REACTIVATING LAPSSED LANGUAGE SKILLS
A STUDY TO EXAMINE THE REACTIVATION OF LANGUAGE SKILLS IN A P.G.C.E. MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAMME

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My research was undertaken under the auspices of the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff

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DECLARATION

I declare that this work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted for any other degree. I further declare that this thesis is the result of my own independent work and investigation, except where otherwise stated (a bibliography is appended). Finally, I hereby give consent for my thesis, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loan, and for the title and abstract to be made available to outside organisations.

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Abstract

Modern languages students who are training to be languages teachers not only have to learn the craft of the profession but are also under constant pressure to maintain their foreign language skills, especially as they have to put their language competence under the close scrutiny of their mentors and university tutors in the challenging environment of the classroom. This study is a three-year investigation of PGCE modern foreign languages students, their attempts to reactivate lapsed language skills and a tutor-led guided learning initiative to offer a targeted language support programme.

The study of language attrition (De Bot and Stoessel, 2000; Hansen, 2001; Meara, 2004) has proved particularly fruitful as a theoretical underpinning to the research. Data on language loss and relearning were gathered by means of a reflective log undertaken by PGCE languages students. These formed the basis of a guided learning initiative that took place in a university School of Education. Students were encouraged to reflect on the process of language attrition and to identify strategies that allowed successful language regeneration. The aim of this initiative was to improve the reactivation of lapsed language skills, to encourage reflection on the process of metalearning and to help students to develop into more confident and competent teachers. Following six months of guided learning, there was an indication that overall gains in grammatical knowledge were limited while there was an improvement in vocabulary. The greatest gains were demonstrated by those students who successfully integrated their language learning activities with their professional training and showed a commitment to maintaining their language skills on a regular and consistent basis. It is recognised that the guided learning initiative has had an impact on practice and the way tutors perceive their role in supporting students' professional and subject knowledge development. The findings will inform the future delivery of the programme.
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<tr>
<td>ALL</td>
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<td>BAAL</td>
<td>British Association of Applied Linguistics</td>
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<td>BERA</td>
<td>British Educational Research Association</td>
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<td>CBI</td>
<td>Confederation of British Industry</td>
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<td>CLT</td>
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<td>CPD</td>
<td>Continuing Professional Development</td>
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<td>DES</td>
<td>Department for Education and Skills</td>
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<td>GLP</td>
<td>Guided Learning Programme</td>
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<td>GCSE</td>
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<td>IQ</td>
<td>Intelligence Quotient</td>
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Chapter 1

Introduction

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Introduction

1.1 Context

Language acquisition and learning is one of the most fascinating aspects of human development, encompassing not only the intellectual growth of individuals but also a wealth of social experiences. We are impressed by the skills of those people who are able to communicate in languages they have learnt with other individuals from widely differing backgrounds and cultures. For those who have the skills to take part in these dialogues, they are not only linguistic exchanges but also much more; they provide windows that allow us look out onto other worlds. The teacher who is able to facilitate these rich experiences holds a significant place in the lives of the learner.

The need to communicate is a basic human requirement. Language is at the core of our interaction with other human beings and allows us to function properly as part of a sophisticated society. When languages other than our native tongue come into the equation, the challenges become more intense, yet so does the richness and diversity of the experience, leading, it is hoped, to a greater sense of tolerance and social development. This aspect of our lives is changing rapidly as society develops. The Internet gives us immediate access to a vast range of material in almost any language we could choose. Translation tools (e.g. Babel Fish, Déjàvu) exist for immediate access to pathways of understanding into other languages, though in theory only, for so far, these tools seem to find the linguistic
ability of the human mind difficult to replicate (Speak Up, 2008). Language teachers may well be relieved at this, their position safe and learners’ dependency on teachers assured for the present. As workers become more globally mobile, there are implications for language development, especially as the developed nations are shifting the basis of their wealth and economic development to knowledge workers and industries, making language skills even more relevant. In order to assure the employability of these workers and the foundation of the nation’s economic survival, governments need to consider the language training of this and the next generation. In Wales, the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) has, in its policy consultation document *Making Languages Count* (WAG, 2009), taken a long, hard look at language provision in schools in Wales and has concluded that there is much work to be done.

Wales, with its tradition of bilingualism is, perhaps, well placed to manage the dearth of language skills and this tradition helps to foster positive attitudes to other languages (WAG, 2009). However, the British population as a whole has an unenviable reputation as a nation of poor linguists; according to the former Secretary of State for Education and Skills, Alan Johnson, “There is a problem in this country: people who speak three languages are called trilingual, people who speak two languages are called bilingual, and those who speak one language are called English”. (Pattni, 2006, no page) However, there are reasons to hope for a change in this climate of monoglot narrowness. Evening classes for European languages tend to be oversubscribed, sales for language courses have
been brisk and there has, for some years, been a range of programmes and news items in the media about the importance of learning languages (Frean, 2008). Nevertheless, it would be unwise to be complacent. Although there are improvements in the adult education sector, these may not be sustained. In addition, although Wales has a history of bilingualism and a level of acceptance of linguistic diversity, there is no doubt that there is still much to be done to place language learning in a more favourable position in today’s society.

In halting this decline in modern language study, schools are, of necessity, at the centre of this challenge. Pupils need not only equality of access to languages, but also a choice of languages to study, wherever possible. Languages have struggled to maintain their position in the school curriculum and the number of pupils taking the General Certificate in Education (GCSE) in Modern Languages in the U.K. has declined seriously, a decrease of 27.6% between 2003 and 2007 (Canning, 2008). This is likely to have repercussions for the future: fewer pupils studying languages at school most likely means fewer language degree students in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), which in turn will have a negative effect on the number of students applying to train as teachers. Although there has been an improvement in the recruitment of students to Higher Education courses that include an element of Modern Foreign Languages (an increase of 28.1% in Wales between 2002 and 2007), full-time undergraduate provision has experienced a decline of 3.1% in the same period (WAG 2009). A vicious circle is turning and is beginning to spiral downwards. Governments (UK and WAG) have
attempted to respond to this crisis with policy changes that support language learning (DES, 2007; WAG, 2009), but the effects of their interventions will not be felt for some years to come.

The study of Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) is expanding into the primary school sector, where a wide range of initiatives has already tested the ground. How effective this shift towards the primary sector will be in maintaining the quality of skills of language learners when they become adults is the subject of much debate (Lightbown & Spada, 1999; CILT, 2006). This move into the primary sector has been matched, however, by a decision to end the compulsory study of MFLs in the 14 to 16 age group in England; a decision that has met with widespread criticism and which was reviewed by Lord Dearing in 2007 (DES, 2007). This challenge was faced some considerable time ago in Wales, as the study of MFLs has never been compulsory. This apparent lack of value placed on language studies in schools has meant that the position of languages in the world of education and in society at large is vulnerable, to say the least.

Language skills are an important feature of the nation’s health. Despite the undeniably key role that the English language plays on the world stage, only 6% of the world’s population are native English speakers and 75% speak no English at all (CILT, 2005a). The UK population demonstrates an acute skills shortage when it comes to languages: only 30% of UK citizens can have a conversation in a second language, compared with 91% in the Netherlands (CILT, 2005a). The
role of the English language in the global economy is frequently exaggerated and used as an excuse for inaction. It is accepted in the business world that languages enhance commercial opportunities and broaden horizons (CILT, 2005a). According to a recent survey, 75% of companies value conversational ability in a foreign language and 48% of employers are currently recruiting some staff specifically for their foreign language skills (CBI, 2008). Lack of language competence in a commercial context is a weak link in the UK’s economy. The role of MFL school teachers in supporting and developing these skills in the next generation of citizens should not, therefore, be underestimated. The linguistic skills and self confidence of these teachers is consequently of great significance as they need adequate skills to be able to deliver the curriculum properly. According to the Dearing report, “investment in teachers is a key to the future of languages” (DES, 2007: 16).

Language learning and teaching is therefore central to this thesis and the professional practice of students who are training to be teachers is the context in which this study will be placed. There is an extensive corpus of research on language learning (Ellis, 1994; Grenfell, 2007; Lightbown and Spada, 1999; Mitchell and Myles, 2004), as well as a growing field of research into language attrition (Hansen, 2001; Meara 2004). This study into lapsed language skills will investigate ways that trainee teachers can use the theoretical frameworks of language learning and attrition in order to reactivate language skills in preparation for their professional training.
The School of Education that is the subject of this study is part of the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff (UWIC). The School offers a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) programme that is a major provider of the next generation of teachers in Wales and beyond. One of the larger subject disciplines offered as an option to students is Modern Foreign Languages, which includes French, Spanish, German and Italian. Students on the programme come from universities in the local area as well as from across the UK and abroad. Many are foreign nationals who, having come to the UK as foreign language assistants, decide to stay to train as teachers of their own language. Such a wide range of students presents a diverse range of prior learning and linguistic needs that is sometimes difficult to anticipate and accommodate.

The university is one of the largest teacher-training institutions in the UK. It is well located in an area that is relatively densely populated, yet is within easy reach of many other major cities and centres of the population in the UK. The programme has been successful in the recruitment of large numbers of language students and although intake has remained relatively stable for some considerable time, in common with many other HEIs, there has been a decline in recent years. Modern Languages members of staff have been recognised by external examiners, mentors and students for the high quality of tutor support and their strong relationship with local schools. However, there are frequently difficulties in placing a large cohort of students and matching their particular language with the
needs of the host schools. Students have a wide range of needs, particularly those who have language skills that need consolidation or the foreign nationals who are unfamiliar with the UK education system, and tutors are frequently under pressure in trying to meet these needs. A research study that is able to improve skills and support the developmental needs of trainee teachers would therefore be beneficial in enhancing professional practice.

As already stated, the position of MFLs in the school curriculum and education is the subject of some concern, given the decline in numbers of pupils and students opting to study languages over the past decade. Part of the shortfall of potential students on the PGCE programme has been met by an increase in numbers of foreign nationals who, as noted above, choose to remain in the UK and train as teachers rather than return to their own countries. Many foreign students choose this route for a variety of professional and personal reasons. Tutors are fortunate in that their professional duties bring them into direct contact with schools and professional development courses that allow them to encourage applications from foreign language assistants.

Apart from the difficulty in recruiting sufficient numbers of students to the programme, a further challenge lies in the recent developments in the organisation of teacher training provision in Wales that have placed the programme in a context of some uncertainty. However, as change is an intrinsic
part of education, members of staff strive to keep an open mind and to meet any challenges that may present themselves in the future.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

As a teacher-trainer, the consolidation of students’ subject knowledge is of prime importance to me. In their training, students have to demonstrate that they have an appropriate standard of Subject Knowledge and Understanding (WAG, 2006) in order to be awarded Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). This requires them to show that they have sufficient expertise to be able to deliver the MFL national curriculum (WAG, 2008) and provide a good model of skills to their pupils.

Before joining the staff of the university, I was a teacher of French for 17 years, working as head of MFL departments in schools for most of that period. During this time, I mentored many students undertaking their PGCE placements. It became apparent to me that many students struggled to provide adequate proof of good language skills, despite having degrees in MFL. This was a cause for concern as their language errors had the potential of being passed on to the pupils they were teaching. It became clear to me that a language degree is not always sufficient evidence of the language competence necessary for teaching, nor sufficient preparation for it. These observations have been borne out by other mentors with whom I have discussed this problem and will be discussed later in this document.
In discussion with students in the years leading up to this study, many have identified the source of their difficulties as having had a period of language inactivity between their degree and their teacher training. This might be due to having time at home to bring up children or having started another career on leaving university before making the decision to train as a language teacher. For others, they have found themselves training to be a teacher of a language other than the one in which they obtained their degree. This might be as a result of realising that their first foreign language did not offer the career possibilities they had hoped. Although employment rates for language graduates six months after they graduate are better than those of all other subjects (WAG, 2009), it is difficult to anticipate the employment prospects of specific languages in the teaching profession.

Consequently, there are many students who come to realise that their language skills are not adequate for the job that they wish to undertake and many recognise that they need to refresh their linguistic competence if they are to exercise their duties properly. This study aims to help such students.

1.3 Proposed Change

Contact and initial discussions that took place with PGCE MFL students demonstrated to me a very real need for support in the recall and reactivation of fading language skills. My role as a teacher-trainer provided a wide range of
possible avenues of research, given the multiple layers of my relationship with language learners (See Fig.1). I have direct contact with the students that I am training and I also have many links with schools, not only as a teacher-trainer but also as a past mentor and as a former chief examiner for GCSE French for the Welsh examining board. My frequent visits to schools to supervise students on their teaching placements allow me very good access to teachers and pupils and allows me to observe students putting their language skills into practice in a very relevant context. I am therefore well placed to observe and assess the students’ competence and anticipate their training needs.

Students who participated in this study recognised the need for an appropriate level of language skills as they train as teachers, not only to enable them to

Fig.1
University Tutors and their Relationship to Students, Mentors and Pupils
provide good models of linguistic competence and facilitate their preparation and
delivery of lessons but also as a means of retaining their credibility in front of
school mentors and pupils. The level of linguistic competence necessary for
teaching languages can be difficult to define and the Standards for Qualified
Teacher Status (QTS), as laid down by the Welsh Assembly Government,
require that trainees “have a secure knowledge and understanding of the
subject(s) they are trained to teach” (WAG, 2006). In the view of Barnes (2002):

The personal language proficiency of the pre-service teacher must be
adequate, yet a definition of this adequacy remains elusive. Each teacher,
tutor and mentor for MFL will have gaps in their proficiency (native
speakers included) and each can point to perceived deficiencies in that of
pre-service teachers.

(Barnes, 2002: 201)

In my view, professional practice should require a secure and thorough
knowledge of all of the language required by the GCSE and Advanced Level
specifications so that trainees are able to deliver lessons at a level appropriate to
the qualifications their pupils are seeking to gain. This would be a good starting
point to the concept of language competence in that this level of knowledge and
skills is most relevant for their professional practice. The distinction between
knowledge and skills is a worthwhile one: knowing language is not sufficient for
professional practice, trainees must be able to demonstrate practical language
skills. In other words, both competence and performance should be evident
(Mitchell & Myles, 2004).
The PGCE MFL students and the dual elements of learning and teaching have been the focus of attention in this study. The students were learners but they also had to develop the skills and persona of a teacher relatively quickly in order to address the standards of QTS. This dual role is complex and many students find it difficult to manage this steep ascent in the initial one-year period of their training. However, the role of *teacher as learner* is a worthwhile one and a good model for pupils as the concept of lifelong learning is promoted by the world of education and governments. In this context, it is important that we practise what we preach. This is equally true of me, in my role as Initial Teacher Education and Training (ITET) tutor. This study centred on my role as a teacher but also gave me the opportunity to develop my knowledge and understanding as a learner and researcher.

While the heart of this investigation lay in the university, the anticipated development of student skills would have an impact in the schools in which the students were placed. The partnership schools look to the university as a source of information on new initiatives and developments and the PGCE student, as the most consistent link between the school and the university, becomes a conduit for new knowledge in the field of languages and educational research. The relevance of the findings from this study therefore went beyond the bounds of the university and the knowledge and skills developed as a result of this study have the potential to extend forward throughout the students’ future careers as teachers.
Consequently, any advances made in the development of a new understanding of how best to reactivate lapsed language skills take on a real significance in schools as, not only can it support language retention, but it might also influence the methods used in schools in the early stages of language instruction in order to maximise and deepen the learning of languages.

In considering the university as the centre of this study, it was important to think carefully about how the investigation could be conducted. Research carried out from the inside of an organisation presents both advantages and challenges. According to Coghlan and Brannick (2005), the main areas of interest and concern are:

- Pre-understanding
- Role Duality
- Access

(Coghlan & Brannick, 2005)

These three key aspects of the complex relationship between researchers and their organisations are worth examination in more depth. In exploring the organisation in which we work, we bring to our study our preconceptions and, perhaps, our prejudices. Organisations have public lives, as displayed in their mission statements and annual reports, but they also have their inner lives, their cultures and traditions. Although 'insider researchers' are able to make rapid
progress due to their more intimate knowledge of the organisations they study, they also run the risk of offending sensibilities, or failing to ask key questions out of fear of doing so. In the context of this study, in researching student learning, there was a danger that students might be reluctant to participate out of fear of owning up to a feeling of linguistic inadequacy or, conversely, that they felt coerced into participating out of a fear of offending their tutor. Access to students and data should be easier for inside researchers, though they need to remain "open to disconfirming evidence" (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005: 62) and know where to draw the ethical line in the inclusion of sensitive data.

It was therefore my intention to involve students as widely as possible in the development of the action research, allowing the students to engage in a collaborative inquiry, reflecting on their own learning and cognitive development (Torbert, 1999). The setting up of a guided learning programme for PGCE students to reactivate lapsed knowledge and skills provided an opportunity for empowerment and a community of shared skills and knowledge, leading to a change in methodology in the PGCE programme in future by aiming to develop a new model of practice.

1.4 Generation of New Knowledge, Application, Understanding

In the acquisition of second languages, the main strands of theoretical thought, as discussed in Lightbown & Spada (1999), seem divided between the concepts of Behaviourism (we imitate what we hear), Innatism (we have an innate capacity
for language learning) and Interactionism (we elaborate our language through social interaction). In simple terms, all of these have elements of relevance and truth in the acquisition of languages. The work of Krashen (1982) is particularly influential in today’s classrooms as it supports the idea of the importance of exposure to language in order to achieve natural, fluent communication, an idea that is supported by the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach which is still, after more than twenty years, very influential in UK languages classrooms. This approach will be discussed more fully in the next chapter.

It is interesting to note that, throughout my discussions with PGCE students, there seemed to be a sharp division in the methods they chose to reactivate lapsed language skills for the programme. Many instinctively returned to old course books and grammar books in order to retrieve and reinforce their structural knowledge of the language, in a conscious effort to regain their knowledge of tenses, rules and vocabulary. Others attempted to recreate the language exposure that they had experienced in earlier stages, by reading and listening to a wide and unstructured diet of language such as reading magazines and watching target language films, allowing the skills to return in a more untrammelled and spontaneous way. However, the latter recognised that they needed to return to their grammar reference books at key points of this experience in order to make the most of and make sense of the regeneration of their language skills. The research explored how effective these two approaches were, to what degree they were dependent on the attitude and personality of the
learner, and whether there was a link between the method selected and the previous language experience of the learner.

1.5 Research design

Aims:

In summary, this research aimed to investigate the characteristics of learners who needed to reactivate and regenerate dormant linguistic skills for future study. It explored the most effective ways of helping these skills to resurface. The investigation attempted to answer the following questions:

- How can best can students reactivate and recall previously learnt language skills?
- Which type of language knowledge seems to be the most resistant to loss?
- Which learning methods have allowed students to maximise their language memory over a significant period of time and how can these methods be adapted for future use?
- What impact does a clearer understanding of this process have on student learning and how can this contribute to improved professional practice?

The findings of this study have the potential to be of benefit to a wide range of language learners, whatever their stage of development. If, as current literature
suggests, more and more learners are returning to the study of languages later in life (CILT, 2005b), such knowledge could make a valuable contribution to their future progress. Current statistics indicate that students in Higher Education who are studying languages yet not following specialist language courses now outnumber students following traditional language courses (CILT, 2005b). Should this trend continue, these students would need to be equipped with the means of retrieving the linguistic skills and knowledge that they previously possessed. Consequently, although the scope of this study relates to the PGCE students at the university who are training to be MFL teachers, the findings are of interest not only to them but also to a wider range of language learners. Even within the cohorts that took part in this study, there was a range of language levels. Some students sought to reactivate languages they had studied many years before while others recognised that even recently acquired language skills had been subject to decline. For this reason, although many students were undergoing a process of reactivation of lapsed languages, others were seeking to improve the standard of languages they had studied in a more recent period. These students and the effectiveness of the strategies they used will be discussed as part of this study. However long the period of language inactivity, increased understanding of how language skills are maintained, enhanced and reactivated has relevance to all learners and can benefit the trainee teachers and their present and future pupils.
In this investigation, I used case study as the most appropriate initial methodology, though the later phase of the study was defined by action research methodology. By using a case study approach (Cohen et al., 2007) in the initial stage, this allowed me to generate hypotheses that were tested in the later research phase, which was more experimental in nature. Interpretation is a major part of such qualitative research, but there is a wealth of quantitative data that is available from organisations such as the Centre of Information on Language Teaching (CILT), which provided a rich context to the study, as well as empirical findings from observations, questionnaires and interviews. In the later stages of the investigation, the questions and tentative conclusions built up to a body of knowledge that I was able to test in practice (Pring, 2000). By using case study as an initial approach, key issues and areas that merited further research were identified (Bell, 2005). The methodologies used in this study will be discussed more fully in future sections of this report but the main summary of the research design is as follows:

**Phase 1 (November 2006 – June 2007):**

This began with a study of relevant literature and data to provide a context to the research. This was updated and reviewed throughout the course of the investigations. I invited students from that year’s cohort of the PGCE MFL programme to contribute to the study by discussing the reactivation of their language skills in a focus group in order to identify general features of language reactivation and report on their personal experiences in renewing their linguistic
knowledge, skills and understanding in preparation for the PGCE programme. Good levels of language expertise and subject knowledge enhance professional practice (Klapper, 2006) and trainee teachers are aware of the importance of providing a good model of language skills for their pupils.

**Phase 2 (September 2007 – June 2008):**

In the following year’s cohort of PGCE MFL students, volunteers were sought to take part in the next stage of the research. According to Stake (1995), a main feature of the case study approach is that the scope of the study has clear boundaries. It provides a rich picture of the context and allows researchers to identify the core issues during an early period. By limiting the study to the year’s cohort of students, I was able to isolate key features that were significant to students in their regeneration of language skills in a significant phase of their professional development. By asking them to record the return of their language skills, I was able to identify lexical and syntactical elements of remaining language knowledge as well as semantic and morphological features (Pinker, 1999). Students were required to reflect on the process of reactivation in some depth and this allowed them to make links with their developing understanding of pedagogy at a crucial stage of their professional development.

**Phase 3 (September 2008 – March 2009):**

This stage is significant in that it marked the beginning of the action research phase of the research study. All of the data gathered in the previous two phases
of the study were used in the establishment of a Guided Learning Programme. Students began by completing a Language Audit and followed this up by completing a Language Learning Log, which recorded the activities they had undertaken each week and reflection on their usefulness and effectiveness. There were Language Awareness sessions twice a term in order to manage the learning process and students were tested at the beginning and the end of the study in order to gain an insight into changes in their language competence. In addition, students identified a language partner, a native speaker of the language they were attempting to reactivate, with whom they had regular sessions. This intervention was defined by the action research paradigm and students were encouraged to use the guided learning programme as a means of reactivating lapsed language skills so that their subject knowledge was enhanced and their professional competence established in a fundamental manner. This was the first opportunity to put into practice the strategies identified in the case study phase of the study and students were able to use these strategies and reflect upon the impact they had on their own learning. Such reflection contributed to both their linguistic skills and their metacognitive development. In selecting the language for reactivation, students were encouraged to identify a language other than their main teaching language, unless they had experienced a significant period of time since they had obtained their degree. This meant that the guided learning programme could support students in the reactivation of language skills (rather than simply their improvement) and could therefore be a more effective test of the strategies that this study aims to explore. This would also be more beneficial
to the students as they would be able to increase their employability by extending the range of languages they could offer to prospective employers.

**Phase 4 (March – May 2009):**

This stage of the study comprised a review and analysis of all data and a revision of the final draft of this document. This allowed a conclusion and recommendations to be written, in full consideration of the extensive research undertaken over a period of three years. It was at this point that an attempt to answer the research questions could be made, using the full weight of the findings of the study. During the investigation, an extensive amount of data relating to language reactivation has been amassed. Where students made linguistic gains, some inference could be made regarding the impact of the programme. However, whether gains are the result of reactivation of language that students already possessed before taking part in the study or whether they were in consequence of newly acquired language is extremely difficult to establish. Further reflection of this very complex point is needed and it could provide the basis of a future study.

In inviting students to take part in the study, there were some important ethical considerations that had to be taken into account, for which the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2004) provides clear guidelines.
Carrying out Action Research carries with it responsibilities in that such research does, by definition, concern itself with action or some sort of intervention. At such a critical stage in their professional development, this intervention needed to be of benefit to the students and not hamper or impede their progress in any way or form. As adult learners, they were able to give voluntary informed consent to the research and were made aware of the process in which they engaged and its implications.

As discussed above, my dual role as both tutor and researcher had to be considered carefully so that students did not feel obliged to participate in order to maintain a good relationship with me. In gathering the data, the right to withdraw from the study at any time was clearly understood and with no requirement to give a reason for doing so. Finally, all participants had a right to expect that their data and any personal information were confidential, unless they chose to waive this right. By compliance with these guidelines, the study not only extended the understanding of this research area, but also ensured that those who participated in the generation of this new knowledge were not disadvantaged in the process.

In the design of this research study, I was mindful of the learning experience of the students at all stages of the investigation. For this purpose, I found Kolb's model on experiential learning and other associated models to be very useful and worthwhile indicators. In the process of learning from experience, there are four general activities:
Fig. 2: Kolb’s Model on Experiential Learning (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005: 33)

The experience of the learner was the core of the study. Because of the complex nature of the language learning process, these experiences might be both cognitive and emotional. The reflective stage of the process is of great value to the understanding of the process and is the first step to the learning experience. This will lead the learner to interpret the experience, in an attempt to make sense of the process, to answer the questions posed in the reflective stage of the learning experience, diagnosing and evaluating the complex nature of the learning. The final stage of the process allows the learner to act on his or her experience, reflection and interpretation of the learning process, taking action as a consequence of the previous activities. This allows the formation of the experiential cycle and the process can then be repeated, with the advantage of emergent knowledge and understanding.
Learning becomes a continuous cycle through life. Learning is not any one of these four activities on its own but each of them together. You need to develop skills at each activity: be able to experience directly, be able to stand back and ask questions, be able to conceptualise answers to your questions, and be able to take risks and experiment in similar or new situations.

(Coghlan & Brannick, 2005: 35)

Languages, in common with many other skills, decay and atrophy with disuse, except that in the case of language skills, my experiences, as both a learner and a teacher, suggest that this process can happen more quickly and more completely. This investigation made inroads into my understanding of how this happens and what I, as a tutor, can realistically do to minimise this process. At the same time, it encouraged participants to learn about their own learning, creating an understanding that they can share with their future pupils, allowing students to develop their role as reflective practitioners and to cement their commitment to lifelong learning.
## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

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2.1 Introduction

Before reviewing the literature in this field, it is important to place it in a personal context and to explain why this topic has always been of interest to me. As a child, I was taken every summer for holidays to the home of my paternal uncle near Oxford. I was often witness to my father’s vain attempts to engage his brother in conversation in Welsh. This was the language they had spoken almost exclusively until they started school; to my almost certain knowledge they were hardly able to speak English until that time. My uncle served in the Royal Air Force during the war, had been posted to Oxfordshire and had married locally and settled there. Apart from brief visits to Wales in the intervening period, he had little contact with the Welsh language apart from my father’s visits. It surprised me greatly that he could lose a skill as fundamental as his first language. In fact his second language, English, had been overlaid with an Oxfordshire accent. Whether he refused to speak Welsh with my father because he could not, or would not, has never been clear to me.

Later on, as a Modern Foreign Languages teacher, I took a more professional interest in language loss. As I struggled to teach language meaningfully and thoroughly, I reflected upon the means of developing these skills in a way that would resist the inevitable erosion that seems to go hand in hand with language learning. This would become not only important for my pupils but also for me, in the struggle to maintain my own language competence. As pupils returned to my class after a week or a few days and seemed to be unable to recall any of the
language they had learnt during their last lesson, learning strategies and their effectiveness became increasingly uppermost in my reflection and lesson planning.

In my present post, working as a teacher-trainer in the university sector, the skills, knowledge and understanding of my students are of primary concern to me. When students join the PGCE programme, they bring to the course a very diverse range of prior learning and understanding of what is expected of them. As future teachers of Modern Foreign Languages, their proficiency in their chosen language is, to a certain extent, taken for granted, as a degree in language is a prerequisite of the course. Their language skills do, however, vary greatly for many reasons. It might be that the composition of their degree programme has not given adequate importance to the acquisition of practical language development (Hudson, 2009) or it could be that the language they have chosen for their degree might not be the one that they will ultimately teach, and that they have had to choose another language in order to improve their chances of employability at the end of the programme. Finally, it may simply be that they have lost the edge on their previous language skills owing to the lapse of time, especially if they are mature students who are returning to the studies they completed some years before.

Retrieving lost language skills is of evident importance to them if they are to develop into confident and competent language teachers. As trainee teachers,
they have a myriad of concerns about their performance in the classroom, such as whether they will be able to control a classroom full of adolescents or whether they will be able to cope with the responsibility of managing the learning of their pupils who are at such a crucial stage of their development. Worrying about the perceived inadequacy of their language skills might add considerably to these concerns, particularly as they need to be seen, in the eyes of their pupils and the watchful mentors, as some sort of 'expert'.

Up until now, on this PGCE course, there has been no programme of language support for students who need to hone their language skills as there has been an assumption by the tutors and the programme leaders that this part of their learning is complete and their competence is therefore taken for granted. However, in order to meet the standards for the award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), the trainee teachers are required to be able to deliver lessons demonstrating a level of language skills that will allow them to teach at secondary school level. Over the years, the presence of a significant number of foreign nationals on the programme has been an opportunity for non-native speakers to practise with native speakers, while at the same time providing the foreign nationals with a partner who can give them an insight into the UK educational system. This aspect of the programme was not a formalised arrangement and, from my early discussions with the students, it fell short of their linguistic and emotional needs.
This diverse range of language skills also has wider repercussions. At the end of their training, although the newly qualified teachers will largely owe their language skills to the experience they had before they joined the PGCE programme, which in this case is most likely to be the university where they took their initial degree, they will be judged as products of this university and poor language skills will reflect badly on the PGCE programme.

Prospective students are tested at interview by target language questioning and a simple writing task, but it is difficult to establish the true extent of their language skills in such a constrained setting and decisions are mostly based on their degree results. It is, therefore, in the interest of the students, the PGCE programme, the university and future pupils and schools that students begin their teaching career with optimum language skills, or at least the opportunity to rectify any shortcomings. For those students who plan to teach a language that has, for a wide range of reasons, lain ‘fallow’ for a long period, efforts to bring about the reactivation of past language skills might be essential in giving them a good start in their future profession.

My involvement in the training of teachers and the development of ways of enhancing their language skills have, therefore, become a primary part of my professional duties. These students who, as already discussed, begin their training at a time when their language skills are not at their optimum level need support in order to overcome this barrier to success. It cannot be underestimated
how much this perceived lack of skill is a cause for disquiet, especially at the
times when the students are exposed to the scrutiny and potential criticism of
university tutors, school mentors and pupils. Many asked for advice on how to
retrieve their lost language skills, which is the quest that lies at the core of this
study.

It is useful, therefore, to return to the research questions already identified in the
previous section:

- How best can students reactivate and recall previously learnt language
  skills?
- Which type of language seems most resistant to loss?
- Which learning methods have allowed students to maximise their
  language memory over a significant period of time and how can these
  methods be adapted for future use?
- What impact does a clearer understanding of this process have on
  student learning and how can this contribute to improved professional
  practice?

In reviewing the literature to support this study, it was necessary to look into the
theoretical basis of language learning before hypotheses could be established in
order to develop an understanding that would enable me to answer the above
questions. The relevant areas within the scope of this study, simply stated,
therefore became:

- How we acquire language
- How we lose it
- How we can get it back
Although this is a study of language loss, retention and reactivation in a professional framework, initial discussions with students suggested that it was important to look at the theoretical background to language learning in order to understand how this takes place in schools, universities and in the personal lives of the students concerned. So that I may deal with these issues in sufficient detail, I propose to examine the literature under the following headings:

Learning
Language Learning
Language Memory and Attrition
Supporting the Language Learner

2.2 Learning

Research into Learning Styles has seen an exponential growth in the recent period and there have been a significant number of different learning style models (Coffield et al., 2004). This research has moved beyond the field of academia and is now firmly rooted in classroom practice. In my numerous visits to schools as part of my professional practice, I have remarked upon the way in which the management of pupils' learning is so influenced by current research. When I have asked members of staff about this, it is almost invariably a result of a recent course that has taken place either in the school or in the local authority, often where guest speakers have promoted their own perception of learning theory. These ideas have been taken up by individual head teachers and their senior management teams and set into operation throughout their schools. Learning is very much on the agenda, and rightly so.
It is not possible here to review all theories and thinking on learning as this stretches beyond the limits of a study of this size. It has therefore been necessary to be selective and narrow the scope of this review to the concepts of learning that seem to me to be either the most widespread or the most relevant to this study. According to Oxford (2003), a well-known researcher into the learning process, some of the main theories of Learning Styles can be categorised in many different ways, one of which can be summarised as:

- Visual, Auditory, Kinaesthetic
- Extroverted, Introverted
- Global, Analytical
- Intuitive, Concrete-Sequential
- Closure-Orientated, Open

(Oxford, 2003)

Oxford makes a welcome distinction between learning styles and strategies and the latter will become more important later in this study in the development of methods for students to retrieve lapsed language skills.

No discussion of learning styles would be complete without reference to the influential work of Howard Gardner, Hobbes Professor of Cognition at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Gardner is most famous for his taxonomy of 'intelligences' (1984), which has been well known for over two decades. His view of learning styles, influenced by his concept of Multiple Intelligences (MI) has spread throughout the global education community. As logico-linguistic Intelligence Quotient (IQ) tests began to be discredited, Gardner’s belief that different features of learners’ intelligence could be
categorised and, in consequence, that learners could be supported in a more effective way, rapidly gained ground. As is well known, these different intelligences are:

Linguistic
Logical, mathematical
Visual, Spatial
Musical
Bodily – kinaesthetic
Interpersonal
Intrapersonal

(Gardner, 1984)

In addition, two more intelligences were added to a later study, all of which form part of Project Zero, a long-standing study of learning that is still running today at Harvard University:

Naturalistic
Other intelligences

(Gardner, 1999)

Gardner made no claims that we fit precisely into these categories but explained that:

All human beings possess relatively autonomous cognitive capabilities, each of which I designate as separate intelligence. For various reasons people differ from one another in their profiles of intelligence, and this fact harbors significant consequences for school and the workplace.

