



# Hearing Impairment and the Latin Classroom Experience: A case study of a Year 10 student with a hearing impairment learning Latin

by Callum Carroll

## Introduction

Hearing impairment and Latin are not usually something that we pair together, yet it could be seen as an appealing GCSE to a hearing-impaired student. On the one hand learning Latin as an additional language may be seen as difficult when the student is still trying to learn and develop their first language. On the other hand learning Latin does not have, nor require, any formal oral or aural assessment like most Modern Foreign Languages (MFL). My school is an 11-16 mixed comprehensive, where all pupils begin Latin in year 7 on timetable with the choice to continue in Year 8, from where it is taught as an off-timetable subject through to GCSE. Here I was introduced to teach a Year 10 boy who has congenital severe sensory-hearing loss in both ears and he wears two Natos UP digital hearing aids all waking hours. I was immediately interested in his reasons for choosing to study Latin, especially as it is an elective GCSE timetabled before school and during lunch time. Prior to this encounter, I had recently attended a session on British Sign Language and the experience of Deaf and hearing-impaired students in school. Hearing about their experiences led me to think about the benefits of learning Latin, which consequently led me to investigate Kim's experience (name changed for confidentiality). I began focusing my observations on him and informally

questioning his teachers; I was met by an array of praise stating that he proudly saw his hearing impairment as part of his identity rather than an obstacle. I started searching for information on teaching Latin to hearing-impaired pupils, but there was almost nothing specifically related to Latin. As a result, I saw this as my opportunity to collate my experiences and the experiences of the pupil and teacher to develop my research into something that may benefit other Latin teachers of hearing-impaired pupils.

The *Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs* (DFE 1994) suggested that it is important to consider the requirements of those with hearing impairment at each stage. Most hearing-impaired students are being educated in mainstream schools, and it is estimated that the majority (about 80%) are being educated through spoken language. Over the more recent years, research has been conducted to suggest that streaming deaf students in mainstream schools has led to a change in the role of teachers and support staff (Hopwood, 2003, p. 75). The terms 'hearing-impaired' and 'deaf' are frequently interchanged. However, the term 'Deaf' with a capital 'D' refers to someone who identifies with the Deaf community, their culture and language. 'Hearing-impaired' usually refers to a range in severity from mild to profound (Watson, 1996, p. 5). Kim has severe fluctuating hearing loss. His hearing is continuing to deteriorate and he is heavily

reliant on lip-reading. He uses his hearing aids to support his lip-reading. Kim was born into a family with several generations of deaf people. His father is profoundly deaf and has been very successful despite the SEN, and he is a professor at a well-established university. Therefore, Kim comes from a highly academic background, which explains why he does not see limitations to his deafness. For the purpose of this article, I frequently use the term 'hearing-impaired' because I think that this research is not limited to the Deaf community, but it can benefit any student at various stages of hearing loss.

As there is a lack of research in this field, I have chosen to address the pupil experience, the teaching perspective, and finally offer my suggestions based on my experience for future practice. My aim was to gather information through observations of and interviews with the student, a selection of his teachers/TAs and his usual Latin teacher. In addition to the primary participants in this study, Kim also shares the same teaching group for many curriculum areas, other than Latin, with a hearing-impaired girl who has cochlear implants and studies German. I decided to include Michelle in this case study for a point of reference with a hearing-impaired student studying an MFL, as well as they are both considered academic and have both experienced a very similar secondary school experience. One thing that I have discovered through this research is that by opening the

dialogue about hearing impairment with other teachers meant that they became more aware of their teaching practice. By opening this dialogue, we consciously use common sense to improve the learning experience.

Once a week I attend a school in another town to gain post-16 experience. At this school, Latin is considered part of the MFL department and I have drawn from the experiences of teaching hearing-impaired students shared with me by a variety of MFL teachers at this school. From all the experiences I draw from in this article, I think that they will not only benefit Latin teachers of hearing-impaired students, but hopefully they will be an advantage to the language teaching community as a whole.

