (the “feedback loop”), they are likely to learn at least as much as earlier generations of learner (though the authors provide little

concrete evidence for this claim). The authors point out some of the creative possibilities presented by technology (podcasts, slide shows in PowerPoint, video editing using Movie Maker) and some of the opportunities these activities offer for dealing with issues such as copyright. They recommend, however, that technology should be integrated into the curriculum rather than used for its own sake, and report evidence that learners themselves prefer a blended learning approach, with a moderate use of technology.

Topics in the book are dealt with thoroughly, though perhaps sometimes rather repetitively (I felt at times as if the book was made up of what had originally been a series of articles). The authors take a sensible approach to the potential dangers for “digital natives” and acknowledge that there are no simple solutions to the problems they identify, pointing out the potentially negative side-effects of some commonly favoured solutions. They provide references for many of their claims, and these are often illustrated with quotes from subjects interviewed for their work on the book. As an overview of the topic the book is likely to appeal especially to schoolteachers and parents. As a university teacher and a more experienced “digital immigrant” I found their recommendations on learning with technology sensible rather than new. However I certainly found much of interest in the book, and at least one idea that I will use with my own students.

Scott Windeatt is Head of the Applied Linguistics and TESOL section in the School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences at Newcastle University.

language café

Language Cafés are being set up all over Europe and are taking language learning in an exciting direction. In a Language Café you can meet people to practise speaking other languages, share cultural interests or just simply socialise. Language Cafés can be found in real cafes and also in cinemas, bookshops, libraries and even online. So if you would like to be part of the Language Café culture, visit

www.languagecafe.eu



JISC

Language
Box 

Wish you were here!

Come and experience a new and exciting way of finding, organising and sharing your language teaching resources in the EdShare Language Box, as the best principles of Web 2.0 meet language teaching!

Language Box is an online resource space where you can:

- save and collect together your most useful resources
- share selected resources with your community
- preview all resources quickly and clearly in an innovative interface
- see your favourite resources
- see what is most popular and most downloaded

Come and join us!

<http://languagebox.eprints.org>



700 words on... globalisation

For the third of our regular series inspired by “700 reasons for studying languages” (www.llas.ac.uk/700reasons) and “international reflections” (www.leedsmet.ac.uk/internat/reflects), we invited Michael Cronin to write 700 words on globalisation.

The big cheese: globalisation through the microscope

When Calvino's Mr Palomar enters a Paris cheese shop he is enchanted by what he finds:

Behind every cheese there is a pasture of different green under a different sky: meadows caked with the salt that the tides of Normandy deposit every evening; meadows scented with aromas in the windy sunlight of Provence; there are different flocks with their stablings and their transhumances; there are secret processes handed down over centuries. This shop is a museum: Mr Palomar visiting it, feels, as he does in the Louvre, behind every displayed object the presence of the civilisation that has given it form and takes form from it. (Calvino 1986: 66)

A visit to a shop becomes a journey through space and time, a secular

stargate, a portal into the geography and history of a nation. Palomar's epiphany gives vivid expression to the distinction between exotic travel and endotic travel (Urbain, 1998: 217-232). Exotic travel is the conventional mode of thinking where travel involves leaving the world of the proximate everyday for a distant place, leaving familiar surroundings for a place which is far removed from the routine world of the traveller. From the perspective of macro-modernity, because far becomes nearer, it becomes all the more commonplace to equate travel with going far. In contrast endotic travel is about staying close by, not leaving the familiar and travelling interstitially through a world we thought we knew. Endotic travel is the mobile site of micro-modernity.

There are three strands informing the practice of endotic travel. Firstly,

the exploration of the “infra-ordinary” (Perec 1989). In Perec's *Tentative d'épuisement d'un lieu parisien* (1982) the narrator compulsorily lists all the goings on in and around a café beside the Saint Sulpice church in Paris. Perec's method makes evident the sheer scale of the “infra-ordinary”, the encyclopedic density of things going on in our immediate surroundings which generally pass unnoticed.

The second strand is an ethnology of proximity expressed in a tradition of writing going from Montesquieu's *Lettres Persanes* (1724) to Marc Augé's *Un Ethnologue dans le métro* (1986). The domestic and not the foreign becomes the focus of enquiry. Montesquieu's famous conceit treats French society and mores as observed from the viewpoint of Persian visitors. The familiar is exoticised through this foreignising practice and he

“de Maistre treats his bedroom as if it were a vast, uncharted and perilous territory where moving from his bed to a chair has all the adventure of an expedition on the high seas”

illustrates the disturbing shortcomings of a putatively “civilised” society. Augé, for his part, treats the Parisian underground as an unknown and hitherto unexplored ethnographic terrain.

The third strand is internal travel writing, which makes its point of departure its point of arrival. In *Voyage autour de ma chambre* (1794) Xavier de Maistre treats his bedroom as if it were a vast, uncharted and perilous territory where moving from his bed to a chair has all the adventure of an expedition on the high seas.

