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**Testing Latin Literature: a case study into the variety of ways
to assess pupils in appreciation of Latin literature without
focusing exclusively on language**

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Abstract

The emergence of WJEC and renewed choice within Latin examinations now allows for discussion about what is or should be tested in Latin Literature. This paper examines various options for testing Latin Literature and measures them against proposed aims of literature, pupil attainment and pupil motivation. Classroom research is conducted using four different versions of assessment (including a trial of a Latin Literature unseen paper) as well as a semi-structured interview. The conclusion of this research highlights the need to tailor any assessment to suit the needs/abilities of individual students.

Testing Latin Literature: a case study into the variety of ways to assess pupils in appreciation of Latin literature without focusing exclusively on language

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My investigation considers four types of possible Latin Literature examinations. One based on the Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR) GCSE exam, a second on a new, as yet un-researched, Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC) exam, the third on a coursework style assessment and the fourth on an unseen passage. My focus was to discover which exams allowed students to express and be rewarded for a personal response. Moreover, I wanted to discover by which types of examination students were most motivated. A compelling reason for this study is the current changing situation of Latin examinations.

History suggests that examinations, like so many other British traditions, are reformed only at times of crisis

(Goacher, 1984: 115).

The Crisis

In 2004, the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) chose to cease offering examinations in Latin. The decision meant that OCR became the only exam board offering Latin from 2006. At the time, Dr. Peter Jones, the spokesperson for the Joint Association of Classical Teachers (JACT), commented: “There is a strong sense of outrage in the classical community at a policy that leaves only one board (OCR) to examine all classical languages” (BBC News, 2004).

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), along with the one exam board (OCR), effectively has the ultimate decision about how Latin should be taught since Latin is not a national curriculum subject and as such QCA are able to impose the curriculum by default. Such a situation means that how literature is tested actually forms a strong basis for how Latin is taught. In addition, the compulsory study of set text literature in the original language is, in itself, unique to classical languages as Modern Foreign Language (MFL) specifications, at A-level, have made the study of literature one of several options, including other non-literary topics (there is no literature topic at General Certificate of Secondary Education [GCSE]). There has been a trend in MFL towards functional skills of speaking a living language and, consequently, less time for the study of

literature; however, Latin, since it is not a living language, has not made such a trend and the role Latin literature should play within school is far from clear.

Literature Review

The Change of Focus for Latin Teaching

In this literature review, I am going to outline the way the focus of Latin teaching has changed over the past fifty years and how this has led to a greater emphasis on learning Latin in order to discover more about its literature and culture through its language. I shall describe how English can provide a strong basis for our understanding of the aims of studying literature with a view to personal response. Thirdly, I shall explain how examinations (and particularly Latin examinations) provide a barrier to meeting these aims of literature. Finally, I shall conclude by analysing in closer detail how far OCR and the new WJEC Latin literature examination specifications attempt to cohere with these aims of studying literature.

Fifty years ago it might have been considered strange for someone researching Latin to put such an emphasis on the study of literature without language. Bolgar (1963) was one who first championed a move away from technical language learning for its own sake to a focus on the study of Latin literature enabled by gaining a good *reading* knowledge of Latin arguing that such advantages offered by the language itself were too slight. This new focus created more reason for students who had no intention of continuing Latin to become enthusiastic about studying it, as now the course could be more inclusive without such a heavy technical focus on grammar learning. However, many Classics teachers had been brought up on the language approach and opposition to Bolgar was often strongly against such a radical change. Roberts and Mortimer (1967: 101) described anything that did not focus on rigorous language learning as simply “nothing except as sugar on the intellectual pill”.

‘Old’ Classics – The Debate in detail: Language versus Literature

The Roman rhetorician, Quintilian (ca.35-100CE), claimed that Roman education demanded *recte loquendi scientiam et poetarum enarrationem* (“the art of speaking correctly and the interpretation of authors” Quintilian 1.9.1). For the early part of the 20th century, schools focussed upon learning the Latin language and confined the *poetarum enarrationem* “interpretation of the authors” to

translation and attempting to mimic their style in prose composition. Sharwood Smith (1977: 50) explained that ‘Old’ Classics teaching was “too often rigorous merely about the surface meaning, but incurious about the nature of the text as a piece of literature”. This rigorous focus on surface meaning approach was extremely resistant to change. A focus on language was considered to aid how one understands literature: “All that is needed is to relate grammar intelligently to appreciation” (Quinn, 1966: 22).

There is no denying that in order to gain some understanding of Latin literature one must first have a firm grasp of the meaning. However, translating some Latin that forms part of a work of literature does not necessarily mean that one has engaged with the literature: “It is easy to confuse the act of translating with ‘doing literature’” (Doughty, 1966, p. 30). This problem is magnified with students who are new to the language and are often too focussed upon discovering the surface meaning (whether due to the teacher’s direction or their own) rather than gaining an understanding of the text. Moreover, teachers can provide an additional barrier, especially if their own education was based on such a language approach:

(they are) accustomed to regard all essays into the literature as ultimately a test of language, tests that are unsatisfactory unless the last grammatical detail has been securely hunted down, and the whole done over in the best literal translation equivalent.

(Doughty, 1966: 35)

On the tests that I set during my research, Doughty’s view did hold true as the students commented on how badly they thought they had done in terms of how little they were able to translate the passage. Nevertheless, there was an effort to move away from such purely linguistic understanding, referred to as the ‘new way’ (Sharwood Smith, 1977), which supported the idea that there was a strong need that “classical authors are treated as literature rather than as a matter of linguistic exercise alone” (Balme, 1966: 46).

Consequently, Latin literature became part of the trend within Classics teaching to move away from rigorous study of grammar to understanding literature beyond just translating the surface meaning.

The Link with English Literature

Classical reading should link up with English literature (Balme, 1963: 105)

A way to shed more light on the issue within Classics is to look to English. Protherough (1983) emphasised the need not to focus purely on linguistic criteria within the teaching of English literature: “A reader’s ability to tackle a novel cannot be assessed by isolating one element of his or her experience – the linguistic one” (Protherough, 1983: 157).

As in Latin, it would be wrong to deny that one can ignore language all together and forms of language, such as words, syntax and rhythm, do “contribute to the total form, not as fringe benefits but as inseparable elements of a ‘single effect’” (Britton 1978: 107). The literary interpretation of a passage may be affected by such linguistic considerations which even one of the students interviewed was able to appreciate: Student B: “Sometimes they (passages of Latin) can be translated in different ways but there’s one meaning which might be more relevant”. However, the need for developing interpretation need not be subordinate to the linguistic element.

The Aims of Studying Literature

Some of the processes of Key Stage 4 (KS4) English (QCA, 2008) which are particularly relevant to Latin literature include emphasis on the need to evaluate and make independent interpretations. If one considers the scale-ratings of Bloom’s taxonomy, evaluation is a high level cognitive process and should be an ultimate aim within teaching (Bloom, 1956). Moreover, the language analysis is not ignored but is placed with a view to gaining further understanding of the text. In addition, the processes contain a good deal of emphasis about being able to “[relate texts to their social and historical contexts](#)” as well as to appreciate the effects of “different cultures and traditions” (QCA, 2008: 88) – an aim particularly appropriate to historical Latin texts.

The aim of the study of literature is often described as to gain an ‘appreciation’ of literature or as to practise ‘literary criticism’. Such terms are avoided within the English National Curriculum as they are often highly problematic. Muir (1974) described ‘literary criticism’ as anything which contributes to the ‘understanding’ or ‘appreciation’ of a text but also mentioned that it could have a looser meaning relating to simple techniques for ‘teaching’ or ‘studying’ literature – an open-ended definition. Nevertheless, Muir was able to be more specific about his view of the aims of literature such as in ‘inherent satisfaction’ which can be seen in the potential opportunities which the National Curriculum for English sets out: “reading for pleasure” (QCA, 2008: 98). Bell, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Schools, in a world book day speech (2005) even stated how “for me, reading is first and foremost about pleasure” (as cited in Lister, 2007: 76). Muir also emphasised how literature can aid personal experience and understanding through responding to a text - compare: “respond to and act upon texts they have read” (QCA, 2008: 98). Finally, the idea that such reading can provide cross-curricular links (QCA, 2008: 98) is one which provides a strong argument for this need to engage with and respond to literature not only within English but also within Latin: “If we succeed,

we will scotch the idea that a classical education is a training in dead languages concerned with remote and irrelevant events” (Balme, 1963: 101).

