

Chairman's Report

Duncan Byrne
Whitgift School

It was good to see about 90 delegates at Oakham School for the ISMLA Conference in February. The committee made an undertaking some time ago to choose a venue outside the South-East at least once every three years, and we could not have been given a warmer welcome than that which we received from Oakham. I would like again to thank the Headmaster, Dr Joe Spence, and Stephen Glynn, Head of Modern Languages and his department for their hard work and enthusiasm on behalf of ISMLA, as the committee does rely hugely on the host department to ensure a successful conference.

I hope that the delegates felt that we had a good variety of speakers at the conference. Summaries of their talks follow elsewhere in this newsletter, but I would like to thank all contributors for giving up their time to address us. It was particularly pleasing that two of ISMLA's patrons, Dr Helen Wright, Headmistress of St. Mary's, Calne and Mr Tony Evans, Headmaster of King's College School, Wimbledon agreed to share their expertise

with us, and I know that their talks were particularly appreciated by delegates. If you have any suggestions regarding future speakers at the conference, the committee would be delighted to hear from you. Next year, I am pleased to announce that the Conference will be held on Saturday 3rd February 2007 at City of London School for Boys, and I hope that you will enter this date in your diary.

During the last few months, ISMLA has been working on the inaugural Young Linguist Award, which will be held in regional centres on Thursday 22nd June 2006. A separate letter of invitation will be sent to all member schools at the end of April, and I hope that significant numbers of you will want to participate. Our aim is to find a national 'Young Linguist' in years 10 and 12 for each of French, German and Spanish. All candidates will sit a short (50 minutes) listening comprehension and grammar test, together with an unprepared oral. Our hope is that the competition will eventually carry a considerable 'cachet', but we also seek to encourage pupil participation by offering cash prizes to national and regional winners. In order to finance this, there will be a small entry fee per school, and I

hope that the initiative will have your support.

You may be aware that the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) has just published a revised set of MFL subject criteria for AS/A2 Level, which have gone to the consultation stage in the last month. I will let ISMLA's Examinations Officer, Dr Geoff Plow, explain our response to the new criteria in greater depth in a subsequent newsletter, but I should perhaps explain that the current proposals include the reduction of A Level to four units (from six), the abolition of coursework in MFL (although it can remain in certain other subjects), and the removal of a requirement to write on cultural topics (although awarding bodies will still be 'encouraged' to retain this cultural element. It should be remembered that QCA publishes only the subject criteria (which will be confirmed following the end of the consultation period on 28th April) and that schools will have to wait some time before reading how the criteria have been interpreted by the awarding bodies in their new A Level specifications, but we can clearly expect some significant changes.

I wish you all the best for this hectic examination period and ask you to keep in touch with ISMLA about any concerns you may have about public examinations, both before and after the publication of results this August.



**JAPANESE
SPEECH CONTEST
FINAL**

Association for Language Learning

Saturday 24 June 2006

To obtain further details please
contact Sheila James at
SheilaJ@ALL-languages.org.uk

Telephone 01788 546443
Fax 01788 544149

ALL's website at www.ALL-languages.org.uk click on events

Geoffrey Plow, as ISMLA Awarding Bodies Liaison Officer, is happy to act as a focus for communication for schools if they feel they have experienced difficulties over public exams at GCSE, AS or A2.

If a school has made an official comment to a Standing Joint Committee, he would be especially grateful to receive a copy of the form sent, so that correlation of any trends across the whole ISMLA membership may be made easier.

Geoffrey is happy to respond at any time to any comment made by an ISMLA member school in relation to public exam matters.

Please keep in touch with Geoffrey at

gaplow@hotmail.com, or via:

***Dr Geoffrey Plow
University College School
Frognaal
London NW3 6XH***

[020 7433 2302]

Exams News

Geoffrey Plow

ISMLA Awarding Bodies Liaison Officer

In the last Newsletter, at the end of 2005, a description was given of the process by which QCA would finalise the new criteria for A levels, to be introduced in 2008. The online consultation referred to in regard to A levels in the last Newsletter was originally set to be complete at the end of March. As we write (early April 2006), it is still underway, with a deadline of 18 April.

If you're reading this on the ISMLA website, do contribute to the online consultation process; if you're currently looking at the Newsletter, the deadline may have passed by now. The address for the QCA online questionnaire is http://www.qca.org.uk/12086_16132.html. QCA are keen to receive responses from individual teachers, as well as from departments and professional organisations, so don't hesitate to give your own opinions.

There are vital issues at stake here, with no easy solutions. The task at hand is to reduce the burden of testing and assessment inflicted upon pupils while simultaneously retaining

and securing valuable features such as a cultural element.

On 29 March, Geoffrey Plow attended the OCR South-East Regional Consultative Committee on behalf of ISMLA, following an invitation from that board. He raised the question of teacher representation on examination board committees and pointed out that subject panels had gone into abeyance at OCR at some point after Curriculum 2000. An answer to this observation would be forthcoming at the next Regional Consultative Committee meeting.

The Regional Consultative Committees deal with a wide range of input, complaints and suggestions from OCR centres. They are not subject-specific. They do have the benefit, however, of allowing us to raise practically any point we wish. So please take advantage of this, and let Geoffrey Plow know of any queries you have relating to the conduct of OCR modern foreign language examinations and the provision for and training in OCR modern foreign language examination specifications - even if your school is not in the South-East. The next Regional Consultative committee meeting will be in November.

If any ISMLA school has a modern languages teacher who is a member of such a committee - with OCR or any other board - Geoffrey Plow would like to know. Please contact him at gaplow@hotmail.com.

In general, don't hesitate to get in touch about public exam issues. As we've said before, it's only by hearing what you have to say that we can identify trends.



In need of a Spanish Assistant?

Adriana Rearte

José Pedro Varela 5756
PB 4. CP 1408. Capital
Buenos Aires (Argentina)

Tel.: (+54) 1146 42 05 27

Email: reartearte@yahoo.fr

ISMLA

National Conference 2006

Oakham School

Dr Terry Lamb

This year we were very fortunate to have, as our main speaker, Dr Terry Lamb, Director of Initial Teacher Education at the University of Sheffield and a former President of the Association of Language Learning. Dr Lamb's keynote speech focused on a project he has undertaken in a local Sheffield comprehensive, interviewing pupils in order to discover the ways in which they would like to learn languages. His argument was that, to enjoy a 'powerful' language learning curriculum, there is an implication of partnership in creating a learning environment which empowers pupils and in which they can sustain this empowerment themselves. This project builds on Dr Lamb's long-held interest in the relationship between motivation and learner autonomy. The Keystage 3 Framework speaks of the need to "create language learners". If pupils become

more autonomous and understand what it means to learn a foreign language (skills, conventions and metacognitive knowledge), they will be better placed later in life to learn a new language as required by their employment or leisure.

Dr Lamb's interviewed four different groups of differently-motivated pupils in his research, questioning them on their experiences of language learning and then their perceptions of the purposes of language learning and the most useful modes of learning. Firstly, all groups of learners construed language learning as a difficult task. Very often expectations of what it is possible to be able to do in a foreign language are linked to pupils' only experience of using a language, namely their mother tongue, and this leads to demoralisation and lack or loss of motivation. As far as the purpose of language learning was concerned, all groups shared a belief in the importance of speaking, albeit in different contexts and different ways. Although motivated lower-ability learners seemed to be content with the largely transactional nature of their learning, abler pupils proposed a radical change in content, enabling them to learn more about the countries of the languages they are learning.

Purely instrumental approaches to teaching and learning contributed to feelings of disappointment and dissatisfaction, often because the prospect of travel or work abroad didn't relate to the pupils' own lives.

Thirdly, Dr Lamb's interviewees appeared to be in broad agreement that independent learning is the most useful mode of learning. Lower-ability learners found it easier to control themselves, as they could not concentrate when the teacher spoke too much, while able learners appreciated the increased responsibility for learning and the opportunity to work at their own (faster) pace. The abler pupils also referred to thinking more about what they were doing when learning independently, engaging their brains and offering a greater opportunity for control of their cognitive skills.