The notion of the endotic has implications for how we think about languages and translation, at the textual and the social levels. A common misconception is that translation is first and foremost about foreign languages and their

acquisition – translation is assumed to be an exotic travelling practice, taking the translator to foreign languages, cultures and places. However, students of translation soon discover that the endotic dimensions to their travels in language become paramount as they realise that they scarcely know the language they had hitherto taken for granted. The students become aware of the uncharted territories and the unsuspected complexities of the familiar tongue. They begin to explore domains of usage, webs of intertextual reference, differences of register, shifts in historical meaning, which had previously remained under the radar of native language awareness.

Globalised patterns of migration mean that a great many places are host to peoples with many different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This

is where the endotic dimension of translation comes into play at a social level. Community interpreting opens up the communication channels in an era of “vernacular cosmopolitanism” (Hall 2002: 30). As the neighbourhoods of global cities become more densely invested with the linguistic diversity of migrant populations, it is translators and interpreters who are crucially involved in making sure that voices are heard and that the attendant richness of multilingualism becomes something more than an incomprehensible soundtrack to visual paens to multicultural diversity.

Professor Michael Cronin is
Director of the Centre for
Translation and Textual Studies
at Dublin City University.

References

- Augé, M. (1986) *Un ethnologue dans le métro*. Paris: Hachette.
- Calvino, I. (1986) *Mr Palomar*, tr: William Weaver. London: Picador.
- De Maistre, X. (1959, originally published 1794) *Voyage autour de ma chambre*. Paris: Laffont.
- Hall, S. (2002) Political Belonging in a World of Multiple Identities, 25-31, in Vertovec, S. and Cohen, R. (eds), *Conceiving Cosmopolitanism: theory, context, practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Montesquieu, C.-L. (1964, originally published 1724) *Lettres Persanes*. Paris: Garnier-Flammarion.
- Perec, G. (1982) *Tentative d'épuisement d'un lieu parisien*. Paris: Bourgois.
- Perec, G. (1989) *L'infra-ordinaire*. Paris: Seuil.
- Urbain, J.-D. (1998) *Secrets de voyage: menteurs, imposteurs et autres voyageurs immédiats*. Paris: Payot.

get a taste for languages



A taste of Indonesian

Teresa Birks gives us a tantalising taste of Indonesian.

Most of you will have heard of sate (satay) and many will know of *gado-gado*, *nasi goreng* and *rendang*. These are some of the most well-known Indonesian dishes, but practically every town and region of Indonesia has its own specialities which reflect local cultures and produce as well as external influences.

The spicy *gulai*, or curries, of Sumatra have been influenced by South Asian cuisine, while Javanese dishes such as *gudeg* are known for their sweetness and use of coconut milk. Chinese influence in the form of noodles (*mie*), and spring rolls (*lumpia*), is evident throughout the archipelago.

Some dishes, such as the Acehnese *kemamah*, or dried fish, are associated with struggle and resistance. From the



hot and spicy seafood of Manado to the buffalo rib soup of Makassar, you are unlikely to experience the wealth of Indonesian cuisine unless you travel there yourself.

So what language should you learn to visit such a highly diverse country rich in cultures and cuisines and, of course, languages? There may be as many as 550 different languages spoken in Indonesia – some estimates are even higher. But there is only one national language: *Bahasa Indonesia*.

A form of Malay, *Bahasa Indonesia*'s success as the language of national unity is even more remarkable considering that only 5% of the population used it as their first language when independence was declared in 1945.

For centuries Malay had been used as

the *lingua franca*, the language of trade and negotiation throughout the vast archipelago that stretched from Aceh in the west to the Moluccas, the Spice Islands, in the East. Malay was later adopted by the Dutch as the language of colonial administration and then by an emergent nationalist movement as the language of national unity and identity.

The term *Bahasa Indonesia* was first coined by young novelists and journalists who promoted political discourse through the medium of Indonesian. The term was later adopted

at the Second Youth Congress in 1928 when *Bahasa Indonesia* was declared the official language of the Indonesian nationalist movement.

Today most people in Indonesia understand *Bahasa Indonesia*. According to the 1990 census, 83% of the population (currently around 240 million) were recorded as speaking Indonesian, with figures closer to 98% for 10-50 year olds and urban inhabitants. Forms of Malay are also spoken by indigenous populations in other countries such as Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand.



Regional languages

Despite Indonesian's remarkable success as the national language, a massive 75 million people consider themselves first language Javanese speakers according to the 1990 census. Overall most regional languages are showing some decline and the number of monolinguals is rising with inter-marriage and urban migration. Languages that are retaining their numbers include those with a written tradition, such as Javanese, and those that retain a role as a *lingua franca* such as Banjarese in Kalimantan.

Grammar

Indonesian belongs to the Austronesian or Malayo-Polynesian language family. It is written using the Roman script and is phonetically consistent. Unlike the languages of many of its neighbours, it is not tonal. Although the majority of the Indonesian lexicon originates from its Austronesian roots, it has been influenced by a number of different languages including Sanskrit (via Old Javanese), Arabic, Persian, Portuguese, different forms of Chinese, Dutch and English as well as local languages such as Javanese and Betawi.

