

An investigation into how pupils' use of learning journals affects their understanding of how to translate Ancient Greek. Pupils' habits and responses in a year 10 Ancient Greek class.

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Introduction

This study investigates the use of learning journals by pupils learning Ancient Greek in a secondary school and their response to them. Learning journals have predominantly been used in higher education for professional and vocational qualifications, where, though their use is wide ranging, it usually involves the student reflecting on some aspect of teaching or learning. There is little documented research on their use in languages teaching or at secondary school level. However, the host of educational benefits they are reported to confer (O'Connell & Dymont, 2011) encourages investigation. Moreover, there is interest in the use of the related concepts autonomy, learning how to learn and self-assessment in secondary education, even in classical subjects.

In the rest of the introduction I shall discuss the school setting in which the investigation took place. In the literature review section I shall discuss some of the uses of journals in more detail and their benefits and potential problems as well as reasons for and aims in instituting autonomy and self assessment practices in education. In the methodology section I shall set out exactly how journals are to be used in this study, how I am going to assess their use and the questions I hope might be answered. I shall finish with a discussion of the findings, their limitations and suggestions for further research.

The school at which the study was conducted was a selective state boys' school which takes girls in the sixth form. The school takes pupils from a very wide area, including much of north east Essex. As the school selects the pupils with the 96 highest scores from the approximately 400 who apply for entry in year 7, attainment on entry is well above average. The school is very high performing. In 2010 100% of pupils gained 5 A*-C grades at GCSE and the school has been ranked top for A-level results five times in the last eight years. In the most recent inspection by Ofsted, in 2007, the school was judged outstanding in all respects.

Classics is strong within the school. Latin is compulsory in years 7 to 9. It is an option thereafter and on average between 30 and 40 pupils choose to continue to GCSE. Take up at A-Level varies. The current Years 13 and 12 have 4 pupils and 12 pupils respectively. Pupils choose to study either Greek or German for years 8 and 9 and then decide whether to continue to GCSE. Initial take up of Greek is strong, with on average between a third and half the year opting for it. Numbers opting for it at GCSE are usually around 10. A level once again varies (current numbers are 4 and 8). Classical Civilisation, only available at A level, usually attracts around 15 pupils.

The classics department contains 5 members of staff, 2 of whom teach reduced timetables on account of other responsibilities within the school. The head of department described the school's pedagogy as 'traditional'. In Greek and Latin, though there is inevitably some variation between teachers, there is a strong focus on the language. The majority of lessons centre on the teaching of grammar and oral or written translation. Pupils are regularly set to learn paradigms and tested on them. Paralinguistic material plays a minor role. The textbooks used are *Ecce Romani*, *The Millionaire's Dinner Party* and *Greek to GCSE* parts one and two, and these are followed closely. At A-level prose composition is introduced and discussion in literature lessons and Classical Civilisation is academic.

ICT is used primarily for practice of Greek and Latin language on the computer programmes designed by the former head of department. All teaching rooms in the Classics department are equipped with projectors, which are used by some staff. Several other rooms in the school are used for some Classics teaching and these have interactive white boards. I believe I was the first member of staff to use interactive whiteboards for classics teaching.

Though the approach taken to Classics teaching may seem austere, the healthy

take up of the subject testifies to the suitability of this approach for the pupils at the school. Through observations of lessons and my own teaching experience I have found that the majority of pupils undertake tasks set in classics lessons willingly and many appear to enjoy the subjects. The majority of pupils show a good aptitude for Latin and Greek and good motivation and attitude to study.

The class chosen for the study was a year 10 Greek class of 4 boys. All had been studying Greek since year 8, and two were studying Latin as well. A rough assessment would describe one as exceptional, two as strong as the fourth as weaker. This class was chosen because it was sufficiently small to allow all pupils to be observed closely during the study and interviewed in depth. It was also likely that, thanks to the more traditional pedagogy employed by the school, the pupils would have little experience of independent learning and self-assessment and are used to depending on the teacher for setting tasks and assessing work. Finally there is no documented case of learning journals being used with pupils this age in any subject, let alone Greek.

Literature Review

I shall start by considering writing on some of the broader educational topics related to learning journals, including autonomy and self-assessment, both generally and within the field of Classics education. I shall then turn to the literature which deals specifically with learning journals. I shall consider first some more general writing about them, and then focus on research into their use in settings more closely related to our own, including science, mathematics and modern languages. I shall comment throughout on the potential application of the literature reviewed to our study.

David Little (1990) gives an account of autonomy in modern languages learning. According to him, it is important to realise that autonomy is not the same as self instruction and does not rule out an important role for the teacher, nor is it a single easily described behaviour. "Learner autonomy is essentially a matter of the learner's psychological relation to the process and content of learning" (Little, 1990, p. 7); it includes a wide variety of behaviours including "critical reflection". For him there are two reasons it is important to promote autonomy. Firstly, a democratic society needs autonomous adults. Secondly, since as child first language learners we learn at our own pace, so for second language learners all learning is internal and requires time and psychological space. The teacher's influence is not absolute. Little also stresses the importance of learners becoming aware of themselves as learners and discovering what learning techniques they instinctively favour. He mentions the use of learners' journals in this context. Interestingly, Little suggests some learners may not want autonomy, especially more able pupils who are often comfortable with total dependence on the teacher.