(Gardner, 2006: 4)

In this retrospective explanation of MI, Gardner makes it clear that he was writing as “a psychologist and trying to figure out how each intelligence operates within the skull.” (Gardner, 2006:4)
The development of Gardner's thinking over this period has provided a rich source of inspiration for educators and within these concepts, I am able to find relevance for language learners at all levels. Some MIs (Gardner, 1984) have obvious resonance for language learners, such as linguistic, interpersonal and intrapersonal. However, even an MI such as logical / mathematical intelligence has significance for linguists in that learners need to organise their syntactical knowledge of a language into verb tables and detect patterns in languages. Musical intelligence is important in order to identify and replicate the cadences and rhythms of language, while visual intelligence can be used to create internal images and pictures that relate to the language, as well as using mind mapping to support linguistic knowledge. It is more challenging for find a connection between bodily kinaesthetic intelligence and languages, but kinaesthetic activities are used extensively in language teaching and this will be discussed at a later stage in this study.

Gardner has since added further layers to his perception of human cognitive ability in his exploration of the new ways of thinking that, he believes, are essential for the advance of human learning and are, in fact, the prerequisites of survival in the 21st century. These ‘minds’ are:

1. The disciplined mind, which is able to master a way of thinking, discipline, profession or craft;
2. The synthesising mind, which is able to make sense of the data-rich society in which we live;
3. The creative mind, which is able to set new parameters and use imagination to extend the boundaries of learning;
4. The respectful mind, which has the capacity to tolerate and embrace other cultures and communities
5. The ethical mind, which allows us to behave responsibly towards our fellow human beings

(Gardner, 2006)

Even this recent exposition of his five minds for the future (Gardner, 2006) has relevance in the context of language learning in that linguists need a disciplined mind to process the grammatical structure of the language they are learning and a synthesising mind to organise the vast quantity of linguistic features in a language. Language learners will tend to have creative minds in that they are seeking to extend their knowledge into an ever-expanding area in the sense that one can never completely know a language. As connection with another culture and respect for it is an implicit feature in learning another language, a respectful mind would be an essential prerequisite for a language learner and this goes hand in hand with an ethical mind. I find it difficult to distinguish between these two minds as I feel that they display very similar qualities, both of which are interdependent and closely linked with the experience of learning languages. Gardner's work has been controversial throughout the world of education but its influence has been considerable. Its key principles have been used as the basis for practice by many educators in key positions, such as headteachers, advisers and teacher-trainers.

Another theory of learning style that has been influential is the model of Visual, Auditory and Kinaesthetic (VAK) learning preferences, developed by Dunn et al. (1984), whereby learners are categorised as having three basic learning styles:
• Visual learners who learn most effectively through visual stimuli such as pictures, diagrams and mind maps;
• Auditory learners who find learning through hearing the spoken word more effective;
• Kinaesthetic learners who learn best through doing and interacting.

(Dunn et al., 1984)

Both Gardner’s concept of Multiple Intelligences and the VAK learning model and its variants have come in for severe criticism by leading academics in recent years (White, 1998; Coffield 2004). The Coffield report, undertaken by Professor Frank Coffield of the London Institute of Education in 2004, led a group of researchers who examined 3,800 research reports, reviewed 800 of them, identified 71 models of learning styles and established 13 major theoretical areas in a detailed report of more than 170 pages. They found that, when measured up against basic criteria for testing, only one could be judged to be effective and that one was for use with managers in industry, not students.

Coffield, in a later article in the Times Educational Supplement (2005), claimed that: “the tools used to split learners into different categories are so unreliable, most such labels seem to be of dubious value.” He was damning of a wide range of learning models, such as Gardner’s theory of Multiple Intelligence and the VAK movement, commenting:

The field of learning styles suffers from almost fatal flaws of theoretical incoherence and conceptual confusion ….. the logo for the learning styles movement should be Dichotomies R Us.

(Coffield, 2005)
He was equally critical of the emergent field of educational neuroscience, where learners are encouraged to identify themselves as left-brainers or right-brainers (Coffield, 2004). This thinking has as its source clinical research in the 1960s for patients who were operated upon in order to reduce severe epilepsy. One of the central ideas of this concept is the idea that the left hand side of the brain thinks analytically and the right hand side of the brain thinks holistically (Geake, 2005). Since the 1990s there have been an increasing number of education programmes that are based upon neuroscience, such as Brain Gym and Accelerated Learning (Teaching and Learning Research Programme, no date). The learning of languages, for example, is considered to be left lateralised, therefore activities that can be associated with the left hemisphere of the brain are considered to be more effective. Such claims have attracted a wide range of responses from the education community, from enthusiastic support (May, 2007) to downright disdain. Professor John Geake, presenting a paper to the British Educational Research Association (BERA) in the University of Glamorgan in 2005 commented that:

> Many in the education profession have been misled into believing an ever-widening plethora of neuromyths: so-called brain-based claims for educational practice. A large part of the blame for this sorry state of affairs must lie at the feet of the academic educational establishment – those professors of education in the prestigious departments whose head-in-the-sociological-sand attitude towards hard science has left them impotent to offer any warnings for our guidance to teachers at the chalk face.

(Geake, 2005)
What then are the implications for the students in this investigation? Firstly, both they and I benefit from the extensive range of research that has gone on for many decades. How effective such thinking has been in the educational world might be questionable but at least efforts have been made to improve the cognitive development of learners and the benefits of metacognition and meta-learning on the progress, motivation and attitude of learners seem unassailable to me. When we strive to make the learning experience more effective, the methods we use might have some flaws but at least we are reflecting on the process and that is, in my view, a positive outcome. It is difficult to separate those methods that work well and those that are less effective but the range of methods provide variety and stimulation, which are elements that support the learner’s interest and motivation.

In reviewing the means by which my students have learnt their languages and seeking ways for them to regain lapsed language skills, an understanding of the basic concepts of learning is of crucial importance. While there are many divergent viewpoints, this is indicative of a healthy debate and a climate of reflection that is beneficial throughout the world of education. In considering the complex process of human learning, I agree with the viewpoint that “any learning theory that has achieved a certain amount of recognition and dissemination must have something of potential value to contribute to an understanding of the whole” (Illeris, 2002:9). However, we must be cautious in the way in which we view the trends and fashions in education, many of which, as pointed out by Coffield
(2005), have little basis in evidence. Practitioners and education managers might be beguiled by the latest learning style fashion and spend a considerable amount of their budget on training and delivery of the approach advocated. It is therefore important that the trainee teachers learn about and critique current theoretical ideas in their field as part of their professional development.

2.3 Language Learning

“A language has no life of its own. It exists only in the mouths and ears and hands and brains of its users”

(Crystal, 2006: 59)

My first memory of learning language came at the age of 11, as a new pupil at a girls’ grammar school. We had begun Latin lessons and our first homework was to learn the verb “to be”. Although I had learnt some Welsh in the primary school, learning had been incidental and unconscious. This first Latin homework was the first time I had been given personal responsibility to learn on my own and in my own way. I remember staring at the words in my exercise book as I sat on my bed, willing them to enter my brain somehow or other but failing. After some time, the idea came of simply chanting the verb again and again (and again). It must have been effective, as after more than 40 years, the verb is still there: sum, es, est, sumus, estis, sunt. Also, in the same dusty corners of my brain, are many other Latin conjugations and declensions, despite having lain unused in the intervening period.
As a teacher of French for many years, I frequently met parents who, when I shared with them the disappointing assessment results of their sons or daughters, commented that they truly could not understand this lack of success as their children spent hours in their bedrooms, learning their French homework. I imagined these pupils, as I had done many years before, staring at their homework and willing it to enter their brains through a process somewhat akin to osmosis. For this reason, I was able to empathise with them and often included learning activities or games in my lessons, such as visualisation (Gruneberg, 1994) or simply included timed memorisation exercises in our classroom activities.

Initial discussions with PGCE students have revealed how closely teaching methods in previous decades have mirrored development of thinking in language learning theory and it is therefore my intention to briefly summarise these here as it is an important context for the study of students’ attempts to retain and reactivate previously learnt language skills.

Once again, it is not possible to deal in great detail with all the methods of learning as this is beyond the scope and relevance of this study. However, I have selected those language learning approaches that seem to me to be the most significant and the most relevant to the interests of PGCE students whose language learning and re-learning are at the heart of this study.
2.3.1 Grammar-Translation method

This method dominated language teaching and learning until the 1960s and was still the main method of delivery during language lessons when I was at school. Its origins can be traced back to times when it was considered that the only languages worth learning were Ancient Greek and Latin. When modern languages joined these on the school curricula, it seemed to make sense to continue to use such methods in all language teaching. Grammar was taught deductively in that the rules were taught separately then applied to written exercises. Translation accurately to and from the mother tongue signified proficiency and speaking the language or indeed understanding the spoken language was a very much less valued feature of the mastery of language skills. Accuracy and a disciplined approach to the organisation of linguistic knowledge were highly prized and it was not unknown for pupils to complete their studies successfully yet be unable to communicate effectively in the target language. In the early part of the twentieth century, the grip of the Grammar-Translation method had begun to loosen, with the Direct Method movement, which sought to reform language learning by giving new prominence to the target language over the mother tongue. This movement was influential in the learning of foreign languages and also in the learning of the Welsh language. The importance that this teaching method gives to the target language and the aim for its almost exclusive use means that the language proficiency of the teacher is of pivotal importance.
2.3.2 Audio-Visual and Audio-Lingual Methods

These approaches to language input were also a feature of my own school experience. My French teacher, in common with many thousands of others in the mid 1960s, had at his disposal a slide projector and a reel-to-reel tape recorder, which he used on a weekly basis. We watched slides of stick figures undertaking activities relating to daily routine and, prompted by the beeps from the tape, would repeat “Où allez-vous?” (beep) “Je vais au port”. At the end of the lesson we would copy down the phrases into our vocabulary books, then learn them at home for our weekly test. Another significant feature of these methods were the language laboratories that one could find in nearly every school. I recall lessons in the language laboratory as being particularly traumatising as, in order to respond to the drills (which included some feature of language manipulation such as changing the verb according to a prompt), you needed to understand some sort of arcane logic. I frequently did not and learned very little from the experience.

It might seem unusual that two such different types of language learning were a feature of my school life, yet according to Grenfell and Harris (1999) this was not untypical:

Interestingly, many of these courses were used without entirely abandoning the grammar-translation method, and it was not unusual to find the two running along together side by side in unhappy union.

(Grenfell & Harris, 1999: 13)
The audio-lingual method, and its closely related British offshoot, the audio-visual method were one of the first attempts to link language learning to scientific theory (Klapper, 2006:107) and were firmly rooted in the theoretical approach of Behaviourism, a psychological theory of learning pioneered in the 1940s and 1950s, particularly in the United States (Lightbown & Spada, 1999). The audio-lingual approach was associated with the need for intensive and accelerated learning for military personnel in the post-war period (Klapper, 2006). The central idea of the Behaviourist theory is that learning is based on imitation, practice, reinforcement and habit formation. This is reflected in the use of drilling, the formation of habit and the avoidance of error. Applied to language learning, “correct language forms needed to be drilled intensively in a stimulus-response process and errors were to be avoided at all costs since they were thought to hinder development of the correct habit” (Klapper, 2006:107).

These methods were widespread throughout the 1960s and beyond and considerable sums of money were spent equipping schools with language laboratories. Unfortunately, being equipped with reel-to-reel tape recorders, they were easily sabotaged by pupils and many lessons were wasted trying to find sufficient booths so that the learning experience was not always a fruitful one. Language laboratories proved to be a false dawn (Green, 1996: 212) and although they can still be found today, they are rarely a feature of school language learning. As for the methods:
Versions of this approach are still used in language teaching, but its critics have pointed out that isolated practice in drilling language patterns bears no resemblance to the interactional nature of actual spoken language use. Moreover, it can be incredibly boring.

(Yule, 2006; 165)

Such methods are still present in our modern languages classrooms today, with the use of flashcard drilling and repetition techniques, though these may be linked more closely with the Direct Method, which has as its aims:

To form a direct association of objects and concepts with the foreign language word, to avoid use of the mother tongue and to accord grammar a more subordinate, accompanying role.

(Klapper, 2006: 106)

2.3.3 Communicative Language Teaching

Once again, I take a personal perspective as my starting point in the discussion of this particular approach to language teaching. I began my PGCE in 1983 and was trained in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). This method is more correctly known as an approach as it combines several different methodologies. The thinking behind this approach is best summed up as:

… a reaction against the artificiality of ‘pattern-practice’ and also against the belief that consciously learning the grammar rules of a language will necessarily result in an ability to use the language.

(Yule, 2006:166)

This very influential approach to language teaching has become “almost the default methodology in much modern language teaching in secondary schools”
(Klapper, 2006:109), yet it is very difficult to achieve a fixed perspective of what
the term actually means. According to Klapper:

The flexibility with which communicative principles can be applied and their
potential for individual interpretation explains, in part, the durability of CLT, but it
also explains why there is no easily recognisable pedagogical framework, no single
agreed version of CLT and why the past 30 years have seen such variations in
the way it has been adopted, adapted and, not doubt, distorted.

(Klapper, 2006:109)

In order to discuss CLT in any depth, it is important to establish a clear definition
of the term and in my view this is provided by Lightbown & Spada (1999) who
assert that:

CLT is based on the premise that successful language learning involves
not only a knowledge of the structures and forms of a language, but
also the functions and purposes that a language serves in different
communicative settings. This approach to teaching emphasizes the
communication of meaning over the practice and manipulation of
grammatical forms.

(Lightbown & Spada, 1999:172)

It is this distinction between the form and meaning of language that sets this
approach apart and causes much of the debate about its definition. Supporters of
CLT (Littlewood, 1981; Savignon, 1991) believe that there has been an
overemphasis on grammatical forms of language to the detriment of using
language in real social settings and developing strategies that will allow this.

Littlewood (1981) clarifies this position in the following way:

A communicative approach opens up a wider perspective on language. In
particular, it makes us consider language not only in terms of its
structures (grammar and vocabulary), but also in terms of the
communicative functions that it performs. In other words, we begin to
look not only at language forms, but also at what people do with these
forms when they want to communicate with each other.

(Littlewood, 1981:x)
This approach, which has as its inspiration the work of the innatist and interactionist theoreticians, emphasises the importance of communication between individuals rather than the over emphasis on grammatical forms and correctness of expression that beleaguered past generations of language learners. Grammatical forms are important as a means of clarifying and negotiating meaning but learners' knowledge and understanding of structure develops incrementally and incidentally as part of the whole learning process.

As a concept, CLT first began to take root in the 1960s following discussions of what comprises language competence (Chomsky, 1965). This will be discussed more fully later in the thesis. Hymes (1971) recognised the importance of the situational context of language learning and this was further developed by other theoreticians (Canale & Swain, 1980). It is this linking of language with its sociocultural context that laid the ground for CLT, in that it recognised that language is much more than verb endings and prepositions and that the teaching and learning of language had somehow become divorced from its real purpose, that of communication. The genesis of CLT is therefore complicated and 'can be seen to derive from a multidisciplinary perspective that includes, at least, linguistics, psychology, philosophy, sociology and educational research' (Savignon, 1991:265).

As the ideas behind CLT and its practice developed over the years, differing versions of it began to be used, defined as a 'strong' and a 'weak' version of CLT.
by Klapper (2006). In the 'strong' version, the learning of a foreign language can replicate many of the features of first language acquisition. Consequently, there is little emphasis on grammatical form and the correction of errors in the belief that these are less important and that errors will right themselves in time. In contrast, the 'weak' version of CLT, the form that is most prevalent in schools in the United Kingdom, has a more structured approach and an acceptance that carefully considered practice of language can achieve successful communication.

Klapper (2006:11) summarises the main features of the 'weak' or mainstream version of CLT as an acceptance of the primacy of learners' needs, a focus on meaning, and the concept that language should be used for a purpose. The concept of sequencing by meaning organises language into topics or functions. Grammar, in this model, supports communication and should be learned from context, allowing a phased development. Language needs are individualised and learner interaction is promoted. The use of the target language is important in helping learners to process language and the skills are integrated, moving away from the idea of four discrete skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. The tutor is seen primarily as a facilitator who manages communicative activities and exposure to authentic language and materials. Most of all, the tutor manages the learners' experience of the language. Errors are tolerated as part of the natural learning process.
The communicative approach, above all, is an activity-based way of teaching and these activities include role plays, simulations, interviews, games, information gap tasks and carousel activities. There is a premium placed on pair and group work and teacher-centred activities tend to have less emphasis. Littlewood (1981) suggests that pre-communicative tasks, such as repetition or pair-work, should precede communicative activities such as functional transactions and social interaction. This, it is hoped, allows the learner to develop a certain level of autonomy and an ability to cope in real settings. Savignon (2002), in a review of CLT, highlighted the aims of this approach, which were to release the learner from the routine tasks of language learning and encourage spontaneity and creativity:

By encouraging learners to ask for information, to seek clarification, to use circumlocution and whatever other linguistic and nonlinguistic resources they could muster to negotiate meaning, to stick to the communicative task at hand, teachers were invariably leading learners to take risks, to venture beyond memorised patterns.

(Savignon, 2002:3)

These aims, which are achieved by many classroom practitioners, have also been misunderstood by others, who have taken it as a cue to abandon the study of grammatical form and to replace an understanding of language with a memorised store of common transactional phrases. The emphasis on language function in context in the communicative approach unwittingly encouraged a 'phrase book' mentality which means, in practice, that many teachers spend a great deal of classroom time in teaching common phrases and responses for pupils to regurgitate in settings such as the GCSE speaking test. It is unfortunate
that CLT principles, as supported by Savignon above, have thus been translated into essentially non-communicative practice.

There have, indeed, been many misconceptions about CLT, most notably reviewed by Thompson (1996). These include the idea that CLT means a ban on teaching grammar and that teaching should be only in the target language. Further misconceptions include the view that CLT means an end to whole class teaching in favour of pair work and role play and a consequent emphasis on speaking skills. This has allowed many detractors of CLT to conclude that such an approach overburdens the teacher and makes the learning experience unmanageable.

The principles and ideals of CLT, I recall, were viewed with a great deal of suspicion at their inception and, particularly so, when they became translated into the GCSE Modern Foreign Languages syllabus. Those teachers who had grown up (and grown old) in the tradition of grammar-translation and its offspring the Ordinary (O) Level Modern Foreign Languages examination viewed the advent of CLT with little short of suspicion and dismay. The communicative approach, however, was promoted with an almost evangelical fervour, allowing it to become firmly rooted in Modern Foreign Languages departments throughout the country, where it is still influential today.

It is true that in the early days of the communicative approach movement there was an element of ‘throwing the baby out with the bathwater’, an idea that every
method that had preceded this approach was not worthy or positively harmful and I remember that, for many years, I used to teach French grammar almost in secret and felt an emotion akin to guilt when I used dictation as an exercise even though I felt (and still feel) that it is one of the most useful language exercises that learners can undertake.

The communicative approach was not without its detractors, most notably Swan (1985), who put forward the point of view that CLT was oversimplified and misleading in its approach to the idea of authenticity and in its materials and methodology. He also argued that it failed to recognise the role of the mother tongue in language teaching and that authentic texts should be used only when combined with specially designed materials. In considering these views, I feel that the problems inherent in CLT are ones of interpretation. While the communicative approach did promote the use of the target language, it did not proscribe the use of English in the classroom. However, many teachers (and perhaps trainers and inspectors) interpreted it as such and the sign of a good lesson was felt to be one that was exclusively in the target language.

Another feature of this approach was the balance struck in favour of communication and fluency at the expense of accuracy. Many interpreted this as a rejection of grammar (I include myself in this misinterpretation) whereas this perceived banning of grammar was never explicitly stated. There was an atmosphere of dogma or even a sense of the party line that needed to be followed throughout British Modern Foreign Languages departments. The
pendulum swings, however, and grammar has found its way into the revised national curriculum (WAG, 2008) and back into examination specifications. There is even a new enthusiasm for metalanguage throughout schools, which allows pupils and teachers to share observations about the language through the medium of the mother tongue.

Discussion of the communicative approach has been a focus in this overview of language teaching methods. I feel it is important to examine this methodology as it has had a very strong grip on the language teaching profession for nearly three decades and is still a very influential teaching approach. The PGCE students who are the subject of this study will not only use features of this approach in their training (with an awareness of its limitations) but, given their age, they are most likely to be products of this teaching method. It is likely therefore that this will have informed their outlook on languages, as well as being the basis of their linguistic competence.

To view these developments from a theoretical framework, it is important to return to the work of the proponents of Innatism, such as Chomsky, and the idea that we are programmed to acquire the language of our environment (Lightbown & Spada, 1999). Chomsky himself is overwhelmed by the complexity of linguistic systems, observing that “an elementary fact about the language faculty is that it is a system of discrete infinity, rare in the organic world” (Chomsky, 2006:183). In attempting to make sense of this system, at the heart of this approach is the idea
of communicative competence, which, in its simplest form is a dialogue between two people. This is made possible by receptive and productive language skills and relates to Chomsky’s idea of discourse competence. This is echoed in Krashen’s *monitor model* (1982), which, simply stated, seeks to replicate the natural conditions of first language learning and allows the language learner to *acquire* the language through exposure to it. This finds some resonance in the target language classrooms of the communicative approach. A further dimension of theoretical thought can be seen in CLT in the work of Interactionist theoreticians such as Vygotsky (1978) and his work on the *zone of proximal development*, highlighting the importance of social interaction, an important feature of the communicative approach.

A clear understanding of the theoretical frameworks that underpin language learning can therefore support the research aims of this study, which include helping the student teachers to become competent and confident teachers. To a large extent, these two terms are interlinked in that they will tend to be confident if they feel their language competence is strong. Likewise, their ability to demonstrate their competence effectively will be dependent on their level of confidence in their ability to do so.

Of course ‘competence’ is problematic in the discussion of the student teachers’ experience in that this is a term that is frequently applied in a number of different ways. Its definition has been subject to much discussion in language theory and
the world of education for many years (Chomsky 1965; Hymes, 1971; Canale & Swain, 1980). One perception of *competence* is knowledge of language, which Chomsky (1965), in his definition of the term, contrasted with *performance*, the way that a person uses language. Chomsky's distinction between competence and performance was further developed by other writers such as Hymes (1971), who highlighted the difficulties of using performance as an indication of competence because performance can be an “imperfect manifestation of underlying system” (Hymes, 1971:271).

The idea of competence in this study is frequently linked to the idea of *communicative competence*, described by Yule as “the general ability to use language accurately, appropriately and flexibly” (Yule, 2006:169). Communicative competence has been the subject of much debate (Hymes, 1971; Savignon, 1976; Bachman, 1990) and the social context of language is a strong feature of this term. There is a divergence of interpretation of the term *communicative competence* as being between those who see it primarily as linguistic interaction in the target language and others, such as Hymes, who define it as “not only the linguistic forms of language but also its social rules; the knowledge of when, how and to whom it is appropriate to use these forms” (Paulston, 1992:115).
Canale & Swain (1980) were very influential in the discussion of communicative competence and felt that there were three distinct parts; grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence. Canale & Swain's view of grammatical competence is a useful element in the context of this study in that it is not limited to grammar alone but comprises knowledge of lexical items, syntax, semantics, as well as morphology and phonology. Their view of sociolinguistic competence involves an awareness of language appropriate to specific social settings and an understanding of how language fits together cohesively and coherently. Strategic competence they defined as the ability to cope with breakdowns in communication by using strategies such as gesture or circumlocution.

Bachman (1990) coined the term communicative language ability (CLA) further developing the ideas of competence and performance. He made a distinction between language competence, strategic competence and psycho-physiological mechanisms. In his view, language competence is very wide ranging and encompasses organisational competence (grammar, vocabulary and textual competence) and pragmatic competence (ability to perform functions and use conventions). Unlike Swain and Canale's definition of strategic competence, Bachman sees this as a wider ability to carry out language tasks, beyond those of responding to breakdowns in language. His third category of psychophysiological competence refers to auditory, visual and neuromuscular skills.
The competence of the student teachers in this study can therefore be seen to be strongly focused on their linguistic capabilities, whether the grammatical competence as defined by Canale & Swain (1980) or the organisational and pragmatic competence as viewed by Bachman (1990). Competence, then, is not simply a question of being able to communicate but it implies an understanding of the complex way that language is formed. In her definition of communicative competence, Savignon (1976) posits:

It is a way of describing what it is a native speaker knows which enables him to interact effectively with other native speakers. This kind of interaction is, by definition, spontaneous, i.e. unrehearsed. It requires much more than knowledge of linguistic code. The native speaker knows not only how to say something but what to say and when to say it.

(Savignon, 1976:4)

Therefore, the acquisition of the linguistic code is an important feature of communicative competence allowing learners to develop the language that enables them to progress towards the skills of the native speaker. As Savignon points out, the surface features of language such as verb endings and nouns are only part of the concept of competence; and language use in inter-personal transactions involves much more than the activities that have traditionally occupied language teachers. An awareness of the social setting in which the learner uses language is an important feature of competence, though how this can be measured is a challenge.

The main difficulty, as pointed out by Hymes, is in how to measure competence by performance as “any stretch of speech is an imperfect indication of the
knowledge that underlies it” (Hymes, 1971:272). He finds the linking of performance to imperfection a 'Garden of Eden' view in that:

Human life seems divided between grammatical competence, an ideal innately derived sort of power, and performance, an exigency rather like the eating of the apple, thrusting the perfect speaker-hearer out into a fallen world.

(Hymes, 1971:272)

The above discussion provides a warning against relying upon language testing of student performance as a finite measure of improvement in competence. The tests undertaken by the students in this study are measures of their proficiency in terms of elements of language, such as grammatical knowledge and ranges of vocabulary at their disposal. These are useful indicators of language competence but they cannot provide complete measures of the students' knowledge or skills.

Communicative competence is therefore much more than either the knowledge of syntactical or lexical items or the performance of such skills, whether it is in the context of spoken or textual language. It is also derived from a clear understanding of language as "social behavior" (Savignon, 2002:2) and should be seen as an integral part of a wider sociocultural setting. In the context of language teaching, the teacher's sense of his or her linguistic ability can be a problem:

Is she a fluent speaker of the language she teaches? If not, does she consider herself to be bilingual? If not, why not? Is a lack of communicative competence, or rather a lack of communicative confidence? Is she intimidated by “native” speakers?

(Savignon, 2002:19)
As already defined in the opening chapter, I have chosen an operational definition of the idea of competence based on the subject knowledge required by the standards for Qualified Teacher Status (WAG, 2006). In a practical sense, trainee teachers have to demonstrate a secure understanding of the specifications of the examinations for which they are preparing their pupils, that is to say the GCSE and Advanced Level examinations and an ability to deliver lessons appropriate to these learning objectives. It is on this basis and its associated linguistic competence that trainee teachers are expected to demonstrate their language proficiency and suitability for the role of language teacher.

The search for competence is therefore a complex one and, as this study is firmly rooted in practitioner research, it is more important to explore the reflection and development of the students as learners and teacher-practitioners than focus on the complexities of what constitutes true and absolute competence.

In the students’ professional practice, the problem inherent in the concept of the reflective practitioner (Schön, 1991) is that it is difficult to balance the emphasis we give to everyday practical experience with the theoretical framework that allows us to make sense of it. Ideally, practice should be linked to theory and research should support and frame our approach to language learning. Theory is
“an indispensable element of teacher learning” (Klapper, 2006:37) but there are dangers:

Crucially … theories need to be critically examined against practice. Many would argue that the unreflective and insufficiently critical consumption of theory in teacher education in the past is what led to many of the ills of methodology bound FL (foreign language) learning and teaching.

(Klapper, 2006:37)

Learning is a unique experience and it is difficult to generalise in an absolute and truly meaningful way. Much will depend on the teachers we had when we were learners and the context within which that learning took place. In the learning of languages, we need to take into account the exposure we had to the target language, the way that we learned the grammatical structures and the way that we chose to internalise this knowledge as well as the diverse skills associated with language use. In addition to this we need to think about our motivation for learning languages and our reasons for taking on the considerable work involved in attempting to master such a complex task. What makes this an almost Sisyphean undertaking is that we are aware, all the time that we are learning, that constant repetition and revision is an inevitable chore if we are to maintain these easily eroded skills. In short, use it or lose it. This is the dilemma faced by the student teachers that are at the heart of this study. Despite intensive learning of the language, they have allowed their skills to lapse into misuse and now need to find ways to retrieve them. In order to determine the means to achieve this, we must look at the way we store language skills in our memory and the manner in which they can be lost when we fail to maintain them.
2.4 Language Memory and Attrition

How do we commit complex language features to memory and retrieve them when needed? The previous sections sought to make sense of how we learn languages and how this has been translated into teaching methods in our schools. Second language learning (SLL) is a very complex field that has a strong tradition of theory and pedagogy. Much is based on cognitive theory and in my reading in this field I came across many references to declarative and procedural knowledge (Grenfell & Harris, 1999; Klapper, 2006; Mitchell & Myles, 2004). Declarative knowledge is the explicit knowledge of facts and, in a languages context, the memorised rules of a language. Procedural knowledge, however means knowing how to use this knowledge; in this instance it would mean making use of our knowledge of grammatical structure in order to speak the language. Klapper summarises this process in the following way:

Revised practice leads to automation or fine-tuning of the particular skill, allowing discrete units to be combined into steadily larger stretches of language, thereby reducing the burden of memory. (The movement from declarative to procedural knowledge also involves movement from short to long-term memory.)

(Klapper, 2006:57)

The internalisation of these complex skills requires practice so that they are integrated into a fluent performance. It is this process that causes difficulties for learners. As they aim for a fluent output of language, accuracy of expression suffers. If they concentrate on improving accuracy, they lose fluency. This ‘see-saw’ of skills is the bane of language learners’ lives. In many ways it is very
similar to learning to drive. We concentrate on the mechanistic aspects of the operation, pressing the clutch, changing gear, then releasing the clutch. As we do this we find it difficult to concentrate on the road and risk crashing the car. However, with repeated practice, these operations move from our short-term to long-term memory and after sufficient practice, we no longer think about what gear we are in, it becomes a subconscious skill. In the same way, advanced language learners no longer think about the conjugation or tenses of the verbs they use, this becomes part of the process of automatisation. However, the analogy is not a perfect one, perhaps, as those who return to driving after long periods of neglect are often able to pick up the skill again with relative ease. Language learners, on the contrary, are aware that even relatively short periods away from the language can erode their skills.

Language memory is a complex phenomenon and it is subject to extensive research (Pinker, 1999; Randall, 2007). The combination of psychology and linguistic theory, which developed into psycholinguistics, a branch of cognitive psychology in the late nineteenth century, has made significant inroads into our understanding of language memory and behaviour. According to Randall (2007), when language enters our short-term, working memory, it is sorted into categories of our long-term memory. Language learning skills need to go through a process of automatisation and this allows them to pass from the working memory into the long-term memory. The language gradually moves from conscious control, where explicit instructions are accessed from the declarative
memory, through the process of automatisation to the procedural memory, where they operate from stimuli from the environment. However, in order to complete the process, Randall points out that:

It has generally been accepted that mere repetition is not sufficient (as audio linguists found out) any more than simple immersion (as the CLT tradition is beginning to realize).

(Randall, 2007: 41)

It is possible to discuss this in much greater depth but it is not my intention to give a linguistic explanation of the phenomenon of language memory, rather it is my view that it is important to understand the context in which the language loss experienced by the PGCE students in this study has taken place.

As my reading moved onto language loss, I faced a very different problem. Instead of the large quantities of scholarly publications and Internet pages that I found for learning and, more specifically language learning, I was faced with a dearth of information about language loss. I found it difficult to believe that I was the only one who was interested in this problem and set about devising a list of key words to assist me in my search for relevant literature. This list was as follows:

Language memory
Language recall
Language retention
Language reactivation
Lapsed language
Dormant language
Language loss
These key words and phrases provided comparatively little until, in the course of reading through the sparse research that I had found, I came across the expression *Language Attrition*. Once I had found this key phrase, it became an 'Open Sesame' and I found a wealth of relevant literature. The problem then arose of how to narrow it down. I quickly found that most literature related to first language attrition and, interesting though this was, it was not within the scope of my study. I therefore narrowed my search down to second language attrition.

Much of the most interesting work has been done in the Netherlands, Japan and in North America. I was able to gain direct email access to some of well-known academics in this field and they were extremely helpful in pointing me in the right direction. A great deal of research has been undertaken by De Bot from the University of Nijmegen in the Netherlands. From the study of long-term language retention through specially devised experiments (De Bot & Stoessel, 2000) it was proposed that there are three levels of language retention:

1. Recall – the ability to actively come up with words in the target language
2. Recognition – the ability to be able to show passive recognition of words in the target language without being able to actively produce them
3. Language which can neither be recalled nor recognised.

It is the third group that is the most interesting for the purposes of this research study. It could be inferred that this is the lost language. However, the research of De Bot and Stoessel (2000) suggest that although this language *seemed* lost, when students relearned this language, they were much more successful than they were at learning language that was completely new to them. In other words,
there was some residual trace of previous language items of which the participants were not aware. They thought they had completely lost these items but in fact that was not so. This phenomenon is known as ‘savings’ and is defined as “a relearning advantage of old items over new items” (De Bot & Stoessel, 2000:336). This was extremely welcome news for the PGCE students who formed part of this investigation. However, De Bot and Stoessel warn that “there is clearly a retention of linguistic knowledge over a long period of time… but how best we can activate them is still unclear” (ibid 352).

Other research findings such as the work of De Groot and Keijzer (2000) were also useful in the action research phase of this research, when PGCE students were helped in reactivating lost language skills. According to De Groot and Keijzer, it is important to realise that “words that are the easiest to learn also leave the more permanent memory trace” (De Groot & Keijzer, 2000:36). For this reason, they advise language teachers to concentrate on cognates rather than non-cognates and words with concrete meanings rather than abstract ones. Unfortunately, the language required by trainee teachers to demonstrate competence, such as the language found in examination specification, needs to include a wide range of vocabulary items, far beyond just cognates and concrete words.

Other research on language attrition (Hansen, 2000) has identified key findings in the process of language decline:
• There is no age advantage and older learners are as likely to suffer language attrition as younger ones;
• The ‘regression hypothesis’ means that language most recently learnt is likely to be lost first;
• Those with a higher language proficiency have an advantage and are less likely to lose language;
• In learning there is an initial ‘plateau’ of knowledge and skills that resists attrition.

(Hansen, 2000)

In a later study, Hansen (2001) reiterates the view that language, once learnt, is not necessarily lost, but becomes more difficult to retrieve. With the right cues, it can be reactivated, but retrieval might take longer.

Much of the research to date has concentrated on discrete items of vocabulary, that is to say words. However, it is important to remember that there is much more to language than words and that grammatical structure, the cement that binds together the vocabulary blocks of language should not be overlooked. According to Meara (2004), this is a major flaw in much second language attrition research and, even if we were to consider only vocabulary, he points out that “(m)ost linguists agree that vocabularies are not just collections of words, and that vocabularies are essentially interlocking networks” (Meara, 2004:137).
The difficulty of researching in this area is one of replicating the natural environment in the testing of the amount and nature of language attrition as:

The problem for researchers is that it is impossible to get inside people’s heads and observe how their vocabularies are organized and how this organization interacts with their vocabulary loss.  