From this research, Dr Lamb drew conclusions concerning how an ideal language curriculum would respond to learners' preferences and perceptions:

Begin with the learners' beliefs, knowledge and strategies

Offer opportunities to examine existing beliefs and knowledge critically

Examine the curriculum critically

A broad range of meaningful content, which is not simply a vehicle for language development, or just focused on transactional, 'tourist' or vocational language, but enables them to have something to talk about to native speakers, e.g. history, geography, culture

Coherent sequencing of syllabus, with pupil input

Opportunities for a range of out-of-school experiences, including contact with native speakers

A focus on speaking, which will enable them to have 'normal' everyday conversations, including learning how to ask questions

Authentic materials, e.g. television programmes, and exposure to artefacts

Varied classroom experiences, including opportunities for individual and group work, use of video, flashcards, song and dance, games, clear and audible listening activities

Targeted teacher responses to questions to avoid unnecessary repetition

Opportunities to choose what they do, to learn in different ways, and to assess themselves

Development of learning skills and strategies

Create a self-managed learning environment

Development of metacognitive knowledge, skills and strategies

Duncan Byrne
Whitgift School

Mr Tony Evans

The International Dimension

ISMLA was very grateful to Tony Evans, Headmaster of King's College School, Wimbledon, and a patron of the Association for agreeing to address the National Conference on the theme of Internationalism. Although he has been committed to the International Baccalaureate for the last five years, Mr Evans focused his address more broadly on what it means for schools to be internationally-minded.

The International Baccalaureate has been near the top of the post-16 agenda for many independent schools since the

introduction of Curriculum 2000, and the subsequent lack of confidence in the A Level 'Gold Standard'. Proponents cite its greater depth, advantage in delaying key subject choices and its promotion of individual research in the provision of an extended essay. Although the I.B. undoubtedly helps to develop international awareness, Mr Evans argued that what is meant by 'internationalism' in our schools goes far beyond this. Indeed, one could argue that the I.B. is too westernised to be truly international.

The main question addressed by Mr Evans was how to educate pupils to appreciate other people's cultures. Too many of our pupils come to school with the blind assurance that 'British is best'. Anti-European prejudice in particular comes from parents or society at large and is difficult to eradicate. Indeed, it seems that language differences are often what create British insecurity and we have to counter this feeling of innate superiority both openly and subliminally. In reality, few of the initiatives we can introduce to promote internationalism are curriculum-based. Admittedly, 'Bilingual' programmes teaching History and Science through MFL have proved very successful in some of our schools, but these are

often reserved for the most able students, reinforcing the idea that internationalism is only for the intellectual elite. Instead, it is management decisions and whole-school initiatives that can subtly spread the required message. Firstly, despite having pupils from several nationalities and faiths, the staff of independent schools are predominantly white. Not only therefore should senior teams reflect on their recruitment policies, but staff exchanges should be facilitated to increase the range of teacher backgrounds with which pupils come into contact. Similarly, GAP students can be taken from partner schools in Russia or China and pupil exchanges encouraged (these are quite common in continental Europe). Finally, subliminal messages cannot be neglected. Why not post visual stimuli around the school emphasising the international nature of excellence? Posters of artists and scientists with biographies in different languages help us to move away from constant references to the all-pervading USA cultural and social model.

ISMLA is extremely grateful to Mr Evans for his amusing and thought-provoking exploration of internationalism that laid down challenges for all of us as languages teachers as we seek

to broaden our pupils' cultural perspectives.

Dr Helen Wright

Learning to Listen: Developing Listening Skills at AS and A level

Dr Wright gave us a thought-provoking and practical talk based on her recently published book in the Advanced Pathfinder series, "Learning Through Listening". Her opening thought was that listening is a skill that can be taught and if we make the skills explicit, then our pupils can become more adept at using them.

We have all spent lessons explaining every item of vocabulary in a listening exercise to pupils, but have also come to the realisation that this does not actually help them to improve. What is needed is an approach that helps youngsters improve these skills for themselves.

Dr Wright pointed out that successful listening combined a combination of the "bottom-up" (working out meaning as a result of auditory perception) and the "top-down" (perception of words after their meaning has been understood by the listener). Pupils should be encouraged to think about "Metacognitive" skills i.e. how they organise themselves for

listening as well as the actual cognitive strategies, how they set about working out what something means.

The good news was that developing a listening programme was something for a head of department to share with his department, and that a number of the texts should be selected by the pupils themselves.

A crucial part of the process though, is encouraging pupils to evaluate exercises once they have completed them. Pupils should be encouraged to reflect upon what will make them better listeners. Dr Wright recommended interviewing the pupils after they have done a task to see how they had got on and to encourage them to evaluate their strategies with a view to helping them to realise which could be profitably used in their next exercises.

Another essential strand in her thinking was that students need to be encouraged to listen regularly, if not daily, in the foreign language. She suggested saving an internet radio station as a favourite or watching the news with others at a set time each week. Again the previous evening's news could be watched each day on the computer. A list of helpful material could be found on www.cilt.uk/publications/learnthroughlistening.

In conclusion, if we encourage our learners to become effective users of strategies, helping them to take charge of their own listening, they might even grow to love it, which surely would be no bad thing!

Peter Ansell
Stonyhurst College

Mr Régis Faugier

Quelle Europe pour les Français?

Tel était le titre du débat passionnant animé par Régis Faugier lors de la conférence organisée par ISMLA à Oakham School en février. Je vous propose un résumé.

Comment est-on arrivé au "non" au référendum sur le projet de la constitution européenne dans un pays qui a joué un rôle important dans la construction de l'Europe?

C'est surtout après la seconde guerre mondiale que l'idée d'une Europe unie a commencé à faire son chemin car il fallait faire face aux USA d'un côté et au bloc soviétique de l'autre.

C'est à la suite de propositions concrètes de la France en 1951 que la Communauté Européenne du Charbon et de l'Acier a été

instituée par le Traité de Paris entre l'Allemagne, le Benelux, la France et l'Italie. Six ans plus tard, le Traité de Rome a établi la Communauté Economique Européenne. La première élection du Parlement Européen au suffrage universel direct a eu lieu en juin 1979. En février 1992 le Traité de Maastricht sur l'Union Européenne a été signé.

La France a joué (et continue à jouer) un rôle primordial dans la construction européenne pour plusieurs raisons.

- Sur le plan politique, la France ne pouvait plus prétendre à une place privilégiée dans le monde depuis les années 50. Elle a donc cherché à imposer sa vision politique du monde face aux grands blocs dominants. Cela explique le modèle très dirigiste et bureaucratique de l'Union Européenne.

- La France voulait prendre la direction politique de l'Europe pour empêcher l'Allemagne de dominer l'Europe par sa force économique

- Sur le plan économique, la Politique Agricole Commune a permis de maintenir les emplois de millions d'agriculteurs à travers un système de subventions et de quotas.

- La France a profité de l'abaissement des barrières douanières internes tout en maintenant des tarifs douaniers importants pour les importations externes.

On comprend pourquoi le concept et la réalisation d'une Europe unie ont été plutôt bien acceptés par les Français jusqu'à récemment. Le passage à l'euro (monnaie officielle depuis août 2002 dans les 12 pays de l'Eurozone) s'est passé sans trop de problèmes. La seule chose qui préoccupait les Français semblait être les problèmes techniques du changement et la peur de se faire « arnaquer ».

Chirac, qui avait bien besoin d'un succès électoral net après les présidentielles de 2002, a pris la décision d'appeler un référendum sur la question du projet de constitution européenne parce qu'il était persuadé que les Français allaient dire 'oui'. Toute la classe politique (sauf les partis d'extrême droite et d'extrême gauche) a appelé à voter pour le projet de constitution. Après avoir suivi les débats et participé avidement à de très nombreuses réunions organisées dans tout le pays, les Français ont exprimé une inquiétude réelle concernant l'Europe. Celle-ci s'est cristallisée dans le 'non'. Pourquoi ?

- Une proportion importante de Français a peur que la France perde son rôle encore prépondérant en Europe car, dans une Europe de 25 membres, aucun pays, même important, ne peut prétendre dominer l'Union.

- Pour d'autres, l'élargissement de l'Europe signifie le recul du français comme langue officielle des institutions de l'Union.

- La P.A.C. va sans doute être révisée, ou même, supprimée.