### *Hearing impairment*

The National Association for Special Educational Needs (NASEN) produced an introduction to hearing impairment as part of the spotlight series. In this book, Watson (2003) describes common forms of hearing loss and suggests ways in which pupils with hearing impairments can be helped in the classroom. Watson states that the degree of hearing loss experienced by a child with a hearing impairment will vary from child to child and occasionally from day to day. The effects can be that normal conversation is heard as a whisper, or a speech may sound muffled. Moreover, and in the case of Kim, any additional factors such as a cold or flu can further reduce hearing. Some children do not seem to be too disadvantaged by the hearing loss in educational terms, as they manage to function despite their hearing loss. A solution to help the hearing-impaired student cope is simply by gaining their attention before speaking and speaking clearly with greater volume.

There are several possible effects of hearing loss that the child might demonstrate. Watson highlights several possibilities: not responding to being called by name; only hearing part of the message; hearing better in some conditions than others, such as a small room; hearing better on some days than others; having difficulty in hearing the difference between similar sounds (for example, 'cat/hat' or 't/d' in phonics); displaying disruptive behaviour during lessons which require children to listen, as

listening tasks can be difficult and frustrating. These are examples that I myself have witnessed through my own observations.

We must be considerate to the fact that a student with hearing impairment must really concentrate hard in order to hear. This can be exhausting for a child as, to an extent, they are focusing twice as much as a non-hearing-impaired child. They must first concentrate on hearing what is said and then focus on listening to the instructions. In my opinion, hearing and listening are two separate tasks. As teachers we hear lots of different noises in a classroom, but during this hearing stage, we focus our energy to choose which conversations we listen to in order to assess where learning is taking place. This is a skill we discover and hone as we mature, but it is a lot to expect from a pupil with a hearing impairment. Therefore, it is no wonder that at times we see these students becoming disengaged or 'switching-off'. When a student does this, they develop poor learning habits.

### *Hearing Impairment and Language Acquisition*

It appears that most of the research invested in this subject is somewhat limited to how best to use equipment in the classroom, or how specific aids work. There is little said on the topic of tactical support. There seems to be a primary focus on early years' support, and I believe that to an extent this is vital. Nonetheless it does not necessarily contribute to subject-specific, or even secondary school-specific teaching. There are occasionally references made to how you can support learning in mainstream schools (Knight and Maltby, 2000), but they are superficial by nature. Even though there is a lot of advocacy for bridging the gap between SEN students and 'normal' students, for children with a hearing impairment there always seems to be that differentiation between whether you facilitate their learning of language or facilitate learning so they have access to the mainstream curriculum.

Thonn and Jessica (2008) look at the more mature classroom experience, and they try to understand how we assist hearing-impaired students in a L2 classroom. Although this is a stage further than the secondary school experience, it provides us with an idea of how to

approach more mature learners. Thonn and Jessica focus on the educator as a language teacher, rather than teaching the English language to students with no prior knowledge in early years' education. That said, the article does rely on the generic formula of a hearing-impaired piece of research – a large focus on how the ear works before tackling the real substance. However, they do produce a meaningful topic on supplementing the hearing circuitry with visual aids, discussing how it dominates our perception over sound.

Lund *et al.* (2005) investigate phonological awareness in mono- and bi-lingual pre-school children with hearing loss. Although their focus is on younger children, their research can be applied to older students, especially the difficulties they found with phonemes which is something I will refer to later. Harris and Terleksi (2011) observed a group of children with hearing loss between the ages of 12 and 16 years. They suggested that this age group demonstrated an average delay of two years or more on standardised measures of reading proficiency. Conventional literacy deficits may be driven by delays in pre-literacy skills; young children with hearing loss have poorer early literacy skills, including vocabulary knowledge and phonological awareness, than their same-age peers without hearing loss.

### *Hearing impairment and Latin*

Unfortunately, and possibly due to the nature of Classics, there is a limited amount written on how we can extend our teaching to be inclusive of SEN students. What is more, there is almost nothing written specifically about teaching Latin to hearing-impaired students. Tony Hubbard, perhaps, comes closest to trying to identify and unveil experiences teachers may find teaching a range of pupils (Hubbard, 2003). Nonetheless, he is quick to outline in his preface that his priority concern is the special needs in terms of ability. He quite firmly states that 'it does not attempt to cover general matters of Special Educational Needs' before offloading this issue onto 'whole school policies in relation to both learning difficulties and gifted and talented' (Hubbard, 2003, p. 51). I think that in this process Hubbard has limited himself firstly, by

a misleading title suggesting his focus is on SEN; secondly, by not fully exploring what it is to teach Classics to SEN students. Hubbard does make some sensible assertions about the limits of differentiation by acceleration, underlining the issues in reading courses which inhibit classes when they are meant to work together for extended periods of time. Therefore, in this case study, I have used his experiences to supplement my own, and further to this I have used it to form arguments on what he says we should do to support lower-ability students we teach.