For Boud (1995) self-assessment is as important for learning as autonomy and is closely related to it: the values which underpin self-assessment "include principally the

encouragement of student autonomy in learning and student responsibility for critical evaluation of their own work” (Boud, 1995, p. 180). Indeed, Boud argues that the structure of any approach to making learners independent may imply self-assessment. Self-assessment is also related to reflective practices and meta-cognition: “for effective learning of any kind to take place, learners must develop the capability of monitoring what they do and modifying their learning strategies accordingly” (Boud, 1995, p. 14). Self-assessment is vital because it influences students' approaches in a way that result in deep learning. Deep learning involves pupils trying to make sense of what they study and relate it to their own understanding.

Boud also discusses the implementation of self-assessment practices. They are likely, he says, to be met with scepticism and resistance by those unfamiliar with them, and for that reason self-assessment activities need to be designed carefully; they must be subject specific, appropriate to the local context and the pupils' development (“pupils' efforts should be redirected into activities which engage them in tasks which have a direct benefit to the kind of learning that engages them with the central goals of the course”, Boud, 2005, p. 178) He also stresses the importance of starting with something simple and of asking students to make judgements on something it is reasonable for them to do so.

Taylor (2005) has written on self-assessment in the particular context of Classics education. He claims that it is a vital part of assessment to engage the pupils in how well they are doing and how they can improve. Pupils need to be participants in their own learning and ways found of making students more independent and responsible for their own learning. Self-assessment is one such way.

Deagon (2006) has argued that it is beneficial for pupils to be aware of their learning styles: “it appears that students who are aware of their cognitive styles and learning preferences can make use of the learning techniques that help them process information

more effectively” (Deagon, 2006, p 42) and “by gaining a little self knowledge, they are able to become more effective participants in their own learning process” (p. 42). Though she does not use the terms self-assessment or independent learning, pupils having a choice of learning techniques implies independence and it is plausible that self-assessment could lead to the greater awareness she refers to. Deagon concludes: “we must restructure our teaching materials and teaching styles to help students find comfortable and meaningful paths to their own manner of comprehension”. Learning journals, which do not belong to traditional classics teaching, might be one such way.

Autonomy and self-assessment in the context of translating Latin and Greek are also mentioned by Van Houdt and Van de Walle. They investigated the attempts of the University of Leuven to develop a new Latin and Greek course to combat the problem of undergraduate students being unable to read the classical languages. They started by identifying as the probable cause of this deficiency: “a decreased knowledge of the Latin vocabulary and morpho-syntactic system; gaps in the reading training which was currently offered, and a too strongly teacher-directed educational process” (Van Houdt & Van de Walle, 2005, p. 2). The cognitive strategies which they suggest are important for reading are 'top down reading' and 'bottom up reading', which requires applying morpho syntactic knowledge. (McCaffrey (2006) has also stressed the importance of these reading strategies.) The reader also needs meta-cognitive skills such as monitoring reading and assessing the cognitive skills. Self-assessment is important in improving this meta-cognition. Students on the course were given a diagnostic test which revealed that it was important not to over rely on either top down or bottom up strategies and that 'context-free word recognition is one of the most salient characteristics of reading ability' (Van Houdt & Van de Walle, 2005, p.12). In order to turn students into autonomous readers, training was given in using strategies and exercises prescribed to remedy students' weaknesses, one

of which trained students to understand words in context. Frequent assessment and self-assessment were also used to stimulate meta-cognition. Van Houdt and Van de Walle conceded they did not have sufficient data for concluding this new course was a success but felt intuitively that it was and such approaches to reading/translating were worthy of further investigation.

Thus we have some ideas of the importance of autonomy and self assessment and also the benefits and also potential difficulties we might expect from any practice requiring them. We also have some ideas of the kind of self assessment useful in learning Latin and Greek, and so some ideas how our journals might be used. Let us now consider some literature specifically on learning journals, first some more general material and then articles focussing on the use of journals in contexts similar to our own.

Moon (2006) has written extensively on journals. Moon claims learning journals are a 'vehicle for reflection' (Moon, 2006, p. 1) designed to enhance learning; there is no fixed definition of what a journal is and 'within this generalized form there are vast creative possibilities' (Moon, 2006, p. 2), 'there is little limit to the subject matter about which journals can be written' (Moon, 2006, p. 3) and 'basic subject matter inspires the development of different structures for reflection' (Moon, 2006, p.3). This suggests a use may be found for journals within our context, even if it is removed from the usual context journals are employed in.

Moon assumes a constructivist view of learning in which knowledge is a flexible network of ideas and the material of learning and existing knowledge may change in the process of learning, in contrast with an accumulation theory of knowledge. Moon claims that journals accentuate favourable conditions for learning in several ways. Those worth considering in our study are: they slow the pace of learning, they increase the involvement in pupils' ownership of learning, enhance learning through the process of writing,

encourage meta-cognition (that is awareness of one's own level of knowledge, ways of learning and ability to control ways of learning), and enhance problem solving skills.