- Les Européens de l'Est vont circuler librement dans les pays riches de l'Ouest.

- Certains s'opposent à l'adhésion de la Turquie parce qu'ils ont peur que 70 millions d'habitants - pour la plupart musulmans et pauvres - changent le caractère fondamental de l'Union dont les racines sont ancrées dans le christianisme et les valeurs occidentales.

- L'opinion publique française reste très attachée à la notion de service public géré par l'Etat pour le bénéfice de tous et n'accepte pas facilement la libéralisation à l'anglo-saxonne, axée sur un capitalisme 'pur et dur'. La libre circulation de tous les biens et services signifierait

la privatisation de tous les services publics qui devraient s'ouvrir à la concurrence comme toute autre marchandise.

- Les acquis sociaux (garanties de salaire minimum, de la semaine de 35 heures, des congés payés, des allocations chômage, etc....) représentent quelque chose de très important pour la grande majorité des Français.

- L'irréversibilité de la constitution une fois votée a semblé dangereuse et anti-démocratique et a incité une majorité de Français à rejeter le projet.

- Le référendum a servi à exprimer une certaine désaffection de la population française due à la stagnation économique, au taux de chômage de 10%, aux programmes de privatisations de certains services publics, ainsi qu'au sentiment de rejet de toute la classe politique considérée comme corrompue et arrogante.

Tous les médias ont analysé la victoire du non (plus de 55% des voix) comme un rejet du type d'Europe proposé, plutôt que l'expression d'une hostilité envers l'Europe. A la suite du 'non' français, les dirigeants européens se demandent

comment poursuivre la construction d'une unité européenne. Ils devront à l'avenir respecter les sentiments et les droits de l'immense majorité de leurs citoyens.

Né et éduqué en Auvergne, Régis Faugier a commencé sa carrière professionnelle dans le Nord-Ouest de l'Angleterre. Il a dirigé deux sections de langues étrangères dans des écoles secondaires. Depuis 1999, il est traducteur, interprète et conférencier. Il est connu pour ses "Journées Linguistiques" qui s'adressent - en français et en espagnol - à un public qui va du GCSE au A Level. Il anime aussi des "Journées d'immersion totale" pour les enseignants.

Si vous voulez en savoir plus sur ses conférences, vous pouvez le contacter directement à l'adresse suivante:

regis.faugier@bopenworld.com

Evelyne Maynard
Lochinver House School

Ms Anika Teske

Das geteilte Berlin

The German language session was led by Ms Anika Teske of Queen Mary's School, Topcliffe, Thirsk, who provided delegates with an entertaining and informative account of the history of her home city of Berlin between 1945 and the fall of the Wall, the history of a city physically torn between the capitalist Western and the communist Eastern Europe. With the aid of a comprehensive PowerPoint presentation Ms Teske led us step by step through the colourful history of the city and gave her audience a revealing German perspective. She presented a number of interesting photographs, including a West German wedding celebrated 'over the Wall', escape efforts involving hot air balloons and a thirteen year-old boy who had been shot having attempted to cross sides. We were told of the pressure from the state in East Germany, as well as the various acts of propaganda and misinformation carried out and were given an insight into life behind the Wall on both sides, including secret missions by the CIA in Poland. The final section of the talk was dedicated to describing the dramatic moment the Wall came down and the ramifications for the city's

inhabitants. The talk was followed by questions from delegates.

All in all this was a very engaging and well structured session and the perfect model in terms of possible cross-curricular teaching, and provided in the accompanying notes much useful material for A-level teachers of the language.

Many thanks again to Anika Teske.

Thomas Underwood
University College School

Dr Rosemary Clark

**Spain and Africa:
"Neighbours, no?"**

Dr Rosemary Clark, of Downing College, Cambridge, spoke to the Hispanists of the conference of the theme of Spain and Africa: Neighbours, no? Her approach to this theme was to look at the historical background of current anti-African feeling in Spain, through examination of cartoons, art, and little-known works of literature, in addition to analysis of historical events. Dr Clark started her exploration of

Spanish fascination with Africa with Queen Isabella in the 16th century who urged Catholics to carry the light of Christianity to Africa. Since this moment, there has been an exotic yearning for Africa punctuated by terrible repression and abuse, the consequences of which can still be seen in anti-Maghreb discrimination today.

Dr Clark's unique ability to integrate different media provided an incredibly interesting and varied exposé of the historical, artistic and social factors that have helped to shape Spain's relationship with North Africa, and ISMLA is very grateful for her contribution to the National Conference, which gave insight that will inform delegates' A Level teaching about contemporary Spanish identity.

Duncan Byrne
Whitgift School



Mr John Ridge

HOD responsibilities and Health and Safety

Late in the afternoon, as the 2006 ISMLA national conference drew to a close, John Ridge gave his talk on health and safety issues as they affect heads of modern languages departments. It was a bracing way to end the day, since it somehow brought all present down to earth. I was reminded of all sorts of things as John explained the various imperatives that lie behind the arrangement of work experience, the setting-up of an exchange and the nuts and bolts of daily life in the classroom.

The careers teacher came to mind who once declared with confidence and not a little Schadenfreude that all forms of work experience were strictly illegal, unless the organiser had personally visited every site of employment. Plenty of other, probably apocryphal tales from the past loomed up too, mostly involving the unpredictability and improbability of the families to whom schools had entrusted their pupils.

But enough of what was going on in my head. John's account was not intended to scare or to impede. He laid down the necessary precautions one

might be expected to take, and the impression conveyed was of reasonableness and good sense. John seemed perfectly plausible when he made the point that the longevity and reliability of contacts one has had with schools abroad will almost always allow the confident resolution of problems. He also, importantly, stressed that this kind of long-standing contact was recognised and valued by insurance companies. Indeed, we were encouraged to contact school insurers, even before talking to senior management in schools, if we wished for guidance and rulings. They would be the agency ultimately paying out, after all.

The teaching and learning of modern languages don't seem, on the surface, the most 'dangerous' of school activities. It was an index of the value of John's contribution that we were made aware of, but not scared stiff by, the dangers we needed to countenance.

Geoffrey Plow
University College School

montana:lingua

Montanalingua is a project to promote language learning as an outdoor adventure

A new project funded by the European Union LINGUA programme seeks to take languages out of the classroom and teach learners in the great outdoors. The aim of Montanalingua is to motivate young students (aged 10-17) to discover one of the target languages English, French, German and Swedish by combining foreign language-learning with open-air games, problem solving, adventure tasks and outdoor learning.

The project is creating teaching modules in which the students leave the classroom and take on outdoor challenges in teams, which require a high level of communication in the target language. The tasks range from games in the park or forest, to exploring a cave or camping overnight under a bivouac. The foreign language learning (on A2/B1 level) is intrinsic to the activities, which also develop teamwork and social skills.

The project is run by a German language school (Dialogue Sprachinstitut, Lindau) and has partners in the UK, France,

Sweden, Slovakia and Romania. The modules have been created by experts in language teaching and specialist adventure education trainers. The project will produce a course book of 30 modules in each target language, and a DVD showing all the modules in action.

As a result of the project, the young students will experience foreign language learning as an adventure. They will be motivated for further learning. The project will establish best practices in an interdisciplinary approach to foreign language learning and outdoor learning.

The project will disseminate its products to secondary schools, language institutes, centres for adventure education and youth hostels. The project is currently looking for schools to test its modules with class groups. All schools who cooperate would receive complimentary copies of the final materials when published.

For more information contact:
info@montanalingua.com
Project website:
www.montanalingua.com

A Teacher Exchange to France - a personal viewpoint

Kathryn Higham

Birkdale School

Having taken the decision to immerse myself in French life and culture through an extended period of residence provided by a term's teacher exchange and with the support of my Head Master, the practicalities of organising the exchange were somewhat trickier than I had imagined. Although the British Council provides a framework for the teacher exchange, it was my responsibility to find someone whose requirements matched mine. The only support that was provided in this search was the possibility of entering my details into a database on a British Council Internet site and waiting! I did this but I felt rather like I was sending a message in a bottle with no guarantee that anyone would ever find it but eventually, a few weeks from the deadline, someone contacted me for a term's exchange.