There has been a renewed focus within Classics teaching on these aims of widening personal experience through response and enjoyment. Sharwood Smith (1977) himself wrote that literature can provide a medium through which we can analyse the world. Lister (2007) has most recently written about the importance of such a response to literature even at primary school level when promoting the use of discussion as part of introducing ‘The War with Troy’ audio CDs into English literacy lessons:

What matters most in this activity...is not whether they have the right answer but that they make a personal response based on their reading of the situation and can explain, and if necessary justify, their response to the others.

(Lister, 2007: 83)

Meeting the Aims

Sharwood Smith (1977) points out that the teaching of literature is actually a paradox since literature is not composed to be taught but for intrinsic pleasure or profit: “Teaching literature implies teaching pupils to read literature as it was written to be read – with profit and enjoyment” (Sharwood Smith, 1977: 55)

Protherough (1986) highlights the problems contained within this paradox by citing a survey conducted by Yorke (1978) in which English teachers were asked what their course aimed to achieve. The highest rated aims were ‘enjoyment’, ‘personal response’ and ‘widening experience’, whereas the least rated included ‘literary history’, ‘awareness of technique’ and ‘developing critical ability’. The highest rated aims are in keeping with the English National Curriculum. However, when the ‘Hull Enquiries’ (a research project based on ordinary classroom work where children were asked questions about their reading) asked 202 O-level students, “What do you see as the chief benefits you gain from studying literature?” these higher rated aims were not reflected in the students’ views (as cited in Protherough, 1986). 80% of students saw literary advantages, such as improving technical analysis, as the chief benefit, 30% mentioned linguistic advantages and only 15% mentioned anything to do with enjoyment or enhanced self-understanding.

These research projects were carried out over 30 years ago and, although much has changed within education over those years, the root cause of such a discrepancy between teachers’ aims and students’ own view is still prevalent today. The teachers were focussing on ‘subjective’ emotional responses whereas the students were focussing on more ‘objective’ critical thinking. The root cause for such divergent responses is due to assessment and the desire to make examinations cognitive and measurable which remains the aim even with the change from O-level to GCSEs. The result of

such polarisation of the subjective and objective within literature, which, in my opinion, Protherough (1983) rightly believes should be inseparable, is what Protherough terms a ‘broken-backed’ curriculum. This term means a curriculum where the aims of teachers are often ignored in favour of ‘teaching for the exam’.

Consequently, not only is the idea of ‘teaching’ literature paradoxical and difficult to apply but also the ideal aims of such ‘teaching’ are often ignored in favour of what is perceived necessary for examinations.

The Problem with Exams

Exams do a lot of good things: they measure progress, maintain standards, provide pupil incentive, and even serve as a guide for careers and university (Protherough, 1986). Nevertheless, to pupils and teachers, reading a book for examination is very different from reading a book for pleasure:

A pupil whose aim in reading a book is to pass an examination is less likely to make a personal response that is necessary if the book is meaningful to him than one reading for pleasure.

(Creek, 1966: 57)

The pressure of an exam syllabus can certainly have an adverse effect on students’ perception of literature. A quote from a student from the Hull Enquiry may serve as an example: “It seems as though we are reading the books only to answer the exam questions, not for ourselves” (as cited in Protherough, 1986: 17).

Such teaching to the exam is frequently seen by teachers at all levels as an obstacle but we do not have to accept this excuse: “We do not have to assume fatalistically that it is impossible to change the system...or that we can escape responsibility by blaming the system” (Protherough, 1983: 147).

The potential obstacle for Latin may be magnified and harder to overcome due to the actual (or at least perceived) difficulty of the exam.

Latin Literature Examinations – the difficulty

Coe (2006) researched into the relative difficulties of grades of different subjects. His method was to compare grades candidates achieved in their different subjects. The study involved the statistics of 678,722 pupils from the summer GCSE examinations for 2004. It concluded that “at grade C...Latin is about a grade harder than the next hardest subject” (Coe, 2006: 9). This research was not able to factor in conceptions such as interest and motivation which may have affected results.

Furthermore, Coe (2006: 11) does highlight that “Latin and Statistics might be examples of...‘under-timetabled’ subjects”. In fact, I have been to state and independent schools where Latin is taught in lunch hours, after and before school. Nevertheless, the perception (whether true or not) of the ‘difficulty’ of Latin adds its own woes to preparation for exams and affects the way teachers teach literature.

Analysing OCR – what they say and do

Currently the single Latin exam board (OCR) is changing the specifications so the one I discuss relates to the new specification, due for teaching in 2009. There are 2 compulsory language papers, and 2 literature papers – one verse and one prose – which are optional out of a choice of 3 remaining. I shall focus on the verse prescriptions. The aims of the verse paper are comparable to those put forward for KS4 English. There is still a focus on an “informed, personal response”, as well as “analytical and evaluative skills” (OCR, 2008, p. 5). Furthermore, the comparison with different cultures is covered within the aims to see “similarities and differences between the classical world and later times” (OCR, 2008, p. 5). In addition, the Assessment Objective (AO) for this paper states:

AO2: demonstrate an understanding and an appreciation of literature and/or other sources related to society and values of the classical world through analysis, evaluation and response.

(OCR, 2008, p. 18)

The assessment objective is consistent with the aims to focus on literary appreciation over linguistic analysis. This objective has recently changed from the previous specification which included one third AO1 as part of the compulsory verse literature paper (Unit 1942/22), which was related to analysis of the language. To my mind, OCR in their legacy GCSE was ambivalent as to what their main assessment objective was. In contrast, the new specification focuses more on the aims of literature comparable to those set out in English. Thus, there is much that is praiseworthy of the aims of the Latin literature paper, with a greater focus towards the elements of literary analysis and personal response governed by the new AO2.

However, when one considers the grade descriptions for grade C, another issue emerges: “They have sound knowledge and understanding of prescribed texts in the original language. They identify narrative aspects and appreciate simple points of style” (OCR, 2008: 31). Unlike the description for grade A, there is no mention of the need for an informed, personal response. One might argue that for lower ability levels this is harder to achieve to a high standard; however, one need only consider

the research from Lister (2007) which showed that even by primary school, all children had the capacity to produce some kind of personal response.

In addition, the questions on the paper include, for higher tier, a translation question, which seems to be primarily a test of language and part of AO1 in the same way that the legacy GCSE stated that it was. Furthermore, no memory aids are provided within the exam such as a copy of the text or any vocabulary, which brings to mind a comment made by another concerned pupil in the Hull Enquiry:

I don't believe so much of the marking should count for being able to remember the text word for word as this will not be a skill you will particularly need in later life.

(Protherough, 1986: 17)

Therefore, OCR seems to have an idea about what the aims of literature should be but these do not match the exam marking and questions which they have actually implemented.

Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC)

In response to the lack of choice for Latin GCSE exams, WJEC has created a new specification for a Latin Literature exam equivalent to a level 2 qualification. WJEC is proposing to split the Latin GCSE in half, offering a Certificate in Latin Language and Roman civilisation and a Certificate in Latin Literature. One of the reasons for this split comes from a study conducted by the Cambridge Schools Classics Project (CSCP) about the number of guided learning hours (GLH) spent for a Latin GCSE; the average, surveyed from questionnaires distributed to schools, was 272 hours (Griffiths, 2009). The GLH for a GCSE subject is set by QCA to around 120-140 hours. Consequently, Latin, despite seeming to be “a grade harder than the next hardest subject” (Coe, 2006), was still having more than twice the time spent on it than recommended for a GCSE.