There is much research extolling the benefits of journals; but problems in their use have also been identified. O'Connell and Dymont (2011) claim it has not yet been determined whether journals are beneficial overall and set out to find the advantages and disadvantages by collecting evidence from 75 articles. They find that the advantages of journals include: providing opportunities for the student to become 'more engaged and active in their learning' (O'Connell & Dymont, 2011, p. 50), fostering meta-cognition, giving pupils an opportunity to connect previous and current experience, providing an opportunity for the teacher to respond to particular learning needs of students, as well as giving the teacher information on pupils' level of understanding and knowledge. Disadvantages include: pupils often being given inadequate training and instructions that are not specific enough and so not understanding what is required of them, and pupils writing to please the teacher rather than for themselves. A finding particularly relevant for our study is that pupils who are a product of the banking model of teaching and used to more traditional forms of assessment 'can find it difficult to commit to pedagogical methods inviting critical reflection.' (O'Connell & Dymont, 2011, p. 56). O'Connell and Dymont also cite a finding that journals are not suitable for all types of intelligence, suiting only 20% of pupils.

So far we have considered some general research on journals. Let us now turn to the use of journals in some contexts which more closely resemble our own, both in subject matter and educational level. McCrindle and Christensen set out to study the effect of learning journals on 40 students aged 17-19 in a first year introductory biology course. They focussed on the journals' effects on learning performance and meta-cognitive and cognitive processes. These terms have already been mentioned and are variously defined in the literature. For McCrindle and Christensen meta-cognitive knowledge includes

knowledge of one's strengths and weaknesses as well as execution, selection, monitoring and control of cognitive strategies. Cognitive strategies, in order of effectiveness, include rehearsal strategies (copying, selective notes), organizational strategies (grouping, categorization), and elaborative (mental images, generative note taking, paraphrasing, self-questioning.)

The authors set out to discover the impact of keeping learning journals first on pupils 'meta-cognitive awareness and control and subsequently on their conceptions of learning, their use of cognitive strategies, their structuring of acquired knowledge and finally their academic achievement' (McCrinkle & Christensen. 1995, p. 173). One group was asked to keep a journal and the other to write a scientific report. The journal entry was to include pupils' reflections on the effectiveness of strategies they had used as well as on their personal learning process.

In the conclusion the authors state that the group using the learning journal showed a more sophisticated conception of learning than the control group and also performed significantly better academically. "the journal group had greater awareness of cognitive strategies as well as greater control in implementing strategies effectively....the journal group showed greater use of more sophisticated and effective cognitive strategies" (i.e. more elaborative and organizational strategies rather than rehearsal) (McCrinkle & Christensen. 1995, p. 182). They also showed a greater use of meta-cognitive strategies.

Journals have been used by undergraduates learning mathematics. Borasi and Rose (1989) endorse the view that writing uniquely contributes to the learning process, since it engages all students in the deliberate structuring of meaning and allows learners to go at their own pace. In their investigation, pupils were given journals, a brief explanation of how they were to be used - "to reflect on and express feelings about the mathematical content and the course, to provide input to the teacher, and to engage in a dialogue with

the teacher” (Borasi & Rose, 1989, p.350). This openness of topic led to some students not knowing what to write and further more detailed instruction had to be given. Pupils were asked to write an evaluation of their use of journals based around 4 key questions. A content analysis of the journals themselves, these evaluations and the instructor's experiences was carried out. Results included: pupils' writing about their feelings had a therapeutic value; restating concepts and rules in their own words helped facilitate internalization and learning of mathematical concepts; reflection on the process of doing mathematics led to greater awareness of alternative approaches and improvements in problem solving skills (Borasi and Rose, 1989, p. 363).

Muelhaus and Loeschmann have looked into the use of learning journals specifically in language teaching. Undergraduates learning German through a distance learning programme were asked to keep a journal for several reasons: to cater for students with different standards of knowledge when there was insufficient contact time, to foster lifelong learning strategies and make students more responsible for their own learning, as well as helping them find more effective strategies for learning. The journals were to include written work, vocabulary lists and reflective comments, students' feelings about the material and effectiveness of the strategies used. The journal was submitted for marking and assessed on the level of interaction with the material. An interesting 'learning issue' emerged that students looked up the vast majority of new words and listed them in their journal but without context or grammatical characteristics (Muelhaus & Loeschmann, 1997, p.23). Workshops were held at which students discussed strategies for vocabulary inferencing. The authors conclude that the fact that students were using these strategies shows that 'they are taking control of their learning' and mention that many students expressed satisfaction with trying new strategies (Muelhaus & Loeschmann, 1997, p.25). They state: 'we seem to have succeeded in convincing pupils independent learning is a

promising, flexible way of learning' (Muelhaus and Loeschmann, 1997, p.26). On the issue of whether the journals actually made the students better at German, they are silent.

Though the research context even of the latter three articles is fairly distant from our own, it does give us some idea of a) how to set up the journaling process, (b) what benefits we might expect pupils to gain from the journals and c) what difficulties there might be.

Methodology

This investigation was intended as a more general exploratory study into a way of using journals, and the pupils' responses to them. It was anticipated that certain issues as suggested by the literature on journals and related topics would be addressed by the data collected. These issues broadly revolved around the questions: Were pupils able to develop the independence necessary to use the journals? Were pupils able to assess themselves and make accurate and relevant entries? What awareness did they show of their own learning and learning strategies? (meta-cognitive and cognitive awareness) What advantages and disadvantages did they think the journals had?