Hubbard addresses the initial idea that language acquisition arises from interaction between children and adults. This process is more easily developed in early years. However, the issue arising with deaf pupils is that they are still acquiring language through their later school years (Hubbard, 2003, pp. 76-77). As a result, it is not surprising that learning a new language can either be unsettling or comforting to some students. On the one hand, it may be unsettling in the sense that they have already had difficulty learning one language and acquiring the vocabulary, but on the other hand each student is a *tabula rasa*. However, there have been advocates for Latin being more accessible to students with SEN (Fischer, 1986, p. 1; Hill, 2006, p. 55; Schneider and Crombie, 2003, pp. 14-15). Hill primarily looks at learning difficulties such as dyslexia, but the principles of her arguments are steadfast for teaching the hearing-impaired as well. Latin teachers do not emphasise listening and speaking but rather reading. The language is without native speakers and its students enter classes on a more level playing field than MFL students do (Hill, 2009, p. 6). I think that to an extent Hill is not wrong. Without the pressure of having to speak in the correct accent or lip-read from a native speaker, who may have different or exaggerated lip movements, there is a benefit for a hearing-impaired student learning Latin.

Townsley (1985) conducted a study at Gallaudet College which demonstrated that students 'whose native language was not English could make sudden and extraordinary jumps in vocabulary and verbal skills, advancing on average a full year above those not taking Latin' (p. 4). The students who took part in the study

had American Sign Language as their first language, not English. Townsley suggested that their first non-sign language was Latin not English. They noticed an eight-month increase in vocabulary after one term. In addition, though I cannot quantify how they measured it, Townsley suggested that an additional side effect was 'above-average motivation', and that there was an appreciation for how Latin helped to improve their comprehension of English, in opposition to MFL which they found difficult to master (1985, pp. 5-8). In another study, Abbott (1991) argued that she experienced a similar motivation effect. She suggested, like Hill, that Latin is possibly one of the only subjects that all students begin in the same position – they all know nothing. More to the point, students need success. Latin is a subject that begins by very simply translating model sentences, fulfilling an immediate success criterion. Abbott suggested that this self-esteem and the pride that they experienced in Latin were not part of the MFL experience.

## Findings and Analysis

### *Pupil Experience*

I thought that Latin might have appealed to Kim because of his hearing impairment. However, after spending time observing him, speaking to other members of staff, and most importantly talking to him, it became clear to me that Kim was a very high-achieving student. Latin was not simply an easier subject for his SEN, but he had chosen it because of enjoyment and because he could take Latin outside of the curriculum alongside his other subjects and he enjoyed the historical side. I was interested in his experience of Latin through the reading course *Cambridge Latin Course* (CLC), as I wanted to consider whether the pedagogy of a reading course would always be most appropriate for him.

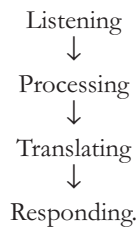
During my initial observation period, I noticed habits such as Kim's wandering attention. I thought that this might have perhaps been due to the fact that Latin lessons occurred outside of the mainstream timetable. Originally, I thought he was simply a chatty Year 10 boy who enjoyed chatting to the friend he

sat next to every lesson. I think that I was misled in my initial views, until I started fully exploring hearing impairment. The role of a silent observer meant that I could not always hear their conversations, but I noticed a pattern. As soon as the Latin teacher turned to talk in another direction or spoke to the whiteboard, Kim 'switched-off'. After reading NASEN's spotlight guide, this coincided with the disengagement they spoke about, especially regarding long periods of listening or frustration when missing some instructions.