Chantilly? Had I ever heard of it? Well, yes. The famous Chantilly cream, which the waiter tries to tempt you with on top of your delicious pâtisserie; "Avec ou sans

Chantilly?". A quick search on the Internet revealed that it also boasts a race-course, the largest horse training stables in France and a château, so splendid it had even been used in the shooting of a James Bond film. It all sounded promising and above all was only a twenty minute fast train-ride away from Paris.

So, what was it really like transforming myself from a Head of Department and teacher of modern languages to being an English teacher at the lycée in Chantilly? The first few weeks proved to be a steep learning curve. Firstly, I discovered that the new Headmaster and new Deputy Headmaster had put together the timetable in the final week or so of August and consequently they had neither taken into account teachers' requests nor had they attempted to make life easier for teachers by ensuring their teaching time was blocked together in the timetable. I tried to listen sympathetically as newly-acquainted colleagues vented their anger at timetables, which to me looked perfectly reasonable! Union activists were already arranging their first meeting to plan strike action if things were not restored. With the general chaos at the start of term, no-one seemed to notice if I didn't

quite get it right. I had to get used to filling in attendance slips for every lesson I taught which seemed an interminable task, with large classes of up to thirty-five pupils, until I got to know them.

I quickly found that it was the contact with the pupils in lessons that I found the most rewarding. I did my best to make the texts they had to study accessible and whenever possible draw on examples from the U.K. The Head of English, in my own school, was an invaluable help in this regard. I wondered if he saw me as an outpost of the Birkdale English department! The small group of Birkdale boys who came out in October also made useful contributions to my lessons. The texts were frequently from other English-speaking cultures and the audio-recordings contained a range of accents from American and Australian to South African and Scottish! I was quite surprised by how much I learnt about these cultures from my preparation and lessons. Another highlight for me was the lunchtime discussions I often had with the other staff especially if the philosophy teachers were there.

Pupils sometimes asked me what I missed most about England when living in France. Apart from family they

expected me to mention food and friends for the same reason they seem to imagine we as British can't live without lamb and mint jelly or gravy poured on everything. However I have to confess that I envy the French their range and choice of fresh food in shops and restaurants. (Despite some advance made by fast-food and ready-meals, it seemed to me that food is something people or families still enjoy together in France.)

What I think I missed most was a sense of belonging to set of values and culture that everyone understood. Yes, being British did mean something. Despite living there for four months, I still fell to some extent on the outside. As I spoke to pupils and teachers, I realised how much we are a product of our own upbringing and expectations. In England, we expect to have choice - in education this means a choice of school, of subjects, of exam boards etc. In France, the Education Nationale leaves little scope for local regional variations and yet virtually everyone I talked to was proud of the French education system. English pupils generally react negatively to the thought of a French style Baccalaureate with 7 or 8 compulsory subjects to the age of 18, but despite conducting a survey with a wide

range of classes, few French pupils seemed to be discontent with the compulsory breath of their programmes.

As the term came to a close, I felt that as well as establishing valuable links, I had achieved a better understanding of the French people I had worked with and met and above all a greater respect for the differences which underline our two cultures. I couldn't help feeling that 'L'Entente Cordiale' for me was more than just a historical agreement made to avoid arguing between our two cultures but a deeper knowledge of what really makes the French tick. I trust in different ways that pupils will benefit from my experiences and not least be inspired to spend time in the countries whose languages they are studying.

To fellow language teachers, I would recommend the experience to anyone who feels they need their linguistic and cultural batteries renewing. Allow plenty of time for the planning stages and think through the implications both for your school in England (who must be happy to receive your French counterpart) as well as for yourself on a personal level. Of course there are challenges but these can revitalise you both as a person and a teacher.

I certainly felt I was returning to my classes with a new freshness and enthusiasm and that French was alive for me in a new way. I also appreciated much more the support we enjoy in the UK from departmental and other colleagues.



Core skills in ICT

Wednesday 10 May 2006 to
Wednesday 12 July 2006
10.00-16.00, CILT, London
£350 or £325 for members of
the CILT Direct scheme

Adelante con el español

Thursday 25 May 2006,
10.00-16.00, CILT, London
£80 or £70 for members of
the CILT Direct scheme

www.CILT.org.uk

ATB8 Conference 2006

David Cragg-James
ISMLA Committee

In the new and capable hands of Secretary Ian Popely of Ashville College, Harrogate, the annual MFL Conference took place, with some financial support from ISMLA, on Friday March 10th. at Leeds Grammar School, Leeds holding its last MFL Conference before amalgamation with Leeds Girls' High School. The Conference has become a favourite with language teachers at Northern Independent Schools, Secondary and Preparatory, and at interested Schools in the maintained sector, 46 schools being represented with more than 80 delegates. The formula, well-tried and tested over the years, remained much the same as in recent years, talks and workshops on topics of interest to linguists alternating with time for 'networking' or just meeting old friends and acquaintances from the language world, time to browse the excellent publishers' and soft- and hardware manufacturers' Exhibition and (an innovation) time to hear selected exhibitors' presentations, the whole punctuated by refreshment breaks and a delicious lunch,

courtesy of the host school's caterers. Indeed the magnificent setting at Leeds and the warmth of Duncan Moynihan's MFL Department's and the school's hospitality did much to contribute to the success of this meeting. Faithful to the 'Ellis meeting' principles of the Area Training Boards' roots, this conference brought together the secondary and preparatory sectors by providing fare of mutual interest or via a branching programme. Sadly, this year, the state sector responded only minimally to invitations to attend, although one appreciates the difficulties encountered by maintained school teachers in obtaining leave of absence, even for such sterling value-for-money in-service training.

A charismatic Simon Green of Trinity and All Saints' College treated the plenary opening session to an inspired and useful and yet light and humorous talk on 'Effective Strategies for Teaching Languages across the Ability Range'. The strategies invoked were accessible to all and it is likely that many of these will be implemented by Simon's enthusiastic audience. Delegates were then invited to chose between Thérèse Comfort's 'Developments in Primary Language Learning' and Wendy Adeniji's 'Using the Interactive Whiteboard in MFL Teaching'. Thérèse is Primary

Languages Adviser for CILT, and Wendy a MFL and IT Consultant, each mistress of their fields. Delegates learnt of a degree of success in the Government's overall plan for languages and Wendy will have influenced many a delegate's budget submissions for 2007-8.

Exhibitors' presentations included John McNutt's talk on Asset Languages. This amounted to an introduction for many to Asset Languages, the realisation of the much discussed 'languages ladder', proving an increasingly popular alternative to traditional means of recognition and accreditation of candidates' language skills.

After lunch delegates were faced with an *embarras du choix*, initially between Sandra Longden of St. Mary's Lincoln, who spoke instructively on 'French at KS2 - preparing for inspection', Frank Hill and Dan Wilton of Leeds Grammar School who offered a second bite at the whiteboard cherry based upon their own practice and experience - 'Teaching using the Interactive Whiteboard' - and Ian Pearson, Safety Manager for NST, who spoke on 'Educational Trips and Exchanges - getting the most out of them', a topic much discussed by language teachers anxious to provide the best possible experience abroad for their charges. Immediately thereafter the choice was

provided by Sally Maynard, experienced PMFL teacher and author of several PMFL resources, who spoke on 'Primary Teaching Resources', Duncan Byrne, Chairman of ISMLA and Head of Department at Whitgift, who provided much food for thought on 'The position of the Second MFL at Primary and Secondary Level', concentrating understandably on the latter, and Kevin Dunne of Ampleforth, whose 'Assessment at GCSE and A Level' called upon his wide experience of examining and of high level involvement with both ALL and ISMLA.

The target language talks in French, German and Spanish ended the day on a high, all speakers of the highest calibre and able to provide that authentic language experience which lifts the mind and stimulates the faculties whilst providing material which is susceptible to immediate use in the AS or A2 classroom. All three speakers have spoken to ATB8 Conferences before and again provided agonising choices for many. Ruth Becerra in her second year as Ampleforth's Spanish Assistant spoke on 'Latin America Today', and Régis Faugier and Thomas Reimann, both teachers and freelance linguists, translators, trainers, authors of language-teaching materials, both involved in the excellent Philip

Allen Updates student days and teacher courses, lectured respectively on 'La France et l'Europe' and on 'Die deutsche Wirtschafts- und Politikkrise: was steckt dahinter?'