The specification for the new Latin Literature paper is still in the draft phase (last accessed 24/03/09); however, many of the aims remain the same as OCR including a need for “an informed, personal response” (WJEC, 2009: 9). One notable inclusion is an aim to “enjoy reading and studying literature” (WJEC, 2009: 9) which links well to the views mentioned by Protherough and others above. The paper does not require a translation element, provides a vocabulary and copy of the Latin text but, perhaps most significantly, has a C grade description requiring that candidates “are beginning to develop a personal response to what they read” (WJEC, 2009: 23). Consequently, there is a focus on personal response throughout the ability range. The paper also contains the

option of controlled assessment whereby the students choose a passage of Latin to write about (WJEC, 2009: 19), which is a new option for Latin Literature.

How does the literature affect my study?

With the introduction of a new level 2 qualification, it appears that the exam system for Latin literature is reforming within its time of crisis. However, I was interested to see which exam specification best achieved the aims of enjoyment and enabled a personal response in pupils at all levels. I wanted to investigate which one treads the balance between accepting some element of language without forcing us back to a traditional approach to Classics with its focus on mere surface meaning.

Research Context

The study took place in a non-selective mixed comprehensive upper school (ages 13-19) in rural Hertfordshire. The school is a specialist Humanities College and the most recent OFSTED inspection described the school as one where “standards are above average in both key stages and in sixth form” (OFSTED, 2006: 2). Latin is started from scratch by the highest ability pupils in Year 9. These highest ability pupils are selected on the basis of pupils’ achievement in modern languages in KS2 teacher assessments. These sets get two hours per week for Latin in Year 9 and five hours every two weeks if they elect to do Latin in Years 10 and 11. Numbers for GCSE are varied with currently 16 in Year 10 and 23 in Year 11. I have focussed on the Year 11 group whose attainment grades in class tests vary from A*-C with no students with special educational needs. I started teaching them from January and was able to share lessons with their current teacher to take them through the verse prescription for GCSE of ‘Nisus and Euryalus’ from the Cambridge Latin Anthology (Carter & Parr, 1996).

Firstly, then, my research focus began due to my own interest in Latin Literature particularly Virgil’s Aeneid. Secondly, the release of the WJEC specification in January gave me a strong desire to research something not done before. Finally, my methodology, with its focus on assessment, fitted well with the assessment drive which was taking place within my school placement.

Methodology

The research was conducted over February and March 2009. Each week for four weeks (with a break between weeks 1 and 2 for half-term), the students were given a different form of assessment

test (see the table below). Each lasted for the first 20 minutes of the lesson, conducted in exam conditions, except the coursework element which was set as homework.

The Lessons

The content of the lessons themselves was turned away from translation and onto reading for enjoyment, attempting to elicit informed, personal responses from students as set out in KS4 English. Students had one large copy of the Latin text with space to make their own notes as well as a small booklet which contained all vocabulary, translation word orders and a literal translation. In every lesson, five minutes were given to recap lines done the previous lesson. The students were then given some time to look at a short section of lines to get a basic translation (weaker students were allowed to use the smaller booklet for help). The teacher would then go over the meaning of the section and then would ask questions – from factual/concrete ones, such as ‘Pick out any words in these lines that you think show Nisus and Euryalus care for each other?’ to more complex ones, such as ‘What about this passage makes Nisus’ death seem a sad or happy one to you?’ Such an approach was designed to allow the teacher to act as a “midwife between the text and the latent responsive capabilities of pupils” (Muir, 1974: 515). The lessons provided a good opportunity to observe the students and maintain a “naturalness of setting” (Denscombe, 2003, p. 192) and when I set the tests, I was free to go around and make observation notes regarding the reaction of the students.

Tests

Table 1 below explains the content and order of the four assessments.

Reasons for tests selected

Two of the tests reflected the different set up for OCR and WJEC examinations. However, as there is no standard form of test in Latin Literature to act as a control for these examination boards, a couple of other possible assessments were used. Although the situation was not ideal for scientific comparison, it did provide the opportunity to explore the possibilities of Latin Literature exams using coursework, a type of assessment proposed within the new WJEC examination, or by having the Latin text unseen rather than learned beforehand.

Week	Basis of assessment	Description	Marking 'textual analysis' question
1	OCR (Appendix A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on the OCR specimen paper (OCR, 2009). Reduced to 20 minutes but keeping the same proportion of content questions (those involving straight-forward answers based on knowledge of the passage) and 'textual analysis' questions (those asking for a 'personal response' to a passage accompanied by three bullet points about general content of the passage.) 	OCR 10-mark question grid and 8 marks for content questions.
2	Unseen (Appendix B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From a later passage not yet studied in class. Additional help was given: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a translation; vocabulary; brief notes on the passage from the <i>Cambridge Latin Anthology: Teacher's Handbook</i> (1996); the Latin text with the order for translation; 3 bullet points on suggested style comments; 5 minutes reading time before test. 	OCR 10-mark question grid scaled to a mark out of 18.
3	Course-work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homework task. "What do you think is dramatic about this scene and how does the use of language support your view?" (18 marks). Based on any 8-10 line section of the poem. Students were allowed to choose their own 8-10 line section and write as much as they had to say on their passage – suggesting that if they wrote under a side of A4 such a passage probably was not worth discussing and they should select another. 	WJEC 10-mark question grid scaled to a mark out of 18.
4	WJEC (Appendix C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same structure as the OCR test but based on the WJEC specimen paper (WJEC, 2009) with no bullet points in the 'textual analysis' question. Vocabulary list and full Latin text included. 	WJEC 10-mark question grid and 8 marks for content questions.

Table 1: The content and order of the four assessments

Interview

In order to triangulate the results of these tests, I conducted a semi-structured interview based on a selection of six students (three boys and three girls). These students were selected on the basis of their average test results from the four research tests, with a girl and boy taken from each mark range (bottom, middle and top). Denscombe (2003: 126) relates how interviews are useful for "data based on emotions, experiences and feelings". Since part of my focus was to analyse the students' feelings towards how each assessment allowed them to express their experience of literature, I considered that an interview would be much more fruitful than any questionnaire. Furthermore, the

students had conducted the assessments over a period of four weeks with a half-term in between and so would have been unlikely to make any accurate reflections as to their feelings about their four tests in a short questionnaire. Moreover, it gave me the opportunity to prompt and probe for their true, meaning reflections on the tests.

Limitations

Firstly, each assessment could only be 20 minutes long so that the students had time in the rest of the lesson to cover their GCSE prescription. Therefore, the length is not an exact replica of a GCSE exam; however, the tests were still conducted in exam conditions and students applied themselves seriously to them. A problem linked to this was how consistent I was able to be with the marks. I was the only marker and the marks were not checked by anyone else. However, my study shows how I focussed in detail on the mark schemes and I remained as objectively faithful to these as I could. Nevertheless, as my literature review made clear, it is difficult to be completely certain of precise marks, especially when trying to gauge the level of a personal response.

Secondly, the students may have been able to improve on these tests through practice. Thus, the test they took first might have a lower standard of response than the ones taken later as the students develop their own response to the text over time. However, the students in the earlier tests did have less text to revise and the most recent sections might have been fresher in their minds.

The smallness of the sample size does reduce how applicable the research is throughout the country; however, this may not be irreconcilable: “Responses to fiction is one of those topics particularly suited to small-scale ‘cottage industry’ research.” (Protherough, 1983: 199). The fact that there was only a small sample meant that I could spend more time analysing the individual answers of each student and considering issues arising from them.

Overall, I made sure that the tests were all conducted fairly with the least possible discrepancies so that I was able to get meaningful results from the comparisons.

Research Findings and Analysis

I shall relate the experience I had with setting and marking each test and then compare the overall results of all the tests to see if any revealing conclusions can be made.

The Mark Schemes

The mark schemes for the tests had their own variations and nuances which are an integral part of how the assessment is carried out. Therefore, although the use of different mark schemes adds another element of variation, it is necessary to retain them in order to get an accurate picture of how students would achieve in the various assessments. The OCR and Unseen tests used the OCR mark scheme for 10-mark questions. The Unseen test used the OCR mark scheme in order to get a balance between both mark schemes over the four tests and it seemed logical to use the WJEC mark-scheme for the coursework test as WJEC were proposing to use such a mark scheme for their coursework element. Therefore, the results would be most applicable to the actual GCSE schemes.