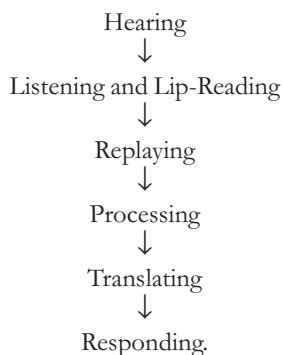
On another occasion, when the class were working through a story towards the end of the *Cambridge Latin Course Book 4*, Kim became distracted. I overheard the conversation: 'What's the infinitive?' The answer came back as a droned response from a small group of girls. The Latin teacher was moving through this at a quick pace, and using his dialogic style of teaching, was asking for interplay with the language. Kim asked 'Where are we in line 9?' The teacher asked 'Where is the future tense in this passage?' Kim began to answer. Another student shouted the answer quickly. The class moved on. It made me question whether Kim understands the language. The pace of the class in every lesson was very quick. I could see Kim lip-reading and paying detailed attention to the teacher's mouth to keep up with the story, but was he getting the time to read and practise the language as much as the other students? He asked 'What does Epaphroditus have against Domitia?' I believe that this demonstrates two things; his interest in context, and that he does not always have access to the discussion context. In my interview with Kim he noted that he enjoyed reading, but he did not get much context from it. He thought that it was a complicated language and different rules applied that he did not always know where to look. I think that in this area the dialogic approach may not be working for Kim as well as for the rest of the class.

In a conversation, Kim said that he is 'not your average deaf person'. He did not see deafness as something that holds him back. He would not let it hold him back and he acknowledged that he knew he was doing well for a deaf student. Due to his strong motivation, he is predominantly in the top set for his classes. To a certain extent, staff have remarked that this is both his and

Michelle's undoing. All the lessons I observed him in I found similar patterns to Latin – lots of eager pupils ready to shout answers out. Kim relies on his peers more than his TAs to keep up, but his peers also work at a much faster rate. He finds it hard to lip-read and take notes, and then finds it hard to fill in the gaps. The pace becomes a real issue with these quick-fire questions and the speed of the dialogic approach. Kim thought that his peers answer all the questions and this did not give him a chance to process what is happening: 'They just give the answers and that's it; then you don't really learn much'. Kim would like to go through everything and explain why this is this or that. When his peers answer quickly, he knows he will miss chunks of the lesson. When this happens and the class moves on he feels as though he is receiving second-hand information, and he does not get the chance to ask about anything. One of the things that we can do is to try to ask more thought-provoking questions. Even if this is an extension question, this allows the student to work through the basics. For a hearing student, the learning process is something similar to:



Whereas for Kim I see the process in Latin as:



He has an additional two stages to focus on before he can reach the same place as his peers. In addition, when I asked Michelle to comment on this, she agreed. She said that she could not access the content of the lesson if the pace was

too fast. For her, Key Stage 3 was a lot faster, but now the class has slowed down to revise everything. Unfortunately, I think that the issue with pace in Latin is not as easily met, as lesson time available is significantly reduced.

The visual system dominates our perception. The visual system can be a useful tool in situations where hearing impairments are affecting language acquisition (Thonn & Jessica, 2008). It is not unsurprising that Kim identifies himself as a visual learner, and I have seen the extent that this helps him more than others. In one class, he recalled a video they had watched a long time ago, and no one else could remember it. Here I could see the distinction between where his visual senses would dominate his aural. One of the things I noted in my observations was the lack of visual input to begin with. A supplementary visual input will assist the hearing-impaired learner when the brain is primed to receive new information. In any case where auditory stimulus may be lost, learners with hearing impairment may be augmented by an unambiguous visual clue (2008, p. 52). There were some interesting ideas the Latin teacher used such as character drawing on the board, which helped and engaged Kim, but then he still missed the context of the group discussions (as this character sketching related back to Epaphroditus and Domitia). One of the things I observed in his English classes is that the teachers always have the key words on a projector. I believe that this is something which helps Kim immensely. Moreover, his annual hearing report suggests that the use of written words or visual information will help to clarify spoken instructions. He benefits from a discreet check back that he has heard and understood vocabulary and concepts. In our interview he said how one word can unlock the whole context of a conversation. He noted that in terms of sounds, there was an article he read recently about lip-reading that said there are only 40 different mouth movements for sounds but lots more sounds that are made. Quite a lot of sounds have the same lip movement. If we can try to give points in advance, it can avoid this confusion.

*Teacher/Support Staff Experience*

The pupil experience led my research in a certain direction. I wanted to focus on

the primary points that I saw arising from my observations and interviews – didactic/dialogic versus visual teaching, pace, access to content and context. From my observations, I could understand where Kim was coming from and I could see these issues occurring in his Latin classes.