(ibid: 138)

Meara refers, interestingly, to the ‘Boulogne Ferry effect’ where a small amount of exposure to a previously learnt and apparently forgotten language releases a surprisingly large quantity of forgotten words. This is an interesting phenomenon that I have experienced personally during visits to Italy after absences of some years, and it was evident from preliminary discussions with students that it had happened to them too. However, there is very little research in this area and, in the view of Meara, “current methodologies for studying large-scale lexical processes like attrition leave a lot to be desired” (ibid:151).

This understanding of language attrition is rendered even more difficult by the fact that language is much more intensely complicated than the words that make it up. As specialists of language attrition struggle to determine the rate and nature of language attrition as it relates just to items of vocabulary, it is worthwhile considering the place that vocabulary holds in the whole linguistic framework of human beings, such as is suggested by the following diagram:
Pinker’s ideas of language organisation, expressed in the diagram above (Fig.3), are useful as they relate to what lies within our very complex memory and this diagram can be used as we consider the type of language that can be retrieved by those students who have allowed language skills to lay unused prior to beginning their teacher training.

This idea of language organisation was a worthwhile one for PGCE students to consider: revising vocabulary lists and relearning lists of verb patterns was not enough, they needed to consider the interrelation of these linguistic elements if
students were to function effectively in the Modern Foreign Languages classroom.

2.5 Supporting the Language Learner

As the focus of this study narrows from the general principles of learning to the methodology of language learning, it is important to consider the language learners themselves. The PGCE students who train to be teachers of Modern Foreign Languages have a vast range of skills to master in a relatively short time when compared to the years they expect to spend in the profession. Their language competence, as already discussed in the Introduction to this study, is very much taken for granted, yet it is this skill that is the \textit{raison d’être} for their being in the profession in that their role in the educational setting is to share this language knowledge and skill with (we hope) generations of future learners. Yet it is this skill that frequently gives them a sense of disquiet if it is not as perfect as they would like it to be. Barnes (2006) who carried out an investigation into the confidence levels and concerns of trainee teachers of Modern Foreign Languages concurs that:

\begin{quote}
For these teachers, who at the start of their training are passionate about the language(s) they will teach, subject knowledge is a major concern in their professional development.
\end{quote}

(Barnes, 2006:43)

The PGCE students are, almost by definition, good language learners as demonstrated by their prior success in obtaining language degrees. It is useful
therefore to consider what good language learners do that sets them apart.

Grenfell (2007:9) makes reference to the “seminal work by Stern (1975) who sets out to describe what ‘good’ language learners do that the not-so-good do not.” These include factors such as:

Being active
Having technical know-how and developing language as a system
Being willing to practise and use the language
Having a personal learning agenda
Being self-evaluative
Being sociable
Constantly looking for meaning

(Grenfell, 2007:9)

This list proved very useful in the establishment of a language reactivation programme for PGCE language students, especially the reference to having a personal learning agenda and the need to be self-evaluative, and I was able to see the crucial importance of having these as features of a guided learning scheme in the action research phase of this study.

In an earlier study, Grenfell and Harris (1999) undertook an investigation into the good language learner and the notion of strategy, and, with reference to the study by Stern (1975) previously mentioned, drew up a list of ten strategies used by the good language learner:

1. Planning strategy
2. Active strategy
3. Empathetic strategy
4. Formal strategy
5. Experimental strategy
6. Semantic strategy
7. Practice strategy  
8. Communication strategy  
9. Monitoring strategy  
10. Internalisation strategy

(Grenfell & Harris, 1999:37)

All the above strategies were relevant to this investigation of planned reactivation of lapsed language skills and could be integrated into the programme. I think that the distinction between learning styles and strategies is a very important one and this is explained well by Oxford (2003) who highlights the difference in the following manner:

- Learning styles are general approaches to learning or solving a problem
- Learning strategies are specific actions or behaviors consciously used to achieve a goal

(Oxford, 2003)

Oxford’s definition of strategies is developed in more detail in Klapper (2006:92) as “specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques that students employ – often consciously – to improve their own progress in internalising, storing, retrieving and using the second language.” As Klapper points out, the use of the phrase ‘often consciously’ is a very interesting one as language learners, particularly successful ones, are not always aware of the strategies they use in order to achieve their learning goal. There is a sense of learners making use of natural or automatic strategic actions that are done without any conscious control or reflection at all. This might include involuntarily drawing on prior language understanding to embed new knowledge or associating new words with images or phrases. It is assumed that strategies are conscious acts but this is often not
the case. For this reason a metacognitive approach to reactivation of lapsed language skills strongly recommended itself and reflection of the process (Schön, 1991) is a well-integrated part of this procedure.

Klapper (2006) provides a full picture of the range of language strategies available to language learners and puts them into useful general categories that can be summarised briefly as:

Cognitive
- Inferencing by applying known information to make educated guesses
- Deducing by making use of linguistic knowledge to form language
- Memorising by using strategies to promote language storage
- Practising by employing techniques to provide ready access to language
- Clarifying and checking to verify understanding of language in its different forms

Metacognitive
- Self-management of understanding and the conditions of learning
- Assessing needs and preferences and choosing how to learn
- Planning and rehearsing for a task
- Identifying problems
- Directing attention to specific parts of a task
- Self-monitoring to check understanding
- Self-evaluating to check results of learning against some criteria

Communication
- Awareness of non-verbal cues
- Paraphrasing and the use of synonyms
- Using approximations and circumlocutions
- Using stalling strategies
- Using coherent markers such as the organisation of written texts
- Using techniques for clarification

Socio-affective
- Seeking information, explanations, examples
- Initiating exchanges with native speakers
- Cooperating with peers to solve problems
- Listening to recorded materials and using self-access facilities
• Controlling emotional responses before language performance

(Klapper, 2006:93-5)

This very comprehensive analysis (in abbreviated form here) was extremely useful for my research. Much of the above activities had already been taking place within the PGCE MFL cohort but only on a very informal, ad hoc basis. This breakdown and sorting of strategies into a coherent form provided an invaluable checklist for me to consider the sort of support that was needed to form part of a guided learning programme. Especially useful was the analysis of metacognitive strategies as these formed a central part of the reflective process of the initiative and would prepare the students for their future role as teachers.

At this point, it is useful to consider a case study that was undertaken by Li in Reading University, making use of many of the strategies outlined above (Li, 2007: 214). Li highlights the importance of using native speakers as “when the learners participated in interactions with speakers of the language, there were opportunities for them to seek clarification or verifications with their interlocutors, which were part of the process of negotiation for meaning.” The PGCE MFL programme is similar to many other programmes of its kind in the United Kingdom in that it attracts a significant number of native speakers wishing to train to be teachers of their first language. They provide a valuable linguistic resource to the other PGCE students, and often form loose partnerships with them, relationships that are mutually beneficial in that they receive in return support for their English language skills as well as help with the provision of insights into the
British educational system. It became clear during the research that a formalised arrangement would be a useful addition to a guided learning programme for my trainee teachers.

Other insights came during their school placements, when students came across the practice of assessment for learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998) and realised that there are features of these concepts that could apply to them in their language reactivation. The active involvement of learners in their own learning experiences and the importance of a clear understanding of how to improve, both central tenets of assessment for learning, are important in the context of this study and in students’ efforts to reactivate lapsed languages. Peer assessment, another feature of assessment for learning, also had a role to play and this occurred in the involvement of the native speakers in their role as language ‘buddies’ and their willingness to share responsibilities in the task of language learning.

In the investigation of lapsed language, strategies that are directly associated with improving memory were also discussed in sessions with students and integrated into the core of the programme. These included strategies such as the following:

Mnemonics
Active listening
Association techniques
Written notes repetition
Personalising information
Self-awareness of existing knowledge
In drawing up a programme to support individual language needs, tutors recognised that it should include not only long-term goals such as regaining previous levels of language skills but also shorter-term goals that are specific and measurable, so that a feeling of progress can be experienced (Fernández-Toro & Jones, 2001). These might include conversation with a native speaker, the reading of a novel in the target language or completion of a grammar activity. Learning independently is a great challenge, especially within the framework of learning a new craft, and one as demanding as teaching. However, this context is also rich in resources, whether it is the expertise of other learners or tutors or the prior knowledge and access to physical resources such as an immense store of language learning materials.

The demands placed on students in the task of reactivating lapsed languages were considerable and were therefore a real test of their motivation. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2009) contend that:

When learners invest in a language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will enhance their cultural capital, their identity and their desires for the future. This is an investment in the learner’s own identity.  
(Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009:4)

The motivation of students and the way it affects their ability to manage both their learning and their professional development is of central importance in this study. Motivation is a complex area of educational research that is constantly developing. Early work by Gardner and Lambert (1959) emphasised the social
perspective of motivation and developed ideas of integrativeness (identification with the target language and culture) and instrumentality (the practical benefits of learning a language). These ideas were developed by later researchers, Csizér & Dörnyei (2005) who proposed that motivation is affected by constructs such as integrativeness, instrumentality, attitudes towards the target language community, cultural interest and linguistic self confidence. However, in her review of research into motivation, Broady (2005) makes the point that it is difficult to interpret and categorise significant features of motivation, as there is considerable overlapping and interrelation between the different constructs.

The effect of motivation on successful language learning is further complicated when one attempts to explore the relationship between them:

...the whole question of the relationship between success and failure on the one hand and motivation on the other is a controversial one. Which causes which? Numerous researchers have documented the strong positive correlation between motivation and achievement.

(Graham, 1997: 97)

It is important for learners to explain to themselves their successes and their failures and their perceptions have a significant impact on the learning outcomes. To a certain extent, their views are affected by attribution theory (Coleman et al., 2007) where factors that affect success are divided into those we can control (dispositional attribution) and those we cannot (external, situational attribution). Graham (2007) explains the practical context of this theory:

Learners who believe that their academic achievements (including ‘failure’) can be explained by factors within their control (such as how hard they
tried or which strategies they employed) are likely to be motivated to attempt similar tasks again.

(Graham, 2007:82-3)

Conversely, those learners who feel that their lack of success is affected by factors beyond their control are less likely to feel high levels of motivation. This was a salient point in the conduct of this research study, as the students were likely to feel higher levels of motivation if they were placed in a position to be able to manage and control their own learning. Therefore a sense of independence and ownership became an important feature in the learning programme undertaken by students in this study. It was important to design the programme in a way that would allow students to have a strong element of choice in the sort of activities they undertook to reactivate lapsed language skills. This sense of ownership over their own learning made it more likely that students would continue to learn and develop their skills beyond the time scale of their PGCE programme.

The setting in which learning takes place is significant in any study of the motivation of students. In a natural language acquisition setting, such as the target language country, the learner is highly motivated by basic living needs in order to integrate into the local community. However, away from the target language country, in classrooms or other instructional settings, there are weaker communicative needs and it is therefore likely that the learner will experience fewer immediate motivational influences (Coleman et al., 2007).
According to Dörnyei (2001), little research has been carried out into teacher motivation, yet it plays a key role in learner motivation. He argued there are four significant factors in teacher motivation: an intrinsic component (such as teaching as a ‘vocation’), contextual influences (demands of the institution and the profile of the profession), the temporal dimension (career structure and promotion) and negative influences (such as stress, restricted autonomy and insufficient self-efficacy). All of these factors have a relevance for the trainee teachers in this study. However, the challenge lies in how to manage these diverse components in the intense atmosphere of the PGCE programme. Here the role of the trainee teachers themselves is pivotal.

The role of self is important in the study of motivation and Dörnyei and Ushioda (2009) promote the concept of the ideal self, which is a representation of the attributes we would ideally like to have, in other words, our hopes and aspirations. This relates to the ought-to-self, which refers to the attributes we ought to possess, the representation of someone else’s sense of duty and responsibility. The students undertaking the reactivation of lapsed language skills had a perception of the sort of learner they would like to be (the ideal self) and this needed to be balanced with their professional duties and the responsibilities that they had to undertake as trainee teachers (the ought-to-self).
The importance of self is evidently core to theories of motivation and this is discussed in detail in the work of the Assessment Reform Group in their study of testing, motivation and learning. They identify components of motivation as:

**Self-esteem**: how one values oneself as a person and a learner;

**Self-efficacy**: how capable one feels of succeeding in a learning task;

**Self-regulation**: the capacity to evaluate one's work and make choices about what to do next;

**Goal-orientation**: whether one’s goal is to learn in order to understand or to perform well on a test (which may not reflect secure learning);

**Interest**: the pleasure from and engagement with learning;

**Effort**: how much one is prepared to try and persevere;

**Locus of control**: how much one feels in control of learning as opposed to it being directed by others;

**Sense of self as a learner**: how confident one feels of being able to learn from the classroom experiences provided.

(Black *et al.*, 2002:3)

Although the guided learning programme that was set up for the students did not have a traditional classroom setting, many of the above components of motivation were present. Students had control over their own learning and used their prior experiences as successful language learners to create the best conditions for reactivating languages.
Dörnyei’s four step framework for motivational strategies (2001) has relevance here as PGCE tutors first of all needed to create basic motivational conditions. The second step in this framework was to generate student motivation. Maintenance and protection of motivation comprises the third step. The final, and arguably most significant step of the process, is to make positive self-evaluation (Dörnyei, 2001:119). Reviewing past progress and evaluating what they achieved in their learning is important, both for both under and over confident learners. Attribution theory explains past successes and failures and encourages learners to celebrate their achievements. Coleman et al. (2007) assert that:

... well motivated learners perceive the progress they are making, and are motivated by it to further effort and further success, in a virtuous circle which language teachers have always recognised and which may be the strongest motivation of all.

(Coleman et al., 2007:248)

It is this sense of progress that is essential to learners, no matter what level of linguistic proficiency they reach. Students who participated in this study found it important to understand the affective factors of their language learning and to use this knowledge to support their motivation, which was challenged at times by the heavy demands of their training.

In many PGCE programmes, students with out-of-date and fossilised language skills are sent on refresher courses or evening classes. For many students this is neither convenient nor motivating. One study found that “a significant number of
adult foreign language students are eager to make rapid progress, and hence find the traditional evening / day class pattern too slow.” (Eckart, 1995:31) An additional challenge is to fit evening classes into the exhausting time schedule of a trainee teacher who is not free during the weekdays and too busy or exhausted to attend evening classes. For such students, a managed programme of learning that has as its heart the regeneration of previous language skills was the logical answer to their needs. The fact that they had the opportunity to reflect on the process and use this experiential learning for their wider purpose of learning to be a teacher both enhanced and validated the whole process.
Chapter 3

Methodology

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3.1 In Quest of Knowledge

It could be contended that the business of education is the pursuit and acquisition of knowledge. However, the nature of knowledge, of truth, is not so easy to identify. Individuals attempt to interpret existence by applying theoretical frameworks, lenses through which they try to make sense of what they see around them. This epistemology will vary from individual to individual, depending on their perspectives or their understanding of the world. Our selection of epistemological outlook will, to an extent, be tempered by our place in the world, our nature, our experiences, our ontology. Epstein et al. (2007: 13) do not subscribe to the idea that “knowledge is ‘objective’ or that researchers can take a god-like stance as knowers.” Our understanding of the world is affected by our belief system and who we are as human beings.

The perception of truth and how we define it is an ontological consideration and, as human beings, we make assumptions about how we view the social world. Cohen et al. pose the questions:

Is social reality external to individuals – imposing itself on their consciousness from without – or is it the product of individual consciousness? Is reality of an objective nature, or the result of individual cognition? Is it a given ‘out there’ in the world or is it created by one’s mind?

(Cohen et al., 2007: 7)

They make a further distinction, based on epistemological assumptions that are equally relevant to the researcher:

The view that knowledge is hard, objective and tangible will demand of researchers an observer role, together with an allegiance to the methods
of natural science; to see knowledge as personal, subjective and unique, however, imposes on researchers an involvement in their subjects and a rejection of the ways of the natural scientist.

*(ibid: 7)*

Pring (2000) distils these two explanations as being those of a knowable world that exists independently of the knower and an opposing viewpoint that our knowledge of the world is affected by our interpretation of it. For researchers, this distinction is often demonstrated in practice by the use of quantitative and qualitative data, which will be discussed later. From a more theoretical point of view, this dualism is embodied in the contrasting theories of positivism and interpretivism. Cohen *et al.* reprise Hitchcock and Hughes’s notion that:

> Ontological assumptions give rise to epistemological assumptions; and these, in turn, give rise to methodological considerations; and these, in turn, give rise to issues of instrumentation and data collection. This view moves us beyond regarding research methods as simply a technical exercise and is concerned with understanding the world; this is informed by how we view our world(s), what we take understanding to be, and what we see as the purposes of understanding.

*(Cohen *et al.*, 2007: 5)*

Making sense of the world is done in an infinite variety of ways and our epistemological standpoint, which is filtered by our ontological perspective, will affect the way in which we come to terms with our understanding of the world, our conception of what truth and knowledge are.

The study of science and the acceptance of the idea that fact is discernible and discoverable, given an understanding of scientific laws, underpin the theory of positivism. This approach to making sense of the world around us has been a central tenet of western thought since before Socrates. The idea that truth and
reality can be scientifically verified is both comforting and reassuring to the researcher. Such reliance on the power of a scientific approach to understanding truth and reality is, however, a cause for concern for the social scientist. Even for scientists, the concept that everything is provable is a worryingly simplistic idea. If we look at a Victorian encyclopaedia we are struck by the confident assertion of facts that even rudimentary modern scientific knowledge would lead us now to consider wrong. Our understanding of science is based on our knowledge of the world at the time; as the world develops and our understanding of phenomena expands, our concept of scientific fact changes. No doubt those who believed the world was flat or the sun revolved around the earth thought their beliefs were founded on scientific laws. In order to be rigorous in research, we need to develop an awareness of our place in history and the role of our interpretation of evidence:

It is no longer possible to speak in terms of a foundational epistemology and a direct ontological realism. No method is a neutral tool of inquiry, and hence the notion of procedural objectivity cannot be sustained. The days of naïve realism and naïve positivism are over. In their place stand critical and historical realism and various versions of relativism. The criteria for evaluating research are now relative.

(Denzin & Lincoln, 2003: 420)

In addition to these concerns, we need to add the fact that, although we can study the human body and its functions scientifically, it is not so easy to apply scientific laws to the human mind and human behaviour. Pring (2000: 32) asserts that “such are the peculiarities of each person’s perceptions and interpretations of events that significant generalisation is impossible. Persons cannot be the object of scientific enquiry.” The fundamental problem of a
The positivist standpoint is that human beings, in their character and that outward expression of that character, their behaviour, are highly variable and therefore difficult to study as a scientific phenomenon. This, therefore, applies to the way they deal with the concept of knowledge and their approach to learning, which is fundamental to this research study.

The view of society as a solid and discernible entity is problematic as it defies our experience of the world. In the view of Radnor (2002), it paints a view of society as:

… existing outside of those individuals that make it up, as socially and culturally defined in a set of rules that we have to follow. It paints a picture of conformist actors in a deterministic social world, living within constraints. Structural conditions clearly impact on individual actions, but it is the activities of human beings that produce society and also, therefore, the social systems that make it up.

(Radnor, 2002: 18)

It is the fluidity and change within society, as well as the variability of the human experience, personality and behaviour, that make it difficult (if not impossible) to study and research in a quantifiable, measurable and scientific way.

Another path open to social scientists is that of the interpretive approach. If human beings cannot be studied in the same way as fauna and flora, how are they to be studied? According to Radnor:

We interpret experiences through the filters of existing knowledge and beliefs, and these existing knowledge and beliefs that we hold are a product of ourselves as active subjects construing meaning.

(Radnor, 2002: 3)
In summary, we determine our epistemology by means of our ontological experience and personal perspective. As human beings we are unique and our experiences are equally unique. Individuals do not have fixed characters but the personality traits they demonstrate depend on those with whom they interact. In existentialist terms, we are the sum of our acts rather than having a fixed personality, an essence. This makes us, and our behaviour, very complex indeed. As human beings, we have different perceptions of the nature of reality, making it very difficult to know other people’s understanding of reality. This makes the relationship between the researcher and those being researched very difficult and problematic. In interpretive research, the researcher’s task is to “make sense of their world, to understand it, to see what meaning is imbued in that situation by the people who are a part of it.” (Radnor, 2002: 21). This requires a high level of perception and interpretation.

Therefore:

Although it is not possible to get inside someone else’s head or ever to really know how someone else feels, through empathetic understanding, gained by the sharing of a common language, we can dialogue, converse and share experiences.

(ibid: 21)

Our place in the social world is construed by the meaning that we, as individuals, place upon it. As researchers, we have to place an interpretation on this meaning and it is here that the difficulty lies. Actions can be misinterpreted, intentions can be misconstrued. The interpretive approach encourages the researcher to determine the meaning of what is observed. Cohen et al. warn that:
One important factor in such circumstances that must be considered is the power of others to impose their own definitions of situations upon participants…. The ability of certain individuals, groups, classes and authorities to persuade others to accept their definitions of situations demonstrates that while … social structure is a consequence of the ways in which we perceive social relations, it is clearly more than this. (Cohen et al., 2007:25–26)

Interpretation of social constructs and human interaction is a heavy responsibility and researchers need to keep in mind the dangers of bias and subjectivity.

There are, indeed, dangers inherent in many different forms of enquiry and there is a tendency in many researchers to be dogmatic and partisan in the approach that they select. I found Pring (2000) to be very helpful in the clear way in which he is able to explain complex theoretical concepts and I referred to his work on the philosophy of education throughout my study of methodology. He clarifies this divergence of stance in the following way:

In a nutshell, the contrast is drawn between quantitative research, which is seen to be appropriate to the physical world (and wrongly applied to the personal and social) and qualitative research which addresses that which is distinctive of the personal and social, namely, the ‘meanings’ through which personal and social reality is understood. The latter simply cannot be quantified; it is not that sort of thing. Furthermore, the former kind of research is referred to as ‘positivist’, a word which has had a bad press amongst educational researchers and which therefore signals strong disapproval. (Pring, 2000: 44)

In his view, positivism deserves a “more subtle and charitable understanding” (ibid: 44) as it can be seen as a rigid and inflexible way of perceiving the world. He also points out that the epistemological difference between the two explanations of our understanding of the world reveal a Cartesian dualism that is difficult to resolve. This tension is further evident in the ontological differences
demonstrated by the view that the reality researched depends greatly on the perspective of the person who is researching it. We can never be sure that our theories are correct, but by airing our apprehensions we go a long way to making our research as honest and as rigorous as possible.

This divergence is further discussed by Denzin & Lincoln (2003), who postulate:

Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry. Such researchers emphasize the value-laden nature of inquiry. They seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning. In contrast, quantitative studies emphasize the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables, not processes. Proponents of such studies claim that their work is done from within a value-free framework.

(Denzin & Lincoln, 2003:13)

However, the distinction between quantitative and qualitative research is, perhaps, less significant than many seem to think, especially in practical terms. As Ryan & Bernard (2003) point out:

When researchers can move easily and cheaply between qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis, the distinctions between the two epistemological positions will become of less practical importance. That is, as researchers recognise the full array of tools at their disposal, and as these tools become easier to use, the pragmatics of research will lessen the distinction between qualitative and quantitative data and analysis.

(Ryan & Bernard, 2003:294)

Positivism, the interpretive approach and the associated paradigms of quantitative and qualitative research are sometimes represented as fundamentally opposed concepts. However, with care and attention to the
integrity of the research process, they can operate together in order to achieve the aims of a research study.

3.2 Methodologies Considered

Just as there are differences in how we make sense of the world around us, there is also a divergence in the ways we research our conception of reality. In education research, as the study of human phenomena is so complex, the ways of finding answers to the multitude of questions we ask about educational practice are, of necessity, wide and varied. The variety of approaches to education research is a fundamentally healthy one in that it gives a broad scope in the selection of an appropriate methodology.

According to Pring (2000), it is common sense that when we want to know something, we go out and have a look. Systematic observation of what we see allows us to generalise about our observations and the more we observe, the more confident we become in our generalisations. From this we are able to build up theory that can predict outcomes and guide practice. Observing the world as it is can be called the case study approach and this is a useful methodology for studying subjects and events in a detailed context. A further stage along the continuum of research methodology is that of action research. If case study methodology studies events as they are (observing what happens), action research methodology studies events as they develop (observing what happens
In order for action research to take place properly, there has to be an intervention and the changes that this cause are the subject for observation.

There are two features of research that give cause for reflection and prudence, however, and these are causal links and generalisation. It is too easy in research to say that $x$ occurred because of $y$, just as judicious care needs to be taken if we say that, because $z$ has occurred in a particular set of circumstances, it will always occur if those are repeated at another time.

Firstly, to discuss causal links, it is useful and diverting to return to Voltaire’s *Candide* (1759), where the philosopher Pangloss continually congratulates everyone on their fortune of living in the best of all possible worlds. He points out to his young pupil, Candide, that God made the human head with ears on both sides in order that glasses might be worn, surely careful planning on His part.

Although this is a ridiculous example, it exemplifies the type of erroneous causal link that can endanger clear thinking in many research studies. Pring, who discusses different sorts of connections and explanations, clarifies this:

> A distinction needs to be made between correlation and causal explanation. Indeed, it is often argued that all we can establish is a correlation and that no conclusions can be drawn about causality.
>  
> (Pring, 2000: 62)

However, it is part of our human experience to seek to link cause and effect and “our sense of causality derives from our interaction with the world – from direct observation of experience rather than inference based on regularity” (Dey, 2004:89). Morrison (2009) warns that causation is provisional, conjectural and
refutable and puts forward the view that “so strong is the inferential nature of causation that we can, at best, think in terms of probabilistic causation rather than laws of causation” (Morrison, 2009:3).

In action research, when an intervention takes place and changes occur, it would be facile to conclude that these changes are solely as a result of the intervention when other related factors or variables would need to be examined and analysed. In case studies, the role of causal links is even more problematic to establish as they are more difficult to isolate.

As for generalisations, many researchers (Bassey, 1999; Cohen et al., 2007; Denscombe, 2003) make the point that it is difficult to make generalisations about findings from a narrow field of experience. While generalisations come naturally to a positivist way of thinking, they are fraught with difficulty in an interpretive approach to research as human behaviour is complex and unique. Cohen et al. assert that:

> For one school of thought, generalizibility through stripping out contextual variables is fundamental, while, for another, generalizations that say little about the context have little that is useful to say about human behaviour.

(Cohen et al., 2007: 137)

Although we can make tentative generalisations about human behaviour, we need to recognise that there will be exceptions to the rule and that human behaviour cannot be studied in isolation from its environment.

We need to be wary about drawing generalisations from limited observations of research data. Flyvbjerg (2004) discusses the case of swans where observations
would allow us to generalise that all swans are white. However, observation of one black swan would lead to what is called 'falsification' which would contradict the proposition and stimulate further investigation and theory building. Flyvbjerg concludes that “formal generalization is overvalued as a source of scientific development, whereas 'the force of example' is underestimated” (Flyvbjerg, 2004:425).

In education research, when we attempt to draw conclusions from observed phenomena, we face such challenges in making generalisations. It is useful to return to Pring (2000), who points out:

> Is there not a danger of ignoring those individual differences, reflected in their own distinctive consciousness, in order to treat each of the several thousand children as identical units to be added together, subtracted and compared? How can this approach to research be reconciled with the apparent uniqueness of each individual? On the other hand, the uniqueness of each individual in certain respects does not entail uniqueness in every respect.

(Pring, 2000: 36)

It may be, however, that we tend to overstate the unique nature of human experience and hesitate in using observed data to make useful generalisations. As long as we are aware of the dangers of generalisation, we can make guarded observations about common human behaviour, verifying findings and testing hypotheses. Pring concludes that:

> Perhaps we exaggerate the uniqueness of each person. Perhaps we make too sharp a break between the ‘private’ and ‘subjective’ consciousness and the ‘public’ and ‘objective’ world, both physical and social… This subtle interconnection between the public and the private, the objective and the subjective, the physical and the mental, the personal and the social, is too often neglected by those who espouse 'research
paradigms’ which embrace one side of the dichotomy to the exclusion of the other.

(Pring, 2000: 37)

As a final observation on the problematic nature of generalisations, Thomas, 2009) reports the German saying, *Einmal ist keinmal*, which he translates as 'what happened once might not have happened at all'. He concludes that:

...one's generalisations may be far from perfect as ways of judging the future, but one can, to varying extents, rely on them as rules of thumb in ordering our lives or in interpreting the findings from our research.

(Thomas, 2009:109)

Therefore, generalisations can be useful in this research study as ways of ordering and making sense of findings, but they need to be treated with caution.

### 3.3 Selecting Appropriate Methodologies

In the planning of this research study, it was necessary to select appropriate methodologies that would allow the research aims to be explored. In addition to the case study and action research paradigms discussed above, the survey approach was also briefly considered, though, as numbers of participants were limited to the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) Modern Foreign Language (MFL) cohorts of three years, this method, which is usually aimed at large numbers of participants, was consequently deemed not to be appropriate.

In planning a research design over a number of years, it is important to arrive at a clear idea of what is required at each stage and how the data that support the study are to be gathered. Cohen *et al.* refer to this as the divergent and convergent stages of the research:
The divergent phase will open up a range of possible options facing the researcher, while the convergent phase will sift through these possibilities, see which ones are desirable, which ones are compatible with each other, which ones will work in the actual situation, and move towards an action plan that can realistically operate.

(Cohen et al., 2007: 78)

In the development of new improved practice, I decided to begin the research investigation with the case study approach, in order to gather useful data and establish working hypotheses. This was the pilot study stage of the investigation. It lasted two years, using data gathered from two separate cohorts of trainee teachers in one institution. These data were then used to establish an understanding of the problem and to attempt to improve practice through an action research approach, which comprised an intervention that took place during the third and final year of the study with a third cohort of trainee teachers. The case study approach that was used in the pilot study therefore provided sound foundations on which to base ideas that could improve the experience of the trainee teachers in the action research phase of the investigation.

It is useful at this point to consider the case study approach as a methodology in more detail. Returning to the idea of the uniqueness of human beings and events, there is much to be said for a study that explores the rich data of their nature and experience. Case studies are characterised by having boundaries that allow for definition, such as a person, a group of people or an organisation. They are bound by geographical and temporal parameters or they may be bound by role or function. This allows specific events or characteristics to be studied in
detail and such in-depth study allows for the development of rich data and vivid
description (Cohen et al., 2007: 253-4).

According to Stake (2000: 437-8), case studies fall into three distinct categories:

- The *intrinsic* case study (a case studied out of interest in the case itself)
- The *collective* case study (studying several cases within the same project)
- The *instrumental* case study (research on a case to gain understanding of something else)

If we have an interest in a field of research for no other purpose than satisfying that interest and learning more about that subject, an intrinsic case study would be an appropriate choice. Such a case study can be extended to the study of more than one subject so that useful comparisons can be made, thus becoming a collective case study. However, the instrumental case study is the type of case study that most closely corresponds with the needs of this investigation in that it aims to provide an insight into an issue and to pin down some generalisations that can be instrumental in carrying out a further action. Such a case study is carried out in depth but the focus of the study is elsewhere, in this case it is in the action research phase of the programme. The case study is instrumental in feeding the next stage of the research with the data that are most likely to be of use in the establishment of an effective and appropriate guided learning programme.
The fact that the PGCE cohorts have been selected, and are therefore, according to case study methodology ‘bounded’ once again return us to the question of generalisation. Silverman (2005: 127) summarises this dilemma as “how do we know…how representative case study findings are of all members of the population from which the case study was selected?” For this we need to consider the concept of purposive sampling. According to Silverman (2005):

> Purposive sampling allows us to choose a case because it illustrates some feature or process in which we are interested. However, this does not provide a simple approval to any case we happen to choose. Rather, purposive sampling demands that we think critically about the parameters of the population we are studying and choose our sample case carefully on this basis.

(Silverman, 2005: 129)

In this case, the sample was selected on the basis of access, in that it was relatively easy to recruit participants to the study from our own cohort of PGCE MFL trainee teachers. It is also likely that the insights provided by the students of the first two years could be applied with some reliability to the students of the third and subsequent cohorts.

Although there are concerns relating to the ability to generalise from the experience of one group of students to another, some useful data were likely to be gathered. According to Pring (2000:41), despite the difficulty of generalisation, similar outcomes and experiences might have a resonance for participants in other studies. Thomas (2009) points out that the choice of case study and the restricted sample that usually goes with it is compensated for by the greater
detail and the richness of the data obtained. Flyvbjerg (2004) goes further, asserting that “there are more discoveries stemming from the intense type of observation made possible by the case study than from statistics applied to large groups (Flyvbjerg, 2004:429).

However, there are disadvantages and once again, I found Pring useful in his analysis of the potential shortcomings of the case study approach:

- By approaching data with an open mind and letting them develop into a series of theoretical assumptions, the ‘grounded theory’ popularised by Glaser and Strauss (1967), is allowed where “there is no privileging of a theoretical position imported from outside through which the data are looked for or selected.”

- Despite an intensive study of the case in question, it is impossible to generalise. “General links between particular events or conditions and subsequent happenings cannot be established. That simply would not make sense.”

- Because of the researcher’s close relationship with the subject of the case study, objectivity is compromised. The mere presence of the researcher as observer affects and changes the case under observation. Some researchers speak of multiple realities but “objectivity in the sense of getting at what exists ‘out there’ independently of researcher and researched makes no sense.”

(Pring, 2000: 41 – 42)
However, case studies have many advantages that should be considered, especially in the context of this study where they can support and direct the focus of the action research phase of the investigation. Adelman et al. (1980, cited in Cohen et al., 2007: 256) contended that strengths of case studies are that they are “strong on reality” and that they allow for generalisations of subtlety and complexity. In addition, they allow for divergent viewpoints and the richness of data can be reinterpreted by other researchers. They are a “step to action” and can provide a launch point for action research while the accessibility of presentation can provide for multiple audiences (Adelman et al. 1980 in Cohen et al., 2007: 256).

The insights gained by the case study approach of the pilot stage of this investigation were taken up in the action research phase of the study. Action research, as a methodological approach, has gained a strong following in social sciences and in the world of education. Cohen et al. (2007: 297) assemble a useful selection of definitions of action research, from “a form of disciplined inquiry” (Hopkins, 1985) to “a systematic study that combines action and reflection with the intention of improving practice” (Ebbutt, 1985), as well as “a small-scale intervention in the functioning of the real world and a close examination of the effects of such an intervention” (Cohen & Manion, 1994). It is also useful at this point to return to the intentions of Kurt Lewin, one of the founders of action research as a methodology, who “deliberately intended to
change the life chances of disadvantaged groups” (Cohen et al., 2007: 297). The fundamental idea in action research is, therefore, change for the better. Perhaps the most useful idea in this context is that of Somkh (1995), as being the idea that “action research is designed to bridge the gap between research and practice” (Cohen et al., 2007: 298).