This scheme has only two points which could relate to personal response:

A good range of accurate Latin quotation with developed discussion of this;
Detailed understanding and appreciation of the set text.

(OCR, 2008: 24)

The lack of focus on personal response meant that many of the marks achieved by students were for other elements, such as “technical terms accurately and effectively used” (OCR, 2008: 24); however, this problem does add more evidence to questioning how much the OCR assessment is focused on the aims they set out in their specification.

WJEC’s ‘10-mark questions’ mark scheme, used in the coursework-style and WJEC tests (in order to keep a balance with the OCR scheme), has more emphasis on personal response, namely: “convincing interpretation/ personal response to the examples chosen” (WJEC, 2009: 14).

Consequently, the students were more rewarded by the WJEC mark scheme for writing a personal response.

Test 1: OCR

The results were extremely varied from 6.5 to 18 out of 18. The lowest test results showed a failure to grasp the concept of the story with students unaware of whose side Nisus and Euryalus were on. Furthermore, student E, for the extended writing answer merely told the plot of the story without referring at all to what about the text was vivid and dramatic. One common problem that students, such as student T, had was that they would write a personal response but not refer to the Latin in their answers. Perhaps the lack of support meant that students were fearful of misquoting the Latin which student P actually did. In order to benefit the students through assessment for learning, I did mention this issue to them and students did correct their technique which was one element where increased practice is likely to have affected their results.

Finally, it is worth commenting on the results obtained by the students in the translation section. I noticed a trend that the better someone's translation, the better someone's overall mark was. Consider the graph below (figure 1), the points represent the percentage score for the translation (marked out of three) against the overall percentage score for the test:

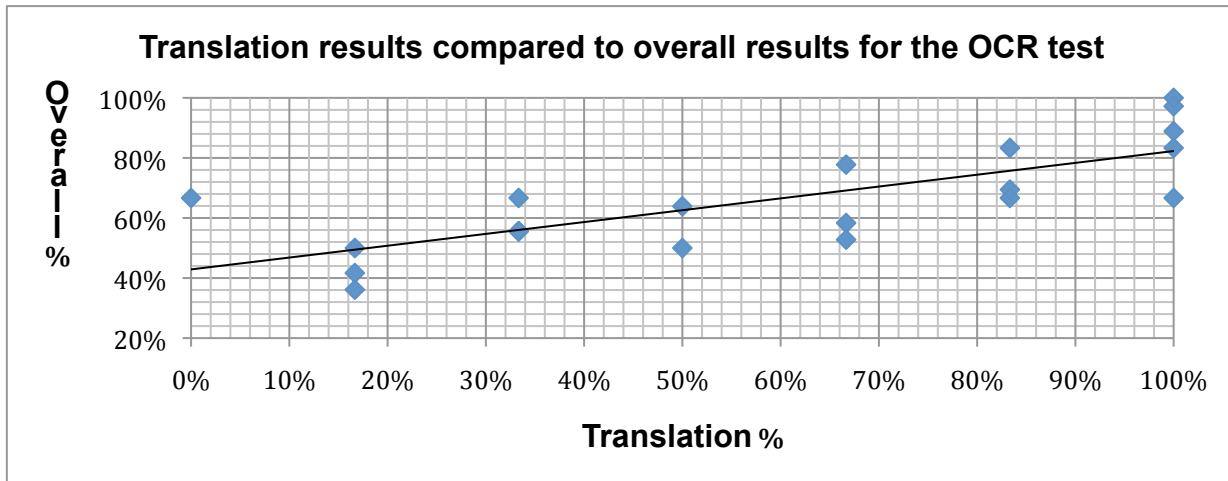


Figure 1: Apparent correlation between score for the translation and the overall score for the test

The graph shows a moderate positive correlation between translation result and overall result, except for the one anomaly where despite a zero in the translation, student L still obtained 67% overall. One could argue that to achieve a high mark requires high marks in each section so the table above shows nothing remarkable; however, in my view, if attainment in translation is indicative of students' overall marks, it would suggest that this literature examination has a strong focus on assessing language skills despite OCR stating that language is not among their Assessment Objectives for this examination (OCR, 2008: 19).

Test 2: Unseen

The students were not warned in advance that the test was to be unseen. My aim was for them to revise normally in order subsequently to apply the skills they had learnt to a different style of test. The class were receptive to the novelty of the task, although it was discovered by a show of hands at the end of the lesson that ten students had not revised and so were glad to have an unseen as everyone was now viewed to be at the same level.

Misunderstanding the unseen text did occur despite the additional help. For example, student T thought that Euryalus had thrown the spears, not Nisus, leading to some spurious interpretation of the passage. The bullet points on style did lead to some vague statements such as "I think that the

use of direct statement makes it dramatic” (student O). In fact, after the lesson, student B commented, “I don’t like saying about it being dramatic, it’s too vague”. In trying to give students a free rein to make their own response, it does mean that they can struggle to formulate anything specific, especially in 20 minutes. Consequently, many students based their answers heavily on the two notes given to them from the Teacher’s guide. However, there were pleasing and unique answers which showed that students had attempted to formulate their own informed, personal response. Student K (a student with an average test mark of 12 out of 18) was able to apply the use of m-alliteration from the previous test to a new scenario in this test. Such personal evaluation and application of knowledge better corresponds to the aims of the syllabus than merely regurgitating points memorised from the lessons. The students’ initial reaction after the test was rather pessimistic and their comments about the test were consequently negative. Student B commented that “you learn more by revising them” and, in a show of hands, only five of the class said they preferred the unseen test to the OCR one. However, when they received their marks back, their view was a far more positive one, which shows how a student’s response to a particular test may have a certain degree of bias depending on the mark they achieved.

Test 3: Coursework

The responses varied from half a side of A4 by student H to three typed pages by student U. Five students chose a section that they had already been tested on and subsequently achieved high marks by making the improvements suggested in their feedback; however, they did expand on the material in their tests with some additional personal responses. Student U’s paper was particularly sophisticated and well structured to a level well beyond GCSE. Even lower ability students, such as student Q, were “beginning to develop a personal response to what they read” (WJEC, 2009: 23). Students still struggled with the term dramatic and with hindsight a question such as “In what ways does Tacitus make this an exciting passage?” (WJEC, 2009: 22) might have elicited more varied responses since students seemed uncomfortable with how far they could stretch the meaning of dramatic. In my opinion, this type of assessment would be best served by the students being allowed to form their own question checked by the teacher. WJEC are proposing such a system in their specifications but my research did not allow the time to liaise with all students about their choices.

Test 4: WJEC

The vocabulary list was used by all students except one (student V) during the test. Students were observed using the vocabulary list for the content questions in order to remind themselves of the events, which may have contributed to the class average of 6 out of 8 in that section. What is perhaps more significant is that the textual analysis questions not only averaged a better mark than the OCR test (7 as opposed to 6.3 out of 10) but also, since no bullet points were given for guidance, had a broader range of answers which indicated a much more personal response. However, it must be highlighted that students (especially students H and I) provided answers that had much less structure and were less developed than those they had done four weeks previously in the OCR test. Therefore, although a greater degree of freedom in having no bullet points meant that ten students improved their textual analysis mark from the OCR test, it also meant that seven students did less well since they had no help in forming their answers.

Results Analysis and Comparison

The Data

I have set out my method in as simple a fashion as possible in order to avoid manipulating the data in any way. My method for analysis was to create an average result for each student (highlighted students had to have averages based on fewer than four tests). Student R was completely removed as he was away for every test. The variance part of Table 2 shows how far each test result varied from the student's average and at the bottom I have included the totals:

The students achieved less well with OCR with an average of one mark less scored per student. In contrast, they performed better on the unseen, which was marked in the same way, with an average of 0.2 marks above the average per student. To my mind, one reason for such a result is that with the unseen test, as with the coursework one, no content questions were asked. Consequently, students were able to make their own personal response which could not be simply right or wrong, meaning that more students were able to write something worthwhile rather than nothing. The coursework test revealed the best results with an average improvement of 0.8 marks. One of the factors for this would have been the additional time students had to complete the work but it does show that students were willing to engage with the text for a sustained period of time which indicates a degree of enjoyment.