In the interview with Kim's Latin teacher, he said that he was aware of Kim's deafness, but honestly admitted that he probably did not do as much as he could to adapt the lessons. He identified that his teaching style involved more dialogic talking about the topic rather than teacher talk. There is a certain amount of didacticism and short activities, but his teaching revolves around talking and taking students through a text. Reflectively looking at his teaching style, he agreed that it is problematic for Kim and that he probably does not learn as much as others. The Latin teacher who has 29 years' experience in six different schools sees the pedagogical benefit of his style. Initially there was a slight reluctance to change, yet he did acknowledge that using slower-moving questions would create some free time for him to process information. Wood and Wood (1984) constructed an experiment which found that the correlations between teacher style and child loquacity were causal in nature. They suggest that if teachers wish to promote conversational participation by deaf children then it is best to avoid frequent questioning, which does not fit very well into methods of dialogic teaching. Although pupil participation may not be necessary in classroom talk to students with normal hearing, it is advocated with deaf children to promote language competence.

An issue with Latin as an extra-curricular subject has meant that there is a reduced amount of teaching time. Latin involves a lot of work and there is a lot to talk about. Even though Latin is not spoken, we have to talk about language and context. First of all there is the issue with translating, which a lot of children cannot do without guidance. Hubbard (2003, p. 52) also argued that classical subjects are multi-faceted. There is always more than just teaching a single aspect of

language; there is understanding of the world we are studying, and there are cognitive skills being subconsciously developed such as inductive and deductive reasoning or analysing patterns. Secondly, there is not a lot of time. Kim has four 50-minute lessons a fortnight, whereas English and Maths have frequent lessons - almost daily. Therefore, there has to be a certain amount of teacher talk. The teacher tends to read quite quickly and bounce ideas about around the class, and admitted that he does not always think about it hard enough to give Kim and other slower students time to think. With the time constraints and content Hubbard (2003) even states that not even the most gifted will be equally good at all of these; the weakest will have some ability, but the rest is to be drawn out. The Latin teacher has considered certain means to make the lessons more accessible such as writing more on the board, writing out principal parts. If students are chanting vocabulary or declensions, then he puts it on the board and points as he goes.

One of the aspects that would help Kim is the use of a TA in lessons. This could allow him to have information repeated back and avoid the issue of the speed in the dialogic teaching. After speaking to several of his TAs it became clear that they were often the greatest asset in MFL, and Michelle also indicated the higher reliance in these lessons. The issue with Latin at my school is that the lessons take place outside of the timetable, when TAs are

not working. The SENCO acknowledged this has been an issue in the past and she had considered moving TA timetables to accommodate Latin, but the feeling was that without having a specialist knowledge TA Kim would not benefit. In my school, both the Latin teacher and I are in the lessons so one of us can act as a TA. It is understandable that resources cannot always be stretched for extra-curricular classes, but if there is the availability of another member of staff in the department then it is not unreasonable to ask them to help.

I had an informal conversation with two of Kim's TAs who usually work with him in English lessons. When they were working as TAs they said that they try to keep within the vicinity of the students, as students are not always forward in asking for help. However, one of the things that arose when we spoke about Kim was that he is perhaps lacking the social element of group work. One TA suggested that he cannot always access the overlapping conversations that we are accustomed to, and in order to help develop these skills one of the teachers planned for small groups to leave the class at a time. Another useful suggestion was to give each pupil a task or goal to achieve as well as the group goal. In the Latin classes there is often not much group work, and sometimes it may seem that in smaller classes the whole exercise is in fact a group task. What this conversation did prompt me to think about was when we do translation exercises and there is a small classroom,

then it would be perfectly reasonable to promote this isolated group work. If the students can work in different parts of the class, then it provides them with the opportunity to discuss and challenge each other's grasp of the language. Moreover, it means that the teacher can move into these groups and provide some one-to-one support, which Kim desired.

At my post-16 experience school, we discussed how the MFL department addresses the hearing-impaired students. They noted that it was much easier in the lower years as most of the information was visual and surrounds the pictures with words. It is evident that the gap would begin to grow for Kim in the *CLC*. It begins with very simple pictures with a lot of easy success, but as the stories progress more needs to be understood from the context, and this is perhaps where we need to intervene when teaching the course. Furthermore, in any listening exercise at the school, the teacher would repeat the phrase to the student so there was not any disadvantage. However, another teacher said that it took the experience away from the other students, who were not gaining the listening skills. Unfortunately, one of their hearing-impaired students could not keep up and was taken out of the language class. They developed a lack of confidence – something which Kim had expressed to me in his interview.