For fare such as that provided by this conference many delegates and contributors had travelled considerable distances. Few would argue that their journey had not been worthwhile!

The Mandarin Conference

Wellington College
February 28th

David Cragg-James
ISMLA Committee

"Quand la Chine s'éveillera, le monde tremblera." (attributed to Napoléon Bonaparte)

".....even as the number of English speakers expands further there are signs that the global predominance of the language may fade within the foreseeable future." (Lord Kinnock in his Forward to Graddol "English Next")

In the wake of the recent much publicised decision by Brighton College to accord curricular status to Mandarin Chinese, Anthony Seldon's February 28th.

Conference at Wellington College - "Why every school should offer Mandarin" - sought to recognise this movement within the educational world, both state and independent, and promote it. Some 200 delegates and guests from all sectors, from the Chinese Embassy and from Chinese governmental organisations, from language interest groups, from the publishing world and press heard Dr. Seldon and other distinguished speakers laud the long overdue embedding of the teaching of Chinese in many British schools and colleges and advocate the furtherance of this trend, an abandoning of a curriculum for the 20th. Century and a forging of a curriculum for the 21st. North Lincolnshire, Essex and Norfolk, it was reported, had all committed themselves to the introduction of Mandarin across the authority. The reasons for the inclusion of Mandarin as a major modern language within the national curriculum were unassailable, argued Dr. Seldon, a point taken up later by Martin Davidson, Deputy Director General of the British Council, and again by Mike Dillon of Durham University. The size of her economy, the extent of her economic growth (9% per annum!), the transformation of Asia, all argued in favour of China's becoming the dominant world power of the 21st.

Century. Not to engage with such a giant by seeking the better to understand her via the study of her language as the expression of her culture would amount to madness. The arrogance underlying the assumption that a common knowledge of English would suffice to facilitate international trade, understanding and world peace was now considered an example of misplaced and discredited arrogance. (One was reminded of Bundeskanzler Willi Brandt's famous statement: "If I'm selling to you, I speak your language. If I'm buying, dann müssen Sie Deutsch sprechen.") The traffic must be two-way. A recent publication by David Graddol ('English Next' - available on the British Council website) had highlighted the disadvantages pertaining to monolingualism in a world increasingly bilingual. Lord Kinnock in his Forward to this work comments: "David Graddol concludes that monoglot English graduates face a bleak economic future as qualified multilingual youngsters from other countries are proving to have a competitive advantage over their British counterparts in global companies and organisations." Graddol comments that "The attractiveness of Mandarin to learners across the world is growing, and language schools

in many countries are expanding their provision to include it. Unlike the enthusiasm for learning Japanese which was prompted by the economic rise of Japan, there are reasons why interest in Mandarin may remain a long-term trend.", and that "English is no longer the 'only show in town'. Other languages now challenge the dominance of English in some regions. Mandarin and Spanish, especially, have become sufficiently important to be influencing national policy priorities in some countries". Graddol quotes Mark Davis in the latter's 'GDP by Language' - "While English is a major language, it only accounts for around 30% of the world Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and is likely to account for less in the future. Neglecting other languages means ignoring quite significant potential markets."

Speakers at the Conference did not play down the difficulties facing British and European children in learning a non-Indo European language, nor did they dismiss the competing claims of languages such as Arabic and, for example, Spanish for a place in a modern curriculum, calling however for Mandarin to be accorded a status in terms of numbers of learners in the British curriculum comparable

to that now occupied by the usual Western European languages. (There was some evidence offered to the effect that some special needs pupils might be coping better with Chinese characters than with English spelling!) It was important, furthermore, that a start was made at a young age, critical indeed to engage with younger children when difficulties, for example with the script, were not so pronounced as at secondary level. Suggestions that the teaching of the script be subordinated to a concentration upon spoken forms in order to enhance uptake in schools met with considerable resistance; the culture, it was felt, would thus only partially be imparted. The British Council's China Programme had registered the numbers of state and independent schools now offering Mandarin in the hundreds and increasing. Martin Davidson however drew a distinction between teaching Chinese and teaching the culture, stressing that knowledge of the culture could only be imparted satisfactorily on a cross-curricular basis. Dominic Register, Senior Development Officer with the Council, outlined the support available to schools and teachers through the Council, support including the two-week immersion courses at the end of

the summer term, the provision of Chinese Language Assistants - often fully trained teachers, professional development days for teachers of Mandarin, course text books and materials, and advice on introducing the language into the curriculum. The attention of delegates was also drawn to the HSBC's Gap Year Scholar's scheme open to future undergraduates able to link their desire to spend a year living and working in China with their proposed degree course. Conference was later addressed more fully on the HSBC's China activities and opportunities by John Morewood, Manager of the Bank's Graduate Recruitment and Management team, John reminding delegates that monolingualism was now the exception rather than the rule amongst the planet's millions. In similar vein, Katharine Carruthers, Chinese Network Co-ordinator of the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, provided details of the considerable shared resources and assistance available through the Network for teachers of Mandarin, there being to date some 140 teachers of Mandarin sharing experiences and materials via the email forum. Dana Ross-Wawrzynski, Head of Altrincham Grammar School for Girls, Margaret Lenton, Head of Slough Grammar School, Chris Williams, Senior Deputy at Lincoln Christ's Hospital School,

and Joan Deslandes, Head of Kingsford Community School provided informative and inspirational accounts of their schools' introduction of Mandarin into the Curriculum and of their willingness to advise schools contemplating such a move. These speakers briefly narrated the course of events leading to the adoption by their schools of Mandarin as a curricular subject, the initial impetus having been provided by a civic link, the visit of a group of Chinese pupils and/or teachers, the realisation that "we cannot become what we want to be by remaining where we are" (Joan Deslandes) or that local indifference to matters or persons Chinese needed addressing in the light of the probability of our pupils' increasing contacts with China and the Chinese. ("We will have to engage" as Martin Davidson remarked: the question as to whether we engage as partner or competitor seemed not an irrelevant one to Mike Dillon.) The need for patience in pursuing links was stressed, as was the necessity of involving the whole school and, where possible, community. The view was expressed that the qualifications framework current in British Schools at present was a hindrance to the successful introduction of Chinese, this view being countered by reference,

initially from the floor, to Asset Languages' implementation of the so-called "languages ladder", this providing a possible way forward.

Examples of the practice of teaching Mandarin at primary level were provided by Dr. Xiu Ping of Monkseaton Community High School, and at secondary level by Lisa Wang of Calday Grange Grammar School. Zhou Shoujin of SOAS spoke on "Mandarin in the 21st. Century" and Michelle Tate of Katharine Lady Berkeley's School on "ICT and Mandarin". In addition to John Morewood, referred to above, George Zhang of SOAS and Shona Harper of VSO spoke of the opportunities available to those studying Chinese, the former speaker drawing attention to those Universities where Mandarin was available as a single subject - Cambridge, Edinburgh, Leeds, Oxford and SOAS, London - , and those, including the above, where Mandarin might be read as a subject in combination, most frequently, with Business Studies or Economics, and the latter speaker commenting positively on "the biggest roller-coaster ride of (your) life" in connection with the experience of VSO in China.

What are we to make of all this? We do not unfortunately have the benefit of a tabula rasa, (otherwise the 'languages

ladder’/Asset Languages might have seen a more whole-hearted welcome!). Our schools teach for the most part the languages of Europe and there are good reasons for continuing so to do as well as concern that enthusiasm for the introduction of Mandarin has, in some instances, been responsible for the abandonment of, for example, German in our schools’ curricula. On the other hand, the reasons for the promotion of Mandarin do seem, to the present writer, compelling, and, as a result of Government’s recent policies, there are undoubtedly more schools in Britain whose pupils might benefit from the help available (and outlined in part above) to embark upon a course of study which might bring considerable rewards to them and to the world in which they will live. In the independent sector, where languages are perhaps not so imperilled, it is perhaps time to consider whether diversification might not argue Mandarin’s inclusion as a curricular equal to the more traditional languages studied. For those linguists for whom Mandarin is not available at school, then encouragement to embark upon the language at University should be less sparingly available.