This fusion between theory and practice is an interesting one and worthy of discussion at this point, leading to a consideration of critical praxis. According to Cohen et al. (2007: 302), “‘Praxis’ here is defined as action informed through reflection, and with emancipation as its goal.” It is perhaps overstating it to say that this study seeks the emancipation of practitioners, but it certainly seeks their empowerment, which is an important tenet of action research. It is informative to follow the changing role of the teacher, charted in Cohen et al. (2007: 302) from the ‘teacher-as-researcher’ espoused by Stenhouse (1975) to the concept of ‘reflection-in-action’ of Schön (1991). Cohen et al are critical of the concept of ‘empowerment’ and question:

Is critical action research socially transformative? At best the jury is out; at worst the jury has gone away as capitalism overrides egalitarianism worldwide.

(ibid: 303)

Within the scope of a relatively small-scale study such as this, it is difficult to consider the notion of empowerment on such a grand political scale. However, it is possible to envisage teachers taking some measure of control of the environment in which their learners learn and wishing to improve practice for their benefit.
Ladkin (2004) develops the idea of action research as being a way of developing the power of participants:

Action research is grounded in the belief that research with human beings should be participative and democratic. Researchers working within this frame are charged with being sensitive to issues of power, open to the plurality of meanings and interpretations, and able to take into account the emotional, social, spiritual and political dimensions of those with whom they interact.

(Ladkin, 2004:536)

Power is a complex concept and Thompson (2007) claims that over simplification of the term has led to a form of reductionism. He makes a distinction between power to, power over, power with and power within. In the context of this study, these are significant perceptions. Students reflected on their abilities, their power to carry out their professional roles and demonstrate appropriate subject knowledge. As tutor, I had some power over them in that I was in a position to influence their behaviour and their learning. This research study sought to share power with the students in that we attempted to work collaboratively to improve their subject knowledge. Finally, it is hoped that the intervention allowed the power within the students to be strengthened by supporting their professional development and facilitating their reactivated language skills.

Power and its relationship to professionalism is important in this study. According to Thompson, empowerment can be defined as “helping people to gain greater control over their lives and circumstances” (Thompson, 2007:21). In a professional context, there is often an imbalance of power, such as between
tutors and students. However, it is the role of the tutor to facilitate the independence of students and their progress in achieving their learning goals. Thompson believes that the concept of professionalism is changing in the way it relates to power relations between participants:

New forms of professionalism are democratic, in the sense that it is not intended to be a top-down relationship between professionals and their clientèle, but rather a situation where the two work together towards mutually agreed goals.

(Thompson, 2007:55)

In the context of the present study, the goal is one of improved knowledge that will, it is hoped, lead to improved practice.

There is, however, a divergence in opinions about whether improved practice constitutes the creation of new knowledge. Koshy (2005) asserts that:

Research is about generating new knowledge. Action research creates new knowledge based on enquiries conducted within specific and often practical contexts.

(Koshy, 2005: 3)

Pring (2000), however, disagrees and sees an improvement in practice but not necessarily a change in the knowledge base on which practitioners operate:

The research called ‘action research’ aims not to produce new knowledge but to improve practice – namely, in this case, the ‘educational practice’ which teachers are engaged in. The conclusion is not a set of propositions but a practice or a set of transactions or activities, which is not true or false but better or worse.

(Pring, 2000: 131)
A pragmatic and realistic approach to this difference of opinion would be to concentrate efforts on an improvement in the professional practice of tutors and trainee teachers, which, after all, is the aim of this study.

To return to the question of the nature of action research, Cohen et al., (2007) assert that it can operate in a variety of areas, namely teaching methods, learning strategies, evaluative procedures, attitudes, values, continuing professional development, management, control and administration (Cohen et al., 2007: 297). As this research study seeks to improve professional practice on the PGCE MFL programme by improving students' learning strategies and their reflection on their learning and professional development, the action research approach can be deemed as being entirely appropriate as it covers many of the areas listed above.

How then can action research be characterised? Most literature refers to the procedures necessary for action research to take place. Lewin (1946) defined these as planning, acting, observing and reflecting (Cohen et al., 2007: 304). These stages have been developed and expanded in a number of ways, most notably by McNiff et al (2003) who summarise these stages as a review our current practice, the identification of an aspect we want to improve, imagining a way forward, trying it out, then finally taking stock of what happens. We then modify our plan in the light of what we have found, continue with the ‘action’, evaluate the modified action then finally reconsider the position in the light of the
evaluation (McNiff et al., 2003: 58). McNiff refers to this as a cycle of cycles, though it is frequently referred to as the spiral model of action research, as illustrated in the Kemmis and McTaggart (2000) model, shown in Fig. 4 below:

![Spiral Model of Action Research](image)

**Fig 4: Spiral Model of Action Research (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2000, in Koshy, 2005:4)**

However, Koshy (2005) warns against using this as a rigid structure and reminds the researcher that:

In reality the process may not be as neat as the spiral of self-contained cycles of planning, acting and observing, and reflecting suggests. The stages … overlap, and initial plans quickly become obsolete in the light of learning and experience. *In reality the process is likely to be more fluid, open and responsive.*

(Koshy, 2005: 5)
It is the idea of reflection, and action based on this reflexivity, that is essential to the idea of action research. This occurs at every stage of the process. Cohen et al., (2007) assert that:

The notion of reflexivity is central to action research, because the researchers are also the participants and practitioners in the action research – they are part of the social world that they are studying.

(Cohen et al., 2007: 310)

According to McNiff et al (2003: 20) researchers need to put the ‘I’ at the centre of their research, reminding themselves that action research is a ‘first-person research’ and recognising that they are at the heart of their research, that they need to take responsibility for their own actions and that they own their own claims and judgements.

This responsibility is frequently a heavy one and Pring (2000: 132) points out that teacher research can be “a lonely and isolated activity”; that research needs to be put into the public domain as it is essential that “action research … is proposed as a form of research in which teachers review their practice in light of evidence and of critical judgement of others” (ibid: 133). This encourages the support provided by networks of like-minded individuals but also tests findings in the forums of critical practice.

Some concerns regarding action research as a methodology have been raised, which Koshy (2005: 30) summarises as a lack of rigour, findings not being generalisable and that it is a deficit model. According to Koshy, the charge of lack
of rigour is answered by the fact that this will depend on the method of data gathering and analysis and that the action researcher is capable of being as rigorous and conscious of strict standards as any other researcher. Triangulation will help ensure the quality of the findings and this can be reinforced by peer review. As for the issue of generalisation, as previously discussed, this is more difficult to resolve. Koshy answers this concern by declaring that generalisation is not the declared aim of the research but should the dissemination of findings lead others to find useful lessons in their own context, this is for them to decide. Pring (2000: 131) supports this view, adding “action research in one classroom or school can illuminate or be suggestive of practice elsewhere.” Finally, the view that action research is a deficit model, that this is inherent in its problem-solving nature, is rejected as finding solutions to problems is not necessarily a negative concept and can be a means of making progress and improving practice.

In contrast, many advantages to the action research methodology have been enumerated by a wide range of writers (Cohen et al., 2007; Koshy, 2005; McNiff et al., 2003). Koshy (2005) lists advantages such as the opportunity to set the research within a specific professional context or situation and the ability for researchers to be participants; they do not need to be distant or detached from the situation. In addition, action research strives to ensure continuous improvement and modifications can be made as the project progresses. There are opportunities for theory to emerge from the research rather than always having to follow a previously formulated theory and, as such, the study can lead
to wide and varied outcomes (Koshy, 2005: 21). This model, therefore, seems particularly appropriate for this investigation into a guided learning programme creating the opportunity for theory to emerge from the process, or, failing this, the promise of it doing so at some later stage, when modifications have been put in place. As such, the process can be seen to be open-ended and full of possibilities.

What this naturally brings to mind is whether the outcome of such action research is always beneficial to the participants. Such a process would only be undertaken with the interests of participants at heart. For this reason, it is important to discuss the ethics of such an intervention at this stage.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

Pring (2000: 146) reminds us that “the pursuit of knowledge, and the associated right to know, is not a principle… which looks to the consequences of an action.” However, in human society we must look to the consequences of actions. Ethical considerations can be summed up as:

- Doing good
- Avoiding harm

We cannot set off in the pursuit of knowledge, at all costs. We do not have an inalienable right to know, this is a right tempered by the responsibility of what that knowledge brings us, and the participants in the research we are undertaking.
Educational research is bound by the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2004) and the three tenets of ethical consideration can be summarised as:

- Informed consent
- Confidentiality and anonymity
- Avoidance of harm

The way in which these are applied to the research methods undertaken in this study will be detailed at a later point as each data-gathering instrument is described. However, it is useful to look at these principles in more detail.

One benefit of informed consent is that it removes responsibility from the researcher to the participant. However, it can create bias in that participants might behave differently once they are aware of the central role they play in the research. Furthermore, it is essential that participants should have the right to withdraw at any time, otherwise the data they provide might be subject to bias due to their reluctance or the coercion applied by the researcher. The role of researchers therefore needs to be carefully considered as they have responsibility for the decisions that will underpin the ethics of the study.

Confidentiality and anonymity are core elements of research ethics. This is not just a question of being anonymous but of being unidentifiable. Sensitive information needs to be handled carefully and data need to be held securely. However, privacy can be relinquished by the participants, if they choose to do so.
In many cases, such as a successful project, participants could well be happy to be identified with changes in professional practice.

The principle of avoidance of harm also needs special consideration and this means that any intervention needs to be carefully considered and that participants need to be made aware of the aims and potential outcomes of the research. As already discussed, researchers need to be aware of the power balance inherent in workplace research and ensure that the interests of the individuals under their care come before the needs of the research in all instances.

This final point is worthy of further consideration, especially in research that takes place in the context of a PGCE programme, where there is an unequal power balance between the researcher, as tutor, and the trainee teachers, as participants. It might be that, although they seem willing participants, they are anxious to appear willing and compliant students to their tutor. This can create a role conflict that affects the outcomes of the study. In addition to this, such research is heavily dependent on the goodwill of colleagues as well as perhaps being subject to professional bias. In some circumstances, findings could prejudice the interests of colleagues or the standing of the institution and the researcher might feel constrained not to present the full extent of the findings due to the consequences they might have. All these need to be taken into account in the sensitive setting of workplace research.
Cohen et al. (2007) have useful advice for avoiding the pitfalls of such research and counsel the avoidance of researching people without their consent, coercing them to participate and any deception of participants. They also warn against exposing participants to mental or physical stress, invading their privacy, or failing to treat participants fairly, or with consideration or respect (Cohen et al., 2007: 62). Lankshear and Knobel (2004: 103) echo much of the above advice and add to it the idea of reciprocation, the notion that the favours done to the researcher should one day be returned to the participants by providing advice or acting as participants in their future research.

There is, indeed, such a climate of research in education at the moment that opportunities for reciprocation are likely to occur at a future date. In the view of Pring (2000):

> The notion of the teacher as a researcher is important. It is crucial to the growth of professional knowledge. It is a refinement of the intelligent engagement in an ‘education practice’. It is a refreshing counterbalance to those who, in treating ‘education practice’ as an object of science, necessarily fail to understand it. It is a reassertion of the crucial place of professional judgement in an understanding of a professional activity.

(Pring, 2000: 138)

The aim of developing trainee teachers as reflective practitioners who strive to maintain and improve language skills while reflecting on the process lies at the core of this research study. In the increasing and developing field of practitioner research, once we have established the range of methodologies at our disposal, we need to consider the methods we shall employ to gather data.
3.5 Methods

In seeking answer the research questions and find effective ways of reactivating lapsed language skills, the selection of methodology and the subsequent choice of data-gathering instruments needs careful attention. The following distinction between *methods* and *methodology* by Cohen *et al.* is a useful one:

If methods refer to techniques and procedures used in the process of data-gathering, the aim of methodology then is to describe approaches to, kinds and paradigms of research.

(Kaplan 1973 cited in Cohen *et al.*, 2007: 47)

Common methods of data gathering are listed by Koshy (2005: 87) as questionnaires, interviews, documentary evidence, field diaries and notes and systematic observation. As the purpose of this study is to identify ways of reactivating lapsed language skills, field diaries, notes and systematic observation are not viable options as the process in question is generally unobservable and essentially cerebral, unless the data have been provided by the participants themselves in the form of reflective journals or logs. Therefore, the practical and viable options remain as being questionnaires and interviews.

3.5.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires are fairly frequent and not always welcome features of modern living. It is worthwhile remembering the negative connotations of this form of data gathering as we, as researcher, consider using this method to answer our research questions. Burton and Bartlett (2005: 100) define a questionnaire as “simply a list of questions that the respondents answer,” adding “it is clearly a useful method, if carefully planned, for gathering responses from a large number
of people relatively quickly." A questionnaire needs careful construction if it is to be successful and many researchers have regretted the expense and poor research outcome of ill conceived and badly planned questionnaires.

According to Bell (2005) significant skills and careful planning are necessary requisites of successful questionnaires:

It requires discipline in the selection of questions, in the question writing, in the design, piloting, distribution and return. What is more, thought has to be given to how responses will be analysed at the design stage, not after the questionnaires have been returned.

(Bell, 2005: 136-7)

Although the data analysis process seems a long way ahead at the time of the construction of the questionnaire, careful consideration of how the data will be evaluated and analysed will save much difficulty at a later stage. For this reason, the framing of the questions is critical and deserve all the researcher’s care and attention.

Successful questionnaires should be simple with questions that are stated in straightforward, comprehensible language. Piloting a questionnaire is essential in order to ensure that questions can be understood and that they elicit the information required by the researcher. Factual questions should come first and leading questions should be avoided. Questions with discrete answers (such as never, a lot etc.) place fewer demands on respondents. Respondents should be assured that their anonymity will be respected in order to encourage honest and valid answers (Koshy, 2005: 88).
A considerable range of question types can be included in a questionnaire and these can include verbal or open questions, questions that select responses from lists or categories, questions that require the respondent to put responses in rank order, questions that are answered by choosing from a scale of responses, questions that are answered by marking a grid or, finally, simple straight-forward numerical questions (Bell, 2005: 137). My main consideration in the construction of my questionnaires was to make the questions clear and that the completion of the questionnaire should not place an unnecessary burden on respondents. For this reason, I used mainly multiple-choice questions where respondents were provided with a space for comments, should they wish to expand on the statement they had selected. According to Cohen et al. (2007: 334-5), questions to be avoided include those that are leading, highbrow, complex or irritating. They also warn against questions that include negatives or too many open-ended questions.

As previously stated (Bell 2005), piloting a questionnaire is advisable, given the complicated nature of the process of creating a questionnaire that will respond to the needs of the researcher. This will not only eliminate questions that do not work but will also help to ensure that the questions produce the data that the research questions seek and will also check how long the questionnaire takes to be completed. If the respondents in the trial run fail to answer the questions satisfactorily (or at all), the questions can be re-framed accordingly.
Piloting can also give information about the layout of the questionnaire, which seems a minor issue, but is certain worthy of the researcher’s attention. Cohen *et al.* (2007) assert that:

> The appearance of the questionnaire is vitally important. It must look easy, attractive and interesting rather than complicated, unclear, forbidding and boring… The rule is simple: keep it as uncomplicated as possible.  

(Cohen *et al.*, 2007: 338)

It is important to keep the likely reaction of those invited to complete the questionnaire in mind at all times; if it is frustration and a sense of time being lost in doing a favour for someone else, the chances of the questionnaire ending up in the bin rather than in the hands of the researcher are increased significantly.

The way in which the questionnaire is returned to the researcher is obviously an important consideration. If this can be done personally, it is likely that the return rate will be increased. However, many questionnaires are returned by post. This allows for a larger number of respondents and a wider geographical field but postal questionnaires do not have the advantage of personal contact. In addition, as Burton and Bartlett (2005: 103) point out, “in education there is so much information sent through the mail that there is a tendency to deal only with those requiring urgent action and to ‘file’ the rest, sometimes in a nearby bin.” Cohen *et al.* (2007) make practical suggestions to increase the return rate of postal questionnaires such as considering the timing of sending out the questionnaires and including stamped addressed envelopes (Cohen *et al.*, 2007: 345).
As the above suggests, using the questionnaire method of data gathering can be a complex and surprisingly challenging task. However, there are many benefits to this research instrument, in that it is possible to gather a large amount of data quickly and responses from individual respondents are easily compared. It is possible to express the data statistically, thereby allowing overall statements about the sample to be made. However, a possible weakness of this method is that the researcher sets the agenda and the respondents can be constrained by this. Questions about complex issues can be difficult to compose and short answers might hide complex responses. It could be argued that open-ended questions and the codifying of responses might lead to subjectivity (Burton and Bartlett, 2005: 108-9).

Observations about how questionnaires were used in this investigation and their effectiveness as a data gathering instrument will be made at a later stage of this discussion of methodology and relevant methods.

3.5.2 Interviews

In the tradition of interpretive research with a qualitative data gathering approach, using interviews as a means of collecting such data is very widespread. Cohen et al. (2007) assert:

The use of the interview in research marks a move away from seeing human subjects as simply manipulable and data as somehow external to individuals, and towards regarding knowledge as generated between humans, often through conversations.

(Cohen et al., 2007: 349)
Although interviews are an interesting and rewarding way in which to gather data, like questionnaires, they are not as straightforward as they seem to the uninitiated. Bell (2005) points out that:

One major advantage of the interview is its adaptability. A skilful interviewer can follow up ideas, probe responses and investigate motives and feelings, which the questionnaire can never do. The way in which a response is made (the tone of voice, facial expression, hesitation etc.) can provide information that a written response would never reveal.

However, there are disadvantages:

Interviews are time consuming… It is a highly subjective technique and therefore there is always the danger of bias. Analysing responses can present problems, and wording the questions is almost as demanding for interviews as it is for questionnaires.

(Bell, 2005: 157)

Fontana & Frey (2003) also warn against the bias of interpretation and observe that:

Increasingly qualitative researchers are realizing that interviews are not neutral tools of data gathering but active interactions between two (or more) people leading to negotiated, contextually based results.

(Fontana & Frey, 2003:62)

Bell (2005) however, is positive in her final assessment, concluding that “the interview can yield rich material and can often put flesh on the bones of questionnaire responses” (Bell, 2005: 157).

Before embarking on interviews, however, there are important considerations, such as the quality and nature of questioning, as the researcher needs to be clear about what information is being sought and how the questions can support
this process. Listening skills are also crucially important as the researcher needs to interact with the interviewee while allowing the interviewee time to express his or her own views. The importance of body language should not be underestimated and this includes the seating, body language and use of eye contact as well as facial expressions. The researcher should use these to encourage the interviewee to feel at ease and respond as fully as possible. The setting and atmosphere need to be considered; the researcher normally has control over these factors and should aim to create an environment where the interviewee will feel comfortable and not be interrupted. Decisions also need to be taken about whether the interview should be recorded or notes taken. Finally, consideration should be given to the overall conduct of the interview. It is important that the researcher makes every effort to make the interviewee feel that it has been a productive and useful experience. Follow-up might include showing the interviewee’s transcripts or notes and sharing the findings of research with them (Burton and Bartlett, 2005: 111-3).

Another essential consideration is the type of interview to be undertaken. These are generally categorised as structured, semi-structured (or guided), unstructured (or open ended) and focus groups, which are similar, though not identical, to group interviews. Each type of interview requires different sorts of skills. A useful analysis of such skills has been carried out by Noakes and Wincup, cited in Silverman (2006:110):
Table 1: Different Types of Interviews and Associated Skills  
(Adapted by Silverman, 2006, from Noakes and Wincup, 2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Interview</th>
<th>Required Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structured interview</td>
<td>Neutrality; no prompting; no improvisation; training to ensure consistency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-structured interview</td>
<td>Some probing; rapport with interviewee; understanding the aims of the project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open-ended interview</td>
<td>Flexibility; rapport with the interviewee; active listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus group</td>
<td>Facilitation skills; flexibility; ability to stand back from the discussion so that group dynamics can emerge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order for data gathering to be carried out effectively, the researcher needs to think carefully about how the data will be recorded. Many researchers rely on notes; however, active listening is a difficult task when the researcher has to make detailed notes. This work could, perhaps, be delegated to someone else, though this brings in the possibility of a different person’s interpretation and it is the researcher alone who fully understands the requirements of the task and the way that the interview procedures need to attempt to answer the research questions. Where notes are used, however, these should be returned to the interviewee(s) for confirmation that they are an accurate record of what was discussed.

Many researchers, therefore, prefer to record interviews in order to preserve, to the best of their abilities, a true record of what was discussed. Some interviewees might be reluctant or refuse to have the interview recorded, or they might modify what they say because their words and reactions are being recorded (Delamont, 2002: 127). For this reason, the researcher must always
ask permission to record interviews; as long as interviewees are reassured about the confidentiality of the recordings, most are happy to oblige. However, it should not be assumed that recorded material is an absolutely fail-proof method of recording data. Technology can fail and transcribing is a very labour intensive part of the process, and even when it is completed, Cohen et al. (2007) point out that:

The transcript can become an opaque screen between the researcher and the original live situation… Transcriptions are decontextualized, abstracted from time and space, from the dynamics of the situation, from the live form, and from the social, interactive, dynamic and fluid dimensions of their source; they are frozen.

(Cohen et al., 2007: 367)

Perhaps they could be improved upon by video taped interviews, though interviewees are more likely to refuse and managing the complexity of data analysis that includes facial expressions and gesture would be extremely challenging. Therefore, transcription of aural, recorded interviews, despite the work involved and the difficulty of returning to the reality of the moment, is probably the most appropriate choice for this research project.

3.5.3 Quality Indicators – Validity, Reliability and Triangulation

The selection of the above methods to gather data in order to answer the research questions fulfils the need to find ways in which the quality of the process can be tested. This is done by giving regard to the validity and reliability of the methods and using triangulation to cross-reference the results.
Validity is an important consideration for the researcher in that it checks the fitness of purpose of the data instruments. It questions whether the methods measure what they are meant to measure and whether they are an appropriate means of answering the research questions. The accuracy of the data and the way that they are used as evidence for the findings is bound to have a considerable effect on the conclusions drawn by the researcher. It is possible that the researcher will interpret findings based on personal perspectives and ontology, which will evidently affect the validity of the judgements made. One solution to this dilemma is to lay data open to peer review and to look at it from the perspective of multiple viewpoints (Koshy, 2005: 105).

Reliability is also an important aspect to be considered and the researcher needs to ask whether the same result would be achieved if the data were gathered at a different time and in different circumstances, perhaps even by a different researcher. In other words, reliability can be thought of as repeatability, stability and consistency. Reliability is more easily established by the quantitative researchers who approach the questions from a positivist, scientific angle. For the qualitative researcher, “data gathered from naturally occurring settings often appears horribly messy” (Silverman, 2006: 202) and reliability can be compromised by the uniqueness of the human experience previously discussed. The research needs to be robust, authentic and trustworthy.
For this reason, it is important for the researcher to seek out more than one method of gathering data in order to provide triangulation. If one or more data instruments lead to the same conclusions, the data have more value and findings have more credibility. In the view of Cohen et al., (2007: 141), “the more the methods contrast, the greater the researcher’s confidence.” In this study, triangulation is provided by questionnaires and interviews, though in fairly wide forms. The data instruments selected and their place in the context of the study will be discussed in the next part of this chapter.

3.6 Methods Selected, Effectiveness and Planning for Data Analysis

At this point it is worthwhile returning to the research questions in order to be able to make a case for the selection of data instruments that will allow answers to be sought most effectively. Those research questions are:

- How can best can students reactivate and recall previously learnt language skills?
- Which type of language knowledge seems to be the most resistant to loss?
- Which learning methods have allowed students to maximise their language memory over a significant period of time and how can these methods be adapted for future use?
- What impact does a clearer understanding of this process have on student learning and how can this contribute to improved professional practice?
The first important point to consider is who is most likely to provide this information. On reflection, the answer is clearly the students themselves, though this idea places serious challenges on the researcher. We might assume that individuals know how they learn as well as how they forget what they have learnt but in fact, their understanding of the process is incomplete. It would seem evident that individuals are better placed than anyone to understand their own cognitive awareness. However, because it is an essentially cerebral phenomenon, it is not an easily observable process. Others, such as tutors and mentors, can comment on the process but individuals are the experts about themselves. Therefore, the students become the central focus of the research design in the form of self-reflection and observation.

As already stated, the research comprised two stages, a pilot study to gather information, in the shape of a case study, followed by an action research phase in which lessons learned in the pilot stage could be put into operation.

3.7 Pilot stage – Case Study

3.7.1 Focus Group

In the first year of the investigation, while the research literature was being reviewed and the research design was refined, the data gathering was confined to a meeting of a focus group on 15 January 2007. This was made up of 6
student volunteers who gave an hour to discuss the research questions. Although there was a good cross section of students of different languages, ages and experience, no native speakers volunteered to take part. The aim of this group interview was to share ideas and to lay down general parameters for the study.

Unlike group interviews, which would mean interviewing a group of participants en masse, the purpose of a focus group, according to Bell (2005) is slightly different:

The intention (and the hope) are that participants will interact with each other, will be willing to listen to all views, perhaps to reach consensus about some aspects of the topic or to disagree about others and to give a good airing to the issues that seem to be interesting or important to them. The researcher becomes less of an interviewer, more of a moderator or facilitator.

(Bell, 2005: 162)

The researcher will have a set of topic headings and will lead them through a discussion of pre-determined topics. This can allow participants to “reminisce, share experiences and even ‘egg each other on’” (Delamont, 2002: 128). Managing group dynamics can be problematic in that some participants may dominate the discussion. Conversely, Cohen et al. (2007: 373) warn of the danger of ‘group think’ or the fact that participants may subtly alter their interpretation of reality to fit in with group expectations and aspirations. These possibilities all need to be carefully managed and in the case of this study, knowing the student participants well made this task much easier. Focus groups
rely on interaction of participants, allowing views to emerge. Cohen et al. (2007) make the point that:

Their contrived nature is both their strength and their weakness; they are unnatural settings yet they are very focused on a particular issue and, therefore will yield insights that might not otherwise have been available in a straightforward interview.

(Cohen et al., 2007: 376)

The ability for issues to ‘emerge’ is a very important and useful feature in the early stages of a study and future developments can be shaped by early identification of key issues.

I decided not to record the meeting but to make notes because it is often difficult to pick out the voices of the participants and identify ownership of the comments. In addition, as noted by many (Bell, 2005; Cohen et al., 2007, Delamont, 2002), some participants are inhibited by recording of interviews. As participants are already self-conscious in stating their views because of the presence of other participants, I felt that the setting would be more comfortable and conducive to free expression of ideas if there was no recording equipment. I made notes during the discussion, which was guided by predetermined topics, and notes were also taken by a research assistant, a volunteer from the Master’s programme who was undertaking research into languages. These notes were later circulated amongst all present and corrections were invited (though none were made).
Evaluation and Data Analysis

This first method proved to be extremely successful and made an encouraging start to the investigation. Many interesting data emerged and will be fully discussed in the next section of this thesis. Students commented that they found the experience interesting and enjoyable. As for the analysis of the data, I had decided that it would be useful to identify and codify key themes as they related to the research questions. It was possible that the research questions could be adjusted and modified at this stage if it became necessary or desirable but this was not the case. The difficulty with field notes is “you are stuck with the form in which you made them at the time and that your readers will only have access to how you recorded events” (Silverman, 2005: 157). So there was an interpretive bias from the outset of which I needed to be aware.

3.7.2 E-log as a hybrid of questionnaire and interview

In the second year of the investigation, once I had a firmer grasp of the key issues involved in the study, thanks to the findings of the focus group and intensive study of the literature in the field of second language attrition, I set about gathering data on a wider scale amongst the second cohort of PGCE MFL students. I held an initial meeting with all the students in this cohort on 21 September 2007 and explained the aims and possible outcomes of the research project, requesting volunteers. Out of a cohort of 38 students, 20 volunteered,
which was a pleasing proportion. Those who did not volunteer might have felt that as recent graduates, language reactivation was not a relevant topic for them. Volunteers were given written details about the study and the ethical considerations were fully explained to participants. These were also presented in a written form, which participants signed and returned to me as a record of their informed consent.

In gathering the data, I faced some difficulty in that I needed detailed information but, as a programme tutor, I was aware that they were under considerable pressure given the demands of their training. I wanted full and carefully considered written responses to searching questions but I understood that this would place unreasonable demands on the students. As a solution, I conceived the idea of an electronic log that would chart their reflection over a period of time, asking participants a small number of questions over a period of a few weeks each time, allowing them time for reflection but giving them the opportunity to respond at a time that was convenient to each participant. By doing this through email, I was able to send out and gather in data in a convenient and easily administered way. I drafted a list of 10 questions that related to my original research questions and developed them. Once I had written the research questions in an extended form that was suitable for an electronic log, I emailed them to several colleagues and critical friends associated with the study for comments. I made some changes in the wording to make the meaning clearer or to avoid leading the respondents to answers that I had unconsciously sought.
Once the questions had been modified accordingly, a small number of these questions (each group based on distinct themes such as reflection on skills or learning strategies) were sent out every 3 to 4 weeks and each time the questions were prefaced by a reminder that students should only answer if they wanted to and that their identity would not be divulged. Although this is not a log in the sense of a diary, it did perform the function of facilitating a process of group thinking that was recorded on an individual basis, according to a pre-set timetable.

**Evaluation and Data Analysis**

Once again, students were enthusiastic in their feedback of this method of data gathering. The initial fear that it might impose too great a burden on students at a critical time in their training was not realised; if individual students felt that they did not have time to respond, they did not do so. However, the response rate was reasonably good and some excellent data were obtained. It proved to be an extremely easy method of data gathering. Once the questions had been piloted and refined, they were sent out at intervals during the year. The timing could be flexible in order to take into account the students' work pattern and assignment submission dates. Once students had responded, their contributions were cut and pasted into a file ready for future analysis. If students did not respond, this was not followed up, as it might be perceived as their tutor ‘nagging’. Given the
imbalance of the power dynamics between student and tutor, this might have meant undue pressure or coercion.

As regards data analysis, once again themes were identified and codified. Unlike the previous method, as students had replied in their own words, there was less possibility of interference from ‘low inference descriptors’ (Silverman, 2006: 287). According to Silverman (ibid), “when we do e-mail interviews, we can readily satisfy this criterion because the participants have already done their transcribing.” However, there remains the problem of interpretive bias, as in the case of all qualitative data-based research.

3.7.3 Student Interviews

At the end of the year, once students had completed the programme, I asked for volunteers willing to be interviewed in the hope of providing a further development of ideas expressed in the e-logs. I asked for volunteers who either saw themselves as good language learners or those who have to work hard to maintain their language skills. Three volunteers came forward but only the two who had identified themselves as good language learners turned up for the interviews. This was disappointing as it would have been interesting to see if there were any identifiable differences between the two categories.
The interviews took the form of the semi-structured or guided interviews described above. I decided in advance the topics to be discussed and emailed them to the participants in order to give them time to reflect. These topics related very closely to the research questions, as it was my intention to seek rich data that would develop the observations already discussed in the e-log. The advantage of the interview over the e-log was that it gave an opportunity for the respondents to develop points that they had made previously and it gave me the chance to clarify key issues, though I kept my intervention to a minimum in order to gather as much data as possible. The interviews were recorded using a hard disk recorder; participants had no objection to this and were keen to facilitate the discussion and support the research study. The interviews took place in quiet locations in the university, in rooms that had been booked for the purpose of the interviews. After each one, the interviews were transcribed and sent to the participants for comments or corrections.

**Evaluation and Data Analysis**

As on previous occasions, students expressed the view that they had been happy to cooperate and pleased to be able to support the research aims in a practical way. Each interview lasted approximately 25 minutes and a significant amount of data was recorded. In their analysis of the Interview guide approach, in other words the semi-structured interview, Cohen *et al.* summarise their findings as:
Table 2: Characteristics of Interview Guide Approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of interview</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview guide approach</td>
<td>Topics and issues to be covered are specified in advance, in outline form; interviewer decides sequence and working of questions in the course of the interview</td>
<td>The outline increases the comprehensiveness of data and makes data collection somewhat systematic for each respondent. Logical gaps in data can be anticipated and closed. Interviews remain fairly conversational and situational.</td>
<td>Important and salient topics may be inadvertently omitted. Interviewer flexibility in sequencing and wording questions can result in substantially different responses, thus reducing the comparability of responses.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table is interesting in that it points out that, despite careful piloting of questions for the e-log, there were “logical gaps” that were plugged in the process of the interview. The interviews could not be deemed to be truly “conversational” however, in that I had decide to keep my comments and observations to a strict minimum in order to provide space for the interviewees to express their ideas as fully and independently as possible.

As for the data analysis, the transcription of the interviews, although a lengthy and tedious process, allowed the full range of comments to be available for codification and analysis. This was much more complicated than the same process for the e-logs as the ground covered was more extensive and the issues discussed in more complex detail. However, given the rich data provided, it was a worthwhile and valuable process.
3.7.4 Telephone Interviews of Tutors of other Higher Education Institutions

In addition to student views on the process of reactivation of lapsed languages, it was suggested by colleagues that it would be useful and interesting to contact our ‘opposite numbers’ in other Initial Teacher Training (ITT) programmes across the United Kingdom. In September 2007, I attended the Centre for Information on Language Teaching (CILT) ITT conference. This provided me with the opportunity to discuss the research with other teacher-trainers within an extensive context of professional practice. I therefore made an appeal for those interested in providing information or guidance for the study to contact me. This was followed up by a message that I posted on the CILT ITT website. I had several responses and entered into email communication with them over a period of some weeks. At the end of the year, as the investigation neared the end of its pilot study, I contacted several of those who had previously expressed an interest in supporting this research and asked to interview them, two of whom were able to make themselves available for interview. Given the distance between our institutions and the cost and time needed to do face-to-face interviews, I made the decision to interview by telephone, with the agreement of the interviewees. I used a hard disk recorder and a conference telephone, in order to provide a good quality recording.

Cohen et al. (2007: 379-380) outline many advantages to telephone interviewing such as low cost, speed and convenience. They contend that it allows researchers to select respondents from a more dispersed population and that
interviewer effects are reduced, allowing sensitive details to be more easily discussed. Although Cohen *et al.* (2007) list many disadvantages, these relate more to the domain of commercial, structured questionnaire-type interviews. One disadvantage identified was that respondents tended to make snap judgements; this was not the case in these telephone interviews as the topics to be covered had been emailed to the respondents a week before the interviews took place, giving them ample time for reflection and an opportunity to consider their responses in detail. A further disadvantage is that the interviewer can miss contextual and behavioural details (Thomas, 2009) but in my view the advantages of the convenience of such data gathering outweighed this consideration relative to its purpose in my study.