***In order to help such pupils, the teacher should:***

1. Provide a good listening environment by keeping and maintaining minimal background noise;
2. Encourage the student to sit closer to the front (though not in a way which isolates them from their peers);
3. Create conditions where the child can lip-read easily:
  1. Don't stand with your back to the student, or to a window on a bright day
  2. Don't move around
  3. Do not exaggerate lip patterns
  4. If possible work at the pupil's level;
4. Provide breaks from solely listening

**Figure 1. | Watson's Suggestions to Improve Classroom Experience**

## My Experience and Recommendation for Future Practice

The theme I found reoccurring throughout this research process was very simple – being conscious of the student. I interviewed a wide range of staff with all different levels of experience, but it was only when we began to speak about Kim that it became obvious the things we could do to help the student. Watson (1996, p. 9) suggests the following:

Kim's Latin teacher had said in the interview that since I began my research he had thought about how he could make the classes more accessible. I had mentioned to him that in order for Kim to access content and context of class discussions there are simple steps we can introduce such as repeating or summarising points of his peers back to him, not talking to the whiteboard when explaining grammar, and trying to slow the pace down. A period after our interview, this teacher said to me that he was more conscious to repeat things so that Kim could access the ideas of the other students. He also sat him next to the whiteboard, and slowed the pace of the class down to allow him more thinking time. After being made aware of the time spent talking to the whiteboard he said that it is very reasonable to write something then turn to explain it, but it is something that you need to consciously try to avoid. In addition, he thought that Kim participated more and the teacher wrote down more on the board and thought it was more accessible; but again it took conscious thought.

A lot of other techniques can be seen as examples of good teaching, such as not putting your hand over your mouth when speaking, and talking in the direction of the student. Using the hearing aid properly will also be a benefit, such as not attaching it to a lanyard with keys, but to clothing. However, one of the most important things is visual input – and in Latin having sufficient vocabulary. Kim's English teacher always tries to include a word of the day on the slide, especially if it is a technical term. Similarly, the head of humanities goes a stage further. Even though it is time-consuming, she produces PowerPoints in advance of the lesson and films herself delivering it so

Kim or Michelle can see the lip pattern, as everyone has slightly different lip movements. Kim has an Edmodo webpage where staff and support staff can share notes, presentations, or other files that may be useful. Perhaps this is something which can be used discreetly – as all students have access to an Ipad. If there is a language feature being taught, then we could prepare a document with annotations of the explanation we expect to give. Furthermore, this can allow us to deliver clear instructions and expectations in advance of the lesson. Kim's English teacher had noticed a change in his attitude. She said that he was becoming more frustrated in lessons, and not completing tasks to the same depth. It was only during our conversation that she thought he may not be getting the second layer of instructions if he begins the task immediately. She said that she could ensure all instructions are on the presentation clearly.

Presenting this information in advance could be vital to success in the language. The SENCO suggested that pre-teaching will help with his needs. Hubbard (2003, p. 54) argues that without the vocabulary even the most- and least-able students are handicapped. If we deliver vocabulary lists in advance, then a progress support worker can use this in mentoring sessions. Thonn and Jessica (2008, p. 53) also suggest that teachers can do a lot to create a learning-conductive classroom for all students as well as our focus on the hearing-impaired. First, always get the listeners' attention before speaking, and announce when there is going to be a change of topic – and highlight key words to access content. It is possible to provide written notes for pre- or post-study if there is a significant delay in production.

Pre-teaching, post-teaching, and over-teaching will not only benefit the hearing-impaired student but the whole class. As Kim enters his examination year, I wanted to be prepared to find how I might teach him his set texts. I used the experience of the English teacher, and head of humanities (Geography) to find how they taught their set texts/case studies. In English, the students read at home and they analyse in class with TA support. However, in Geography they would start with the theory then follow with the evidence. The geography teachers begin by teaching the theory then

the process. It is almost like re-teaching, and when we meet the process again it is revision and almost over-teaching. After hearing this, I thought that this could be something we change in the way we teach set texts.