RECLAIMING INDEPENDENCE - ASSET LANGUAGES IN ACTION

Asset Languages is a fresh and accessible means of assessment that is already beginning to attract the attention of the Independent sector. Designed to recognise achievement in over 20 languages; from French, German and Spanish to Arabic, Chinese and Russian, it uses the Can Do Statements of the DfES Languages Ladder. The suite of qualifications is being developed by Cambridge Assessment through OCR and Cambridge ESOL, as part of the National Languages Strategy.

As a proficiency scheme, not linked to any particular course of study, Asset has the potential to empower Independent school language departments and enable them to reclaim the curriculum.

The scheme is simple - learners can be assessed separately in the four skill areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing, over the six stages of the Languages Ladder from Beginner to Mastery.

As each skill forms a qualification in its own right, learners can combine one or two skills in several languages, or be working further up the ladder in some skills without being held back by the others.

Independent schools have already begun to use Asset Languages with learners of all ages:

- o to accredit the progress of students who are taking an additional language such as Chinese.

- o to reward the skills of younger learners who may already have several years of language learning under their belts

- o to support transition of children from Preparatory to Senior or Upper Schools with a clear and consistent level of their achievement in languages

With the introduction of the Advanced Stage of Asset Languages in September 2006 and Proficiency and Mastery Stages to come, the options will also be there to extend choices for able learners in all years. Students can progress to Advanced Stage in Years 10 and 11 without being constrained by GCE and Grade A GCE students can demonstrate their skills at Proficiency and beyond. Enrichment courses can cover

everything from General Studies Russian to Japanese for Business.

Nick Mair of Dulwich College, London has identified three key advantages of Asset Languages since becoming involved in the Asset Languages pilot in 2004/05:

"To my mind there are three strengths:

- an achievable exam to motivate in the early stages - particularly useful for retaining those starting a second MFL.

- Not all skills have to be examined - great for many pupils who stumble at GCSE - and indeed for a prospective employer - written skills may not be that important if almost all of your work is using a phone.

And as the Languages Ladder takes into account the Common European Framework for languages, Asset Languages uses level that are recognised by language speakers around the whole world (except perhaps England!)"

- The scheme offers flexible options to endorse students' achievements: Teacher Assessment tasks that can be done in the classroom as part of normal lessons, for learners to

gain informal certificates on the spot and/or OCR marked External Assessments, which lead to formal qualifications. Asset Languages supports existing schemes of work and teaching methods - it is a skills-based assessment scheme, not a course of study.

Assessment materials are available in eight languages in 2006; French, German, Italian, Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, Japanese, Panjabi and Urdu at Breakthrough, Preliminary and Intermediate stages. The Advanced Stage of Asset Languages (Level 3) and up to 15 new languages will be rolled out from September this year.

To find out more about Asset Languages and how to register as a centre, please visit www.assetlanguages.org.uk or call 01223 553998



ISMLA

welcomes any articles, reports and other contributions that would be of interest to members.

Please contact
Thomas Underwood
for further details
(See inside cover for contact information).

**Articles for the
Autumn Edition of
the Newsletter
should be with the
editor by
Wednesday 23rd
August 2006.**

**FRENCH and SPANISH
Sub-editors required!**

To write one article on recent French / Spanish cultural, social or political developments for each edition of the ISMLA newsletter.

If you are interested please contact

Thomas Underwood
(See inside cover for contact information)

Reviews

Avance 3

Anneli McLachlan
Colin Christie
Eleanor Mayes
Hodder & Stoughton
ISBN: 0340811781

Avance is aimed at the KS3 Framework. The pupil's book 3 is accompanied by Teacher's Resource Book, Workbook Pack A & B, Cassette Set and CD Set.

At first glance, Avance is a colourful, and culturally contemporary textbook. It is topic-based in which grammar points are covered in context.

Listening exercises feature regularly in each unit. The matching and ordering tasks provide a good way of revising key vocabulary for each topic. The progression in listening exercises allows more varied tasks such as gap-fill dictations and grammar-based listening exercises. These more complex exercises, however, are limited in number, as are the more traditional table-fill and note-taking tasks with longer listening passages.

The large number of reading activities which involve matching captions to images are satisfactory, although for some activities, it seems that pupils

would spend more time deciphering what the images exactly represent. In my opinion, the successful reading activities are those which are structured in their questioning and guide the pupil through dissecting a longer text. These tasks are aimed at developing pupils' reading skills by first requiring the pupils to scan for vocabulary and grammar, to skim the passage for information, and only then to answer comprehension questions.

There is ample opportunity for speaking activities in each unit. I particularly like the oral starters which are not necessarily linked to the new topic, but provide a good opportunity to revisit typical conversation topics with the group. This mirrors the way our French counterparts start most of their language lessons, which proves to have good results at this level. The topic-related speaking exercises are mostly role-plays which I believe would need additional structure prior to the pupils benefiting from the task. In these cases, this would involve building a more extensive vocabulary with the pupils, as they would most probably not wish to stick to the limited range of expression given.

The writing exercises progress from word to sentence and then to text level, and can be used to consolidate new language. The tasks are varied and often supported with a writing frame. For the more able, however, there is not enough opportunity to be creative and independent in their writing, and they may well, once again, find the structures too limiting.

Despite the grammar section at the back of the book, the grammar points are not clearly specified within the units and there are not enough grammar exercises to support the speaking and writing tasks. It is not to my preference that the grammar points do not have their own index at the start of the book. The vocabulary list at the back of the book serves as a glossary, but in addition to this, I would equally value a list of vocabulary categorised by topic at the end of each unit.

On the whole, Avance has some interesting activities, but its lack of clear grammatical progression means that it does not encourage maximum production of language. I would question its ability to stretch the more able pupils.

Tina Postalian
University College School

Avance 3

Anneli Mclachlan
Colin Christie
Eleanor Mayes
Hodder & Stoughton
ISBN: 0340811781

“Avance” is a new course for Key Stage 3 French which has been designed to cater for the KS3 MFL Framework as well as following the QCA Scheme of Work for KS3 French.

Each book is divided into six units. Within each unit, there are approximately seven chapters, each occupying a double-page spread within the book. At the start of each new chapter, the Framework objectives addressed are listed in accessible English for the pupils. The teacher’s book contains the same information, but in the format in which it appears in the Framework itself.

The double-page spread incorporates activities for all skills, and there are additional activities at the end of the textbook, again for all four skill areas. The pupil’s book is colourful and up-to-date, focussing mainly on France but with due regard to other Francophone countries, especially in Avance 2 and Avance 3. The content does however become more sparse as

the books progress, and able pupils in Years 8 and 9 would require supplementary material from the teacher. Instructions are given in both French and English in Avance 1 Units 1-3. From Avance 1 Unit 4, instructions are only given in French. This practice is replicated in the pupil workbooks, published in an A and B format to allow differentiation.

The teacher's book is divided into four sections; teacher notes, OHTs, worksheets and summative assessment. Assessment tasks are well differentiated, allowing good Year 9 pupils to achieve Level 7 in all skill areas. The teacher notes are effectively a sample lesson plan, with a starter, main activity and plenary suggested for each chapter. Relevant worksheets and OHTs are referred to within these notes rather than separately at the end of the unit. This approach makes the teacher's book a user-friendly resource.

Whereas the pupil textbook and teacher's book are attractive and user-friendly, the supplementary resources (OHTs, worksheets and interactive whiteboard software) are somewhat disappointing. The OHTs are published in the teacher's book in a photocopyable format rather

than being printed separately in colour. The worksheets closely resemble the pupil workbooks and contain limited quantities of French. The interactive whiteboard software is a little better, being printed in colour and much more visually stimulating. However, it too contains only short extracts of French. As with the pupil textbooks, the additional resources would need to be supplemented with other materials for good groups.

Overall, this course would be most suitable for middle-ability pupils. Adaptation for high-ability pupils would require great effort on the part of the teacher. The additional resources are not particularly stimulating in any case. The course is sold on the basis that it has already fully incorporated the KS3 MFL Framework objectives, clearly a time-saving device for MFL departments who still need to address these, but my personal opinion is that Avance is not substantial enough in content.