Following each interview, which lasted approximately 20 minutes, the interviews were transcribed and sent to respondents so that they could change any comments or elaborate on any points they had made.

**Evaluation and Data Analysis**

My greatest concerns were that the equipment would not perform to a sufficiently satisfactory level and that I would have wasted the time of the respondents as well as lose valuable data. I was pleased, in the event, that the recordings were of an excellent standard. As a data collection method, the timing was convenient for both me and the respondents. They were keen to participate in the study, and as language specialists, they supported whole-heartedly the aims of the project.
Their expertise in modern languages allowed them to give many interesting and useful insights into the research questions and they were eager to be kept informed of any findings as they would consider applying them to their own students. The data analysis, once the transcription had been completed, was codified and organised according to the research questions. This part of the process was interesting as it was the first time that respondents beyond the circle of PGCE MFL students had been sought and their perceptions, based on their years of experience as teacher trainers, meant that they were highlighting new fields of inquiry, increasing the challenges of codification in a very valuable way.

3.7.5 Questionnaires to Partnership School Mentors

Once again, I felt it would be useful to look for data beyond the trainee teachers themselves. Although they are at the centre of this inquiry and are best placed to understand their own language capacity, there is a danger that their perception of their language skills is not always accurate. It might be that they over-estimated their own skills, judging themselves to be more competent than they really were. Although my years of experience, firstly as a mentor and then as a teacher trainer, have led me to realise that some students are overly confident, my experience is that most will tend to underestimate their abilities and judge themselves too harshly. I decided to send out a questionnaire to MFL mentors in partnership schools in an attempt to evaluate student language skills and
whether they had improved or declined during their experience as mentors and asking what particular features of languages, such as vocabulary, structures, pronunciation, gave students most difficulties. Mentors are well placed to make such judgements: they observe trainee teachers on a daily basis and are able to make comparisons over a number of years. In fact, mentors were specifically asked not to comment on the trainee teachers they had mentored that year, as this would be both insensitive and unethical.

The questionnaire was piloted with the help of critical friends and many useful observations were made, allowing the design of a brief but concise questionnaire (Appendix 1). I made a deliberate decision to make the questionnaire as short as possible and used scaled responses as, being a languages teacher in the past, I understand the severe time constraints under which mentors operate. I did, however, include sections for comments under each set of scaled responses. The timing was also critical. I did not want to send the questionnaires out to school when the trainee teachers were there as it might lead teachers to be influenced by the trainees who were at their school at that particular time. That meant that I had to wait until June 2008, a time when teachers are extremely busy with end of year assessments and reports. I therefore waited until the first week in July, allowing a period of less than three weeks for the return of the questionnaires. I included a stamped addressed envelope for their return in order to encourage as many replies as possible. Questionnaires were sent to mentors
of all partnership schools that had taken an MFL trainee that year, 42 in total, of whom 27 replied.

**Evaluation and Data Analysis**

The questionnaire, once it had been piloted and the questions and layout refined, was very easy to administer. Support staff were very helpful in the printing off of envelope labels and preparing the questionnaires for the post. The timing, although very tight, seemed to work very well and the questionnaire evidently became one of the ‘summer signing off’ tasks of many mentors. The fact that it was very brief and to the point must have made it one of the more attractive end of term tasks, though many mentors showed themselves to be willing to complete the extra comment boxes to support the essentially quantitative data provided by the questionnaire.

The data analysis, compared with the previous methods, was relatively easy in that the data were easily quantifiable. The information sought in the first part of the questionnaire allowed me to see whether there were any perceivable differences in opinion between different types of mentors. In that way, it was possible to see if the older, more experienced mentors were stricter or harsher in their judgements of trainee teachers. However, such judgements are not absolutely clear-cut: it might be that the mentors are more accurate, basing their judgements on more years of experience.
The case study phase of the study lasted for two years and comprised two separate cohorts of trainee teachers. A large amount of data was amassed, especially in the second year of the study. This placed the study on a very sound footing as it entered the third and final year of the investigation, the action research stage.

3.8 Action Research Phase
As previously discussed, the action research phase is characterised by an intervention that is planned, carried out, evaluated and reformulated where necessary to improve future practice. The case study phase of the research gave ample insight into possible ways of advancing this stage of the study and, after due reflection on the data, I decided that the best way of supporting students in the reactivation of lapsed language skills was the establishment of a guided learning programme (GLP). Following discussion between MFL tutors, it was decided that it would be an appropriate method of demonstrating one of the standards for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), that of demonstrating Subject Knowledge and Understanding. As such, all students on the MFL pathway of the PGCE programme would participate. Native speakers would be encouraged to identify a language other than their mother tongue or English, a language that they had studied in the past that they could reactivate. Renewed skills in an
additional language would increase their employability and help them to develop an insight into language learning through carefully chosen strategies and ongoing reflection.

3.8.1 Language Audit and Testing

The GLP began with an assessment of students’ current level of linguistic knowledge and skills. This was done in the first place by self-assessment through means of a Language Audit. Such audits have been long-standing practice by university tutors, but it was felt that a new approach was needed to find a more appropriate tool to measure linguistic ability. During discussions with tutors from other Higher Education Institutions (see 3.7.4), different types of Language Audits had been a frequent topic of conversation and tutors shared examples of the audits that they used. From these, a composite version that suited the needs of the GLP was constructed (Appendix 2).

In addition to the Language Audit, it was felt that a more objective assessment was needed to establish baseline data. Three different types of test were chosen:

- Diagnostic grammatical tests
- Vocabulary tests (receptive knowledge)
- Vocabulary tests (productive knowledge)
These tests will be discussed more thoroughly in the next chapter of this study, along with the results and evaluation. Although there are many more features of language that could have been tested, such as oral fluency, spelling and idiomatic knowledge, testing those features was constrained by time and opportunity.

The Language Audit and tests were carried out in September 2008 during an introductory session with the PGCE MFL students during which the aims of the research study were explained. In addition, the ethical considerations were discussed with the students, ensuring that they were fully informed of the expected outcomes of the research and the care that had been taken in making sure that the research activities were in the interest of the students and their professional development. These Language Awareness sessions (as they were called) became a feature of the programme and took place on Mondays (school placements being Tuesdays to Fridays) at fixed intervals during the GLP. They provided a forum for discussion about the work undertaken in the GLP and a place where wider issues of language acquisition could be discussed, thereby contributing to the meta-learning aims of this study. They were also a place where the data produced by the GLP could be discussed at some length, allowing a substantial reflection and review of the findings.
Evaluation and Data Analysis

Students were encouraged to select a language to reactivate which might not necessarily be the main language they would teach. This provided a wide variety of data, ranging from students who chose their main teaching language, a language in which they had recently obtained their degree, to students who chose a language that they had known imperfectly a long time ago. This wide range of competences meant that meaningful assessment of skills could only be achieved by measuring each student’s personal progress by establishing baseline data against which future progress could be measured. This creation of a statistical profile for each student’s progress in reactivating languages was especially fruitful and produced some interesting data. The Language Audits were not used to provide these statistical data as they performed a separate function, obliging students to think about their skill level and identify areas of weakness that needed to be remedied. The statistical data used in this study were obtained from the diagnostic and vocabulary tests. These were extremely rich in quantitative data and the information on students (native language, level of studies in each language) allowed the variables to be manipulated in many informative ways.

3.8.2 Language Learning Logs

Much of the findings of the case study phase pointed to the benefits of a sustained and regular system of self-study. This was carried out by requiring the students to carry out a Language Learning Log in which not only would they
record details of a weekly learning activity but they would also reflect upon it (Appendix 3). In the initial stages, students were given a free choice of activities based on the thinking that they were best placed to identify their learning needs, having identified them in the Language Audit. In later stages, they were given some guidance about different types of activities that might more usefully match their needs or fill in gaps in their knowledge or skills. In addition to the Language Learning Log, students were asked to identify a language partner, a native speaker with whom they could converse on a regular basis. The number of native speakers on the PGCE programme meant that this was a fairly easy task, though many chose friends or acquaintances outside the PGCE programme. The timetabling of university sessions was also useful in that there is a two hour period between morning and afternoon sessions, allowing those who have language partners in the PGCE cohort to carry out a language activity or spend this time with their native speaker partners to improve on their oral language skills.

**Evaluation and Data Analysis**

The main difficulties that became apparent in this part of the GLP were the reluctance of some students to complete the log on a regular basis. While accepting that the PGCE programme is a period of intensive study and professional development, it is also a period where the consolidation and improvement of language skills are of evident benefit to the trainee teacher, who needs to be seen to be a competent practitioner in the languages classroom. As
previously explained, Subject Knowledge and Understanding is a key standard for Qualified Teacher Status, so students should be aware that they are expected to demonstrate skills that exemplify this standard. While all students accepted its importance, a minority tended to give it less attention than it deserves, preferring to concentrate on more immediate concerns such as lesson planning and marking pupils’ work. When it became obvious that some students were resistant to the idea of keeping a regular Language Log, I determined to find ways of making the Language Log less onerous for them.

I started a discussion thread on Blackboard, the Virtual Learning Environment of the university, on the theme of *Combining Learning with Leisure* in which I suggested ways in which students could undertake normal leisure activities such as watching films, listening to music or reading novels, but in the target language. I was keen to emphasise that such activities would take very little time and commitment but would be a valuable contribution to their learning experience. Many students responded with interesting ideas such as changing the settings on their mobile phones to the target language or following foreign language recipes to cook their evening meals. Some students, I suspect, remained unconvinced about the benefit of such activities or the importance of maintaining and strengthening their language skills. It is possible that some students were not entirely honest in the information that they put into their Language Logs, though this was inevitable given the wide range of ability and levels of commitment to improving subject knowledge.
3.8.3 Student Questionnaires and Evaluation

At a mid-point in the GLP, during a Language Awareness session in December 2008, a questionnaire (Appendix 4) was administered to the PGCE MFL student cohort. Like the mentor questionnaire, it was piloted in order to assure the validity of the findings. It was circulated by email to colleagues and critical friends associated with the study and their comments were used to improve the layout and the questions. The questionnaire set out to measure:

- Students’ perception of their language competence (in main and reactivated languages)
- Students’ attitude to the GLP

To a large extent, the section covering language competence mirrored the Mentor questionnaire (see 3.7.5) and this was deliberate in order to facilitate comparisons. The section designed to measure student attitudes used scaled responses to allow students to answer easily but sections at the end provided opportunities for open responses in order to gather rich data.

The student questionnaire was completed in December 2008, mid-way through the Guided Learning Programme, in order to evaluate it and make any adjustments that might improve it. The data from this questionnaire, test results
and the mentors’ questionnaires were also given to students during a Language Awareness session in February 2009 where they were discussed and notes were taken. Finally, student views were also sought at the last stage of the study by means of a brief email questionnaire (4 questions only) sent to selected members of the cohort in April 2009. The rationale for selection of students was their level of participation in the programme and the degree of improvement they had made during the months that the initiative was underway.

**Evaluation and Data Analysis**

Distribution of the questionnaire during a lecture session meant that the return was high. Students were assured that the questionnaire was completely confidential and if they did not want to respond, they could hand in a blank copy. Those who were absent were given the questionnaire in January 2009. All but two students responded, providing 28 responses (2 students out of the original cohort of 32 having left the programme).

The anonymity of the questionnaire had its limitations in that it did not allow for the native speakers to be identified. In subsequent discussions, during a Language Awareness session, it became clear that some of them had different attitudes from the UK students in that they did not always subscribe to the idea that the GLP was an important part of their professional development. Some of them felt that as they already had native speaker skills in their main language,
they did not need to develop other languages because their main language would secure them employment without much difficulty.

As most of the questions were based on the selection of scaled responses, this allowed for the statistical analysis of the data. The discussion of these data in the Language Awareness session in February 2009 allowed students to listen to the views of others while giving them an opportunity to voice their own opinions. The final email questionnaire that was sent out at the end of the study was an effective way of gathering data fairly easily. This form of data gathering had been suggested by the success of the e-log. The findings from both will be discussed in detail in the next section.
Chapter 4

Results and Analysis

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4.1 Case Study

The early phases of the case study were characterised by the need to establish a firm basis of evidence on which to establish the later and more crucial action research phase of the study (Bell, 2005; Cohen et al., 2007). In the case study phase, the sample comprised student volunteers from the PGCE MFL cohort. This differed from the Action Research phase of the study where the intervention undertaken was extended to the whole of the PGCE cohort. This difference in the sample and its effect on the findings on each phase change is an important aspect discussed in the outcomes of the research as a whole. The development of the research questions had arisen out of the need to find a way of supporting students with language skills that were inadequate for the demands of their training and who wished to understand more fully the processes of reactivating lapsed skills and knowledge. This would help support not only their own learning needs but also to give them an insight that might aid their future pupils. These research questions, as previously stated, are:

- How best can students reactivate and recall previously learnt language skills?
- Which type of language seems most resistant to loss?
- Which learning methods have allowed students to maximise their language memory over a significant period of time and how can these methods be adapted for future use?
- What impact does a clearer understanding of this process have on student learning and how can this contribute to improved professional practice?
4.1.1 Focus Group

In the initial stages of the pilot study, although the research questions had been established, the scope of the study had not been decided. In order to explore the aims of the study, it was decided to take the research questions to the first cohort of PGCE MFL students involved in this study (2006 – 2007) in order to establish parameters for the investigation and to determine whether any impediments or constraints could be identified. This was done by organising a meeting of a focus group composed of volunteer students from the cohort of PGCE MFL students of the year 2006 – 2007. The purpose of the meeting was to listen and gather information on the area of research, which would, it was expected, lead to a greater understanding of the issues. In such meetings, a permissive environment is established in which participants can freely share points of view and perceptions. It is different from other groups in that no consensus is reached, no decisions or recommendations are made; it is simply a method of obtaining high quality qualitative data that can serve to direct the study in later stages (Krueger & Casey, 2000).

Volunteers were requested from the whole cohort of 35 students and six attended the focus group meeting on 15 January 2007. All of the volunteers were British nationals. Their profiles are as follows:
Table 3: Profile of Focus Group Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Languages Inactive and for what period of time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KM</td>
<td>French 10 years; Spanish 3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>French 17 years; German 7 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LN</td>
<td>Spanish 17 years; completed French degree recently after break of 17 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JG</td>
<td>Mandarin 10 years; Japanese 10 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HM</td>
<td>French 4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JP</td>
<td>French 15 years; German 15 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although these six students comprise only 17% of the cohort, their views are significant as they identified themselves as individuals who were concerned about the difficulties of language reactivation.

After an explanation of the ethical regulations that bound the study, a questioning route was followed to guide the discussion. This route was linked to the research questions outlined above and comprised the following questions:

1. Which languages do you want to reactivate and how long have they been inactive?
2. How easy / difficult has it been to regain language skills?
3. What came back easily / with difficulty?
4. How did you go about it?
5. Were you methodical in your approach? (How?)
6. Were you more intuitive in your approach? (Why?)
7. What language elements were left when you began to look?
8. Were receptive / productive skills equally balanced?
9. Which aspects of language reactivation have you most / least enjoyed?
10. What do you see as the key issues of this area of language learning?

This questioning route had been prepared in advance and the questions had been piloted by supervisors and critical friends associated with this study. As
mentioned in the previous section, the discussion was not recorded but notes were taken by me and also by a research assistant. These were later merged into one set of notes and circulated to participants for correction. These notes were then examined in detail in order to identify important and recurrent themes.

The main themes and outcomes of the discussion can be summarised as follows:

- The degree of success in regaining lapsed language skills depended on exposure to the language and the motivation of the student;
- Contact with native speakers and the target language country was favoured as a sure method of language reactivation. However, native speakers tend to be reluctant to correct the learner, out of fear of seeming rude, even when the learner has requested this;
- Teaching provided good opportunities to re-learn the basics of the language;
- Receptive skills (listening and reading) were more accessible than productive skills (speaking and writing);
- Pronunciation seemed resistant to loss but regional accents tended to be replaced by more standardised forms;
- Understanding of how the spoken forms were written also seemed relatively resistant to loss;
- Ease of reactivation depended on how well the skill / knowledge had been learnt in the first place;
Methods chosen for reactivation were wide and varied but tended to be characterised by either an unsystematic exposure to language (reading, listening, watching films *ad hoc*) or a structured approach (working from grammar books and learning vocabulary lists);

This division seemed to have a correlation to the age of the students and therefore, possibly, to the way they had been taught. This meant that the older students returned instinctively to the deductive learning characterised by the grammar-translation method and the younger students were more inclined to favour the target language exposure that is the feature of the communicative language teaching approach.

4.1.2 E-Logs

With the next cohort of PGCE MFL students, during the academic year 2007 - 2008, it was possible to undertake a more extensive collection of qualitative data, given the insight and understanding provided by the preceding cohort of students. In consequence of the demanding nature of the PGCE programme, I needed to find a mechanism for gathering data that would not place unrealistic demands on the students at a time when they were working hard to cope with the demands of their professional training. As previously discussed, I conceived the idea of a reflective log that could be kept by students by means of emails that they sent to me, a process that would become a sort of hybrid of the questionnaire and interview methods of data gathering.
I held an introductory session with the students to explain the aims of the research and to seek volunteers. Twenty students agreed to become involved in the project, of whom 16 responded to the initial email. Although this sample did not extend to the whole cohort, the volunteers provided valuable information that was relevant to the study by virtue of the fact that they had identified themselves as individuals needing to reactivate their languages. These volunteers included British students and native speakers. During the introductory session, students signed a document that explained the ethical considerations as outlined by BERA (2004) and that they understood they were protected by these guidelines. In addition, at the top of every email that I sent out, there was a reminder of the ethical guidelines and an assurance that they were not obliged to participate and that if they chose to do so, their identity would remain confidential. Student reflection was triggered by a series of questions that I sent out at regular intervals. Responses were collected and gathered together in a single document for analysis.

The questions were piloted with supervisors and critical friends and were organised into groups (as indicated) and sent out to students every 3 to 4 weeks.

Email 1:
1. What are your feelings regarding your present level of language skills?
2. Have you undertaken any preparation to revive lapsed language skills for your school placement? If so, what have you done?
Email 2:
3. What has influenced your choice of methods to revive lapsed language skills?

Email 3:
4. How well have you coped with working to regain lapsed language skills? Which aspects have been fairly straightforward? What has been challenging?
5. Which features of language came back easily / what came back with more difficulty?
6. What sort of language seems the most resistant to loss? Why do you think this is?

Email 4:
7. How much do you think the way you were taught has influenced your choice of methods for language reactivation?
8. What do you remember about the way you were taught languages? What seemed to work well, as far as you can recall?

Email 5:
9. Have the methods you have chosen to revive lost language skills worked as well as you would have liked? Did some work better at the beginning or would have been better later on in the process?
10. What tips would you give to a PGCE student wishing to revive lapsed language skills?

By organising these questions into groups, this allowed students to cope more easily with the reflection required by the study. They also allowed for certain themes to emerge, which were linked to the original research questions. These themes can be summarised as:

- Self-analysis and assessment of language skills and knowledge
- Practical aspects of language reactivation
- Understanding of meta-cognition and meta-learning
I propose to deal with the findings of this stage of data gathering under those three headings by identifying common threads and giving the students the opportunity to have their views expressed by means of quoting from their e-logs. The coding process was fairly lengthy because of the large amount of data gathered. The e-log questions had been carefully linked to the research questions but the themes that emerged could not be anticipated in advance. The responses to each e-log question were read several times and key phrases were highlighted and then transferred to the coding frame. The initial coding was established by sifting this information and identifying common or significant themes. Deviations from these themes could be identified at the same time. Once patterns emerged, this allowed the establishment of focused coding which then provided material for the analysis below. Quotations that clarified or highlighted the points made were selected at the same time. For an example of a coding frame, see Appendix 9.

**Self-analysis and assessment of language skills and knowledge**

Apart from a minority of fairly confident students, most tended to be rather self-critical and aware of the limitations of their language skills and knowledge. One student commented that she feared her language skills were “in a constant state of decline” (Student 13). Another student expressed her anxiety, admitting, “I feel quite stupid … I am unsure of my ability to teach in the target language” (Student 16).
It is likely, however, that the students who volunteered were different in characteristics from those who did not volunteer. Either they decided to participate because they recognised that they need to improve their skills and welcomed an opportunity to gain an insight into how to do so, or perhaps the fact that they volunteered indicated that they were generally more committed students who were less likely to be satisfied with an inadequate linguistic performance.

Most recognised the danger that their skills would atrophy if they were underused and many felt that the best way to maintain optimum language skills was to live in the target language country, though this would of course be impossible in their situation. Many linked their language ability with their exposure to the language and lack of opportunity to practise therefore meant a decline in skills. Another interesting feature was their attitude to a particular language; if they did not like it they were not motivated to work to maintain or improve it:

> At the present moment, the thought of going to Italy and having to speak Italian fills me with dread, which is extremely disappointing and frustrating as I have a degree in the subject and really love it.

(Student 10)

This student also studied Catalan in the past but expresses less favourable attitudes to this language:

> I really disliked Catalan at university and consequently remember only the basic phrases.

(Student 10)
Different aspects of language caused varying degrees of difficulty to the students and there seemed to be no pattern as to which types of language skills needed the most attention. Many complained about oral fluency, while others were happy about their speaking skills but more concerned about their grammatical knowledge. There seemed to be no limit to the range of language difficulty that would cause students problems:

Although I am fairly confident and fluent with my French, I am still prone to making errors at the most basic levels from time to time (gender being a key issue) so I have to ensure that when I am teaching new vocab I focus on making sure that I fully know and can use that vocab myself.

(Student 4)

Many students realised that they had not only lost the most sophisticated grammar and vocabulary knowledge but also very basic skills as well. This obviously affected the way that they needed to approach language reactivation in order to achieve the best results:

When I started to revive my lapsed language skills, I should have begun from scratch (re-learning basic grammar/vocabulary) and then built up to a higher level rather than just flicking through books/magazines etc. in my spare time.

(Student 3)

While many complained of the difficulty of managing the learning of more than one language, others were more concerned about their depth of knowledge in a single language. Unsurprisingly, students seemed united in the acceptance that good language skills would contribute considerably to their success in training to be a languages teacher.
Practical aspects of language reactivation

Preparation for the PGCE MFL programme and activities undertaken once they had begun their training were wide and varied. Some had visited the target language country in previous months and many recognised the value of native speaker contact. This took many forms, from conversations with native speaker trainee teachers to using modern technology links such as Facebook to keep in touch with native speaker friends (Student 16). This contact did not necessarily need to involve productive skills such as speaking and listening. One student commented on the usefulness of simply listening to native speakers' conversations as a way of reactivating skills that had lain dormant:

I find the French girls on the course a big help too, although I don't tend to speak to them much in French I follow what they're saying and remember a lot of the constructions and vocab that I thought were lost forever.

(Student 15)

Some chose to attend evening classes, either before the programme began or during the period of the PGCE, though many felt this was very difficult, putting them under pressure at a time when they wanted to devote their concentration to their training. Others chose to observe language lessons in their partnership school. This was especially useful if the language they had chosen to reactivate was not their main teaching language; this meant that they were able to benefit from attending these lessons without their role as languages 'expert' being compromised in front of their pupils.

Teaching the language, as previously stated, proved an excellent way of reinforcing their knowledge of the language, as they would have to prepare
linguistic tasks in order to be able to teach them and this allowed them to revise the language in a focussed manner. Student 13 commented that she had to teach the topic of clothes that week and therefore needed to know the vocabulary and gender of these items. Teaching would also provide ample opportunity for revision and reinforcement of language points:

… as through teaching and using vocabulary such as this, it will now be ingrained in my memory! There are only so many times that you can repeat things with flashcards before it is permanently ingrained in your head!!!

(Student 7)

As discussed in the focus group, many students chose to read extensively in the target language to reactivate lapsed language. One student pointed out that the familiarity of well-loved texts allowed the reader to concentrate on the language features of what she was reading rather than worrying about the plot:

I'm a Harry Potter freak and a great admirer of JK Rowling (that woman has done more to promote kids' literacy than any Government initiative) and also I know the books inside out and backwards having read all of them at least 5 times. This helps as I don't have to worry about misunderstanding the plot and can concentrate on the language.

(Student 15)

Similarly, well-known films allowed the students to concentrate on the language structures and vocabulary rather than worry about following the story lines:

I have DVDs of things like Friends and Ally McBeal dubbed into French and Italian which I sometimes put on if I am pottering around cooking.

(Student 13)

This last contribution was the genesis of the idea that language reactivation did not need to be hard work and that it could be incidental to leisure activities. This
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sparked the concept of learning for leisure which became a feature of the Guided Learning Programme that took place the following year.

Relatively few students chose writing as a method of language reactivation and it is barely mentioned in the students’ e-logs, though one student did mention that:

Differently (and embarrassingly), I'm trying to keep a general diary in French of the things that I do, how I feel etc. so that I'm in the habit of writing French everyday. I don't often write much but I don't want to become one of those teachers who ends up with stilted French because I haven't practised anything other than what I teach.

(Student 7)

It is not clear why so few chose this method of reactivation. Many learners perceive it as being the most difficult of the four skills as it demands not only accuracy but has a permanency that allows close scrutiny. It is probably because it is the skill that places the spotlight on the learner in a way that makes it difficult to gloss over mistakes and errors. However, it does provide time for reflection before committing ideas to paper and combines two essential aspects of language learning, vocabulary and grammar.

Many students did recognise that their knowledge of grammar was insufficient for the teaching they would undertake and spent a considerable time re-learning grammar from their old course books. Some students took this task very seriously:

I familiarised myself with the requirements of the national curriculum at KS3 and KS4, bought some GCSE revision guides and downloaded some past papers. This enabled me, to some degree, to identify the level of language required.

(Student 5)
In common with the students from the focus group of the previous year, the students did tend to return to their past learning habits in recognition that they had previously served them well:

I suppose that my choice of methods was influenced by the fact that I know that this is how I learnt things best in the first place. By resorting to tried and tested methods, I am convinced that I will be able to learn as quickly, in order to avoid moments of embarrassment when the words that are being asked for escape me.

(Student 11)

As the discussion in the focus group indicated, choice of reactivation activity depended on factors such as students’ tastes and personality as well as the cost and availability of resources such as learning materials and evening classes. In recognition that the difficulties encountered by students could affect all levels of language learning, many students favoured a ‘bottom-up’ approach, one student advising:

Basically, start right from the very basics again, so you have the foundations and the confidence to teach the simple stuff. Then gradually build up to a higher level.

(Student 3)

Such an approach not only allowed students to consolidate their language skills but to tune into the pupils’ level of understanding, helping them to anticipate pupils’ difficulties and misconceptions. This attempt to recapture past learning skills from the basics upwards was also an important step in the development of self-confidence necessary to function well in the languages classroom. As one of the students in the focus group had said a year previously: “I did it before and I can do it again!”
Understanding of meta-cognition and meta-learning

Central to students’ development as reflective learners was an understanding of the self and how their own learning had developed in the past. As PGCE MFL students, they should, logically, be categorised as successful learners (Grenfell, 2007: 9) and consequently they were likely to be the source of useful and interesting insights into language learning. This knowledge of self is a shortcut to tried and tested methods that allow students to access methods that are most likely to succeed:

I respond better to learning language as a means to an end rather than as the end itself so I find watching films, reading books for pleasure and listening to music far more effective than actively trying to learn with a text book.

(Student 4)

Unlike less experienced learners, these students did not spend too much time in the selection of language acquisition strategies as their knowledge of what had worked well previously for them allowed them to bypass this stage. For less successful learners, this could well have been an obstacle that they would have found difficult to overcome.

Consequently, this self-awareness allowed a sense of self-confidence to develop over time, serving the students well:

I would say that my spoken language came back easily, just because I was speaking the language on an everyday basis. It has now come to the stage that if I am working in French (e.g. preparing lessons) then I will speak to myself in French. Likewise, the vocabulary lists that were once familiar to me have started to emerge from the depths of my memory. However, as I sometimes struggle for the right word in English, if I am
unable to recall the occasional French word, then I don’t look upon it as a huge problem.

(Student 11)

The attitude towards errors and mistakes was interesting in that students frequently became impatient with themselves at the basic slips they tended to make. There was a realisation that errors that were not recognised could make their way into the permanent language memory:

… there is always the fear of repeating errors that go uncorrected and that these will get hardwired into my language memory as I hear myself saying / thinking them.

(Student 12)

They did, however, have a healthy attitude to errors in that they accepted them as a normal part of the process of language learning. One student advised:

… that they should have (sic) into account that mistakes are part of the learning process and that we have always something new to learn, since we don’t know everything.

(Student 8)

Those students who attended evening classes and took on the role of a pupil again found the experience a sobering one and developed an insight likely to develop their sense of empathy with their own pupils:

A few weeks ago we did a listening exercise and it amazed me how nervous I felt. It really made me empathise with how my students must feel. To me the listening exercises I prepare in school are so basic, but when the tables are turned, i.e. an exercise our teacher pitched at our level, it’s amazing how scary it is!

(Student 16)
Later in the e-log, she summarised her feelings as:

On the whole though, the experience reminded me what it is like to be a pupil and that in itself is an extremely useful experience!  
(Student 16)

Some students used their past experiences as pupils to develop their thinking about the learning process, using both their positive and negative experiences to make choices about their learning and teaching:

For GCSE written coursework, we memorised what we were going to write and we did the same for the oral exams. These were really unuseful (sic) and I will not be doing this in my teaching - for the benefit of my pupils.  
(Student 7)

Most students recognised that the most useful language experiences that they had undergone in the past were those that helped to develop them as independent learners, such as preparation for a topic for an oral examination (Student 13) to an understanding of the skills each individual has and the creation of a learning environment that allows the development of an individual and independent nurturing of those skills:

I remember being given encouraging feedback and the necessary tools to progress further. However, I feel that the turning point came in the regular grammar lessons in the later years at Secondary school. I remember being satisfied with learning the rules, and then being able to manipulate them to meet my needs. Retrospectively, I was a fairly independent learner. I was lucky enough that, once pointed in the right direction, I was able to progress sufficiently. I am also lucky enough to have had teachers that recognised this, and nurtured this in the right fashion.  
(Student 11)
Students showed a remarkable level of understanding of what was likely to work in the process of reactivation and were able to express their insight into the ways in which such activities could be undertaken:

Reviving language skills can seem like an uphill struggle to begin with, but if you've already learnt it once, it really doesn't take that long to relearn it. Focus on activities that you enjoy doing anyway, such as reading or watching films, but in the target language, and reinforce this with a bit of grammar from time to time. Don't panic if you have to teach a word or phrase that you've never seen before, just enjoy the opportunity to expand your subject knowledge; there's nothing like forgetting a word in front of a class full of children to ensure that you never forget that word again!

(Student 4)

4.1.3 Student Interviews

In June 2008, at the end of the academic year, I decided to hold interviews with students selected from those who had participated in the e-log data gathering. I sent a request to the students and asked for volunteers willing to participate. I particularly wanted to investigate students who would be willing to identify themselves as successful language learners as they would be most likely to provide me with an insight into strategies for the reactivation of lapsed language skills.

Although three students had agreed to be interviewed, only two volunteers came forward, one male and one female, and they were interviewed separately. The conversations were recorded and transcribed. The interviews lasted approximately 25 minutes each and took place on separate occasions. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. The data coding followed the same
procedure as the E-Log data in that a coding frame was established to identify significant themes. This allowed for a detailed analysis of the ideas expressed in the interviews. Both students had been enthusiastic participants in the e-log data gathering and the male student was well known to me as I had taught him at school, when he was an A level pupil.

The features of a good language learner, as identified by Stern (1975), reviewed by Grenfell (2007) have already been discussed in the Literature Review of this study, but the key elements of successful language learning bear brief repetition here:

- Being active
- Having technical know-how and developing language as a system
- Being willing to practise and use the language
- Having a personal learning agenda
- Being self-evaluative
- Being sociable
- Constantly looking for meaning

(Grenfell, 2007:9)

These characteristics were richly in evidence throughout the interviews of both students. The male student frequently used the word ‘challenge’ and it became clear that he relished the opportunity to get to know the language well and that this gave him a sense of satisfaction and self-confidence. His knowledge of the language and his ease of manipulation of the structures and vocabulary were very important to him and defined him as a successful learner:

I have always been very keen to learn a language but not just the language itself but the workings behind the language … I am the sort of person who will get a new electronic toy … and will have to take it apart just to see what goes where so that if anything went wrong I’d know how to fix it.
The students were thorough in their approach to language learning and prided themselves on the effort they were willing to put in to achieving a high degree of language mastery:

I’m a stickler for grammar. If I have to learn a rule then I’ll learn it and that’s it then, that’s done... I used to take things home and just read through it just to make sure I knew exactly what was going on and then I just liked to employ that structure so if I learnt say the imperfect tense you’d apply it to a few different verbs just to see how it works.

(Student 11)

This willingness to practise and use the language had allowed the skills and knowledge to become firmly rooted in their long-term memories, making the process of attrition less marked. Evidently the effort of committing language structures and vocabulary to memory had been significant, but these students had decided that it was a worthwhile investment and this high level of motivation had been repaid by the considerable mastery of languages they both demonstrated:

I’ve always been the sort of person that if you explain something to once it might not stick first time but I’ll read through it again in my own time, do a few examples, kind of see it in action, put it into practice myself and then that’s it, it’s done, I know it.

(Student 11)

This willingness to devote significant time and effort to improving their language skills demonstrated a high degree of single-mindedness and very good organisational skills, exemplifying the ‘personal learning agenda’ that Stern (1975) had recognised. The female student recounted her preparations in the months before the PGCE MFL programme began:
I bought a load of grammar books and pulled out my old grammar notes and I basically highlighted what I thought were the key points … for both languages and literally … parrot fashion learned everything again. I had grammar drill books that I used to test myself.

(Student 5)

Both students recognised that their love of languages was not confined to the narrowness of their studies but would spill over into other areas of their lives, including their social interactions. Stern identified sociability as a common trait amongst gifted linguists and, although he did not recognise himself as anything approaching an extrovert, the male student used social situations during the year spent abroad as part of his degree studies as a means of extending his linguistic skills in a thoughtful and focussed manner:

We'd always be out with groups of friends that we'd met while we were out there so groups of Italians or French people and I was known as the quiet one, but I was told on several occasions that when I did actually say something then it was very much the answer to what they had been talking about so that was good.