Student	OCR Test (/18)	Unseen Test (/18)	Coursework Test (/18)	WJEC Test (/18)	Average (/18)	Variance from average:	OCR TEST (/18)	Unseen Test (/18)	Coursework Test (/18)	WJEC Test (/18)
A	11.5	11			11		0.3	-0.3		
B	17.5	17.5	18	17	18		0.0	0.0	0.5	-0.5
C	10.5	12	8	13	11		-0.4	1.1	-2.9	2.1
D	12	17	17	16	16		-3.5	1.5	1.5	0.5
E	7.5	15	15	10	12		-4.4	3.1	3.1	-1.9
F	9	12	12	10	11		-1.8	1.3	1.3	-0.8
G	14	13	15	14	14		0.0	-1.0	1.0	0.0
H	12	14	7	14	12		0.3	2.3	-4.8	2.3
I	15			11	13		2.0			-2.0
J	16	16	18	14	16		0.0	0.0	2.0	-2.0
K	10	13	15	10	12		-2.0	1.0	3.0	-2.0
L	12	12			12		0.0	0.0		
M	15	17	18	18	17		-2.0	0.0	1.0	1.0
N	12	11	13	14	13		-0.5	-1.5	0.5	1.5
O	10	8	12	12	11		-0.5	-2.5	1.5	1.5
P	9.5	16	14		13		-3.7	2.8	0.8	
Q	6.5	8	10	9	8		-1.9	-0.4	1.6	0.6
S	11.5	12	17	10	13		-1.1	-0.6	4.4	-2.6
T	9	11	16	12.5	12		-3.1	-1.1	3.9	0.4
U		18	18	18	18			0.0	0.0	0.0
V	18	17	15	16	17		1.5	0.5	-1.5	-0.5
W	12.5	16	16	17	15		-2.9	0.6	0.6	1.6
							-			
Average:	12	13.6	14.4	12.8	14	Total:	22.3	4.3	16.8	1.3
						Per student:	-1.0	0.2	0.8	0.1

Table 2: Results

The students achieved less well with OCR with an average of one mark less scored per student. In contrast, they performed better on the unseen, which was marked in the same way, with an average of 0.2 marks above the average per student. To my mind, one reason for such a result is that with the unseen test, as with the coursework one, no content questions were asked. Consequently, students were able to make their own personal response which could not be simply right or wrong, meaning that more students were able to write something worthwhile rather than nothing. The coursework test revealed the best results with an average improvement of 0.8 marks. One of the factors for this would have been the additional time students had to complete the work but it does show that students were willing to engage with the text for a sustained period of time which indicates a degree of enjoyment.

Interviews

Students B and V were taken from the top average of the test results, students P and S from the middle and students Q and O from the bottom. I did this method of selection so that I was able to get a balanced viewpoint with all ability ranges included. Student P was the only one who had not completed one of the tests in class; however, he had completed it at home and had it with him to refer to in the interview.

Denscombe (2003) highlights the danger that quieter students may be ignored in an interview of four to six people and that differing views may not be aired; however, the benefit of conducting the six together was that they were able to contribute to what each other had to say. Moreover, the group interview was helped by a relaxed environment, where everyone was sitting round in a circle to create an atmosphere of sharing ideas. There was no significant gender divide as the girls and boys were equally comfortable at expressing their views from all ability ranges. Furthermore, the interview was semi-structured with a set of questions prepared in advance but not rigidly adhered to if an interesting tangent emerged. I taped the interview so I did not have to worry about making detailed notes. I felt that an audio-tape was the least intrusive way of being able to get a detailed account of what the students had said. Consequently, the interview was able to elicit much useful information about the students' own attitudes and feelings towards the tests.

General Ideas

One of the reasons students gave for wanting to do literature was precisely because it was different from the language.

Student B: It's a break from the language which can get quite heavy (i.e. quite repetitive at times)

Furthermore, the students referred to an intrinsic interest in the stories especially because they were 'real' Latin as opposed to the 'made up' Latin within the Cambridge Latin Course.

Student P: It's different from any other subject, very interesting storyline, the way everything is written is very interesting to learn about.

Student S: rather than us making it up, it's them in their own language.

Moreover, how Latin literature can aid understanding about our own society was brought up (student O: "The literature also backs up our society and where it comes from"). Four of the students said they prefer literature to language; but the two top ability students were unsure:

Student V: There is a lot of language involved in the literature from many respects, so I couldn't choose between the two...Not so much in the techniques of the literature but obviously you have to be good at the language to translate the literature.

Student B: Sometimes they can be translated in different ways but there's one meaning which might be more relevant.

The two top-ability students see language as a large part of what they do within literature. As I mentioned in the literature review, it would be wrong to deny a level of language analysis within literature but the focus on translation does not seem in keeping with the aims of studying literature (especially those claimed by the OCR GCSE examination that the students were preparing for). Nevertheless, the comment by student B does show a great deal of sophistication in response to Latin literature. Student B has applied her language skills to gain a deeper understanding of the passage which may be open to different interpretations. Such a level of response should not be denied in any assessment.

OCR and WJEC - Translation or No Translation

When asked about the translation element, the students focussed on the idea that a translation proves how much revision had been done.

Student B: I think it's a measure of how well you've revised for it because there are some words which aren't in the vocab list.

In contrast, although half the students did not notice the WJEC paper did not contain a translation question – perhaps indicating how little students question the elements of a test put in front of them – the discussion did move onto an interesting question.

Student V: How can you comment on the word order if you didn't know what each Latin word meant?

Student O: I couldn't.

Student V: That's why I think it's important to have a translation to make people know the Latin word order.

Student O: Yeh.

Student V: If you do that then you're not limiting yourself at all to what you can answer in the longer questions.

The students see the translation question as a real incentive to know the text word for word; however, student O did say that were it a real exam, even without a translation question, she would revise the text more thoroughly. In addition, there is an idea that having a fixed translation question provides a comfort as students like to know that their revision will pay dividends. Consequently, although the translation does not cohere to the aims of literature in general, there is a notion by certain students that it allows them to make a better response to the textual analysis question as well as to 'show off' what they have learnt. However, all the students' responses are one's where exam rules dominate. This focus may partly be due to the fact that the interviews were being conducted about my own tests but the students were completely set on the idea of learning Latin for the purpose of passing an exam.

The students were uncertain as a group whether they liked the lack of guided bullet points in the WJEC test. In contrast, they unanimously agreed that the bullet points in the OCR test were a good thing.

Student B: I found it harder because I like having the bullet points as a sort of tick-list; it structures your answer as well, so you're not bringing different points in at the wrong times.

Contrast:

Student S: ...when they're there I had a bit more relaxed freedom of mind. So I wasn't worried about trying to find what they had written but trying to find my own points instead.

Some students observed that there was a greater difficulty in structuring answers without bullet points; however, there could be increased freedom and potential for personal response. The OCR test mark scheme required candidates to make points relating to each of the bullet points to obtain the top marks; however, as this interview indicates, it would reward personal response more if such

a stringent view of marking was not adopted and the bullet points were left in as a guide for students.

The vocabulary list received very positive responses, most significantly from the student who had performed least well in the tests.

Student Q: Because I've never had the patience to revise an entire translation, it helped me with the factual questions, just with a couple of words to give me the gist of the passage and I remembered from lessons in class what was happening.

Student Q had actually achieved a relatively high 63% on the content questions for the WJEC test (his average percentage for all the tests was 44%) by using the vocabulary list. Memorising the additional vocabulary required for a literature exam seems neither coherent with the aims of the paper nor applicable to enhancing one's experience of literature. As a result, the WJEC additional help ensures that candidates are being credited for their understanding and response to the story not their retention of vocabulary. From a practical point of view, all the students said they would have preferred to have had the vocabulary by line number in order to reduce the time taken to sort through it.