A case study was chosen as the most appropriate method for investigating our research question. According to Yin, a case study is an acceptable method for an exploratory study, and for the present study it has advantages in that “the case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life events” (Yin, 2009, p. 4) and “a major strength of case study data collection is the opportunity to use many different sources”, (Yin, 2009, p.114)

I collected data from three sources: participant observation, artefacts (including the journals completed by the pupils and other written work) and interviews conducted with the four pupils. These are discussed in more detail below. Data from these sources were not only collected in isolation but compared and contrasted with each other to see if they agreed. This is acknowledge to be a powerful method ('data triangulation..add[s] richness to the description and provides verification of the significance of issues through different methods and sources", Simons, 2009, p. 130); “the most important advantage presented by using multiple sources of evidence is the development of converging lines of enquiry, a process of triangulation and corroboration” (Simons, 2009, p. 115-116)

Before the study could begin, it had to be decided how the learning journals were

going to be used by the pupils. The flexibility of the learning journal concept and the lack of documented use in similar situations meant it was not clear what the subject for reflection should be for students. Furthermore, the small time scale for the study and time available in lessons restricted what could be included. In deciding then how the journals should be used, several things were taken into account: the literature on the use of learning journals and related ideas (self-assessment and autonomy), especially as treated in language research, and my own thoughts on what would be viable and useful for pupils in this school setting. It was important to bear in mind the advice of Boud (1995), that self-assessment tasks should be appropriate to the course and capable of being carried out by pupils.

I decided that pupils would use the journals to reflect on their performance in translation exercises completed both in class and at home, oral and written, and would use their journals to record points of grammar or vocabulary they had been uncertain of or mistaken about. After a period of six weeks, they would be asked to look back over the entries in their journals and reflect on and assess their learning and performance in Greek lessons more generally over this period. They had to write an entry in which they said how they felt they had performed in Greek, what they had done well and what less well and why, and what they would do to improve.

It has been stressed that proper training is required if the full benefits are to be gained from the use of journals (Boud, 1995, O'Connell and Dymont, 2011). Therefore pupils were initially given a brief explanation and examples of the kind of entries expected; they were given five minutes in the last quarter of each lesson to make an entry on the lines suggested. Journals were kept by me and distributed and collected in during lesson as needed. Although not ideal this was done for two reasons: firstly to avoid the chance of the journal being lost, which would be critical when the sample size was so small.

Secondly, I did not feel that removing the opportunity for pupils to complete entries at home would adversely affect results. It has been found (Moon, 2006) that when journal writing is introduced, pupils often fail to complete optional entries for various reasons including being unaccustomed to the task, requiring teacher guidance or not seeing the activity as worthwhile. I therefore decided that pupils should be given designated time to complete entries.

The three methods of data collection employed were: participant observation, analysis of artefacts and interviews. Participant observation was chosen rather than non-participant observation for several reasons. To an extent it was unavoidable, since I was teaching the class I was observing and could therefore not help participating. Participant observation was also beneficial for this study, because manipulation of events was necessary surrounding the learning journals. Not only did I have to organize the distribution and collection of the journals each week and provide both the initial instructions and models for entries, it was also likely that further intervention would be required to ensure pupils kept to the guidelines for journal entries, by offering further examples and guidance. Yin has identified the several drawbacks in participant observation: firstly that as a participant one cannot focus completely on those phenomena that are the object of observation. An example here would be while assisting one pupil with an entry I was unaware of what others are doing and cannot make notes on this. Secondly, I ran the risk of biasing the results by over-influencing the pupils into producing the results one wants. This is a risk particularly when the parameters of the study cannot be rigidly defined and I was uncertain how pupils would respond.

The observation itself focussed on the pupils' reactions to the learning journals. It was of course not possible to predict exactly how pupils would react and so what exact kinds of behaviour I should be watching for. So in observing I tried, therefore, to be as

comprehensive as possible and be alert to anything that pupils said or did that had implications for their understanding, use, and feelings about learning journals. Observation of these phenomena mainly took place during the time designated for learning journal entries. Pupils were observed throughout the lesson as well, firstly in case there should be other behaviour which suggested anything about their responses specifically to learning journals, but secondly, and more importantly, pupils' performance in translation tasks was observed, in order to compare pupils' performance as assessed by me with the evidence of that assessment as found in their journals. I took notes, as far as possible, during or after the lesson, consulted them later and compared them with other data.

A second source of data was artefacts: I collected data from material written by pupils. The primary source of this was the learning journals themselves. I collected after every lesson and scrutinized to ensure that pupils had been using the journals to make the appropriate kind of entries; if further instruction was required I tried to give as little help as was necessary to get the pupils making the right kind of entries. At the end of the period of five weeks I undertook a thorough examination of pupils' entries in the journals was undertaken. This examination focussed on what they had chosen to write, how they had recorded it, its relevance and accuracy. Their final entry, in which they were asked to reflect on their experience of learning Greek was also scrutinised, with a particular focus on the level of self-assessment and meta-cognitive awareness they showed.

The other artefact which I scrutinised was pupils' exercise books. Over the period the learning journals were used, pupils completed several translation tasks for homework in exercise books. I collected these, marked them, and returned them to pupils. I advised pupils that learning journal entries could be based upon marked work in exercise books. It is acknowledged, both in the use of learning journals, and independent learning, that it is important for pupils to be able to respond to and learn from work assessed by the teacher

(Boud, 1995). At the end of the case study, copies of the work pupils had completed in exercise books were compared with the entries in learning journals. I did this in order to see whether pupils had based learning journal entries on marked work and how it had been recorded.