Samantha Ryan
Birkdale School

A la carte

Danièle Bourdais
Sue Finnie
LCP

Are you always looking for interesting reading material for learners at Key stage 3 and struggling to find some? This could provide a solution.

A la carte consists of a box containing 3 packs of reading cards, each pack aimed at a different level, answer cards and a CD-rom containing a PDF version of each card. The cards are A4 size, colourful and user friendly. The cards are double-sided; one side consists of a text (which can take different format - e.g. a cartoon, post cards etc.) with comprehension exercises and one side consists of further reading exercises with extension writing tasks. Difficult vocabulary is translated. The cards are attractive and the topics are varied - some are boy-orientated topics such as football, others are girl-orientated ones like fashion, others are neutral like fairytales.

This pack can be used in different ways at different levels. You can choose to use them for regular 10 minutes reading sessions either at the

start or end of lessons. You can also devote whole lessons using the cards for some individual reading practices, swapping cards every ten minutes or so. Moreover, the CD-rom in conjunction with an interactive whiteboard, allows a whole class use of one card at a time and could once again be used for starting or finishing lessons. Whichever way you choose to use them, the students will be engaged provided it is not overused and it is timed well. The different levels of reading provided by the cards make differentiation within the class easy and the instructions - which are in English - help students to be both more independent and confident. The students seem to like the novelty of this resource and it makes a change from the boring old support that is the textbook!

Overall it is a good resource which encourages students at all level of key stage 3 to read and be independent, and after all, let's not forget that, after all, French is not only just about textbooks - so let's get reading!

M-L Delvallée
Sevenoaks School



Gramática práctica

Pyrrha Powell

LCP

ISBN 190510118 X

This collection of 88 photocopiable worksheets would be an asset to any Spanish department. They are ideal for Key Stage 4 students to learn or consolidate their knowledge of all the grammatical concepts required for GCSE.

The presentation of the material has to be this publication's best selling-point. The layout of both the book as a whole and each worksheet is refreshingly clear. The information presented to the student is neither overwhelmingly dense nor drab, and the original use of cartoon is a successful way to introduce new topics. The appearance of these superficially entertaining sheets effectively serves to engage the student into a more complex set of grammatical rules and exercises. The various tasks reflect those of a modern textbook or GCSE exam paper: gap-fills, multiple choice, translation and match-up activities.

To conclude, the worksheets are self-explanatory (all rules and practice questions are together on the same page) and their user-friendliness should

therefore necessitate very little teacher input. Any difficult vocabulary is translated and the sheets are thankfully just the right size to be neatly and easily photocopied. And, as with all the best teaching resources, the answers are provided at the back for quick reference when in doubt!

Alice Brooking

Sevenoaks School

Übung macht den Meister

Marian Jones

LCP

This is an excellent resource for KS 4 and students revising for GCSE. It is well laid out with clear examples for student to follow. There is a lot of opportunity for gap filling with plenty of support in German to give the student confidence. There is both variety of activity and layout to hold the student's interest and keep them interested and focussed. Answers are usefully placed at back for reference and to serve hopefully as an incentive as students can chart their own progress.

Ralph Ruge

Sevenoaks School

Einfach Grammatik

Steve Williams

LCP

Grammar to be covered is usefully outlined at the beginning of the booklet. There is a lot of German support by way of examples to enable the student to feel confident about attempting the exercises. Bold type is used for salient grammatical points which makes it easy for the student to refer to while completing the accompanying tasks. The pictures are fun and motivational. Answers are clearly laid at the back and the material covered is relevant and useful for the GCSE exam. All in all, an extremely valuable resource for GCSE.

Ralph Ruge

Sevenoaks School

Lies mich 1

Sabine Gläsmann

Steve Williams

LCP

A fantastically rich resource box full of useful vocabulary in context. Some of my colleagues found the vocabulary mix on the back of the cards a bit random (i.e. not like your average GCSE list) but this strikes me as much more realistic than any of the

GCSE lists. We currently use the box as a permanent fixture in the classroom for whoever has finished a given task. These pupils then get to pick a card, and they are fighting over the privilege! It is astounding how much can be learnt by just looking closely at an interesting visual stimulus. Three cheers to the makers of this valuable teaching tool!

Ralph Ruge

Sevenoaks School

Potential Reviewers!

Are you so impressed by a new resource that you would like to recommend it to newsletter readers?

Alternatively, are you keen to review any new material that we receive from publishers (reviewers may keep the resource for the department)?

If the answer to either question is "yes", please contact the Nathalie Fayaud, Reviews Editor or Thomas Underwood, Newsletter Editor. Their contact details can be found on the inside cover.

Mozartjahr 2006 - ein Genie wird 250 Jahre alt

Stefanie Schmiedel
Northwood College

Als am 27. Januar 1756 dem Hofkomponisten und Vizekapellmeister Leopold Mozart ein Sohn namens Joannes Chrysostomus Wolfgangus Theophilus Mozart geboren wurde, gab es keine Supermärkte und kein Telefon. Auch ein Wochenendseminar, dessen Zweck die Vermittlung der Herstellung von Mozartkugeln ist, war vor 250 Jahren ziemlich undenkbar. Im Jahre 2006 jedoch, kann man sich ein Leben ohne die Musik Wolfgang Amadé Mozarts, wie er sich selbst nannte, kaum vorstellen. Und auch wenn man kein Fan klassischer Musik ist, so wird einem die kleine Nachtmusik schon einmal begegnet sein: sei es im Supermarkt an der Tiefkühltruhe oder in der Telefonschlange der Autoversicherung. Der Musik Mozarts wird eine entspannende Wirkung nachgesagt, und so bedienen sich auch Schwangerschaftskurse und Schulen seiner zauberhaften und leichten Melodien. Mozart selbst sagte, dass ihn „das Komponieren weniger anstrengt als das Ausruhen“.

Das kurze Leben Mozarts hingegen verlief alles andere als harmonisch oder entspannend. Von früher Kindheit an komponierte Mozart und fuhr mit Vater und Schwester auf Tournee durch Europa, wo er als Wunderkind gefeiert wurde. Der frühe Verlust der Mutter und ein gespanntes Verhältnis zu seinem Vater prägten Mozart ebenso wie seine eigene Ehe und der Tod fünfer seiner sieben Kinder. Hinzu kamen Geldprobleme, Rivalitäten unter den Hofmusikern und Auseinandersetzungen mit seinen Arbeitgebern, die Mozart das Leben als Konzertmeister in Salzburg und als freischaffender Komponist in Wien schwer machten. Er starb 1791 und wurde in einem einfachen Grab, dessen genaue Lage unbekannt ist, auf dem Wiener Friedhof bestattet.

2006 ist das Jahr für klassische Musikliebhaber, bei denen Mozarts Kompositionen aufgrund ihrer Originalität und Genialität einen besonderen Platz im Herzen haben. Es ist auch ein großes Jahr für die beiden österreichischen Städte Salzburg und Wien. Und auch für so ziemlich jeden, der aus dem Komponisten und Menschen Mozart einen Profit machen möchte. Dazu gehört der Musikverlag, der dieses Jahr alle Werke Mozarts auf 180 CDs herausgebracht hat. Oder der

Reiseveranstalter, bei dem man eine „Musikalische Zugreise“ nach Salzburg, Wien und Prag buchen kann. Candlelight dinner vor der Vorstellung des Don Giovanni ist inklusive. Natürlich gibt es neben dem Verkaufsschlager

„Mozartkugeln“ auch Mozart T-Shirts und seit diesem Jahr, im Stil der Anti Britney Spears Kampagne, auch „Anti Mozart T-Shirts“.

Es bleibt zu hoffen, dass man sich im Mozartjahr vor lauter T-Shirts und Candlelight dinners auch auf den Menschen Mozart besinnt, dessen Werke zu einem bedeutenden Teil unserer Musikgeschichte geworden sind.

Veranstaltungen im Mozartjahr

www.austria.info

www.mozart2006.at

www.wienmozart2006.at/

Über das Leben und Wirken Mozarts

www.mozart.ard.de

<http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mozart>

Mozart für Kinder

[www.blinde-](http://www.blinde-kuh.de/kinder/mozart.html)

[kuh.de/kinder/mozart.html](http://www.blinde-kuh.de/kinder/mozart.html)

www.littlemadeus.de

La musica fa bene alla salute!