Unseen

It is interesting that in Latin literature our aim is to test skills such as personal response; however, the revision the students referred to was always in regard to learning/memorising a translation. Thus, students are spending a significant amount of time engaging with the text in a very different way. Furthermore, there was some strong resistance to the unseen method of testing from student V who felt that without revision, the subject became too easy.

Student V: ...one of the reasons I really like Latin is that I do find other subjects quite simple, so Latin is quite a challenge for me and I like it that way.

The idea that Latin Literature can be viewed as challenging is a positive attribute; however, there is a risk that the 'challenge' within Latin Literature can be focussed around memorisation of texts word for word rather than on application of more complex intellectual skills such as developing a personal response. Nevertheless, when I asked about the potential development of such skills for the tests, another positive comment was elicited.

Student O: It (learning of skills in literature) can be transferred into other subjects so it supports it in other things.

The potential development of cross-curricular links is a significant link to the aims set out in KS4 English. However, the caveat to this view (as expressed by student V, "I personally would like a mix of both. I like to have knowledge to be able to apply it") is that some sense of balance must be

maintained so that students feel that they have at least gained some factual knowledge about the ancient world from the course.

Finally, the bullet points relating to aspects of use of language such as word order, were again received with ambiguity with student P saying that “it gives you a chance to write about a wider variety of incidents” but student B claiming “it might limit you, as you might not want to put things that were discussed in class but don’t fall under these categories”. It seems that the sorts of bullet points used, whether content based or language based, have various advantages and disadvantages. Even none at all was viewed as a potential advantage. But one must be careful not to base a mark-scheme on such assistance because it is potentially limiting to the personal response of a student.

Coursework

The responses were again mixed for coursework. The element most enjoyed was the luxury of time, which fits the idea that students need time to develop their response. However, the students’ focus was on how to obtain marks rather than any altruistic study of literature.

Student S: You have the time to go through it and make sure you have covered all the points that you need.

Nevertheless, this was the first test in which there was mention of genuine enjoyment and everyone agreed that they had enjoyed this activity more than the tests.

Student V: I found the enjoyment a key factor. I honestly enjoyed writing about it but only if you’ve got the time to enjoy it.

However, despite the fact that this assessment had the potential to allow most freedom for personal response with the added time (student O: “It does encourage you to expand on your ideas, so you can add to things and get more in depth with the Latin”), there was a concern that ideas from class were being regurgitated.

Student B: If you did a bit that we had gone through in class then you’re basically putting down the same words we said in class which isn’t really Latin, it’s not challenging and it’s not really doing anything of your own work it’s just repeating it and depending on how well you repeat it depends on what mark you got.

Much of the attitudes displayed relating to the coursework style test stemmed from experience of coursework in other subjects. There was a feeling that it was easier to obtain higher marks in coursework but it was a more tedious exercise because of the amount of teacher input into preparation for the work.

Student V: Not only that but it was also very monotonous.

Such a focus on results indicates how important it is for a test to reward students who are achieving the aims for literature. Students fixate on how to gain marks and, thus, it is necessary to direct such fixation onto achieving the aims of literature.

Overall the preferences for each student were as follows (Table 3):

<u>Student</u> (average mark [/18])	<u>Preference</u>
B (18)	OCR
O (11)	WJEC
P (13)	WJEC + Coursework
Q (8)	Coursework
S (13)	Unseen
V (17)	WJEC

Table 3: Student preferences

WJEC is the most popular with three votes and coursework second with two (student P was not able to give a preference for one in particular). What is significant is that the students did not always select the test simply on the basis of their best result and every assessment style was preferred by someone. Students S and V actually did better in other exams but felt that they had gained more in the others.

Conclusion

e pluribus unum – “one from many”

Students and teachers should be aware of the differences that OCR and WJEC will provide. The development of choice within Latin examinations now allows for discussion about what is or should be tested in Latin Literature. OCR requires more memorisation and is more language-focussed. This would suit the desires of some students such as student B as seen above. However, WJEC provides a greater focus on rewarding personal response with its marking criteria. Moreover, the option to do coursework can make Latin Literature more accessible to lower ability students such as student Q who was able to draw on the help available outside examination conditions. It also allows top

ability students such as student V to increase the depth of their personal response in a way that he very much enjoyed. However, it is not yet certain how WJEC's use of 'controlled-assessment' might produce different results than the ones outlined in this research.

The key conclusion to emerge is that one has to be aware how each assessment has different effects depending on the type of student, since even the inclusion of different bullet points can strongly affect the outcomes from different students. With the advantage of choice of examination boards comes the responsibility to make an informed decision about what will best benefit any particular group of students and how much one wishes to adhere to any more 'general' aims about the reasons for studying literature. Finally, this research has highlighted the possible inclusion of an unseen element for Latin Literature. The unseen was able to encourage genuine personal response and students were not fazed by the nature of such an assessment because of the help they were given. Future research could further investigate the viability of unseen assessment and how much it is able to reward the attainment of a skill rather than the collection of a body of knowledge.

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List of Appendices

Appendix A	OCR Test (pp. 40-41)
Appendix B	Unseen Test (pp. 42-45)
Appendix C	WJEC Test (pp. 46-47)
Appendix D	Interview Permission Form (p. 48)
Appendix E	Interview Transcript (pp. 49-57)

Name: _____

Virgil: Nisus and Euryalus

Answer all the questions

[Marks for each question are given in brackets – Total = 18]

Passage 1

Nisus erat portae custos, acerrimus armis,
et iuxta comes Euryalus, quo pulchrior alter
non fuit Aeneadum Troiana neque induit arma,
his amor unus erat pariterque in bella ruebant;
tum quoque communi portam statione tenebant. 5

Virgil, Cambridge Latin Anthology lines 1-5

1. Write down and translate the two Latin words that describe what Nisus was doing.

.....
.....[2]

2. How is Euryalus described? Give two details.

.....
.....
.....[2]

3. Whose side are Nisus and Euryalus on?

.....[1]

4. Translate lines 4-5.

.....
.....
.....[3]

[Turn over

Passage 2

Nisus and Euryalus Unseen Test – Question Sheet

After being spotted on their way through the enemy (Rutulian) camp by a cavalry troop led by Volcens, Nisus and Euryalus are pursued into the woods and become separated. When Nisus retraces his steps he sees from a distance that Euryalus has been captured. He launches two spears from his hiding-place and kills two of the enemy.

Volcens makes to attack Euryalus.

conclamat Nisus nec se celare tenebris
amplius aut tantum potuit perferre dolorem:
'me, me, adsum qui feci, in me conuertite ferrum,
o Rutuli! mea fraus omnis, nihil iste nec ausus
nec potuit; caelum hoc et conscia sidera testor; 5
tantum infelicem nimium dilexit amicum.'

Nisus shouts out nor was he able to hide
himself in the darkness
any longer nor to endure such great grief;
“Me, me, I am here who did the deed, turn
your steel on me,
O Rutulians! The fault is mine entirely, he
(Euryalus) dared do nothing,
nor was he able to; I call to witness this heaven
and the stars knowing the truth; 5
he was only too fond of his unfortunate friend

Numbered Version

2 1 3 6 5 7
 conclamat Nisus nec se celare tenebris
 8 9 11 4 10 12 \\
 amplius aut tantum potuit perferre dolorem:
 1 2 3 4 5 8 9 6 7
 'me, me, adsum qui feci, in me conuertite ferrum,
 10 11 \ 2 1 3 6= 4 (6=) 5
 o Rutuli! mea fraus omnis, nihil iste nec ausus
 8 9 \ 3 2 4 6 5 1 \\
 nec potuit; caelum hoc et conscia sidera testor; 5
 1= 4 3 1= 5 \\
 tantum infelicem nimium dilexit amicum.

Extra Notes

- 3** **me, me:** exclamations, outside any syntactical construction.
- 4-6** Nisus means that Euryalus was too young to cause any harm and came at his own insistence to accompany the friend he loved.