The value of interviewing in educational research is widely acknowledged:

“Compared with other methods, interviews enable me to get to core issues in the case more quickly and in greater depth, to probe motivations, to ask follow up questions and to facilitate individuals telling their stories” (Simons, 2009, p. 43).

I decided to use semi-structured interviews because of the exploratory nature of the investigation; while there were issues I knew I wanted to discuss with pupils, I was also aware pupils might raise other interesting issues, and I wanted to be able to pursue these. Furthermore some of the questions I intended to ask were very open ended, and would require follow up in different directions depending on pupils' responses. I was aware both of the danger of over-prompting pupils in following up their responses, and of the unevenness of data caused by different pupils addressing different questions. I tried to guard against these mistakes but inevitably some of pupils' answers may suffer from bias.

I decided that I would interview pupils at the end of the case study about their experiences of using the journals. They were interviewed individually. Although this is perhaps less comfortable for pupils, both because they are alone with the teacher, and because they seemed to feel they were being tested, I felt this would be more valuable than interviewing them in a group. There is a difficulty in group interview in getting an equal level of response from all participants and also the serious danger that one interviewee may influence the others and make him less likely to think for himself. I conducted the interviews in a private room forming part of the Classics department. I planned that the interviews would be conducted during the time of a normal Greek lesson, with the class'

normal teacher covering in my absence. I felt pupils might be more generous with their responses if they did not feel they were using up their free time. They would not feel they had to hurry through to get away. In fact only three of the interviews could be conducted in this way, and the fourth had to be scheduled for lunchtime.

The importance of putting interviewees at ease to ensure full and honest answers has been stressed (Powney and Watts, 1987). I had the advantage of having been teaching the boys for almost two months by this time and had developed a rapport with them. Nevertheless, most of them were clearly apprehensive about the process. In order to combat this, I tried to allay their concerns by telling them they were not being tested in any way, and on the walk to the interview room tried to initiate some small talk on another topic such as other subjects they were studying or extra curricular interests. Once in the interview room, I gave a brief background to my research. A frequently cited problem in interviewing is the danger of the interviewee predicting the answers that will be most useful or pleasing to the interviewer and giving these rather than the truth. I anticipated pupils might be inclined to give an overly positive response to the learning journals, which I attempted to counteract by stressing at the beginning that no answer they gave was more or less useful to me, everything was valuable, and the most important goal was to be honest.

Powney and Watts (1987) have also noted that one needs to respond appropriately to the interviewees' answers during the interview. I also needed to avoid leading them in a way which might give biased responses or suggesting answers to them rather than waiting for them to formulate them themselves.

I recorded the interviews with a digital voice recorder and later transcribed them. I also took notes during the interview to avoid sustained eye contact and make the pupils feel more at ease.

Results

Observations gave some indication of the evolution of pupils' attitudes towards the journals and their performance in class which could be later compared with the entries in their journals. When the journals were first introduced and their use explained and pupils asked to make an entry, their response was inactivity and a look of confusion in some cases, suggesting this was something quite unfamiliar to them. Pupils did not admit to not understanding the task or not being able to think of something openly, perhaps out of embarrassment. When an example was given and pupils were told to record that, they started immediately and seemed more comfortable doing so. The impression of uncertainty and discomfort was apparent in pupils for 3 or 4 lessons thereafter but did decrease. Over this time pupils quickly and willingly took down examples provided by me, but often appeared to have difficulty thinking of something themselves to record, sometimes confessing when questioned that they could not think of anything to record. They often needed to be prompted by me, or even given a further example. Their difficulty in recording was not due to a lack of material. During class time I observed that all had made errors or shown gaps in their knowledge which conformed to the criteria and could have been recorded. The interviews would partly explain their difficulties in recording. Around the fifth lesson pupils began to become more comfortable with using the learning journals. Hesitation started to decrease, and pupils began to write more in their journals and the looks of confusion and uncertainty were no longer visible. Pupils were clearly becoming used to using the learning journals and started to anticipate making an entry. On one occasion pupil D called out during the lesson 'Ah that's something I can put in my learning journal', when he made a mistake and on another pupil A said to pupil B (perhaps slightly ironically), when pupil B didn't know something "You can write that in your learning journal". In the later lessons, when asked to make an entry, pupils either started writing

immediately, or looked back over written work or exercises that had been done orally. They were clearly reminding themselves of errors or gaps in their knowledge and then recording something.

Thus it was clear that there was some evolution in pupils' understanding and use of the journals. These remarks so far have to a large extent not distinguished between different pupils; as a participant observer I was not able to make detailed notes on each pupil's behaviour with regard to the journals. However, I noticed some rough trends: pupils A and D seemed to have least difficulty making entries, pupil B appeared comfortable with the task, but seemed content not to write much, and pupil C hesitated most and it was not clear that he ever became comfortable with the task. It is also worth noting that pupils A, B and D, when asked to make the final more general entry, responded quickly and wrote freely, appearing to have no difficulties thinking of things to record. Pupil C again stalled, said he did not know what to write, and needed some encouragement before he recorded anything.