(Student 11)

This ability to make language learning a central part of their lives demonstrated the importance that linguistic skills and knowledge meant to them and therefore it was not surprising that they chose to become language teachers in order to share their enthusiasm and to use teaching as a means of remaining involved in a discipline that evidently meant a great deal to them. They understood the importance of maintaining a high degree of language skills throughout their professional careers and as such were ideally placed to reflect on language reactivation because they would continually need to evaluate their own skills while passing them on to generations of future pupils.
4.1.4 Telephone Interviews of Tutors of other Higher Education Institutions

The data gathered by the focus group, the e-log and student interviews had provided much valuable information into how students could reactivate and recall lapsed language skills and I realised that future cohorts of students would need support and guidance to benefit from this insight. The establishment of a guided learning programme for PGCE MFL students was an obvious way forward and it was therefore useful to find out what other Higher Education Institutions (HEI) did to support their students in the maintenance of their language skills so that any programme set up by us would benefit from their experiences. Following discussions with sixteen tutors from other institutions at the CILT ITT conference in 2006 and via the CILT ITT MFL website, I found that the main support for students tended to fall into the following categories:

- Refresher courses (either before or during the PGCE programmes)
- Subject knowledge audits
- Action plans
- Tutorials
- Language ‘buddies’

I considered these all to be very worthwhile activities that I could adapt to fit the needs of my students in the framework of a guided learning programme. I wanted to develop a structure that would give students the responsibility and independence of organising their own learning programme so that they would be more likely to keep the habit of ongoing skills development in future years, during their professional careers. This ‘habit’ would be a useful part of their professional practice, as incomplete or unsound knowledge of the target language has an
adverse effect on teachers’ ability to deliver the curriculum and achieve learning objectives (Barnes, 2006). Although this was not part of my research *per se* and not amenable to study in the scope of my project, I hoped that this would become more, in fact, than a mere habit and that it would have a more fundamental change on the student, and alter their outlook, their mindset and their view of themselves as lifelong learners.

Two of the lecturers who contacted me had given outlines of programmes that they had undertaken with their students that seemed to offer the features that I valued as being a means of providing independence within a framework of structured support. I carried out telephone interviews, which I recorded and transcribed in July 2008. These transcriptions provided valuable material which I annotated, setting up data coding frames to identify key themes and significant ideas.

Topics to be covered in these interviews had been communicated to the teacher-trainers a week before the interviews took place so that they could reflect on the issues to be discussed. These topics were:

- Students’ language competence;
- Accuracy of students’ perception of their language competence;
- Proactivity of students in maintaining, improving or reactivating their language skills;
- Support provided by the HEI;
Aspects of language that suffered loss and those that seemed resistant to attrition.

The programmes delivered by the two teacher-trainers provided an interesting contrast. The first interview took place with SG who manages a BA programme that lasts 3 years and awards Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). This programme is an undergraduate course that has a significant language element and is therefore geared to language support and the development of student skills. The second interview took place with TR who runs a large PGCE MFL programme. Although students already have a language degree before they begin the programme, TR has put in place many measures to both assess student competence and provide support where needed. Both universities investigated are located in England.

Student competence in their chosen language was an interesting topic covered by the interviews. Although SG’s programme is an undergraduate course, some students have very good language skills by virtue of being native speakers. This did not mean, however, that they were immune to language difficulties as “they will be excellent on the spoken level, but sometimes can be struggling a little bit with the grammatical accuracy in their writing” (SG). This echoed my own experience of native speakers’ language competence in both the PGCE MFL and BA degree in Secondary Education programmes in the university in which I teach.
In TR’s programme, 80% of the students in her cohort tend to be foreign nationals and this had given her ample opportunity to observe cultural differences in their approach to learning. She found that African students tend to rely on memorisation, rote learning, speaking and listening but found analysing sentence structures very difficult. The French students had little understanding of analysing their own language and when TR questioned them on this aspect of the language, she said:

I just get blank looks and shrugged shoulders – well I don’t know I just do it. So it’s … this idea of … you’re learning through rote learning, but actually they’ve never sat down and reflected on how they learn - all the styles in which they learn, all the strategies that they’ve used. That’s obviously not been part of their language learning experience.  

(TR)

It is evident that our prior learning has a significant impact on our understanding of language and the learning styles we adopt. Native speakers usually have a great advantage in their language skills but UK students also have advantages in that they have learned the language from the ‘bottom up’ and are able to anticipate the difficulties that pupils have in language learning because they have experienced the process themselves. SG contrasted a Moroccan student with near native language skills whose written French and knowledge of grammar is poor with English students who have learnt French as a foreign language in a traditional setting who have better grammatical knowledge and are able to apply this. This means that their French is more accurate but perhaps lacks the “spontaneity and style” of the Moroccan student.
Although the UK students frequently have a better understanding of the grammar of the language they have learnt, they are still prone to mistakes:

If they’ve gone through the traditional A level route in the past, I find that things like for example … the subjunctive, they can recall the subjunctive but then they would make very, very basic mistakes in their grammar.

(SG)

To a certain extent this contradicts current research in language attrition (Hansen 2000), which suggests that the first types of language lost are the most recently learnt. However, student reflections in the e-log indicated that loss of language from the long term memory could affect all sorts of language and, to a certain degree, it was dependent on how well that feature of language had been learnt in the first place and how frequently it had been used since it had been learnt.

The teacher-trainers had many useful and interesting comments on the sort of language resistant to loss and the language that needed to be reactivated. In her experience, TR found that:

Genders seem to have gone. Adjectival endings, they seem to go. … Verb endings, you know for the different pronouns. … And the French … those that have learnt French, especially, really struggle with the perfect tense. … And with German a variety of … endings they have problems with.

In other words, grammatical knowledge seemed to be the focus of attrition rather than other aspects such as oral fluency, knowledge of vocabulary or pronunciation. SG confirmed that pronunciation did, indeed, seem to be resistant to loss, as had already been indicated by the focus group and the e-log findings. She commented that:
Pronunciation, if it was good originally, it’s still always good, you know, they are not going to suddenly be coming out with language that’s … badly spoken or spoken with the wrong intonation.

It is interesting to note the above observations place them in the context of the relevance of perception. It is difficult for individuals to assess their own linguistic skills as they are concentrating on the process of communicating, that is to say listening, speaking, reading or writing. It could be argued that observers (in this case, university tutors) are better placed to make these judgements, firstly because they can concentrate fully on the task of assessment and evaluation, and secondly because they are able to draw upon years of experience to make this judgement. However, it could be argued that nobody is better able to assess communicative skills than the individuals themselves. They are the ones who are ideally placed to listen to not only the outer voice of language expression but also the inner voice of language processing (Vygotsky 1986). It is therefore important to differentiate between the perceptions of the students themselves and those who observe them, namely the university tutors and school mentors.

In evaluating the linguistic competence, and students’ perceptions of it, there seemed to be no consensus from the two teacher-trainers. TR found that they tended to have less confidence in their ability than their linguistic competence merited while SG found it difficult to generalise. I would agree that students vary greatly in their linguistic skills and also in their perceptions of how good their language ability is and that it is impossible therefore to generalise, as many would be better than they thought while others would tend to be over-confident.
Accurate language audits and testing would clearly benefit students in identifying their areas of weakness and in finding strategies to address these areas. The importance and development of language audits will be discussed later in this document.

Both teacher-trainers provided ample opportunities for students to resolve any language weaknesses. Although TR’s programme was at PGCE level and students therefore needed a degree to obtain a place on the programme, she was still rigorous in assessing their language skill, realising that a degree in a language is not always evidence of adequate linguistic skills (Barnes, 2006; Richards, 2008). Her programme provided many opportunities for students to reinforce their language skills either by means of a 14 week refresher course prior to the PGCE programme or short courses that run alongside the PGCE programme. Her students are also encouraged to attend language evening classes during the PGCE year. Students responded very well to these opportunities, especially the intensive course that runs prior to the PGCE programme, though this was frequently because it was a condition of entry. However, once they had secured a place on the programme, a minority of students seemed less inclined to give such importance to language learning and TR worried how this lack of commitment would affect the way they would cope with the demands of the programme and a future career in teaching.
Both teacher-trainers commented that the best students were proactive and independent in their learning and that an element of self-study was a useful part of their programmes if these characteristics were to be developed. SG had devised a learning log that students had to keep, recording the activities they had undertaken to improve their language skills. She gave them a free choice of activities:

It could be going and reading an article in Marie Clare, just in the target language, or it could be listening to some rap music, or you know anything that I think they would be interested in. I've got one student who's very interested in current affairs and she's always reading the different media available for French so she's ... up-to-date with international affairs via the French newspapers and Internet resources.

This freedom of choice had clearly proved useful in this instance and it was later incorporated into the Guided Learning Programme undertaken by our own PGCE students.

Both teacher-trainers were generous in the information they provided during the interview and followed this up by emailing documents they used in their ITT programmes. The Language Audit sent by TR was incorporated with the audit already in existence in our PGCE programme and the resulting document provided an audit that suited our needs well. SG sent her Language Logs and, with some modifications, these became the Language Logs that we used to support language reactivation in our Guided Learning Programme in the year 2008 – 2009. Discussions with the tutors proved to be very fruitful and provided many ideas that were incorporated into the Action Research phase of the study.
4.1.5 Questionnaires to Partnership School Mentors

The final source of data for the case study phase of this investigation was the mentors in the partnership schools. As a teacher of 17 years experience, many of which included periods as a subject mentor, I had made many observations about trainee teachers. During this period, I had carried out regular assessments and classroom observations of trainee teachers, followed by discussions with them about their progress and subject knowledge. At this stage of the investigation, it was therefore useful to see whether other mentors shared my observations. The data from the questionnaires would provide information about trainees’ language proficiency on which to base the Guided Learning Programme and might indicate a way forward.

It is not the intention to analyse these data in depth at this stage because they will be discussed more fully alongside the data gathered from student questionnaires. Both mentors and students were asked the same type and range of questions and the comparison is both interesting and informative. Consequently, the data from the mentor questionnaire are presented here but I shall return to them at a later stage when the student data are being presented and analysed. The data that was gathered were primarily quantitative in nature and a tally system was used to measure responses to each question. Where mentors had chosen to add comments, key themes were identified and coded allowing further analysis.
As previously explained, the questionnaire (see Appendix 1) was sent to partnership schools in early July 2008, at which time the mentors no longer had trainee teachers under their supervision. They were asked to comment on trainees in general and not on the trainees they had mentored that year. I identified 42 schools that regularly accepted PGCE MFL students as trainee teachers and sent the questionnaire to the subject mentors of those schools. I received 27 responses, giving a return rate of 64%.

Mentors were asked to evaluate the language competence of past trainees and categorise them as very good, good, satisfactory or unsatisfactory. The findings can be seen in Fig. 5 below:

![Fig. 5: Mentors’ Perception of Language Competence of trainees](image)

Considering that this applied to the trainees’ main teaching language and not their reactivated language (which is typically a second or third foreign language),
this result is worrying as I would have expected more to have responded Very Good. It is even more significant when one considers that these students have a degree in that language and that many of them are, in fact, native speakers.

This made another question even more relevant in that it asked mentors to estimate whether they thought there had been a change over the years in trainees’ language competence. They were asked whether they thought that it had Improved, Declined or there had been No change. The findings can be seen in Fig. 6 below:

![Changes in Language Competence](image)

**Fig 6: Changes in Language Competence of trainees (by all mentors)**

I was surprised by the number of mentors who had responded ‘Don't know’ so I decided to look at the profile of the mentors and took out the responses of those who had been mentors for less than 5 years as they would be less able to give an accurate evaluation of the change in trainees’ language competence over a
sufficiently long period. The results were surprising in that the number of mentors who thought that trainees’ language skills had declined increased from 63% to 74%. The change in those who thought that language competence had improved or that there was no change was negligible. All felt qualified to give an opinion so none answered ‘Don’t know’. This was an even more disappointing result and one based on the judgement of mentors who were more experienced and therefore more likely to be accurate in their assessment. The results can be seen in Fig 7 below:

![Fig 7: Changes in Language Competence of trainees (by experienced mentors)](image)

In addition, mentors were also asked to identify aspects of language that caused trainees particular difficulties and to rate how often these occurred using the following frequency categories:
An average score for each aspect was attributed, relating to this frequency rate and the results can be seen in Fig. 8 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>rarely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>nearly always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>always</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fig. 8: Mentors' perceptions of the nature of trainees' difficulties**

It is interesting to note that all except *Recall of Vocabulary* fall within the *Sometimes* or *Often* categories, which is disappointing for language graduates. Grammar tends to be the aspect of language competence that most catches the eye (and ear) of the mentors, though these results are fairly clustered around the same response range.

Many mentors took the opportunity to add comments in the spaces provided and their observations were useful and informative. They commented that trainees
often struggle with classroom language (spoken and written) and that elementary mistakes with spelling and grammar are frequent. This meant that pupils are sometimes being taught incorrect structures or pronunciation, for example. As regards spoken language, mentors felt that few trainees seem to have benefited from their placement year abroad while some native speakers have trouble with their English. Another disadvantage experienced by native speakers is that they find it hard to understand and anticipate pupils’ misconceptions.

In summary, the mentors were concerned about the level of language competence of many of the trainees that they had received from the university. Whether their lack of language competence was due to a period of inactivity or whether it was because they had failed to learn the language thoroughly in the first place is difficult to establish. However, the dissatisfaction of most mentors was clearly indicated and this meant that the need for the establishment of a Guided Learning Programme for future cohorts was confirmed.

4.2 Action Research

The pilot phase of the investigation having been completed, the Action Research phase began in the academic year 2008 – 2009. A cohort of 32 students enrolled on the PGCE MFL programme at the university in September 2008 and comprised 10 male and 22 female students in the following nationality groupings:
Table 5: Nationality and Gender profile of Action Research Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>British</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentine</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peruvian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Their average age was 27.7, the youngest being 22 and the oldest being 51 years old. Unlike the previous cohort, where volunteers had been sought to provide data for the research, this stage of the research involved the whole cohort. As such, this sample was different in composition and, consequently, outlook.

In order to manage the intervention, which was in the form of the Guided Learning Programme (GLP), I held regular Language Awareness sessions with the PGCE MFL students.

The GLP comprised:

- Initial Language Audit (in the main and in the reactivated language)
- Identification of a Language ‘buddy’
- Language Learning Log (LLL)
- Tutor contact (supervision of LLL)
- Testing (September and March)
- Language Awareness Sessions
The Language Awareness sessions, which took place twice a term, provided a framework for the GLP and were used to discuss the research study. Findings from the case study phase were disseminated, experiences about language learning strategies were shared, feedback on Language Learning Logs was given and the sessions also provided a forum for discussion about the progress of the GLP, language awareness and beliefs. For an outline of the Language Awareness programme and a sample of one of the sessions, see Appendix 10.

In the first of these sessions, students identified the language they wished to reactivate and Language Audits (Appendix 2) were completed. The students were tested on different aspects of their language proficiency, which will be discussed later in this document. The purpose of the testing was not to assess the students formally but to gather data. Individual test results remained confidential and this information was only available to me and to each individual student. In the first Language Awareness session, I also explained the purpose of the Language Logs and gave them guidance about how they should complete them.

An important feature of these Language Awareness Sessions is that they were used as a means of disseminating findings from the first phase of the study and as an opportunity to give information about strategies that past students had found useful in the reactivation of languages. These strategies underpinned the
management and direction of the Guided Learning Programme and allowed the reactivation of lapsed language skills to take place in favourable conditions. The broad themes of this process can be summarised by the following model in Fig. 9 below:

**Fig. 9 : A Model for the Reactivation of Lapsed Language**

These findings and the themes developed by this research are listed more fully in Appendix 8. In the reactivation of lapsed language, the students needed to be aware of the importance of the strategies they used (Active Learning), the context in which they operated (Professional Practice), how they could fit learning into their daily routine (Combining learning with leisure) and how to manage their own learning needs and attitudes (Managing Motivation and Affective & Social factors).
Students in previous cohorts had identified the value of balancing language ‘exposure’ activities with more structured learning, such as grammar revision. The had learned to distinguish the value of rote learning from the shortcomings of chunk memorisation and the usefulness of activities such as song, language manipulation and sharing good practice. They had recognised that the nurturing of productive skills were important in the reactivation of lapsed language and that it was important to apply knowledge in order for it to find its way into the long-term memory.

Managing motivation and individual language learning needs during an intense period of training was a challenge for students and it was therefore important for them to be clear about what they wanted to achieve. Many students found that a clear sense of self-awareness could become a tool for motivation and that they could use positive prior learning experiences as a means of encouraging themselves to work on their language skills. The support of others, such as their language ‘buddies’, tutors or fellow students in evening classes, also had a role to play in their language development and students became aware of the potential of such contacts. They also needed to become aware of the affective and emotional factors of language learning and the importance of managing their learning in a way that supported their sense of self-esteem. Other affective factors that could be used to support student learning was tapping into their love of the target language culture in the form of literature, cinema and music.
Students in previous cohorts had indicated the role that social and leisure activities could play in alleviating the burden of language learning and this went beyond the confines of the university and the partnership of language ‘buddies’. Students enjoyed the structured learning provided by evening classes and were imaginative in integrating language learning into their daily routines and leisure activities. However, it was in their professional practice that students had identified the greatest potential for progress as it was here that they could immerse themselves in a language learning environment. Teaching was recognised as an excellent means of learning and subject knowledge was anchored in the long-term memory by extensive use of vocabulary and grammatical structures. It also put the skills they were seeking to reinforce at the forefront of their practice and reminded them that although they were teachers, they were also learners. Reflection therefore became a central part of their practice. These findings from the previous stage of the research became the basis of the guided learning programme and can be seen in more detail in Appendix 8.

It is important to note that the selection of a language to reactivate was the responsibility of each student. They were encouraged to choose a language that had been inactive for at least a year so that they could test the reactivation strategies identified by past students within the framework of the GLP. In most cases, this was not their main teaching language but a second, weaker language. However, some students who had completed their degree some years
before joining the PGCE programme were able to use the GLP to reactivate their main teaching language, which gave them renewed confidence and the opportunity to regenerate lapsed language skills that they would need daily in the classroom. As for the native speakers, they were encouraged to identify another language (not English or their mother tongue) to work on as this would not only increase their employability but would give them an insight into the learning process, one of the central aims of this study.

4.2.1 Language Audits and Learning Logs
As previously mentioned, the Language Audit has long been a feature of this PGCE MFL programme, though we, the tutors, had come to the conclusion that they did not fulfil their purpose in their current form. We were pleased to have the opportunity to examine Language Audits from other PGCE MFL programmes and I used features from these to improve our own. The final version (Appendix 2) separated language skills and knowledge into logical groupings and students were required to rate their ability. They were then required, during the year, to record action taken or experience gained to resolve the weaknesses they had identified. This audit was completed during the first Language Awareness session and, for the purposes of this study, related to the reactivated language, which, as already stated, in most cases was not their main teaching language. Most students therefore needed to complete two audits, one for their main language for the purposes of the PGCE programme, and one for their reactivated
language. Only the data that relate to the work done on the reactivated language have been considered for the purposes of this study. The Language Audits were useful in that they made the students assess their own language skills from an early stage in the year, while the work done as part of the Guided Learning Programme allowed them to place this reflection in a wider context. The audits could then be reviewed at the end of the year allowing students to make a personal assessment of whether they had made progress in the areas that required development.

As well as carrying out a range of testing on the students (which will be dealt with in the next section) another purpose of the introductory session was to explain the Language Learning Logs (LLL). The use of reflective logs has become increasingly popular in both business and education and their use is underpinned by “a philosophy that action learning is a pedagogical approach that best achieves learning outcomes” (Freisner & Hart, 2005: 117). This allows students to record their development in a structured and meaningful way that will allow them to chart the progression of their understanding of their learning process. It is therefore important that this reflection is carried out regularly as:

... to write a log at the end of an experience defeats one of its key uses, since logs capture cycles of learning that occur as a student develops.

(Freisner & Hart, 2005: 117)

In the first session, students were only given imprecise suggestions about the sort of language activities they should undertake, as I considered that it would be interesting to see whether there was a correlation between their age or
nationality and the language activities they chose. Although there did seem to be 
some correlation between the age of the student and activities selected (older 
students being more likely to select grammatical exercises) it was not always the 
case. Nor was there a great difference in the type of activity selected between 
the nationalities. Therefore, in the case of this aspect of data presented, the 
research is inconclusive.

The structure given to students for the completion of the LLL was deliberately 
simple, to encourage regular recording of activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Language Activity</th>
<th>Observation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

They were asked to complete this on a weekly basis and return it to me by email. 
In order to facilitate this, I sent a weekly reminder. I then saved the document for 
each student, updating it every week. After the first month or so, if the language 
activities tended to be too heavily balanced in one type of skill or activity, I 
emailed the student and made suggestions as to how he/she could vary the 
language activity to improve their learning, based on the model for reactivation 
described above.

We, the tutors, had decided that this should became part of the learning and 
teaching element of the programme as it contributed towards the evidence for the 
QTS standard of Subject Knowledge and Understanding (WAG 2006:7) As such, 
all students were expected to complete the LLL. I had some initial concerns
about students feeling under pressure to participate in this learning intervention and how this would affect the ethical principles that underpin this research (BERA, 2004) so I gave careful consideration to the demands that I placed on the students and the timing and management of the GLP. However, after some weeks, I realised that some students did not regard the unequal relationship between a tutor and student to be an issue that affected their learning choices (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005) and my concerns about students wishing to appear compliant when they did not wish to participate had been unfounded. A small minority of students (four in total) failed to keep up to date with sending in their weekly logs, despite the fact that they needed to provide evidence of the QTS standard of Subject Knowledge and Understanding. The number of students failing to complete their weekly logs fluctuated over the months of the GLP and peaked to nearly a third of the cohort at times of pressure, such as weeks when an assignment needed to be submitted. This was unfortunate, but to a certain extent, inevitable.

In November, at the time when the first major assignment was due to be submitted, a fellow tutor on the PGCE MFL programme communicated to me some concerns expressed by a small number of the students during her session. A minority of them felt that they did not want to undertake the tasks of the GLP and wished to concentrate their efforts on other aspects of the training programme. This brought to the forefront of my reflections some thoughts about power dynamics and I realised the accuracy of the observation of Thompson
(2007) that “the negotiation and assertiveness skills involved in conflict management can be seen to amount to skills in the sensitive and appropriate use of power” (Thompson, 2007:18). Although I felt I was right to insist that students work towards optimising their language competence, being one of the fundamental standards for QTS, I realised that little would be achieved by handling a difficult situations insensitively. In such a research study, we take ownership of and are committed to the research aims and it is difficult at times not to feel affronted by those who not only do not share our views, but seem to obstruct them. I had, however, to suppress these feelings of frustration and to find a way of moving the project forward.

In an attempt to regain the momentum of the GLP, I made three decisions. Firstly, I no longer sent weekly reminders to students to complete the LLL as it seemed that this was having an adverse effect and might make some students less inclined to participate. Secondly, we made room on the programme timetable for them to complete their LLL, helping them to find time available for this task. Thirdly, I started a thread on the university’s Virtual Learning Environment about how to combine their leisure pursuits with language learning activities so that they would be less inclined to see this learning as a chore. To a certain extent, this improved the rate of return. There were, however, some students who did not demonstrate a commitment to the importance of ongoing language learning and maintenance of linguistic skills as part of their professional
development. This is of some concern as this attitude is not likely to change in their future careers.

The quality of the Language Learning Logs completed by students varied greatly and, as explained earlier, some students were evidently reluctant to give up time to the consolidation of their linguistic knowledge. Their logs were completed in a perfunctory and unsatisfactory manner and they sometimes failed to present them when requested. It is also likely that some students were not truthful in the listing of activities in their logs; this is difficult, if not impossible, to confirm. To a certain degree, students' efforts might be charted by assessing the progress they made in reactivating their language skills. To this end, I carried out tests that will be described in the next section. I shall return to the Language Logs at a later stage in this study and examine whether there is a correlation between those who made the most progress and the quality of their Language Learning Logs.

4.2.2 Language Testing

This study has already discussed the relationship between students' language competence and their perception of it. I felt that it was important to attempt to measure language skills in an objective way and to try to assess how the Guided Learning Programme could improve them. It was therefore useful to assess student skills and establish baseline data at the start of the programme so that they could be compared with an assessment of the students' skills at a later stage in the intervention. However, this decision was made with a full
understanding that this was not the central part of the research, that the process of reactivating language skills would remain uppermost in the aims of this study and that the testing would only provide an indication of how well this process was working. Given the small numbers in the sample and the variability of students’ learning experiences, the tests could not give definitive proof of language competence, only an indication. The testing would, however, give the students an opportunity to reflect on their skills in a concrete way.

I attended the annual conference of the British Association of Applied Linguistics (BAAL) in September 2008 in order to present a paper on the findings of the pilot stage of this study. The conference not only gave me the opportunity to present the findings for peer review but also to meet individuals who could give me guidance on ways that I could carry out the testing. After several discussions, I decided to carry out the following tests:

- Diagnostic grammar test
- Vocabulary test (receptive knowledge)
- Vocabulary test (productive knowledge)

All these tests have limitations in that they isolate features of language that should be viewed as part of a larger and more complex context. However, I felt that these tests would at least offer some insight into students’ skills levels in addition to relying on their own assessment. Students completed these tests in the Language Awareness sessions.
The first series of tests were carried out in mid-September 2008 and the second tests took place in late March 2009. Only those students who were able to take part in all three tests on both occasions have been included in this analysis, so that pertinent comparisons can be made and any improvement charted. The profile of the students who took part in all the tests can be seen in Table 6 below:

Table 6: Language Profile of Action Research Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Native Language</th>
<th>Teaching Language(s)</th>
<th>Reactivated Language</th>
<th>Years of inactivity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student A</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student B</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student C</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student D</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student E</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>German / Spanish</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student F</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>French / Italian</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student G</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student H</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student I</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student J</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student K</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student L</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student M</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>German / Spanish</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student N</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student O</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student P</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Q</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student R</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student S</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student T</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student U</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student V</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student W</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the students listed above are not the complete cohort, for the reasons stated above, they are a good cross section of the students on the programme.
All were able to identify periods of recent years of inactivity in the languages they had chosen to reactivate and in some cases (Students D, H, V and W), these periods were of significant length.

**Diagnostic Grammar Test**

The test that I chose to assess students’ grammatical knowledge was used in a report to the Higher Education Academy on Assessment for Learning in teacher education (Richards & Roberts, 2008) and is further described in a study on Formative Assessment in teacher education (Richards 2008).

The test comprised a multiple choice exercise (See Appendix 6) where the respondents not only have to select a grammatically correct version of a sentence but are also required to indicate on what basis the selection has been made (knowledge of rule, guesswork or a ‘feel’ for the language) and how sure they feel of having given the correct answer (as a percentage). Such a test is useful as it not only tests grammatical knowledge but also gives an indication of whether that knowledge is based on a sound understanding of the rules.

For the purposes of the study, 8 tests were written or adapted from existing studies (Richard 2008; Richards & Roberts 2008). Two tests were provided for each language, one to be taken in September 2008 and a second test in March 2009. Efforts were made to place similar demands on students in each of the tests and in each of the languages. This attempt at parity was checked by asking experienced teachers of more than one of the languages to examine and
comment on a range of the tests and to identify ways of making the tests as parallel as possible. In consequence, adjustments were made, though it is recognised that it was not possible to make the tests completely uniform in the linguistic demands they placed on students.

In the original study (Richards & Roberts, 2008) there are 40 questions. I decided to reduce this to 15 questions (Appendix 6) as the first weeks of the PGCE programme are very intense and students need a great deal of preparation for other aspects of teaching before they begin their first school placement. In reviewing the results (Appendix 7) it might be pointed out that there are significant differences between the scores of students in each language group. For example, students who took the test in French achieved a mean of 7.56 out of a possible score of 15 compared with those who took the test in Spanish who achieved a mean score of 4.5 out of a possible total of 15. Students made their own decisions about which language to select for reactivation. It is therefore likely that the students in each language group had very different levels at the start of the study. In fact, for some students, their reactivated language could well be their main teaching language while for others, it could be a language they had studied indifferently many years previously but now realised the benefit of renewing their knowledge of it. What is more important, for the purposes of this study, is whether an improvement took place between September and March, and, furthermore, whether any improvement could be due to the Guided Learning Programme.
The data are inconclusive and show little apparent improvement (Appendix 7). Although efforts were made to have parity between the level of difficulty between the first and second test, in practice this was very difficult to achieve. In retrospect, the reduction of 40 questions in the original test (Richards, 2008) to 15 questions limited the efficacy of the test as it did not provide an adequate scope of grammatical knowledge to be tested. Student success largely depended on luck in the inclusion of grammatical points that they knew. A larger scope to the test (such as the 40 questions in the original test) would have been able to assess more accurately the extent of students' knowledge. Student B, for example, scored 9 in her first test, 8 of these being based on her knowledge of grammatical rules with an estimation of 95% certainty. However, she correctly selected 7 correct phrases in the second test, 3 of these being based on her knowledge of rules, with an estimation of 73% certainty. It seems that she was unlucky in the grammar points covered by the second test, hence her lower score. The test, therefore, might not have been an accurate indication of her knowledge or her level of improvement.

This decision to devise a shortened version of the test, although for a valid reason (the need to fit administration of the test into the intense induction programme), therefore had an effect on the validity of the test, in that the range of grammatical rules tested had a random relationship to the students’ knowledge of them. This made the test a less valid indication of student progress throughout
the period of the study. However, as already stated, the tests were not intended to provide definitive evidence that students had improved their skills; they were meant to serve as an indication of trends in language skill reactivation. With hindsight, the tests should have been more extensive in the rules they tested in order to give a more valid measure of students’ at two points in the study.

However, if we consider that a trend of limited grammatical progress was indicated by these tests results, it is perhaps significant that grammar reactivation did not feature as much in students’ language logs as other activities, such as reading or listening to the target language. It is likely that, given the demands and challenges of a teacher training programme, students preferred less active or demanding activities in their few hours of leisure.

A complete profile of test results can be found in Appendix 7.

**Vocabulary Test (Receptive)**

The test that I used to measure receptive knowledge of vocabulary is based on the X_Lex test, a computerised yes/no test (Meara & Milton, 2003). Respondents are given a list of words in the target language that include real words as well as words that are not genuine, but which follow the patterns of words in that language (pseudowords). Respondents have to identify the words that they recognise. In order to control for false-positives (i.e. guessing), if students identify pseudowords as words that they recognise, this is scored negatively. Therefore,
for every correct word identified, the respondent gains one point, but for every pseudoword selected, the respondent loses two points. In a list of 60 words, there are 40 real words and 20 pseudowords. If respondents tick every word, they would receive a score of zero.

I developed a test based on these principles for each of the four languages. In more sophisticated versions of this test (Graham et al, 2008), words are selected from established frequency bands. However, as the purpose of this test was to gain an approximate indication of vocabulary base within a restricted time frame I selected vocabulary that had relatively similar levels of complexity from each language (Appendix 6). As with the diagnostic grammar tests, 8 versions (2 for each language) were devised so that students could sit 2 different versions of each language test. Efforts were made to place similar demands on students by having the tests examined by teachers who had experience of teaching more than one of the languages and who were therefore well placed to make appropriate comparisons.

In reviewing the results (Appendix 7), students in all language groups show an improvement, the best improvement being in the German group where there was an average improvement of 8.87. Results in this test were more successful than the grammatical tests and gave an indication of an improvement in students’ vocabulary knowledge bases. It is likely that this improvement is as a result of the types of activities they were undertaking, as recorded in their Language Learning
Logs. These were heavily weighted towards learning that would support the improvement of the receptive skills, listening and reading. Such activities included reading magazines, listening to music and watching films in the target language. These types of learning were more easily integrated into their demanding work schedules and could be done at odd moments of the day without too much effort or difficulty.

Many students were exposed to their reactivated language during their school placements (61%) while others had selected languages for reactivation that did not offer them this opportunity of contact with the language they were seeking to reactivate. Those students who were able to experience, or better still, teach their reactivated language, had an evident advantage over the other students. This is a limitation of the research as it is not possible to separate the advances made by the Guided Learning Programme and those that were an incidental outcome of students’ exposure to the reactivated language in the classrooms of their placement schools. In a future research phase, these two categories of students could be separated in order to examine the effect of language contact in school placements.

For a complete profile of results, see Appendix 7.
**Vocabulary Test (Productive)**

The test that I used to measure productive knowledge of vocabulary is known as a *Spew Test*. These tests have their limitations (Meara & Fitzpatrick, 2000) but can be a useful way to gauge productive vocabulary. Students are given words in the target language and have produce as many associated words as possible in a fixed period of time. The association is personal to the respondent, in the manner of a psychologist’s ‘ink blot’ test and the purpose is not to explore the strength of the association but the number of words the respondent can produce. For example, the word ‘banana’ might suggest words such as ‘yellow’, ‘fruit’ or ‘yoghurt’ but it might suggest ‘accident’ to someone who had recently slipped on one.

Respondents are not informed that the association is not assessed so that they will concentrate on meaning and attempt to generate linked vocabulary, otherwise students might be tempted to write down any words without reference to meaning. The number of words produced is measured, the first test providing a numerical value that gives the baseline data and the further test giving a second numerical value that allows any change in productive skills to be measured.

I established a list of ten lexical items (See Appendix 6), the same for each language and students were allowed one minute per item to produce as many associated words as possible. This was repeated at the second test, with words
that were of a similar type and level. Students found the exercise very challenging, as productive skills tend to be more demanding and require a greater effort and a higher level of linguistic competence. The words generated were marked by native speakers to ensure that all words written by the students had been considered in a way that a non-native speaker would not be able to estimate.

The test results (Appendix 7), apart from Italian, show a marked improvement. Once again, the nature of the activities undertaken by students, as recorded in the Language Learning Log, show a distinct bias towards supporting vocabulary acquisition, which allows the production of words in test where output is required. The decline in standard of the students' reactivation of Italian is affected by the test of one student, who was able to produce 26 words fewer in the second test, despite months of reactivation activity. However, that student had proved to be a reluctant participant in the GLP, had failed to return his Language Learning Log on several occasions and when he did, it was perfunctory and superficial. This also emphasises the need for a larger sample in order to validate the findings of such testing.

It should be pointed out here that the language testing was only intended to offer an indication of the gains that the students made. The sample of students for each language was too small for any real validity to be achieved and the format of the tests needs to be refined to ensure the reliability of the findings. However,
the tests give a useful indication of trends and the results suggest that students made inconclusive advances in grammatical knowledge and greater gains in vocabulary, which is explained, to a certain extent, by the types of activities listed in their Language Learning Logs. Despite the difficulties in achieving a satisfactory level of validity, the experience of administering the tests and the limited range of findings will provide a solid foundation on which to base the next guided learning programme to be undertaken with the cohort of 2009 – 2010. For complete results, see Appendix 7.