Vocabulary

Line 1

conclamo, conclamare, conclamavi	shout out
Nisus, Nisi	Nisus
nec	and not, nor
se	himself, herself, themselves
celo, celare, celavi, celatus	hide
tenebrae, tenebrarum	darkness

Line 2

amplius	more fully, any longer, any more, further
aut	or
tantus, tanta, tantum	so great, such a great
possum, posse, potui	can, be able
perfero, perferre, pertuli, perlatus	endure
dolor, doloris	grief

Line 3

ego, mei	I, me
adsum, adesse, adfui	be present, arrive
qui, quae, quod	who, which
facio, facere, feci, factus	make, do
in	into
ego, mei	I, me
converto, convertere, converti, conversus	turn
ferrum, ferri	iron, sword

Line 4

o	O
Rutuli, Rutulorum	the Rutuli
meus, mea, meum	my, mine
fraus, fraudis	trick
omnis, omne	all, every
nihil	nothing

iste, ista, istud	he, she; that
nec	and not, nor
audeo, audere, ausus sum	dare

Line 5

nec	and not, nor
possum, posse, potui	can, be able
caelum, caeli	sky, heaven, weather
hic, haec, hoc	this
et	and, also, even
consciis, conscia, consciis + gen.	knowing the truth, implicated in
sidus, sideris	star
testor, testari, testatus sum	call to witness

Line 6

tantum	only
infelix, gen. infelicis	unlucky
nimum	too much
diligo, diligere, dilexi, dilectus	be fond of, love
amicus, amici	friend

Name: _____

Name: _____

Virgil: Nisus and Euryalus – Test 2

Answer all the questions

[Marks for each question are given in brackets – Total = 18]

6. Refer to lines 47-60 (*interea praemissi...custode coronant*).

a) *interea* (line 47): from your knowledge of the previous passage:

i. What have Nisus and Euryalus just been doing?

.....[1]

ii. Where are they headed?

.....[1]

b) *interea praemissi...Volcente magistro* (lines 47-50): give three details about this detachment of horsemen.

(i).....

(ii).....

(iii).....[3]

c) *Turno regi responsa* (line 49): whose side is Turnus on?

.....[1]

d) *imaque propinquabant...adversa fulsit* (lines 51-54): how were Nisus and Euryalus spotted? Give two details.

(i).....

(ii).....[2]

[Turn over

7. Refer to lines 55-60 (*haud temere...custode coronant*): how does Virgil make this a vivid and dramatic passage? You should refer to both the content and the style of writing in the Latin text.

[10]

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

Project Title: 1c PGCE Assignment for Cambridge University

Student Researcher: Mr A

Supervised by: Mr X, Mr Y and Dr Z.

Research Question: “Testing Latin Literature – a case study into the variety of ways to assess pupils in appreciation of Latin literature without focusing exclusively on language”

Purpose of Research: My research is a study into which of four methods of testing (two by exam boards OCR and WJEC, one invented unseen test and a coursework style test) enables candidates to express themselves most in regards to literary appreciation and which the students themselves most enjoy doing.

Basis of Participation: In agreeing to this interview, please be aware that information given verbally will be tape-recorded.

Results: Results may be in a published assessment once all the research is completed. Confidentiality will be maintained, and any direct quotes from your participation will be accredited anonymously.

Right of Exclusion or Withdrawal: If you feel uncomfortable with the content of the discussion during the interview you are free to terminate participation. You will not be asked to answer any questions unwillingly.

Consent: I AGREE to participate in this study.

I give permission to tape record the meeting.

Participant Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Interview Questions – Testing Latin Literature

Read and sign the Interview Consent Form.

General

a) What do you like about studying Latin literature?

Student B: “It’s a break from the language which can get quite heavy (i.e. quite repetitive at times)”

Student P: “It’s different from any other subject, very interesting storyline, the way everything is written is very interesting to learn about.”

Student S: “rather than us making it up, it’s them in their own language”

b) What do you dislike about studying Latin literature?

Student O: “I don’t like poetry in general.”

Me: “What do you not like about poetry”

Student O: “I don’t like the rhythm and how you have to make it all go together. I like it more simple.”

Me: “What do you mean by make it more...”

Student O: “I don’t like it in depth so you having to choose your words carefully and making it have rhythm. I prefer stories, like prose.”

Me: “Is that a general feeling, people prefer to have a story”

Student V: “No I like both equally actually”

Student B: “I do think the poems do have more hidden meanings so you actually have to take them apart more whereas the stories can be a bit more obvious but there are still meanings underneath.”

c) What do you think the purpose of studying Latin literature is?

Student Q: “because it helps in other subjects”

Me: "Ok, what do you mean?"

Student Q: "Like if you're going into medicine or something...the technical words of diseases or Biology with animal names"

Student S: "I think it helps you pay more attention to detail. Because with Latin the word order is very thought about whereas in normal English it isn't as important to it so it makes you pay more attention to the details rather than just looking on the face of it."

Student O: "The literature also backs up our society and where it comes from"

Student B: "Because when we study poems in English now, we can transfer the Latin skills across, the word order and structure"

Me: "Is it just skills or do you find you enjoy the literature more by studying it?"

Student V: "I do very much so."

d) Would you want to read Latin literature even if you weren't assessed on it?

Student B: "Probably not because I wouldn't understand the meaning of it."

4 = no, 1 = maybe, 1 = yes

e) Do you prefer literature or language?

4 = Literature, 2 = can't choose

Student V: "There is a lot of language involved in the literature from many respects, so I couldn't choose between the two."

Me: "That's interesting. What language would you say is in the literature?"

Student V: "Not so much in the techniques of the literature but obviously you have to be good at the language to translate the literature."

Student B: “Sometimes they can be translated in different ways but there’s one meaning which might be more relevant.”

Take a look at the test papers that you have done.

OCR

1) What did you think to the questions in the first half? Useful?

Student V: “You need to actually know the text rather than just be able to interpret it. Testing your knowledge of it rather than your interpretation. Use of interpretation can be spread across any part of Latin literature but there are different texts.”

2) What about the translation element? Do you think that is a good idea?

Student O: “Yeh, I think it is useful because some people might not learn it, they may only half learn it so they know what the odd word means. So it just shows how well someone has learnt it, that they actually know what it means.”

Me: “Would you agree with that opinion?”

Student V: “Yes, it’s a merit for hard work rather than ability, which there should be a healthy mix of both in any test.”

Me: “Do you think that you should know the translation off by heart?”

Student P: “No, it’s helpful to have this question because then you’re going to go over the text more to learn it and then you’re going to have a greater understanding of the text at the end because you’re going to know the text well.”

Student S: “I don’t think you should know it off by heart like word for word but I think you should know it well enough to be able to, if you recognise some words, know what part of the story it is to be able to make a sufficient answer for it.”

Me: “So is a translation the way to do that or could you just have more of the general questions?”

Student S: “I think a translation is needed because it shows a different aspect of it, whereas you could generally make it up in your own interpretation but translation is a bit more specific to what you know. It would make the difference between last minute reading over it and actually thoroughly learning it which is what it’s supposed to be testing.”

Student B: “I think it’s a measure of how well you’ve revised for it because there are some words which aren’t in the vocab list. So it really shows you’ve learnt it, not necessarily word for word but you’ve definitely got the idea of it.”

Student V: “I learnt the translation of each word (the method I use takes a long time) and then pieced together the translation from that. I didn’t use the English translation read through that a few times to be able to recite it.”

Me: “How many of you did do that – trying to just use the English?”

Other five say they did just use English.

3) How about the last question? Were you helped by the bullet points?

Student P: “I think it’s a good combination to have the questions at the start and the questions at the end. It’s helpful when we’re going through in class to get different ideas from different people from the certain word order or what certain words can mean.”

Student O: “Yeh, they (the bullet points) are good because they help you. You have a better idea.”

WJEC

1) Look at the first half again – you’ll notice there is no translation in this paper. What do you think to that?

3 didn’t actually notice/could not remember that this test had no translation element.

Student S: “I was relieved because I didn’t revise it too well.”

Student O: “I preferred not having translation.”

Me: “Did you feel you still knew the text as well?”

Student O: “Yes, I just didn’t know the Latin.”

Me: “When you say you didn’t know the Latin...”

Student O: “I didn’t know what the Latin words meant but I knew what happened. I only knew some Latin words.”