I consulted two kinds of artefacts: written work completed by pupils during the period of the investigation and the learning journals themselves. The latter of these is by far the richer source, though the former is also valuable in so far as it can be used to judge pupils' success in deriving journal entries from their written work.

The first aspect of pupils' journal use to consider is their note taking skills or accuracy of recording information. It will be remembered that I provided written models of appropriate entries on the board, as well as oral prompts. Scrutiny of the journals reveals that pupils inevitably took down examples provided by me. These are not free from inaccuracies however; breathings are missing, and there are some (serious) misspellings. In fact in the recording of the imperfect of *απορεω* ('I am at a loss') – *ηπορουν* ('I was at a loss') – every pupil made an error of some kind.

When I consider those entries that pupils chose for themselves, the accuracy varies between pupils; pupil A's entries are entirely correct both in Greek and the English translation and analysis; only some breathings were missing; Pupil B's were of a similar standard though missing the majority of breathings. Pupil C's contained several errors and missing breathings. Pupil D's contained not only missing breathings and subscripts but numerous errors including incorrect copying down of Greek (e.g. την Γραιην instead of των Γραιων), incorrect translations (e.g. ηρωτησαντο ('They asked') being translated as 'I asked'), and incorrect analyses of words (e.g. εγενετο, a verb, being described as 'dative', which is only appropriate for nouns.) The quality of the entries in pupil D's journal is a cause for concern, and is so inaccurate to be seriously misleading if consulted by the pupil.

The small number of entries per journaling session from all pupils is noteworthy. Pupils appear to have made an average of 2-3 entries per session, and some of these include model entries provided by me. Observation of pupils during lessons suggested there was substantially more material pupils could have legitimately recorded, either from oral or written work, yet this does not appear in the journal. For example, pupil A in an oral translation failed to identify ηγγηληθη as the aorist passive of αγγελλω, yet did not record this. An approximation would suggest pupils probably managed to record at most half of what they could have, although it is not certain recording everything would have been either practical or useful.

Pupils did record the right kinds of things: that is they recorded something they had not known or had been mistaken about. The majority of entries pupils produced themselves follow the pattern of a Greek word and its translation. My model had been the word, a parsing of it and often the original form. In some cases pupils recorded this as well. The vast majority of entries from pupils were single words. One or two phrases and

sentences appear.

Three of the pupils did something different. One wrote a number of more general comments ('remember hats for contracted verbs' and 'look at tense of verbs carefully'). A second wrote out the table for 'παλις' when a failure to recognize the dative form revealed to him he could not remember it. A third copied out a portion of the vocabulary accompanying the passage which was being translated. Pupils were asked about these in interview.

For their final journal entry I asked pupils to write several sentences commenting on how they thought they had performed in Greek over the last half term; they were also asked to look back over their journal entries and record any tendencies they detected and say how they would improve their performance in Greek. All pupils wrote a general comment about their performance ("I think I have performed well", "I think I am reasonably strong"). All pupils also commented on their performance in vocabulary tests. Three of the pupils also identified a particular weakness in translation and wrote that they needed to address this in order to improve. (e.g. "My understanding of participles isn't so great so I should try to revise them more") Pupil A also recorded some ways in which he had improved ("I can easily recognise genitive absolutes which I sometimes missed before") My own observations of pupils and scrutiny of their work would suggest that their comments were accurate and appropriate. Pupil D, the weakest in the group, did not identify an aspect of translation to be improved, remarking only on a general problem "remembering things". Some of his other comments were vague and one showed an inaccurate recollection of what material had been covered.

In the interviews, all pupils showed they clearly understood the basic purpose of the journals, saying they were used for recording mistakes, things that were difficult to understand or things they got wrong. Some added more specific descriptions such as rules with the example of the genitive absolute or irregular words. When they were asked further

about how they had decided what to include, there was less consistency and often some uncertainty. About half said they recorded silly mistakes i.e. errors resulting from momentary lapses, the other half that they didn't and this wasn't worthwhile. Two pupils could not articulate how they decided what to include, and one changed his mind halfway through answering a question, first saying he would not record words he had never seen before and then that he would. Pupil C said he would only record 'major' things and did not feel he always had something to record.

Pupils' overall feelings about the journals varied substantially. Pupil A thought they were useful as they were, B and C that they were partly useful, and D that they were not useful at all. A complaint common to all pupils was that they were not allowed to keep the journals between sessions to look at, and all felt they would be more useful if this were changed, so that they could consult the journal regularly for revision, especially before exams. Only two thought that the actual writing in the journal helped them learn what they were writing. Pupils C and D said they did not like them but couldn't offer much explanation. C complained there was too much focus on the negative and would prefer to be taught for that part of the lesson. D kept repeating they were not useful.

Pupils agreed it was beneficial to record things that were particular to them, and they clearly recognised the advantages of this. However, only one pupil expressed complete confidence in selecting what to record himself. Others had reservations; two pupils said they found it difficult to decide exactly what to put in. One of these could not articulate his reasons; another said it was connected with his dissatisfaction with the whole journaling activity. Pupil A said he would have preferred the teacher had told him at least some things to record. He was also concerned that he would not select what was important, or if left to his own devices would not record anything.