4.2.3 Student Questionnaires

In a Language Awareness session that took place in December 2008, I gave students a questionnaire to complete with the following aims in mind:

- To review the Guided Learning Programme (GLP) and indicate which areas needed adjustment;
- To identify student attitudes to the GLP;
- To evaluate activities undertaken by students in their Language Log;
- To gather data regarding student perceptions of their linguistic competence;
- To gather data on student perceptions on their main and reactivated language competence. This would allow some comparison with the perceptions of the mentors (previously discussed in 4.1.5).
The questionnaires had been piloted and the design had paid due attention to the anonymity of the respondents. Students were assured that nobody could be identified and were encouraged to be as honest as possible. They were also informed that if they did not wish to complete the questionnaire, they could hand in a blank copy. Owing to absences, 28 questionnaires were completed as 2 students had withdrawn from the programme and 2 students were absent. Most of the data gathered was by means of a Likert scale and quantitative in nature, allowing me to use a tally system to measure responses to each question. Where students had taken the opportunity to comment on their responses or in their answers to open questions, I used coding frames to identify common and significant themes.

Students were asked to evaluate their language competence in their main teaching language. The results are shown below in Fig. 10:

![Language Competence of Trainees](image)

**Fig. 10** Trainees' Perception of their Main Language Competence
It is worthwhile at this point to compare this assessment with that of the mentors, as shown in Fig. 5 below:

![Language Competence of Trainees](image)

**Fig. 5 Mentors’ Perception of Language Competence of trainees**

This difference in perception of trainees’ language skills is striking and, when the data were discussed at a Language Awareness session in February 2009, trainees made the following observations:

- The difference was disappointing, especially as mentors were evaluating native speakers as well as UK students;
- There might be a tendency for mentors to view past standards in overly positive way, making their evaluation unnecessarily harsh;
- More experienced teachers might have higher standards;
- More experienced teachers might find it difficult to empathise and recall what it was like to be a trainee;
Given the crisis in recruitment for language degrees and places on ITT programmes, it was possible that standards had declined;

Students’ evaluation of their competence in their reactivated language was also informative, as shown in Fig. 11 below:

![Language Competence of Trainees](image)

**Fig. 11** Trainees’ Perception of their Reactivated Language Competence

They were much harsher in their self-assessment of their reactivated language and many (32%) estimated that they still had significant work to undertake in order to reactivate their language skills to a level appropriate for teaching the language.

In the questionnaire, trainees were also asked to identify aspects of language that caused them difficulties and to rate how often these occurred, using the following frequency categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>rarely</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>often</td>
<td>nearly always</td>
<td>always</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An average score for each aspect was attributed, relating to this frequency rate with the results shown in Fig. 12 below:

![Difficult Aspects of Language](image)

**Fig. 12** Trainees’ perceptions of the nature of their language difficulties

It is interesting to recall at this point the mentors’ rating for the frequency of these errors and compare them with those of the trainees, bearing in mind that the mentors had, as part of their professional duties, listened carefully to the language used by the trainees and assessed them against the QTS standard of Subject Knowledge and Understanding (WAG, 2006). This comparison is demonstrated by Fig. 13 below:
In the questionnaire, students had been given the opportunity to comment on the difficulties they encountered in both their main and their reactivated language. Their observations were collated and coded, and the main themes are discussed below.

**Main Language:**

Many students recognised that they needed to double-check their spelling though felt strongly that teaching helped them to improve their language knowledge. They found it useful to keep in contact with friends abroad, especially as a way of honing the skills required to teach pupils in Years 12 and 13, which requires extensive language competence. Many native speakers worried about their mother tongue fluency and some were anxious about their knowledge of
grammar. They recognised that they were sometimes at a disadvantage because they had not learnt their own language as a foreign language, and were therefore unable to anticipate learners’ difficulties.

**Reactivated Language:**

Students found marking and assessment of pupils’ work in their reactivated language particularly difficult. In their efforts to regenerate language, although complex structures remain, simple ones often do not, so the language affected by attrition could not be easily predicted. It was generally agreed that it is difficult to fit language reactivation around the PGCE programme. Other students observed that learning becomes more difficult as one gets older, though research does not always support this view (Lightbown & Spada, 1999). However, experience of previous language learning allows them to make a more effective selection of learning strategies that are appropriate to their needs.

Students were also given an opportunity to evaluate the work done so far as part of the Guided Learning Programme and were asked to assess how much they felt their competence and confidence in their reactivated language had improved. Their perceptions are shown in Fig. 14 below:
Fig 14: Trainees’ perception of improvement in Competence & Confidence

From the responses it can be inferred that trainees had experienced an increase in confidence that was not matched by a perceived improvement in their competence. They seemed unwilling to make claims of better language skills as these were still being tested in the classroom. However, they seemed more comfortable in using the reactivated languages as they had experienced several months in their school placements and were evidently feeling more at ease with the linguistic demands of their duties. This feeling of security and confidence should, it is hoped, allow the appropriate conditions for the improvement in competence to take place.
They were also asked how interesting and useful they found the GLP, as well as how easy it was to carry out the requirements of the programme. The findings are shown in Fig. 15 below:

![Fig 15: Trainees' evaluation of the Guided Learning Programme](image)

Although they found the programme both interesting and useful, they did not always find it easy to fit it into their work schedule, though this is to be expected given the demands of their professional duties and development. I was surprised at the relatively small percentage of trainees that gave the programme a high rating for usefulness and this made me realise that some did not share my views about the need to maintain language skills, or at least did not recognise the programme as being an appropriate way to meet this objective. A summary of their observations were as follows:
**Strengths:**

- It concentrates on the importance of subject knowledge;
- It identifies and works on gaps in knowledge and skills;
- The weekly log allows for consistent improvement to take place;
- It helps trainees to regain confidence as well as competence;
- It forces trainees to reflect on learning;
- It gives freedom in the choice of activities and flexibility in learning.

**Areas for improvement:**

- More time needs to be allocated for the GLP in the university timetable;
- Small assessments should take place every other week (1 respondent);
- More advice should be given about the sorts of tasks that can be undertaken;
- There should be more language tasks in university sessions;
- The Language Log should be organised into blocks rather than on a weekly basis.

Students were also asked to indicate what types of language activities they had undertaken from the following list (Table 7) and to rate how successful they had seemed:
Table 7: Types of Activities undertaken by Trainees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talking with native speakers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading magazines, books, Internet, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching films, listening to radio or music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing letters, emails or other texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar exercises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning vocabulary/ expressions / idioms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student were asked rate how often they had undertaken these activities using the following frequency categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nearly Always</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An average score for each aspect was attributed, relating to this frequency rate with the following results shown in Fig. 16 below:

![Language Activities](image)

**Fig 16: Frequency of Different Language Activities**

It was interesting to note that most activities were undertaken with similar frequency rates, apart from writing which was the least popular. It is also interesting to note that, although students claimed to work on their grammar and
learning as much as other aspects of the language reactivation, this was not supported by the evidence in their language learning logs, which seemed to indicate that these were less frequently studied than the questionnaire findings suggest. This is interesting and suggests that either the students were unaware of this imbalance or that they were deliberately changing the weight of the frequency ratings, though the reason for this is difficult to establish as the questionnaires were anonymous. I can only conclude that they genuinely thought they were doing more grammatical work and learning than was actually the case.

Students rated the success of their activities according the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not at all successful</td>
<td>Sometimes successful</td>
<td>Often successful</td>
<td>Nearly always successful</td>
<td>Always successful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An average score was attributed for each response, relating to the degree of success in the scale above. The findings are shown in Fig. 17 below:

![Success of Language Activities](image)

**Fig 17: Success Rate of Different Language Activities**
The low rating given to writing suggests that the reason that students undertook fewer written activities was that they did not consider them to be useful in the reactivation of languages. It is useful to note that they did rate grammar and learning highly, and (from the previous question) claimed to do such activities fairly frequently. However, the results from the diagnostic testing and the evidence from the language learning logs do not bear this out.

4.2.4 Further Student Evaluation

As a final evaluation of the Guided Learning Programme, twelve students were selected from the cohort and in late April 2009 I sent them emails asking for their views on the advantages and disadvantages of the programme and asked them to suggest improvements and more ideas for reactivation. The students were selected to provide a cross section of views and attitudes as shown in Table 8 below:
Table 8: Students selected for final evaluation of the programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Reason for selection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student G</td>
<td>Improvement in test results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student H</td>
<td>Improvement in test results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student N</td>
<td>Improvement in test results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student S</td>
<td>Improvement in test results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student W</td>
<td>Improvement in test results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student X *</td>
<td>High quality of Language Learning Log</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Y *</td>
<td>High quality of Language Learning Log</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student T</td>
<td>High quality of contributions in Language Awareness Sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student K</td>
<td>Resistant participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student E</td>
<td>Low Quality / Frequency of Language Learning Log</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student L</td>
<td>Low Quality / Frequency of Language Learning Log</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student V</td>
<td>Low Quality / Frequency of Language Learning Log</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Not included in Test analysis as absent for second test

The criteria for selection were borne out as Student E sent an email declining to give an evaluation, Student V replied late and with a brief message only and Student L did not reply at all. Student K sent a reply that expressed regret for her reluctance during the year despite her recognition of the positive features of the programme.

The responses from students were merged into one document and analysis was carried out by creating a data coding frame that allowed significant themes to be identified. Students identified a wide range of benefits of the work they had undertaken and were able to make the link between the improvement of their language skills and their professional practice, understanding that linguistic competence underpinned their role as a language teacher. They had worked...
hard to motivate themselves and felt that the programme gave a structure to this work, helping them to organise their time and efforts effectively. It allowed them to focus on themselves at a time when there was a tendency to focus on schools and pupils, making sure that they retained their identities as learners. This had benefits in school, as observed by one student:

I have almost gone back to being a learner like the pupils and can empathise with their learning of the language.

Student N

The programme allowed them to maintain the cultural dimension of language learning and keep up to date with current affairs and other related fields. They enjoyed the flexibility that the programme gave them though this had disadvantages for some:

You offered a lot of freedom which is good as we all wanted that but it also had the counter effect that we are free to work or not. However, I am not sure that everyone would agree on imposing something to learn.

Student K

Many enjoyed the social benefits of the programme and enjoyed contact with their language ‘buddy’ or attending evening classes. They had the satisfaction of seeing themselves making progress and at the same time increasing their employability.

The problems they encountered were overwhelmingly those of lack of time and organisational constraints and these themes were echoed by virtually all of them. Student S pointed out that “arriving from school, applying for a job, planning lessons and writing essays or IPD (Initial Professional Development) are already
a lot to do." Some apologised for the lack of commitment they had shown at times, one of them pointing out:

   It is not through lack of enthusiasm that students fall behind in following the programme, it is simply through the pressure of the PGCE workload.  
   
   Student W

However, after the initial months of their training, they had learned how to plan for lessons and manage their workload more effectively, allowing them to cope with the demands of the programme more easily. The choice of activities was key to managing the requirements of the programme:

   The course is very demanding and therefore time management was probably my only issue, however I overcame this by choosing enjoyable ways of maintaining my language through magazines, TV etc.  
   
   Student X

This suggested that the idea of combining the business of learning language with leisure pursuits had indeed been a successful modification of the original programme. Key to the success of students was the choice of language to reactivate. If they had selected a language that they did not know well or were unlikely to encounter during their professional practice, this made the reactivation considerably more onerous and some students were disgruntled that others were having an easier time because they had selected their main and / or teaching language. As previously stated, students were encouraged to choose a language other than their main teaching language, unless there had been a period of inactivity before joining the PGCE programme. In the case of those who needed to reactivate their main teaching language, the GLP would be a worthwhile means of supporting their classroom experience.
Many of the suggested improvements to the programme centred around its closer integration in the PGCE programme, rather than being an ‘add-on’. One student suggested:

Maybe it could be incorporated into the programme of study, with group work every now and again, conversation workshops with tasks … so when we students get together on those Mondays to cry / discuss progress on the course maybe it can be done in the reactivated language.

Student V

Some suggested facilities such as language laboratories or sessions in the target language. One suggested that students should be set language tasks such as essays or oral presentations, but recognised that this would not be popular. Students seemed to be divided between those who disliked the weekly Language Learning Log reminder and those who wanted more structure or the imposition of tasks. The difference between individual needs and learning styles makes such a programme extremely challenging and a way of providing flexibility within a structured framework would seem to be the way forward. One student proposed a potential solution:

The GLP report could be sent monthly, probably more practical than weekly. A grid with ‘actions to be taken’ for the GLP could be done, like tick the box if done: grammar exercise, a discussion, reading a Spanish newspaper, cook following a recipe in Spanish, watch a movie, listen to radio… a great deal of different practical activities.

Student S

Students often mentioned the need for careful monitoring to ensure that they did not become overloaded or subjected to excessive stress at such a crucial stage of their development.
Many of them repeated the observations made by previous cohorts about the reactivation of language. They valued the importance of contact with the language ‘buddy’ though they advised that care should be taken in the selection of the person, as some students who had chosen someone who was not part of the cohort found that their partner was not always available when needed. Several recommended evening classes, recognising that they needed the structure and discipline that such activities would provide. Reading was a very popular activity as it was easy to do, allowing a wide variety of interesting content and integration with their daily routine with minimal difficulty. Many expressed a view that visits to the target language country were essential in maintaining optimal skills but regretted that this was often difficult to fit into their training programme. Oral skills were highly valued and grammatical knowledge was only mentioned by a few students.

The evaluation provided a worthwhile overview of the effectiveness of the programme and students showed a very good understanding of ways in which it should operate in future. Until the GLP becomes a formal part of the PGCE MFL programme, its effectiveness will be compromised as some students will view it as an unwelcome and optional burden on top of their studies. Despite the view of tutors that the maintenance (and improvement, where necessary) of subject knowledge and skills is of crucial importance to professional development, some students do not share this view and are not likely to do so in their future teaching careers. For those who recognise the value of sound subject knowledge, skills
and understanding, the Guided Learning Programme is a valuable means of establishing a long-term habit that will serve them well in their future careers. With robust language skills, they are better able and equipped to manage their professional duties and concentrate on essential core of their work: their pupils’ learning.
# Chapter 5

## Conclusion

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</tr>
</thead>
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5.1 Reviewing the Research Questions

In concluding this investigation, we need to return to the research questions to assess how far this study has been able to answer them. Each stage of the research has had as its focus some area of language study or student support that relates to the problems under investigation, though the path of the study might have diverged at times. I propose to deal with each question discretely and bring together the threads and themes of the data to support the ideas presented below.

5.1.1 Question 1: How best can students reactivate and recall previously learnt language skills?

**Exposure to language:** In the case study phase of the research, findings suggested that students valued exposure to the language as a means of reactivating lapsed language skills. This suggests very strongly that receptive skills, that is to say listening and reading, were high on students’ agenda when they sought to revive dormant skills. Contact with native speakers was identified as a worthwhile activity and this was recognised in the Guided Learning Programme with the request that students arrange regular interaction with a languages partner. However, contact with native speakers was also, at times, incidental, with some students using Facebook and one student recording that she found it useful to simply to eavesdrop native speakers' conversations. In perfect circumstances, students would spend time in the target country prior to beginning the programme. However, within the context of the PGCE programme,
students made the best of what they contact they had available. It is entirely understandable that students wishing to reactivate previously learnt language skills would concentrate on receptive skills as these can be categorised as input activities. They are also the learning experience that would give the students the greatest sense of self-confidence before they embark on the more challenging productive skills, which are the tasks that draw attention to the learners, perhaps at times when they do not feel ready for such scrutiny. It is also interesting to note that the age profile of the students in the study categorises most of them as learners of the communicative language learning generation, a language learning experience that prizes exposure to language as a fundamental means of building up linguistic expertise. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that such students value building receptive skills as a gateway to a higher level of language learning. However, although there is a correlation between the way they originally learned languages and the way they chose to reactivated them, this does not denote causality (Morrison, 2009). It is probably that they were influenced in their selection of ways of reactivating language by the methods with which they were already familiar but this is not an established cause.

**Structural Approach:** The fact that students favoured an approach that exposed them to languages does not mean, however, that many of them did not recognise the importance of the structural features of language learning. The importance of grammatical knowledge was highlighted by a large proportion of students in recognition of the essential role it was to play in their future careers as language
teachers. Some (especially the older students) returned to grammar studies instinctively and spent considerable time and effort in working their way through grammar books. This process gave them considerable self-confidence and allowed them to feel equal to the task of language teaching, providing them with a framework for their linguistic knowledge. Such learning was constantly reinforced and built on during their time training to be language teachers. As many pointed out, the best way to anchor knowledge in their long-term language memories was by teaching it, not just once but several times. This process will be repeated often in their future careers, allowing their language skills to become firmly rooted in the years to come. It was also interesting to note that several students commented that they had found it useful above all to return to the basics of language learning. Mentors had already pointed out that no grammatical point was too simple or basic to fail to cause the students problems. Therefore students were right to take the 'bottom-up' approach as they could not safely assume that any feature of grammatical knowledge was immune from language loss and, as such, it merited attention. In discussions, some used the metaphor of needing to build a house on solid foundations. Even if it was a grammar point that the students knew well, reviewing it would benefit the students by reinforcing their self-confidence. As such, no harm was done and potentially a great deal of good was derived by this constant review of grammatical knowledge and skills.
Combined methods: In assessing the two broad methods of language reactivation, that is to say, exposure to language or a more structured (and grammatical) approach, many students recognised that not only was a combination of the two approaches useful but that it was essential in order to cover the complex range of language skills and knowledge required by their new career as a languages teacher.

Eric Hawkins, the renowned modern linguist, describes eloquently the importance of this combined method. He recounts his early studies in Spanish, where his grammar-translation schooling provided a good foundation for his immersion in Spain, allowing his skills to develop rapidly. In contrast, a later visit to Germany was less successful as he did not have sufficient structural knowledge to provide the foundation for rapid progress. He likens it to swimming, where:

… when learning to swim it is useful to practise arm and leg movements first on the bank, before jumping into the water. The early learning sets up expectations, to be tested and modified by experience abroad, about how the language works. Without it, immersion in the spoken language can be confusing. There are no ‘hooks’ for the new learning to cling to.

(Hawkins, 1999:33)

Most students recognised the importance of providing these ‘hooks to learning’ and concluded that the best solution was to begin with a period of building up receptive skills through a wide range of exposure to the language and to then intersperse this work with more structural language reactivation in the form of grammar work and vocabulary building activities.
However, as the results of the diagnostic grammar testing indicated, although many claimed to accept the importance of grammatical knowledge and listed such activities in their Language Learning Logs, this did not always lead to improvement in their structural knowledge. Most students on the programme completed their school studies in the era of the communicative language teaching approach and, as such, are likely to give less importance to the knowledge of grammatical structures than older language teachers. It is probably inevitable, therefore, that they possess lower grammatical skills and value them less than previous generations of language learners.

In the choice of reactivation methods, much depended on the tastes and personality of the students and their personal circumstances. Those who were naturally disposed to social contact sought out evening classes; however, some were unable to take this option due to cost or their domestic circumstances. Students' choice of learning activities was likely to have been affected by their established learning styles. For example, those students who had, up until this point, favoured a visual learning style, such as reading, were likely to favour an approach to learning that had served them well in the past. Likewise, those who have succeeded by learning through listening to recorded material during past studies were likely to continue to learn in an auditory way.
Furthermore, those who enjoyed study and had a love for the language found the process of reactivation relatively easy and enjoyable. These were the students whose confidence and competence developed at a rate that allowed them to make the best of the experience of training to be a teacher. Motivation and a recognition of the importance of affective factors in influencing progress was a key finding of this study. Savignon (2002) sums this up in the view that:

Attitude is without doubt the single most important factor in a learner's success. Whether the learner's motivations are integrative or instrumental, the development of communicative competence fully engages the learner. The most successful teaching programs are those that take into account the affective as well as the cognitive aspects of language learning and seek to involve learners psychologically as well as intellectually.

(Savignon, 2002:12)

Managing students' affective, professional and personal needs was a major challenge in this research study and it was clear that the aims of the research were not shared or successfully achieved by all students. However, the programme did have a significant impact on most of the students, enabling them to extend their views on language learning and think more about learning habits. The degree of success in implementing the guided learning programme varied throughout the cohort. Some were indifferent and viewed it as yet another milestone on the way to their achievement of qualified teacher status. In my opinion, however, most students in the cohort were altered by the experience of the guided learning programme and made considerable changes to how they viewed the role of learning in the context of their professional lives, and this group is likely to retain the habit of ongoing language maintenance. Furthermore, I would hope that for a significant number of these students, the change will be
even more fundamental in that they will have developed a new mindset in their perception of language learning as a personal, dynamic and ongoing experience. It is this last group who will develop into the language teachers who have the most to offer their profession and the pupils in their charge. It should also make a significant difference to their attitude to their professional role and is likely to make them practitioners who feel a greater sense of empowerment and fulfilment as teachers.

5.1.2 Question 2: Which type of language seems most resistant to loss?
In their efforts to reactivate lapsed language, students had to assess their existing skills and knowledge in order to identify gaps in their linguistic competence. This was done by means of the language audit and also by the range of testing that was undertaken, though the limitations of this assessment have been recognised. In identifying the types of language that had resisted the process of attrition, it was very difficult to generalise, owing to the widely varying learning experiences of the students and also the students themselves, their personality and their dominant learning characteristics. However, some general themes became apparent:

- In order of difficulty, students found that basic structures were most resistant to loss, though they could frequently slip up over apparently minor grammatical points. They found the retrieval of vocabulary moderately difficult and the more complex grammatical points the knowledge that was most likely to be subject to attrition.
Receptive skills were also felt to be more resistant to loss and once the process of reactivation had been undertaken, most students felt that their comprehension (both oral and aural) was relatively easy to improve. However, the productive skills of speaking and writing were much more challenging and many students expressed a dread of being put under the spotlight in the performance of these skills. It became evident that the students with the weakest language skills (perhaps in a second foreign language) needed a period of intensive input before they felt comfortable about demonstrating their productive skills.

One feature of language that seems to resist attrition was reported to be pronunciation. This was confirmed by both students and mentors. It was evident that if a student had learnt the rules of pronunciation in the past, this was internalised in the long-term memory and prevented students from making errors in pronunciation in the future. This did not mean, unfortunately, that errors of pronunciation were never made but where they were a problem, it seemed that they were as a result of imperfect understanding or knowledge during the original learning process. This often had a relation to the students’ spelling as understanding of the spoken form and how it affected the written form are obviously closely linked. One especially interesting feature of the limited attrition of pronunciation was that students reported cases of transfer from regional to standardised accents during the process of reactivation. Some students reported that if, in the past, they had been very fluent in a language and
had acquired a regional accent, when they reactivated their language skills, they found that the regional accent had disappeared and had been replaced by a standardised accent. It could be argued that this is probably due to the materials used and the learning conditions during the reactivation period, but I would argue that it is surprising that traces of the regional accent seem to disappear totally. This would be a worthwhile and interesting topic for future research.

5.1.3 Question 3: Which learning methods have allowed students to maximise their language memory over a significant period of time and how can these methods be adapted for future use?

In a sense, this question is similar to the first research question, though it is more specific in its focus. When students were asked to reflect on their learning methods, this inevitably led to discussion on a very disparate range of activities. Much of the reflection related to the types of activities which had not been useful and despite this negative response, these views were useful in allowing advice to crystallise in a way that would support students in their aim to maintain and improve language skills.

While some students recognised the value of rote learning for internalising verb conjugations or grammatical structures, many were highly critical of the chunk memorisation that has become a feature of many pupils’ language learning experience. The learning of complex sentences without understanding the
constituent parts and how they function as part of the linguistic whole was felt to be extremely unhelpful. Many students pointed out that memorising such phrases could allow pupils to pass examinations but gave no understanding of the language or how the learners could manipulate it in order to suit their individual needs. This 'phrase book' approach does not have the flexibility to allow learners to attain more sophisticated levels of language proficiency and many learners find that if they are presented with slight variations of the pre-learnt phrase, they cannot understand what is being asked of them. This discussion of learning took place in the Dearing report, which recognised that:

One of the problems that has bedevilled language teaching methodology has been the perennial pendulum swing between creativity, rote learning and understanding. In fact, successful language learning is likely to include all three as part of the process of exposure to and interaction with new language.

(DES, 2007: 29)

During discussion in the Language Awareness sessions, the activities that the students recognised as being useful all had some element of language manipulation in them. This might involve taking sentences apart and reforming them or altering them in ways to match different variable, such as changing the tenses to match different time references. This was useful not only to strengthen grammatical understanding but also to reinforce knowledge of vocabulary. In fact, the learning of vocabulary featured strongly in the activities favoured by students, but they did not necessarily choose to sit down and learn lists. Their preferred methods showed much more imagination such as following recipes in the target language or changing the settings on various items of technology (such as
mobile phones) to the foreign language settings. This allowed them to work on their linguistic knowledge in a way that did not place too much of a burden on their busy schedules.

This attempt to combine leisure activities with language reactivation proved to be very fruitful and students shared ideas about using their leisure activities to support their language learning, creating a list of useful and imaginative ideas. It was interesting that listening to foreign language songs appeared frequently in students’ language logs. Although students had rejected the idea of chunk memorisation, they found that learning song lyrics by allowing them to become a background to their lives was an acceptable form of the same activity. However, the rhythm and cadences of the songs were useful in internalising the language in a natural (and enjoyable) way. In the description of his less successful visit to Germany in his memoirs, Eric Hawkins describes playing the piano and singing at the home of his hosts and finding that it helped him to find his way into the language structures of German and memorise extensive amounts of vocabulary (Hawkins, 1999: 81).

High on the list of activities that they valued from their own learning experiences were those that allowed them to become independent language learners. Many remembered projects they had undertaken as part of their language studies with great fondness. It seemed that this sense of ownership had allowed them to develop a more acute and defined feeling of self fulfilment and this had opened
the way for them to develop as confident language learners. To a certain degree, this study attempted to replicate that experience by giving them a free choice in the activities that they undertook in order to reactivate their languages.

The more successful activities undertaken by students inevitably found their way into the lesson planning they undertook in their placement schools and creative activities such as writing songs were discussed in subject sessions at the university. The Language Learning Logs therefore had a three-fold benefit: they allowed students to try out activities that they could later use in the classroom, they provided a structure for the improvement of their language skills and they helped students to develop an insight into their own role as a learner and consider ways of making the most of their learning experiences.

5.1.4 Question: What impact does a clearer understanding of this process have on student learning and how can this contribute to improved professional practice?

The investigation was discussed with the students on several key occasions, keeping students fully informed of its progress and the research findings. At certain times, the data were not particularly welcome, such as the disparity between the ratings given by mentors to the students' language competence, compared with those of the students themselves. This gave them food for thought and forced them to reflect more critically on their linguistic ability. This did not necessarily mean that their self-confidence was damaged as they recognised
that the difference in perceptions was not always due to actual linguistic competence but could be as a result of different value judgements. It was useful, however, to make them question the assumption that a language degree equated complete language competence.

In my opinion, the greatest quality of any teacher is that of empathy as this predisposes the individual to cope with the wide range of learners’ needs and aspirations. Having their language competence questioned and challenged obliged the trainees to place themselves squarely in the position of their pupils and see themselves as learners. They were forced to accept that learning is not a static, finite activity but that it is a lifelong commitment. It is a cliché to say that ‘the more you know, the more you realise you don’t know’ but there is a germ of truth in these words. This gave them a new perspective and allowed them to identify more closely with those that they taught. As one student pointed out, the nerves she experienced having homework returned to her in evening classes allowed her to sympathise more closely with her pupils when she was returning marked work to them. This consideration for the feelings of others goes a considerable way towards creating a comfortable learning atmosphere, one where pupils feel secure and at ease, an environment where they can make mistakes and learn from them, a process that is essential in any learning experience.
An inevitable impact of the study was that it highlighted the importance of subject knowledge in the programme. This is often forgotten by trainees in the process of learning skills that seem more immediate, such as how to control a classroom of adolescents while managing resources and technological equipment. However, trainees realise very quickly that their role as expert in the eyes of the class is undermined by imperfect language skills; if they do not realise this themselves, it is pointed out by their mentors. The study therefore highlighted the importance of linguistic competence and motivated students to make sure that their subject knowledge was equal to the task of teaching. As discussed above, although I cannot claim that the impact of the programme motivated all students, it did make a significant difference to the most committed trainees, those that are likely to make the most effective and successful teachers.

The most notable impact, however, is likely to be the improvement in students' understanding of the learning process. The Dearing report highlights the importance of practitioner research and supporting teachers in the development of metacognition:

"We need to build on the many examples of rich and rewarding practice in our schools, providing opportunities for language teachers to observe and practise new approaches and to reflect on the learning process."

(DES, 2007:16)

There is therefore an expectation that teachers should reflect on their practice and the learning that is fundamental to their role, so this should begin during the period of training of these teachers. Consequently, the metacognitive advantages of the insights gained by this investigation should not be underestimated. The
students who took part in the study have proved by their educational achievements that they are successful learners. As such, they have a store of strategies that have proved their worth over a considerable period of time. It is likely that such students rarely reflect on the value of such strategies. They do not need to, because they work. Evaluation and reflection usually take place when a problem is identified, so they should not be criticised for taking these strategies for granted. This study forced the students to evaluate their learning methods and reflect upon them, allowing them to become the ‘reflective practitioner’ recommended by Schön (1991). However, by reflecting on their own learning experiences, rather than those of their pupils, this placed them at the centre of this study, adding depth to their understanding, thereby allowing an increased self-knowledge that could be transferred to their pupils at a future date. The fact that they acquired this increased understanding by their own experience places a higher value on this knowledge.

5.2 Key Issues

It has been proposed throughout this report that the most effective students will have a commitment to lifelong learning. If they do not do so, it is surely our place to foster one and create conditions that will allow students to develop an awareness of the crucial role that this should play in education and society as a whole. The aims of this study have been to support students in the reactivation of lapsed languages but on a larger scale, they should become active lifelong learners, striving to pass this ethos to their pupils.
In this task, their motivation and commitment have been called into question and this level of engagement with their professional practice will be the cornerstone of their success. The most effective teachers are the ones who see beyond the confines of daily routine and are able to see the essential role that a good habit for learning has in the nurturing of wholly functioning members of society. These are the individuals who are curious about life and open to new experiences, able to empathise with a wide range of fellow citizens, whatever their background, race, creed or language.

The role of the teachers in society is a complex one. They are responsible for the apprenticeship of other human beings, often at a critical period of their development. This is a heavy responsibility. As such, they need to provide a model for their pupils and in the delivery of subject knowledge and understanding, this model needs to be a sound and rigorously tested one. The role of the students in this study as future teachers of modern languages can only be effective if it is based on sound language skills. This function as languages ‘expert’ is central to their professional practice and needs to be underpinned by a solid level of competence and confidence.

The journey into self awareness and perception undertaken by this study has provided students with the opportunity to take a long, hard look at themselves and critically analyse not only their weaknesses and shortcomings but also to
recognise their strengths in a way that should allow them to capitalise on what they have learnt, not only during their language studies but also in the process of becoming a teacher. This will, it is hoped, allow them to develop into the reflective practitioners that we need in our classrooms.

It has also been an informative experience for the tutors, challenging their preconceptions and forcing them to identify more clearly their role in this crucial period of the students’ development, as well as having an impact on my own professional development. This has allowed many ideas to crystallise and these recommendations will be discussed below in the final section of this report.

5.3 Recommendations

• The first contact with students on the programme comes at the interview stage. It is recommended that the assessment that formed the action research phase of this study is modified and used at this recruitment stage in order to assess more accurately students’ levels of language competence. These tests will be revised in accordance with the findings discussed earlier in this report.

• The demands placed on students during the programme are considerable and it is proposed that the subject team explore ways of managing the learning experience of the students so that they are not overloaded and consequently unable to function effectively. This could take the form of
reorganising subject sessions and changing the format of the guided learning programme so that it is more easily integrated into the students' professional development, both at university and in the partnership schools. The guided learning programme should be modified to provide a structured framework within which students have the flexibility to manage their learning a way that suits their individual needs. Tutors will need to look into the provision of language support sessions and investigate the purchase of language materials that would support reactivation. The choice of such materials should reflect the types of activities that the students find most useful and enjoyable, such as films and recipe books.

- While recognising the difficulties faced by students in the management of their workload, tutors remain convinced of the essential role of Subject Knowledge and Understanding in the training of teachers. This is a central feature of the standards of Qualified Teacher status and is therefore an element of the programme that cannot be ignored. It is therefore proposed that the Language Learning Logs become a fixed feature of the programme though their management and content will be reviewed to take into account student observations. It is also proposed that students compile a portfolio of language activities for inclusion in their progress file. This will be useful and interesting for future employers and will provide a reminder to students that language learning should be an ongoing commitment.
Dissemination of findings is an important feature of research and it is intended that some aspects of this study will be further explored, either as articles or conference papers. An extensive bank of data has been gathered for this investigation and these can be reviewed in relation to other aspects of the many complex areas of language research. This has proved to be a rich vein of study and the neglected field of language attrition will provide many avenues of future research. In addition to this, the investigation has been a rewarding process for my own professional development, and the knowledge and skills I have gained during this journey will be of significant use in my role as a researcher, teacher and learner.
References:


## Appendices

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Appendix 1 – Mentor Questionnaire

(University Headed paper)

Dear MFL Mentor,

This 2 page questionnaire forms part of a research study I am undertaking with the aim of providing student teachers with support to help them reactivate language skills that might have lapsed or declined in some way. I would be grateful if you could spare a few moments to complete the following questions and return in the stamped addressed envelope provided. It has been designed to take you as little time as possible to complete. Please be assured that your responses are entirely confidential and anonymous and that this has been approved by the School of Education Ethics Committee.

Thank you for your help.

Jill Llewellyn Williams
School of Education

.................................................................

About you
Please tick the relevant box

1. Age

Under 25  26 – 35  36 – 45  46 – 55  Over 55

2. Gender

Male  Female

3. Number of years in the teaching profession

Under 5  6 – 15  16 – 25  25+

4. Number of years as a mentor

Under 5  6 – 15  16 – 25  25+
About your student teachers
N.B These observations apply to student teachers you have mentored over the years and do not specifically apply to the students that you might have mentored this year

5. Please make an assessment of the general language competence of student teachers you have mentored in past years.

Please tick the relevant box

| Their language competence is generally very good |
| Their language competence is generally good     |
| Their language competence is generally satisfactory |
| Their language competence is generally unsatisfactory |

Comment, if required

6. With which aspects of language do most student teachers experience difficulty?

Please rate the frequency of difficulty using the following scale

<table>
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<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>rarely</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>often</td>
<td>nearly always</td>
<td>always</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pronunciation
Recall of vocabulary
Spelling
Grammar
Spoken fluency
Knowledge of idioms / expressions
Other (please specify)

7. Do you believe there has been a significant change in the language competence of modern foreign language student teachers over the years?