From my experience teaching Kim, I have begun to implement my own tactics in the class. When we are addressing a text from the *Cambridge Latin Course*, I try to deliver five short bullet points about the story – not so much that they give the story away, but a generic point that will help Kim access the context if he misses something in class discussion. He has found these to be very useful, and it means that he can access passages without having to focus as hard on lip-reading when his peers talk. I have also found that drawing his attention or getting another student to draw his attention to me has meant that he is always looking, and I tend to speak with my face directed at him. As a result he has clear vision, and it does not affect his peers if I talk in his direction. An area where the whole class has difficulty is in learning their declensions. When we are revising these, we form them as a class on the whiteboard then I point to each word as we say them aloud. I manage the pace of the chant so that Kim is not overwhelmed with ten other students shouting *puella, puellam, puellae* etc. In terms of managing the pace of the class, I have begun giving short blocks to read through in advance. I ask the students to read five lines in Latin to themselves, then we speak about the language. In this way I have managed to include and develop my dialogic teaching style to benefit Kim. I find myself very visually interplaying with the language, for instance *pueri puellaeque deorum effigies coronis florum ornabant* [the boys and girls decorated the statues of the gods with wreaths of flowers]. I used hand movements to suggest the manipulation of the language and how each word agrees with each other. I place the imaginary words in front of me and move them to show how the sentence is constructed – admittedly it involves the imagination of the participants but it is a visual means of engaging Kim.

In addition to the support we can offer in class, it is advisable that the teacher maintains contact with the parent. The head of humanities maintains regular contact with Kim's parents and this supports the idea of creating that

dynamic triangle of school, parent and pupil. Parents are encouraged to work with teachers as partners in all areas of education, and this has been the case since the Code of Practice 1994. The role of the parent has become more clearly defined and valued. Knight and Maltby (2000, p. 96-99) argue that the nature of the relationship between the parent and the teacher should be developed through mutual respect. The specialist knowledge of the professionals and the intimate knowledge of the child by the parents should interact for the mutual benefit of the child. As a result, the pre- and post-teaching can be extended from the school environment.

## Conclusion

Upon reflection, this piece of research did not necessarily take the direction I initially thought it would. Kim is not an average deaf student, and his choice to do Latin was far more to do with his academic interests than the subject's appeal to a hearing-impaired student. However, this is not to say that the research did not have a positive outcome. The common response from the members of staff interviewed, and from informal conversations, was that this research provoked thought. By generating awareness, teachers and support staff reflectively looked at what they did and more importantly what they could do to facilitate learning.

I have drawn from the experiences of many members of staff and considered the function of audiology in the classroom to see where it could benefit Kim. It became clear that to improve the Latin classroom experience, there may be less to do with Latin, but more to do with good teaching practice. One of the key areas that needs to be focused on is visual input. Our visual senses dominate our aural ones. If there is a way of projecting clear instructions and making information accessible, then we should endeavour to do so. The *Cambridge Latin Course* begins with many pictures, and as the language becomes more complex the pictures cannot always convey the story. However, this does not mean that we cannot still produce a visual accompaniment to set texts.

Furthermore, it is likely that most schools entering Latin in public exams will

be under a time constraint, and that there will probably be a selected group of gifted individuals. Despite these circumstances, it is still important to consider making these classes accessible not only to students with SEN, but to slower-working students. The pace of the lesson can still be reduced with some conscientious planning and thought-provoking extension questions. Kim made an astute observation in our interview about his peers. He said that 'Just because the class looks good with people answering questions quickly, it does not mean everyone in that class understands'. It is important to manage this pace by acknowledging the student with the answer but indicating that another student may need more thinking time. Also I found that allowing students to work in small groups to translate a story meant that I could negotiate the classroom and do individual language work.

Finally, I have seen that there is a benefit to dialogic teaching, and over the process of this research I have developed my own dialogic style. However, this is not always the most practical way to teach a hearing-impaired student. I understand that this is a unique case study, and that it may not answer all questions concerning hearing impairment and the Latin classroom experience. Nevertheless, this article raises awareness to a subject that is quite often neglected in teaching Latin. The experiences collated and suggestions raised will hopefully benefit anyone who may have a student with an SEN in their classroom, or it will promote a more conscious approach to how we deal with SEN in Classics.

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