A particular difficulty which all pupils admitted they had was remembering

everything that they had done in the lesson, which limited what they could record. This applied most to oral translation. This explains some of the unusual entries in the journals: the pupil who had copied out vocabulary lists and the other who had written a general remark confessed they had done this because they could not think of anything else to write down.

Two pupils said they had learned something more general over the time of using the journal, one that he had a tendency to rush and make careless errors, another that he frequently confused active and passive forms. Both felt they would be more alert to these mistakes in the future. It is not clear whether the journals were necessary to bring about these realizations.

Pupils were asked whether they would continue to use the journal if not forced to by the teacher. Three pupils said they would continue to use the journal as it was, though one of these said he expected he would forget to. All pupils had suggestions on how the use of the journals could be improved. As mentioned above, they all thought it was important to have more access to the journal, with 3 specifically mentioning its use as a revision tool. Two also suggested looking back over entries and trying to identify common mistakes. To address the problem of forgetting what one had struggled with in the lesson, two pupils suggested it would be better to record things as soon as one became aware of them rather than waiting until the end of the lesson. One pupil made it clear it would be more useful for recording more general errors (such as confusions between active and passive verbs) and he thought of this even before I asked the pupils to record more general mistakes in their books. Two were unsure about this and the last (pupil D) thought this would not be useful. Other interesting suggestions for improving the journals included: having different sections: one for mistakes, one for general points, and one for irregular forms (Pupil B); having pupils share mistakes and the class trying to help each other think of ways to remember

these things, using it for morphological mistakes rather than vocabulary, and not being under the obligation to make an entry (Pupil C).

Conclusions, Limitations and Further Research

All sources agree that while all pupils found journaling difficult initially about half of them became comfortable with the process. To some extent pupils feelings of uncertainty and discomfort were unfounded as observations and inspection of the journals revealed that in all cases pupils were using them correctly. The vast majority of entries they made were relevant, and pupils who felt uneasy about the process did not make significantly fewer or less relevant entries than those who felt more comfortable. Pupils' reservations fits with the research cited that high ability pupils, particularly those who are the product of the banking model of teaching and used to depending on the teacher, feel uncomfortable with tasks requiring more autonomy.

Three pupils made accurate entries in their journals (excepting errors with breathings). The accuracy of one pupil's entries was a case for concern. Pupils showed they were able to achieve the level of autonomy and self-assessment required for this task. This was especially apparent in their reflection at the end of the study. The majority of pupils were able deliver an accurate assessment of their performance over a specified period and reach more general conclusions about strengths and weaknesses in their linguistic knowledge (though sometimes uncertain whether this was due to the learning journal).

In so far as pupils showed awareness of their knowledge they achieved a level of meta-cognitive awareness. Three pupils also identified as a weakness a failure to apply morpho-syntactic knowledge in particular cases (e.g. voice of verbs) This is further evidence of the development of meta-cognition, in the form of awareness of a bottom up cognitive reading strategy.

There were strong indications that the journals could be improved: by allowing pupils permanent possession of journals to allow revision regularly and before

examinations, to allow entries to be made during the lesson, rather than at the end to avoid the problem of pupils difficulty in recollecting relevant material, and giving pupils more choice in the kinds of entries they made in the journals.

On perhaps the most important question of whether the journals were actually beneficial in the form they were being used, pupils were divided. Thus a verdict of inconclusive must be recorded on such issues as the value of reflection and writing to learn, quoted as the advantages of journals in other contexts. Pupil opinion is of course no objective measure; I am inclined to think the journals benefited pupils more than some may have realised. Pupil's cynicism could be due to the unfamiliarity of the concept. At any rate all pupils could see a way in which the journals could be modified to render them (more) useful.

The greatest limitation on this study was perhaps the use of interviews as a method of data collection. The journals themselves and observation provided reliable evidence for conclusions regarding autonomy, self-assessment and quality of reflection, but for the answers to some questions I was reliant purely on subjective pupil opinion, including the question of whether the journals conferred an overall benefit on learning. Furthermore, it is questionable whether the short period of the study actually gave pupils sufficient experience of journals to offer an accurate assessment. The usual limitations of this type of small scale case study also apply: nothing more general can be concluded about the use of learning journals even in similar contexts because the sample size was so small, also because the study was conducted in an unusual educational context. (i.e. with pupils showing motivation and aptitude well above average).

This study does suggest a number of ways further research might proceed. Firstly, a similar study might be carried out over a longer period with more pupils. It would also be interesting to revise the use of journals to incorporate the suggestions pupils made here,

including using them for revision purposes and more generalized comments. Perhaps the most promising line of research concerns pupils using journals to monitor strategy use. There is substantial relevant research on the use of journals to improve performance by reflecting on strategy use. I mentioned some instances in Classics and Mathematics above, and the importance of being aware of different strategies and being able to choose the most appropriate one for the task and one's learning style. Harris (1997) has also written on strategy use in modern languages learning, both for translation and vocabulary and grammar learning, and a number of his suggestions could be adopted for Greek (or Latin). Our investigation touched on this issue, in so far as pupils gained some awareness of particular bottom up translation strategies they could benefit from; but this could be extended substantially. Pupils could be instructed in a much wider range of strategies both for translation and grammar and vocabulary learning, given opportunities to try these, and use journals to reflect on which helped them most.