It utilises a complex system of prefixes, infixes and suffixes which give different grammatical meanings to root words. Verbs are not inflected for person or number and there are no tenses, though the use of time adverbs such as “tomorrow” and auxiliary verbs such as *akan* (will) and *sudah* (already), are used to indicate whether an action has been completed.

Acronym soup

The use of acronyms, blends and compounding to create new words and expressions is widespread in Indonesia, often created and spread by the popular press and the government, as well as through word of mouth, the internet and text messaging.

For example, the universally understood term for contraception, *KB*, originates from the government's family planning programme, *Keluarga Berencana*. If you are a confident person, you will be described as *PD*, from *percaya diri* (self-belief), but if you are prone to bragging, you may be described as *GR*, from *gede rasa* (feeling big).

During the 1997 Asian economic crisis, the press coined the term *krismon* from *krisis moneter* which has now entered everyday use. Other examples include political parties, *partai politik*, known as *parpol* and the general elections, *pemilihan umum*, known as *pemilu*.

A national love of the play on words, a razor-sharp wit and the sometimes need for creative forms of resistance – particularly during the Soeharto regime and in the face of endemic corruption - means there are always humorous and critical alternative meanings in circulation.

The penal code, for example, the *KUHP* (*Kitab Umum Hukum Narapidana*) becomes “give some money and the case is closed” (*Kasih Uang Perkara Tutup*), and the founding constitution, the *UUD* (*Undang-Undang Dasar*) becomes “it's always about the money” (*Ujung-Ujung ada Duit*). *Politikus*, the word for a politician becomes *poli tikus* (many rats) and *hakim* (judge) is transformed into “contact me if you want to win” (*Hubungi Aku Kalau Ingin Menang*).

Myth-busting

Indonesian is often mistakenly referred to as *bahasa*, but *bahasa* just means “language”. Thus Malay is *Bahasa Melayu* and English is *Bahasa Inggris*.

Reduplication is used to make plural forms, e.g. *ibu-ibu* (mothers). Yes, but this is only the case when the plural is not implied by the context, which it usually is. For example: “there were two people there”, “there are too many billboards”, “I saw different types of dog” and so forth.

Reduplication, often cited as an example of Indonesian's “simplicity”, can be very confusing to the learner as it is used in many different ways, including the creation of new words and meanings. The word *hati* for example (which means heart or liver depending on the context) means “be careful” when reduplicated and the word for eye, *mata*, means spy. Some words such as *cumi-cumi* (squid) and *biri-biri* (sheep) only exist in reduplicated form.



Frustratingly, new acronyms, blends and compounds seem to appear out of nowhere and often without explanation. Some may remain and become part of the official and popular lexicon, others may disappear and fall out of use very quickly.

If you have Indonesian students at your university why not ask them what their alternative meanings are for LSE, SOAS, UCLAN, UCL...

Teresa Birks is the Higher Education Adviser at CILT, the National Centre for Languages.

Events calendar

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

Why CEFR for sign languages? A description of the curriculum

Date: 25 September 2009

Location: Centre for Deaf Studies, University of Bristol

Dr Loraine Leeson will give a seminar on "Why CEFR for sign languages? A description of the curriculum". Recent developments in sign linguistics research influence decisions made for the integration of specific methods, curricula and teaching materials for the learning and teaching of sign languages. The aims of this seminar are to tackle these issues and generate, for the first time, academic discussion over the emerging field of Applied Sign Linguistics. This event is sponsored by the Subject Centre's guest speaker fund.

Sign language teaching methodology and sign language teachers' training

Date: 26 September 2009

Location: The Hawthorns, University of Bristol

Dr Loraine Leeson (see above) will also be a keynote speaker at the sign language teaching methodology and sign language teachers' training symposium, sponsored by the Subject Centre's guest speaker fund.

Meeting the current challenges: the humanities and employability, entrepreneurship and employer engagement

Date: 23 October 2009

Location: Woburn House, London

This conference is being planned in partnership with other humanities subject centres and the Routes into Languages programme. The conference is aimed primarily at humanities practitioners, but could also interest careers staff and senior managers.

Teaching textual analysis in modern languages

Date: 13 November 2009

Location: University of Bath

This conference will bring together colleagues interested in sharing their experience in teaching and assessing reading, textual analysis and textual commentary as part of modern language degree programmes. The day will address issues relevant to both "language" and "content" courses, such as: understanding L2 reading for teaching and assessing reading skills; traditional practices of close reading, analysis and interpretation; approaches from the social sciences; and using hypertext and other types of digital text. Speakers will present examples from a range of modern languages and EFL.

e-Learning symposium

Date: 28-29 January 2010

Location: University of Southampton

This is the 5th LLAS e-learning symposium. This successful event gets bigger every year; and combines practical workshops on technology-enhanced learning with inspirational presentations from key researchers in the field. Topics for 2010 will include open educational resources, e-portfolios for languages, and pedagogy in authoring tools.





Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies
Avenue Campus
Highfield
University of Southampton
Southampton
SO17 1BF

Phone: 023 8059 4814
Fax: 023 8059 4815
Email: llas@soton.ac.uk
Web: www.llas.ac.uk