Student V: “How can you comment on the word order if you didn’t know what each Latin word meant?”

Student O: “I couldn’t.”

Student V: “That’s why I think it’s important to have a translation to make people know the Latin word order.”

Student O: “Yeh.”

Student V: “If you do that then you’re not limiting yourself at all to what you can answer in the longer questions.”

Me: “If it were a proper exam and there wasn’t a translation would you learn the Latin words?”

Student O: “If it were a proper exam I would learn it.”

Student B: “I like having a translation question because some general questions like whose side is someone on, you can’t always find it in the actual Latin text, so I prefer the translation because you know the answer is always actually going to be there, so you know that, if you revise thoroughly, there shouldn’t be anything that comes up that you can’t answer.”

Me: “So you like that comfort.”

Student B: “It’s like an incentive to revise properly as you can’t really be asked anything else.”

2) The last question doesn’t have the bullet points, what do you think to this?

Student B: “I found it harder because I like having the bullet points as a sort of tick list, it structures your answer as well, so you’re not bringing different points in at the wrong times.”

Me: “Is that the experience of everyone?”

Student S: “I don’t know because when they were there before, it was like ‘oh god’ if I can’t see what that bullet point means, I don’t have a clue what to do, I think I’m going to fail but when they’re there I had a bit more relaxed freedom of mind. So I wasn’t worried about trying to find what they had written but trying to find my own points instead.”

3) With this paper you were given the whole Latin text and a vocabulary list. Did this have any advantages or disadvantages from your own experience?

Student O: “I like the vocab list. It’s very useful, so you could actually translate it.”

Student V: “It can be useful if it’s just one word crucial to the question and you forget it in the heat of the moment.”

Student S: “I found it useful because I didn’t revise enough and the vocab was there to help me when I got stuck.”

Student P: “Like Student V says, if you learn it well, it shouldn’t really be an issue but if you do forget some words then it’s useful as the story is there for you.”

Student Q: “It was good.”

Me: “What was good about it.”

Student Q: “Because I’ve never had the patience to revise an entire translation, it helped me with the factual questions, just with a couple of words to give me the gist of the passage and I remembered from lessons in class what was happening.”

4) Would you want the vocabulary set out alphabetically or by line number?

Line number preferred by all.

Student B: “You could get the meaning of it just by skimming down the translation.”

Student V: "I suppose from that respect, you might almost as well be giving the translation almost of the Latin which I wouldn't like."

Unseen

1) How did you feel when you were told that it was going to be an unseen test?

Me: "Student B you say you panicked."

Student B: "Yes I did because I'd revised for it and felt quite confident going in and then it suddenly threw me off a bit."

Student S: "I had the opposite effect because I hadn't really revised for it, a few minutes before I was really worried about it and then I found out it was unseen and I thought I couldn't have prepared anyway and it relaxed me a bit and I thought everyone has an even chance now."

2) Did you feel the question paper gave you enough help to answer the questions?

Student B: "The only thing it didn't have was the one with the English words above the Latin."

Student S: "But to be honest we were given so much help, it might as well do it for us."

Student B: "Yes."

Me: "Do you think it would have added to your answers with the extra help?"

Student B: "It would have just been quicker."

Student V: "I personally wouldn't have written anything else."

Student S: "I think it would have made it too easy."

Student V: "Following on from Student S's point, one of the reasons I really like Latin is that I do find other subjects quite simple, so Latin is quite a challenge for me and I like it that way."

Me: "So you like the challenge of having to learn a lot of the texts?"

Student V: "Yes, because it's harder than a lot of the other subjects. That's one of the reasons why I look forward to Latin."

3) What do you think to these different bullet points for advice?

Student P: "I think with the bullet points it gives you a chance to write about a wider variety of incidents in the text because if you've just got three bullet points about three things that happen in the passage then that's what the marker is looking for, so that's what you're going to write about but there is more than one time that the rhythm and sound contribute to the meaning of the passage so you can write about more."

Student B: “I think in a way it might limit you, as you might not want to put things that were discussed in class but don’t fall under these categories, so it might make it a bit more robotic how you write it.”

All agree that could write things outside the bullet points but felt that needed to cover the points well to get the marks.

- 4) What do you think to this idea of learning the skills for answering literature and not having a set text to revise?

Student O: “It can be transferred into other subjects so it supports it in other things.”

Student S: “I like it because even if you know the text you might not know exactly how to answer one of these questions because you might not be sure what to write about, so I think having the skill and it being unseen would be better as, seeing that you already have so much help.. (5 second pause) you just need the skill, you’ve got the capability, you’ve got the tools to find out what the Latin means, you just need the skill to be able to write it.”

Student V: “I personally would like a mix of both. I like to have knowledge to be able to apply it.”

Student O: “I wouldn’t want one this long as the 18 marks really daunted me.”

Me: “So you’d like it divided up?”

Student S: “The fact that it is unseen would worry me because how do you prepare for that. There is only so much you can practise a skill.”

Student V: “Plus the risk of off days.”

Student Q: “I prefer to have one question of just 18 marks because I can just ramble on”

Coursework

- 1) How did you find writing about this? What did you like/dislike?

Me: “What did you like about writing this?”

Student B: “You get the structure right as you went through because I did mine on computer so I could check through it so you didn’t have any problems about missing out points or putting them in the wrong place.”

Student S: “I found doing it in my own time at my own pace was helpful because you’re not trying to rush so you’re not missing any points. You have the time to go through it and make sure you have covered all the points that you need.”

Me: “Did you feel you were able to bring in some more of your own ideas rather than just what we had done in class?”

Student V: “What I particularly enjoyed about this is that you gave us the option of doing a piece of Latin we hadn’t seen before. So you knew it was completely our own ideas rather than if we’d gone over it in class and shared others viewpoints.”

Me: “Anything people dislike about it?”

Student B: “If you did a bit that we had gone through in class then you’re basically putting down the same words we said in class which isn’t really Latin, it’s not challenging and it’s not really doing anything of your own work it’s just repeating it and depending on how well you repeat it depends on what mark you got.”

Student O: “It does encourage you to expand on your ideas, so you can add to things and get more in depth with the Latin.”

Student B: “I think it just makes you, when there’s no time limit, put in as many things as you can think of and every little detail. To get a high mark you see it as every point is a mark. When you have no time limit, it’s not selecting the most appropriate things.”

Student V: “I found the enjoyment a key factor. I honestly enjoyed writing about it but only if you’ve got the time to enjoy it.”

Everyone enjoyed this activity more than the tests in class.

Student V: “When I was writing the tests in class, I wasn’t thinking ‘yes this is good, I’m getting some really interesting stuff out of this’ whereas at home I was.”

2) Would you prefer to do this or a test for your GCSE?

Student B: “You’d probably get a higher mark doing it as coursework but then I don’t think it’s as interesting because, if we did it as coursework, it’s just going through in class and then repeating what we’ve done in class in your own words. You don’t get as much pleasure from it because you’re not really learning it and putting the effort in, you’re just typing up something you’ve already done, so I think from that point it’s a bit boring.”

Student V: “I quite like the challenge, for something as important and long-lasting as GCSE is, I wouldn’t feel I’d earned had I not gone for the harder option which would be the test.”

Preferences – Student Q: Coursework

Student O: WJEC

Student B: OCR

Student S: Unseen

Student P: Coursework + WJEC

Student V: Coursework + WJEC – more satisfaction after doing tests.

Me: “Would you want more choice?”

Student S: “If we did coursework and they did the first test (OCR), they would have worked harder than us because we wouldn’t have had to revise, we would be just doing it at home in our own time, whereas they’d be really hard revising. It wouldn’t be equal, it would be easier to get marks on the coursework.”

AOB

Do you have anything else you’d like to add?

Student B: “The reason why I think coursework wouldn’t be particularly effective is because, when we did it in History, we basically had a lesson on learning about it, then we wrote it up as homework, then she looked at it and told us what wasn’t good or what was good about it. We wrote it up that lesson and then she marked it, so there wasn’t going to be much variation within the class of who understood it more.”

Student V: “Not only that but it was also very monotonous”

Student B: “It was really boring”