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Appendix A: Extracts from pupil B's learning journal

• οὐν - therefore
 οὕτως - in this way.
 10/03/11
 - ην = acc ending!
 11/3/11
 • ἀποκρίσασθε = plural mid. imperative
 = "answer!"
 • ἔστιν = here/whichever is
 • ἐν ᾧ
 17/3/11
 (S)
 Nom TBUS TIΩS, TIΩDOS
 Ace TIΩDA
 Gen TIΩDOS
 Det (M) TIΩDΩ
 Nom TIΩDES
 Ace TIΩDAS
 Gen TIΩDΩV
 Det TIΩDΩ(V)

24/03/11
 • τε... καί = Both...and...
 • ΤΙΩΤΕΣ = (Nom) All
 • μάχη = (Nom) fight, battle.
 25/03/11
 • ἄλλο - other (Nom pl).

I feel I am reasonably strong at the subject. I think I need to concentrate more and be more accurate on things like whether a verb is active or passive and the cases of nouns (nom. or acc. etc.) but I think I have a good grasp of the subject and a decent mental vocabulary for the words of it. To improve I think I just need to pay more attention to my translations of the above mentioned problems.

Appendix B: Extracts from Pupil C's Learning Journal

ΠΡΟΧΕΙΡΟΝ - will cease
 - middle
 φησὶ - he says
 φημί - I say
 ΤΙΜΩΤΕ - You(pl) honour
 - Honour!
 ἔβωον - They were shouting
 - Imperfect active
 Over the last half term I think I have performed well in Greek. My vocab learning has been good as well as translation. However, looking back over ~~the~~ my learning journal there are some things I could improve on. My understanding of ~~possibilities~~ ^{participles} isn't great so I should try to revise them more. I need to look more closely at the words I am translating so I don't confuse them with similar looking words. But overall I think I have been learning well and have enjoyed it.

ἔτετέρον - Tell me (Imperative)
 ἀτοκῶν - 2nd Pl. Middle imperative
 - answer.
 ἐν ᾧ = in which
 ἔστιν = there is
 τῆστων - One of the Greeks
 βοηθεῖται = help
 αἰπεθεῖται - Mpl. act. pass. participle
 - αἰπεῖν - having been captured
 κοιθεύοντας - sleeping
 - present participle
 νόσος - disease
 ἐξεπνεύσας - having revived
 - αἰσθῆναι, middle, participle
 παθόντα - αἰσθῆναι ~~participle~~
 - having suffered

Extract from Transcription of Interview with Pupil A

I: How would you say you've been using it. What have you been using it for?

P: For things that I get wrong or find difficult in an exercise or homework or important things like rules I suppose, genitive absolute which I couldn't quite get, I wrote that down

I: When you're writing things down what exactly do you write down?

P: Say it's from a passage I write out the Greek and then I write out a translation, and how you translate it or what it is I suppose.

I: Okay

P: ..with labels so this is the accusative or whatever.

I: Okay, and do you have any general impression about using it, could be advantages or disadvantages?

P: Advantages – it would be good for the things I found difficult to learn them and be good at them when I come to do exams, there's always a chance I might forget about them and not learn them but I think I would look at it for exams.

I: Okay

P: I think it's pretty good

I: Anything else? What was your general impression when you first started ?

P: A bit weird – I've never really done anything like that before. I think it's turned out to be good.

I: Was it clear at the beginning how to use it?

P: Not really, no. It became quite obvious I could just put in what I didn't understand or got wrong or important so yeah.

I: Okay: so you've said, you've given some advantages. Did you see anything less good about it, any problems

P: ummmm

I: Or any ways it can be improved

P: ..umm not sure. Maybe something that you have to put in your learning journal, as well as the things you found difficult, important things, though that goes into the back of the book anyway

I: So you mean I should give you more instructions about what to put in?

P: Yeah, or we might just put in whatever that's not really important if left to ourselves, but there's always the chance we're not going to look at it ever again; that's another problem I suppose, but that's the student's choice.

I: Yes, well we'll come to that later because you're right, that's a good point. You've already said a bit about deciding. You've told me how you decided what to put in; these are things you found difficult or didn't know. That's right is it? Anything else?

P: I did put some interesting words in there actually

I: Yes, I noticed you sometimes put lots of vocabulary from the stories in. Was that...

P: suppose if it comes up again I might remember it.

I: Okay, so that's why you put it in?

P: Maybe because I couldn't think of anything else to put down

I: Okay, that's okay. You also said you might have preferred to be told what to put in.

P: Some of the things, not all of the things though

I: Why is that?

P: If we're left on our own we might put anything down and it might not be important, or necessary to put it down, We might not be able to think of anything. It would be helpful if we have some things the teacher knows that everyone wasn't really very good at something could put that down as well as what the individual person knows he isn't good at.

I: Yes in fact when I was looking at your journal I noticed there were things you couldn't have put everything in that you could have done

P: Maybe I couldn't think of it at the time, or I dunno

I: Did you sometimes find it difficult to remember what you'd got wrong in the lesson.

P: Yes

I: When did you find that?

P: At the end of the lesson. Maybe if we did it as soon as we got something wrong, would be better or a bit after, cause sometimes we forget "Oh yeah I got that wrong didn't I?". At the time I can't really remember till someone mentions it.