Ernestina Meloni

American School London

Non ci crederete ma anche il cuore va a tempo di rock ! Infatti anche l'organo tanto caro agli italiani, spesso presente nella lingua italiana : affari di cuore, cuori solitari, cuori infranti, problemi che stanno a cuore, e' un rubacuori, e cosi via ... va a tempo di musica, perche' viene influenzato dalle note musicali. Ma a fare la differenza non sono gli stili musicali, quanto il ritmo delle sinfonie. Se rock e techno aumentano i battiti cardiaci e fanno respirare piu' velocemente, anche un assolo di chitarra elettrica, o persino le note melanconiche di un violino, inducono un aumento della frequenza del battito cardiaco. Il silenzio, al contrario, riporta l'organismo alla normalita'.

La musica si conferma come un formidabile stimolante per il corpo umano, secondo un'indagine condotta recentemente da due studiosi dell'Universita' di Pavia in collaborazione con un medico inglese. Sono stati presi in esame le reazioni di 12 musicisti e 12 persone di pari eta' che non suonano alcun strumento. A tutti loro hanno fatto sentire

una serie di stili e ritmi diversi, con intervalli di due pause di assoluto silenzio. Rispetto alla condizione di partenza, le musiche veloci inducono ad un aumento del battito cardiaco e della pressione arteriosa. Qualsiasi ritmo modifica la circolazione del sangue all'interno delle arterie del cervello, indipendentemente dal tipo di musica. Ma a seconda del ritmo la velocità del flusso sanguigno tende a calare o aumentare. Questi effetti sfumano progressivamente appena ritorna il silenzio. Esiste infine una spiccata differenza nel modo di percepire il ritmo tra esperti e non : i musicisti tendono ad avere il respiro più sensibile alle note rispetto a chi non suona alcuno strumento. Insomma : in base a questo studio chi vuole rilassarsi deve scegliere ritmi dolci e lenti, magari sfruttando calde sinfonie new age, sapendo che nelle pause di silenzio l'organismo riduce ulteriormente la tensione. Chi invece desidera avere l'organismo pronto a reagire agli stimoli deve scegliere ritmi più veloci. Del resto la musicoterapia ha già dimostrato la sua validità come le note hanno un potenziale effetto sul corpo, utilizzata per ridurre lo stress, per migliorare la circolazione, per aiutare atleti a spingere le loro abilità o anche per persone sotto

trattamento fisioterapico dopo lesioni neurologiche. Quindi ... via libera al ritmo ... sfrenato della musica !

Setting standards for leadership

October 2006 to June 2007, CILT, London

£250 or £225 for members of the CILT Direct scheme

Head Start

Wednesday 28 June 2006 09.30-16.00, CILT, London

£135 or £125 for members of the CILT Direct scheme

www.CILT.org.uk

Eclaircies ou turbulences dans le secteur aérien ?

Cécile Léonard
Dresden International School

Lors d'une conférence internationale à Paris qui s'est tenue les 28 février et 1er mars dernier, Jacques Chirac a accueilli les représentants de 95 pays, 60 organisations non gouvernementales et 17 organisations internationales afin de discuter et mettre en place des moyens innovants efficaces pour lutter contre la pauvreté dans les pays du Sud et y améliorer la santé. Il s'agissait essentiellement de répondre aux exigences du millénaire, fixées par l'ONU en 2000 et visant à réduire de moitié la pauvreté dans le monde d'ici à l'année 2015.

Le projet qui tient le plus à coeur au Président de la République Française et qu'il a lancé il y a environ trois ans consiste en la ponction d'une contribution de solidarité sur les billets d'avion. Pourquoi l'avion ? Tout simplement et naturellement parce que le transport aérien de passagers est un des principaux moteurs de la mondialisation. Selon un rapport de la République Française, le trafic devrait continuer à augmenter de 5% tous les ans, assurant une

rentrée d'argent continue. Il est aussi bien connu que les voyageurs aériens n'appartiennent pas aux catégories les plus pauvres de la population.

Cette idée de prélèvement de solidarité a été approuvée par le Parlement français en décembre dernier. Elle a également récolté l'adhésion d'un grand nombre d'institutions internationales telles que l'ONU, la Banque Mondiale, le G8 et il va de soi que les ONG lui ont aussi apporté leur vif soutien. Cette nouvelle taxe entrera en application dans l'Hexagone l'été prochain à partir du 1er juillet. Elle sera de 1€ par trajet sur les vols intérieurs et de 10€ pour les autres destinations. Dans les classes affaires et en première, ce chiffre sera multiplié par 4. Il est prévu que les passagers en transit sur le territoire français seront exemptés.

D'autres pays tels que le Brésil, le Chili, la Grande-Bretagne, l'Inde, la Norvège et la Thaïlande se sont engagés à instaurer une taxation similaire à l'avenir. L'idée d'un prélèvement de solidarité internationale (PSI) se développe progressivement. Pourtant, si de nombreux pays se sont montrés favorables à cette mesure, sa mise en place sur le plan international reste assez lente. Cependant, pour

l'organisation ATTAC, cette initiative est excellente car elle démontre qu'une fiscalité internationale est envisageable et « elle témoigne qu'il est possible d'agir à partir de l'échelon national dans le cadre de la mondialisation ». En effet, l'argent récolté (une somme qu'on estime à 200 millions par an rien qu'en France), permettrait de faciliter l'accès aux médicaments afin d'enrayer les grandes pandémies comme le SIDA, le paludisme, la tuberculose et la malaria dans de nombreux pays en voie de développement.

Malgré toutes ces bonnes intentions, ce nouvel impôt ne fait pas l'unanimité, notamment au sein des compagnies aériennes. En effet, celles-ci y voient une menace pour le secteur de l'aviation. Elles anticipent que le nombre des voyageurs pourrait être amené à diminuer, ce qui engendrerait des conséquences négatives sur leur activité avec notamment une perte d'emplois, le nombre de 3000 à 4000 suppressions de postes ayant été évoqué. Ceci reste à voir.

Un autre argument mentionné est qu'il serait possible de contourner cet impôt par la délocalisation. Mais cette possibilité est-elle vraiment réalisable ? Il faut rappeler que le prélèvement de l'impôt se base sur la territorialité, et non

sur la nationalité, ce qui signifie que les compagnies doivent prélever ladite somme non pas en fonction de leur nationalité ou pays d'origine mais si leurs avions décollent d'un pays participant à l'initiative.

Les Etats-Unis ont également manifesté leur opposition au projet de souche française. En aucun cas, ils ne soutiennent l'idée d'une taxe supplémentaire dans un secteur qui se voit déjà fragilisé par la hausse du prix des carburants.

Heureusement, une participation universelle n'est pas nécessaire pour collecter des fonds. Evidemment, plus la participation des pays riches sera importante, plus les sommes collectées seront élevées et plus l'impact sera considérable pour les pays en voie de développement.

Many thanks to Cécile for her tremendous contributions to the newsletter over the past few years.

We wish her well in her new ventures.

Learn German: the World Cup Edition



The football World Cup will start in a few months. The Goethe-Institut in the UK tries to use this great international event to draw some further attention on German language learning and teaching. Some materials were designed that reflect this endeavour throughout a strong, recognizable green colour: both the Goethe-Institut and the sport on the green use this colour for their image. Posters and a set of postcards have been developed.

These printed media refer to England's ambition to win the cup. The poster indeed poses the phrase: 'Easier said than done'. The sentence has an ambiguous meaning, because either learning German and winning the title is not too simple. Postcards and poster form a unity: the names of 12 English football stars are part of the game. The postcards with motifs like 'Beckham' can be used in various ways, e.g. as playcards on the football field which forms the back of the poster. The other side of the postcards displays a variety of German / English words on football. Easily, a little knowledge on German phrases for use during the World Cup is established.

Teachers in the UK can order these postcards for free from our Learn German Shop. This is the third part of the Learn German campaign. It is co-financed by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the Journal German Life and Letters, the Goethe-Institut and several German departments at Universities in the UK.



ISMLA

National Conference

2006



Chairman Duncan Byrne addresses delegates.