Yes, it has improved
Yes, it has declined
No

Comment, if required.
### Appendix 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LANGUAGE AUDIT</th>
<th>NAME</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(adapted from T. Riordan 2008)</td>
<td>DATE OF AUDIT</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LANGUAGE</th>
<th>1 = Very strong</th>
<th>5 = Very Weak</th>
<th>Action taken or experience gained</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language Learning Strategies</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand and use grammar terminology e.g. adjective, connective, gender, relative clause.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can use dictionaries and other reference materials appropriately and effectively.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I have techniques and strategies for memorisation</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I use context and clues to interpret meaning</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I use knowledge of English and other languages to support my language learning.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Grammar</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>I generally get genders correct</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I use correct plural endings</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>I use the correct form of demonstrative, possessive and indefinite adjectives</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>I use correct adjectival endings</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>I use adverbs correctly</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>I use the comparative and superlative correctly</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>I know how to use prepositions correctly</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>I know when and how to use cases appropriately and accurately (German)</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know a wide range of connectives (conjunctions)</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I know a wide range of time phrases</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>I use subject and object pronouns appropriately</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I use question forms correctly</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>I know the term infinitive and its categories</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know which verbs are irregular and which are regular</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task</td>
<td>Score</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can use the correct part of the verb with its associated subject pronoun</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use the present tense correctly</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use the present continuous correctly (\text{(Spanish)})</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use the imperative correctly</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use the perfect tense correctly</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use the imperfect tense correctly</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use the imperfect continuous correctly (\text{(Spanish)})</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use the pluperfect tense correctly</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use the conditional tense correctly</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use the preterite tense correctly (\text{mainly Spanish, Italian)}</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use the future tense(s) correctly</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use reflexive verbs correctly</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use modal verbs correctly (\text{mainly German)}</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use separable verbs correctly (\text{mainly German)}</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use the negative forms correctly</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use clauses and can place word order correctly (\text{mainly German)}</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use the passive correctly (\text{mainly German)}</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use the subjunctive correctly (\text{mainly Spanish, French, Italian})</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Listening**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am able to listen carefully for gist and for detail</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can understand spoken texts at native level of complexity</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can differentiate between different forms of pronunciation and accents</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can differentiate between different registers</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can deal with the unpredictable and the unfamiliar e.g. by interpreting what I hear from content, tone, inferences.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can summarise, report and paraphrase what I hear</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I listen for personal interest and enjoyment as well as for information</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Speaking**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have good pronunciation and intonation</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can ask and answer questions</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can initiate, develop and sustain conversations</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can communicate with native speakers</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can use the target language</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can vary and adapt the target language to suit different situations and for real purposes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can use idiomatic language appropriately</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can use a wide range of structures and vocabulary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can express ideas and opinions clearly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can skim and scan texts for information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can use knowledge of context and grammar to understand texts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I work with authentic materials, including texts from the internet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can summarise, paraphrase and report what I read</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can interpret implicit meanings, assumptions and attitudes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can use glossaries and dictionaries effectively</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I read for personal interest and enjoyment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can communicate through writing and be understood</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can write accurately</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can check my written work for quality and accuracy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can write independently (i.e. without using reference materials)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can write for different audience and purpose</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can write creatively and imaginatively</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can use idiomatic language appropriately</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can translate effectively between languages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I communicate with native speakers through correspondence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*or countries where these languages are spoken
**Appendix 3 – Example of Language Log**

**Guided Learning Programme**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Language Activity</th>
<th>Observation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening to Podcasts in German (political, news, chat)</td>
<td>Tried to find different accents to hear and also different types of texts for varying vocab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Watched French television channel.</td>
<td>I enjoyed watching the French television channel, I found it an easy way to reactivate my language. I was especially interested in watching the French news and was surprised at how much I could still understand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening to podcasts from Liberation.fr whilst cooking dinner</td>
<td>I have found this activity makes good use of my time and is re-acquainting me with spoken French. I am able to keep up-to-date on current affairs, whilst also adding to my vocabulary, which I am aware needs work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grammar exercises on the perfect/imperfect/pluperfect/present tenses.</td>
<td>I feel the revision of the tenses was an important activity. Although I felt that I already knew them relatively well, after looking over them I realised that some revision was needed. I began by reading over the grammar points and then I practised them by doing several exercises from grammar books. After spending some time on this I now feel that my tenses have improved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning some vocabulary in School. Googling French lessons web pages on internet to practice pronunciation (vowels, animals, etc.)</td>
<td>I need to learn how to spell the words or expressions before trying to pronounce them. Observing French lessons is helping me remember basic words and expressions. Improving my pronunciation by drilling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Talking to my language partner. Working on grammar exercises from Upgrade your French Revisiting and relearning basic vocab for use in class.</td>
<td>The combination of grammar, vocab and speaking practice seems to be a good combination. When using more skills I seem to have better weeks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Changed language settings.</td>
<td>For this week I have changed the language settings on my mobile phone to Italian.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Revision of prepositions particularly the cases which follow. Worked via grammar books and exercises.</td>
<td>Revision also helped by a visual exercise I constructed for a year 8 class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Translation practice.</td>
<td>This week I decided to test my translation skills, following a piece of work prepared for a year 11 class last week. I translated a short piece of...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing (news article)</td>
<td>This was useful as it enabled me to identify my weaknesses and focus on them.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Booking a holiday to France</td>
<td>Was interesting reading French tourist websites and learning new cultural things about France, where to stay in relation to where to go etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Met new Spanish people, through the one I met 3 weeks ago.</td>
<td>Sad to say, but it was easier when a bit tipsy.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German music (German rap and other songs using only German)</td>
<td>Getting used to translating quick sentences, especially with rap. Hearing more colloquial German and keeping up with new words coming into the language.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooked a Risotto.</td>
<td>I made a truly scrumptious Risotto dish by following an authentic Italian recipe (in Italian).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening and speaking: Had a Skype call with my language partner</td>
<td>Really interesting phone call, really hard at the beginning but after 10min I could make myself understood</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail correspondence with my ex Italian teacher and a classmate from my evening class from last year.</td>
<td>I keep in touch with several of my classmates and the teacher from my evening classes. We sometimes arrange to see a film or meet for a drink and we email and speak in Italian. I always have to check my written Italian even in a short email!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read the French news on the internet.</td>
<td>This activity helps me stay up to date with what is happening in France.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watched the Little Mermaid in French</td>
<td>Translation of songs was interesting. Songs might make a good class activity. For example, pupils could listen for certain words, fill in the gaps in lyric sheet etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am having conversations with my Spanish housemate. I am still writing new words in a notebook.</td>
<td>The conversation is getting more and more precise. I start to use the past tense!!!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation practice</td>
<td>I translated a short piece of writing from a news story online. This was useful as I was able to focus on specific technical language which I hadn’t used for several months</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 4

Guided Learning Programme - Evaluation

This questionnaire has been designed so that you are not identifiable from any of the details you give. Please answer the questions as honestly and completely as possible. If you do not wish to complete this evaluation, please hand in a blank copy.

Your contributions so far have been valuable and interesting. Your participation in this research is confidential and you retain anonymity unless you choose to waive it. In any dissemination or publication of the research findings, participants will only be identified as students of the PGCE Modern Foreign Languages cohort of 2008 – 2009 of the Cardiff School of Education. (See B.E.R.A Guidelines 2004 § 24)

Your Main Teaching Language

1. What do you think is a fair assessment of your general language competence in your main teaching language?
   Please tick the relevant box

   - My language competence is generally very good
   - My language competence is generally good
   - My language competence is generally satisfactory
   - My language competence is generally unsatisfactory

   Comment, if required

2. With which aspects of language do you experience the most difficulty?

   Please rate the frequency of difficulty using the following scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>rarely</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>often</td>
<td>nearly always</td>
<td>always</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   - Pronunciation
   - Recall of vocabulary
   - Spelling
   - Grammar
   - Spoken fluency
   - Knowledge of idioms / expressions
   - Other (please specify)
The Language you have chosen to Reactivate
N.B. If this is the same as your main teaching Language, go straight to question 5.

3. What do you think is a fair assessment of your general language competence in the language you have chosen to reactivate?

Please tick the relevant box

| My language competence is generally very good |   |
| My language competence is generally good     |   |
| My language competence is generally satisfactory | |
| My language competence is generally unsatisfactory | |

Comment, if required

4. With which aspects of language do you experience the most difficulty?

Please rate the frequency of difficulty using the following scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>rarely</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>often</td>
<td>nearly always</td>
<td>always</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pronunciation
Recall of vocabulary
Spelling
Grammar
Spoken fluency
Knowledge of idioms / expressions
Other (please specify)

5. Any further comments about your main or reactivated language:
Guided Learning Programme

The aim of this programme is:

• To improve the linguistic competence of trainee language teachers
• To improve the linguistic confidence of trainee language teachers

6. To what extent do you feel more competent in your reactivated language?

Please circle:
Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 Very much

7. To what extent do you feel more confident in your reactivated language?

Please circle:
Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 Very much

8. How useful do you think the Guided Learning programme has been?

Please circle:
Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 Very

9. How interesting do you think the Guided Learning programme has been?

Please circle:
Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 Very

10. How easy do you think the Guided Learning programme has been?

Please circle:
Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 Very
11. In your choice of language activities for your weekly log, what sort of activities have you tended to choose?

Please rate the frequency using the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>rarely</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>often</td>
<td>nearly always</td>
<td>always</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Talking with native speakers
- Reading magazines, books, Internet etc.
- Watching films, listening to radio or music
- Writing letters, emails or other texts
- Grammar exercises
- Learning vocabulary / expressions / idioms
- Other (please specify)

12. Which sort of activity do you think has been the most successful?

Please rate the success using the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all successful</td>
<td>Sometimes successful</td>
<td>Often successful</td>
<td>nearly always successful</td>
<td>Always successful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Talking with native speakers
- Reading magazines, books, Internet etc.
- Watching films, listening to radio or music
- Writing letters, emails or other texts
- Grammar exercises
- Learning vocabulary / expressions / idioms
- Other (please specify)

13. What are the strengths of the Guided Learning Programme?


14. How can it be improved?


Thank you!
Appendix 5

Email to students at the end of the Guided Learning Programme for final evaluation.

Dear

As my research is drawing to a close, I have selected a small number of students out of the group to gather their impressions of how the Guided Learning Programme has gone. I'd be very grateful if you could take just a few moments to answer the following questions:

- What have been the benefits of the Guided Learning Programme for you personally and for the PGCE programme?
- What problems did you find with the GLP?
- How might the Guided Learning Programme be improved for future use?
- Do you have any other comments/ ideas on reactivation of lapsed language skills?

In line with BERA guidelines, if you are unable or would prefer not to answer these questions, that's fine. However, it would be useful for me if you can tell me if this is the case rather than not replying to this email.

It would also be very helpful if you could respond by next Monday, if possible. Thank you very much, I really appreciate your views,

Jill

Email sent to the following students:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Reason for selection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student G</td>
<td>Improvement in test results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student H</td>
<td>Improvement in test results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student N</td>
<td>Improvement in test results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student S</td>
<td>Improvement in test results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student W</td>
<td>Improvement in test results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student X</td>
<td>High quality of Language Learning Log</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Y</td>
<td>High quality of Language Learning Log</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student T</td>
<td>High quality of contributions in Language Awareness Sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student K</td>
<td>Resistant participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student E</td>
<td>Low Quality / Low frequency return of Language Learning Log</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student L</td>
<td>Low Quality / Low frequency return of Language Learning Log</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student V</td>
<td>Low Quality / Low frequency return of Language Learning Log</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Not included in Test analysis as absent for second test
Appendix 6

Tests

Diagnostic Tests 1 & 2

Receptive Vocabulary Tests 1 & 2

Productive Vocabulary Tests 1 & 2
(‘Spew’ Tests)
Diagnostic Language Test for French 1 (adapted from B.J. Richards 2008)

Name…………………………………………… ……Date………………..

Circle the letter (A, B, C, or D) of the sentence that you think is the best French. Circle one sentence only.

Show as a percentage how sure you are of the right answer (e.g. if you’re completely sure put 100%, if your answer is a complete guess put 0%)

Circle to show whether you answered through your feel for the language, or your knowledge of the rule (could you state it?) or if it was just a guess.

1. A Explique-moi cela mon petit.
   B Expliquez-moi cela s’il vous plaît monsieur.
   C Explique-moi cela mes enfants.
   D Explique-moi cela s’il vous plaît monsieur.
   Percentage sure = …….% “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess

2. A Il a décrit les vacances qu’il se souvient avec plaisir.
   B Il a décrit les vacances lesquelles il se souvient avec plaisir.
   C Il a décrit les vacances dont il se souvient avec plaisir.
   D Il a décrit les vacances desquelles il se souvient avec plaisir.
   Percentage sure = …….% “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess

3. A Elle est belle avec sa robe et son chapeau vers.
   B Elle est belle avec sa robe et son chapeau verts.
   C Elle est belle avec sa robe et son chapeau verte.
   D Elle est belle avec sa robe et son chapeau vertes.
   Percentage sure = …….% “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess

4. A Si tu l’ais averti il t’aurait téléphoné.
   B Si tu l’aurais averti il t’aurait téléphoné.
   C Si tu l’as eu averti il t’aurait téléphoné.
   D Si tu l’avais averti il t’aurait téléphoné.
   Percentage sure = …….% “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess

5. A On y s’habitue.
   B Sa soeur lui l’a acheté.
   C Elle en y a bu.
   D Mon père me l’a donné.
   Percentage sure = …….% “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess

6. A Cet hôtel est agréable!
   B Cette hôtel est agréable!

Jill Llewellyn Williams ST 06004578 262
C  C'est hôtel est agréable!
D  Ce hôtel est agréable!

Percentage sure = ……%  “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess  

7.  A  Je me suis mis de travailler.
B  Elle a refusé venir.
C  J'ai décidé à partir à sept heures.
D  Il a commencé à pleuvoir.

Percentage sure = ……%  “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess  

8.  A  Pendant qu’il regardait la télé il a entendu la sonnerie.
B  Pendant qu’il a regardé la télé il a entendu la sonnerie.
C  Pendant qu’il regardait la télé il entendrait la sonnerie.
D  Pendant qu’il a regardé la télé il a entendu la sonnerie.

Percentage sure = ……%  “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess  

B  C’est une des rues plus élégantes de Londres.
C  C’est la fille plus intelligente du monde.
D  C’est une des plus chics rues de Paris.

Percentage sure = ……%  “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess  

10.  A  On m’a offertes des fleurs.
B  Elle a été offerte des fleurs.
C  On m’a offert des fleurs.
D  J’ai été offert des fleurs.

Percentage sure = ……%  “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess  

11.  A  Ces vêtements sont ceux de Marianne.
B  Ces vêtements sont celles de Marianne.
C  Ces vêtements sont celui de Marianne.
D  Ces vêtements sont celle de Marianne.

Percentage sure = ……%  “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess  

12.  A  Rendez-leur leurs crayons!
B  Rendez-leur leur crayons!
C  Rendez-leurs leurs crayons!
D  Rendez-leurs leur crayons!

Percentage sure = ……%  “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess  

13.  A  Je n’ai de monnaie dans ma poche.
B  Je n’ai pas de la monnaie dans ma poche.
C  J’ai de la monnaie dans ma poche.
D  Je n’ai pas monnaie dans ma poche.

Percentage sure = ……%  “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess
14. A Sa femme s’est monté sa valise en haut.
B Sa femme a monté sa valise en haut.
C Sa femme est monté sa valise en haut.
D Sa femme est montée sa valise en haut.

Percentage sure = …….% “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess

15. A Toutes les rues étaient couvertes par glace.
B Toutes les rues étaient couvertes de glace.
C Toutes les rues étaient couvertes de la glace.
D Toutes les rues étaient couvertes avec glace.

Percentage sure = …….% “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess
**Diagnostic Language Test for German 1** (D. Pendleton 2008, adapted from B.J. Richards 2008)

**Name**……………………………………………    **Date**........................

Circle the letter (A, B, C, or D) of the sentence that you think is the best German. **Circle one sentence only.**

Show as a percentage how sure you are of the right answer (e.g. if you’re completely sure put 100%, if your answer is a complete guess put 0%)  

Circle to show whether you answered through your **feel** for the language, or your **knowledge** of the rule (could you state it?) or if it was just a **guess**.

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<tr>
<td>1. A heuteabend</td>
<td>B heute Abend</td>
<td>C heute-Abend</td>
<td>D heute abend</td>
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Percentage sure = …….%  "feel" / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

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Percentage sure = …….%  "feel" / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

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Percentage sure = …….%  "feel" / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. A Wo war ihr gestern?</td>
<td>B Wo waren ihr gestern?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Jill Llewellyn Williams ST 06004578**
C Wo wart ihr gestern?
D Wo wartet ihr gestern?

Percentage sure = ……….%  “feel” / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

7. A Es ist plötzlich sehr warm geworden.
B Es hat plötzlich sehr warm geworden.
C Es ist plötzlich sehr warm geworden sein.
D Es wurde plötzlich sehr warm sein.

Percentage sure = ……….%  “feel” / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

8. A Du solltest es ihm haben gesagt.
B Du hättest es ihm sagen sollen.
C Du solltest es ihm sagen gehabt.
D Du hättest es ihm sollen gesagt.

Percentage sure = ……….%  “feel” / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

B Die Nacht war kalte und dunkel.
C Es war eine kalte dunkle Nacht.
D Es war eine kalte dunkle Nacht.

Percentage sure = ……….%  “feel” / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

10. A Martin ist nicht so groß wie Axel.
B Martin ist nicht so groß als Axel
C Axel ist größer als Martin.
D Axel ist großer wie Martin.

Percentage sure = ……….%  “feel” / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

11. A Wer Hund ist das?
B Von wem Hund ist das?
C Wessen Hund ist das?
D Dessen Hund ist das?

Percentage sure = ……….%  “feel” / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

B Kommst du? Ob es an dem aufkommt.
C Kommst du? Es kommt darauf an.
D Kommst du? Es kommt daran auf.

Percentage sure = ……….%  “feel” / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

B Er wohnt in Llandewi Brefi, einem kleinen Dorf in Wales.
C Er wohnt in Llandewi Brefi, eines kleinen Dorfes in Wales.
D Er wohnt in Llandewi Brefi, ein kleines Dorf in Wales.

Percentage sure = ……….%  “feel” / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess
14. A Hast du meine neue Schuhe gesehen?
B Hast du meinen neuen Schuhe gesehen?
C Hast du meine neue Schuhren gesehen?
D Hast du meine neuen Schuhe gesehen?

Percentage sure = .......% "feel" / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

15. A Er lag das Buch auf dem Tisch.
B Er legte das Buch auf den Tisch.
C Er lag das Buch auf dem Tisch.
D Er legte das Buch auf dem Tisch.

Percentage sure = .......% "feel" / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess
Diagnostic Language Test for Spanish 1 (adapted from B.J. Richards 2008)

Name………………………………………………   Date………………..

Circle the letter (A, B, C, or D) of the sentence that you think is the best Spanish. Circle one sentence only.

Show as a percentage how sure you are of the right answer (e.g. if you’re completely sure put 100%, if your answer is a complete guess put 0%)

Underline to show whether you answered through your feel for the language, or your knowledge of the rule (could you state it?) or if it was just a guess.

1. A  El clima de una región no cambia de un día a otro pero el tiempo sí.  
B  La clima de una región no cambia de un día a otro pero el tiempo sí.  
C  El clima de un región no cambia de un día a otro pero el tiempo sí.  
D  El clima de una región no cambia de una día a otro pero el tiempo sí.  

Percentage sure = …….%
“feel” / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

2. A  Y a su hermana le gustan más las blusas azul.  
B  Y a su hermana le gusta más las blusas azul claro.  
C  Y a su hermana le gustan más las blusas azul claro.  
D  Su hermana le gustan más las blusas azul claro.  

Percentage sure = …….%
“feel” / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

3. A  Hacia cinco años que ellos son en Chile.  
B  Hacia cinco años que ellos estaban en Chile.  
C  Hacia cinco años que ellos estén en Chile.  
D  Hacia cinco años que ellos eran en Chile.  

Percentage sure = …….%
“feel” / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

4. A  Es difícil que salgamos en seguida.  
B  Es difícil que salimos en seguida.  
C  Es difícil que saldremos en seguida.  
D  Es difícil que saldriamos en seguida.  

Percentage sure = …….%
“feel” / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

5. A  Haré el viaje si tuviera el dinero.  
B  Haría el viaje si tengo el dinero.  
C  Haré el viaje si tendré el dinero.  
D  Habría hecho el viaje si hubiera tenido el dinero  

Percentage sure = …….%
“feel” / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

6. A  El niño se lava su cara.  
B  Yo me pongo el corbata.  

Jill Llewellyn Williams ST 06004578
C  No sé dónde está mi corbata.
D  Él se cepilla su dientes.

Percentage sure = …….%  “feel” / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

7.  A  Yo le hablé antes salir.
  B  Yo le hablé antes de salir.
  C  Yo hablé le antes salir.
  D  Lo yo hablé antes de salir.

Percentage sure = …….%  “feel” / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

8.  A  Nunca en ma vida he oído tal cosa.
  B  Nunca en ma vida, oído tal cosa.
  C  Nunca en ma vida, he oído cosa.
  D  En mi vida, he oído tal cosa.

Percentage sure = …….%  “feel” / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

9.  A  Ellos la se explican a él.
  B  Ellos se la explican a él.
  C  Se la ellos explican a él.
  D  Ellos se la a él explican.

Percentage sure = …….%  “feel” / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

10.  A  Aquellas maletas no son los suyas.
  B  Aquellas maletas no son la suyas.
  C  Aquellas maletas no son suyas.
  D  Aquellas maletas no son la suya.

Percentage sure = …….%  “feel” / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

11.  A  La chica que estoy pensando es venezolana, no cubana.
  B  La chica quien estoy pensando es venezolana, no cubana.
  C  La chica de quien estoy pensando es venezolana, no cubana.
  D  La chica en quien estoy pensando es venezolana, no cubana.

Percentage sure = …….%  “feel” / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

12.  A  Las flores que están en la mesa son de nuestro jardín,
  B  Las flores que son en la mesa son de nuestro jardín,
  C  Las flores que están en la mesa está de nuestro jardín,
  D  Las flores que son en la mesa están de nuestro jardín,

Percentage sure = …….%  “feel” / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

13.  A  La cuidad fue destruída para el terremoto
  B  Yo lo necesito para el siete de julio.
  C  Me queda mucho para hacer.
  D  Por rico, no es generoso.

Percentage sure = …….%  “feel” / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess
    B Robert se hizo abogado.
    C El se puso médico.
    D Con tantos problemas el viejo se puso loco.

Percentage sure = …….% “feel” / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

15. A El nos sirve para de guía.
    B La verdad es que esto no sirve nada.
    C El se sirve para eso de abrir botellas.
    D Sirvase usar este plato.

Percentage sure = …….% “feel” / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess
Diagnostic Language Test for Italian 1 (adapted from B.J. Richards 2008)

Name……………………………………………    Date………………..

Circle the letter (A, B, C, or D) of the sentence that you think is the best Italian. 
Circle one sentence only.

Show as a percentage how sure you are of the right answer (e.g. if you’re completely sure put 100%, if your answer is a complete guess put 0%)

Circle to show whether you answered through your feel for the language, or your knowledge of the rule (could you state it?) or if it was just a guess.

1. A Quando mi sono sposata avevo ventiquattro anni.  
   B Quando mi sposavo avevo ventiquattro anni.  
   C Quando mi sono sposata ho avuto ventiquattro anni.  
   D Quando mi sposavo ho avuto ventiquattro anni.

   Percentage sure = …….%  
   “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess

2. A Come siete venuti, in macchina o in piedi?  
   B Come siete venuti, in macchina o a piedi?  
   C Come siete venuti, a macchina o a piedi?  
   D Come siete venuti, nella macchina o a piedi?

   Percentage sure = …….%  
   “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess

3. A Mi pare che Giorgia si abbia innamorata di me.  
   B Mi pare che Giorgia si sia innamorata di me.  
   C Mi pare che Giorgia sia si innamorata di me.  
   D Mi pare che Giorgia si sia innamorato di me.

   Percentage sure = …….%  
   “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess

4. A Se proprio vuoi fare la pace con lui, telefonalo!  
   B Se proprio vuoi fare la pace con lui, telefonagli!  
   C Se proprio vuoi fare la pace con lui, gli telefoni!  
   D Se proprio vuoi fare la pace con lui, lo telefoni!

   Percentage sure = …….%  
   “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess

5. A La ragazza la quale parlavo è una mia compagna di classe.  
   B La ragazza con la quale parlavo è una mia compagna di classe.  
   C La ragazza che parlavo è una mia compagna di classe.  
   D La ragazza la quale parlavo è una mia compagna di classe.

   Percentage sure = …….%  
   “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess

6. A Speriamo che sarebbe arrivata in tempo.  
   B Speriamo che arriverà in tempo.
C Speriamo che arrivasse in tempo.
D Speriamo che fosse arrivata in tempo.

Percentage sure = …….%  “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess

7. A Cognosci i figli di Gianna? No, ma conosco suoi nipoti!
B Cognosci i figli di Gianna? No, ma conosco sue nipoti!
C Cognosci i figli di Gianna? No, ma conosco i suoi nipoti!
D Cognosci i figli di Gianna? No, ma conosco suoi i nipoti!

Percentage sure = …….%  “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess

8. A Ma quanto pane mangi?
B Ma quanta pane mangi?
C Ma quando pane mangi?
D Ma come pane mangi?

Percentage sure = …….%  “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess

9. A La lezione con le preposizioni era difficile.
B La lezione dalla preposizioni era difficile.
C La lezione per le preposizioni era difficile.
D La lezione sulle preposizioni era difficile.

Percentage sure = …….%  “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess

10. A In questo mese sono stati organizzate molte manifestazioni.
B In questo mese sono stati organizzati molte manifestazioni.
C In questo mese si sono state organizzate molte manifestazioni.
D In questo mese sono state organizzate molte manifestazioni.

Percentage sure = …….%  “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess

11. A Ieri si è salito sulla cupola del Duomo.
B Ieri si sono saliti sulla cupola del Duomo.
C Ieri si è saliti sulla cupola del Duomo.
D Ieri si ha salito sulla cupola del Duomo.

Percentage sure = …….%  “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess

12. A Se sarei stato al tuo posto, avrei fatto diversamente.
B Se fossi stato al tuo posto, avressi fatto diversamente.
C Se avessi stato al tuo posto, avrei fatto diversamente.
D Se fossi stato al tuo posto, avrei fatto diversamente.

Percentage sure = …….%  “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess

B Gli zii di Francesco sono persone divertenti.
C Gli zii di Francesco sono persone divertenti.
D Gli zii di Francesco sono persone divertente.

Percentage sure = …….%  “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess
14. A Credo che si siano scelti un buon posto a teatro.
   B Credo che si sia scelti un buon posto a teatro.
   C Credo che si sia scelto un buon posto a teatro.
   D Credo che si abbia scelto un buon posto a teatro.

   Percentage sure = .......%  “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess

15. A Se avrò abbastanza soldi, mi comprerei una bella casa.
   B Se avessi abbastanza soldi, mi comprerò una bella casa.
   C Se avessi abbastanza soldi, mi comprerei una bella casa.
   D Se avrà abbastanza soldi, mi comprerà una bella casa.

   Percentage sure = .......%  “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess
Name………………………………………………    Date………………..

Circle the letter (A, B, C, or D) of the sentence that you think is the best French.  
**Circle one sentence only.**

Show as a percentage how sure you are of the right answer (e.g. if you’re completely sure put 100%, if your answer is a complete guess put 0%)

Circle to show whether you answered through your feel for the language, or your knowledge of the rule (could you state it?) or if it was just a guess.

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<th>(D)</th>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Elle n'a jamais vu rien.</td>
<td>Elle n'a jamais personne vu.</td>
<td>Elle n'a jamais rien vu.</td>
<td>Elle n'a rien jamais vu.</td>
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<td>Percentage sure = …….%</td>
<td>“feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>C'est un beaux exemple de roman!</td>
<td>C'est un belle exemple de roman!</td>
<td>C'est un bel exemple de roman!</td>
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</table>
D  C'est un beau exemple de roman!

Percentage sure = .......%  “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess

7. A  Ceux-ci me plait!
B  Celles-ci me plait!
C  Ce me plait!
D  Celui-là me plait!

Percentage sure = .......%  “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess

8. A  Elle est couchée la poupée de bonne heure.
B  Elle a couché la poupée de bonne heure.
C  Elle s'est couchée la poupée de bonne heure.
D  Elle s'a couché de bonne heure.

Percentage sure = .......%  “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess

9. A  Il faut que je le dire.
B  Il faut que je le dis.
C  Il faut que je le dise.
D  Il faut que je le dit.

Percentage sure = .......%  “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess

10. A  Après s'être réveillée, elle s'est levée.
B  Après s'être réveillé, elle s'est levée.
C  Après s'être réveillé, elle s'est levé.
D  Après s'être réveillée, elle s'est levé.

Percentage sure = .......%  “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess

11. A  Comprenez-vous ce qui est arrivé?
B  Comprenez-vous quoi est arrivé?
C  Comprenez-vous ce qu'est arrivé?
D  Comprenez-vous qu'est arrivé?

Percentage sure = .......%  “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess

12. A  Elle est la meilleure élève de la classe.
B  Elle est la plus bonne élève de la classe.
C  Elle est la mieux élève de la classe.
D  Elle est l'élève meilleure de la classe.

Percentage sure = .......%  “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess

13. A  Ce sont des questions que personne ne posent.
B  Ce sont des questions que personne pose.
C  Ce sont des questions que personne ne pose.
D  Ce sont des questions que personne ne pose pas.

Percentage sure = .......%  “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess
    B L'agence sera fermée depuis 2005.
    C L'agence a fermé depuis 2005.
    D L'agence a été fermée depuis 2005.

   Percentage sure = …….% “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess

15. A Les vacances sont très importantes pour les français.
    B Moi, je suis Français!
    C Il a un mauvais Français!
    D Je suis professeur de français en Allemagne.

   Percentage sure = …….% “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess
Diagnostic Language Test for German 2 (D. Pendleton 2008, adapted from B.J. Richards 2008)

Name……………………………………………    Date………………..

Circle the letter (A, B, C, or D) of the sentence that you think is the best German. Circle one sentence only.

Show as a percentage how sure you are of the right answer (e.g. if you’re completely sure put 100%, if your answer is a complete guess put 0%)

Circle to show whether you answered through your feel for the language, or your knowledge of the rule (could you state it?) or if it was just a guess.

1. A Sein Onkel ist ein Arzt: einen sehr guten Arzt.
   B Sein Onkel ist ein Arzt: ein sehr guter Arzt.
   C Sein Onkel ist Arzt: ein sehr guter Arzt.
   D Sein Onkel ist Arzt: ein sehr gut Arzt.

   Percentage sure = …….%   “feel” / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

2. A All meine Freunde werden eingeladen.
   B Alle meine Freunde werden eingeladen.
   C Alle meinen Freunde werden eingeladen
   D All meiner Freunde werden eingeladen

   Percentage sure = …….%   “feel” / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

   B Ich bin Deutsch seit drei Jahren lernen.
   C Ich habe Deutsch seit drei Jahren lernen.
   D Ich lerne Deutsch seit drei Jahren.

   Percentage sure = …….%   “feel” / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

   B Wir fahren trotz dem schlechten Wetters an die See.
   C Wir fahren trotz des schlechten Wetters an die See.
   D Wir fahren trotz dem schlechten Wetter an der See.

   Percentage sure = …….%   “feel” / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

5. A Es ist ein sehr hohes Gebäude: das hoheste in der Stadt
   B Es ist ein sehr hohes Gebäude: das höchste in der Stadt.
   C Es ist ein sehr hohes Gebäude: das höchste in der Stadt
   D Es ist ein sehr hohes Gebäude: das höchste in der Stadt

   Percentage sure = …….%   “feel” / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

6. A Ich verstehe nicht alles das er sagt.
   B Ich verstehe nicht alles, was er sagt.

Jill Llewellyn Williams ST 06004578
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7. A</th>
<th>Worauf wartest du?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. B</td>
<td>Was wartest du für?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. C</td>
<td>Was für wartest du?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. D</td>
<td>Auf was wartest du?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8. A</th>
<th>Er fährt mit der Straßenbahn in die Stadt, und dann geht zu Fuß.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8. B</td>
<td>Er fährt mit der Straßenbahn in die Stadt, und dann er zu Fuß geht.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. C</td>
<td>Er fährt mit der Straßenbahn in die Stadt, und er dann geht zu Fuß.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. D</td>
<td>Er fährt mit der Straßenbahn in die Stadt, und dann geht er zu Fuß.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10. A</th>
<th>Hier spricht Mann Deutsch.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10. C</td>
<td>Hier Mann spricht Deutsch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. D</td>
<td>Hier man spricht Deutsch.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>11. A</th>
<th>Sie sind Vorgestern angekommen.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11. C</td>
<td>Sie sind bevor gestern angekommen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. D</td>
<td>Sie sind vor gestern angekommen.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>12. A</th>
<th>Eines Tages werden wir euch besuchen.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. C</td>
<td>Einen Tag werden wir euch besuchen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. D</td>
<td>Einem Tag werden wir euch besuchen.</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>13. A</th>
<th>Das Hotel ist neulich verkauft worden.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13. C</td>
<td>Das Hotel ist neulich verkauft worden.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
    B Drei Glas Bier und zwei Flasche Cola, bitte.
    C Drei Gläser Bier und zwei Flaschen Cola, bitte.
    D Drei Gläser Bier und zwei Flasche Cola, bitte.

    Percentage sure = .......%  “feel” / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

15. A Ich freue mich auf dich wiedersehen.
    B Ich freue mich darauf, dich zu wiedersehen.
    C Ich freue mich darauf dich wiederzusehen.
    D Ich freue mich darauf, dich wiederzusehen.

    Percentage sure = .......%  “feel” / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess
Diagnostic Language Test for Spanish 2 (adapted from B.J. Richards 2008)

Name……………………………………………… Date……………………

Circle the letter (A, B, C, or D) of the sentence that you think is the best Spanish.
Circle one sentence only.

Show as a percentage how sure you are of the right answer (e.g. if you’re completely sure put 100%, if your answer is a complete guess put 0%)

Underline to show whether you answered through your feel for the language, or your knowledge of the rule (could you state it?) or if it was just a guess.

1. A   El se lo dice a él
      B   El le lo dice a él.
      C   El le se dice a él.
      D   El se dice a él.

Percentage sure = …….% “feel” / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

2. A   Hace un año que estuve en México.
      B   Hace un año que estoy en México.
      C   Hace un año que fui en México.
      D   Hace un año que esté en México.

Percentage sure = …….% “feel” / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

3. A   Nueva York es la ciudad más grande en los Estados Unidos.
      B   Nueva York es la ciudad más grande de los Estados Unidos.
      C   Nueva York es ciudad más grande en Estados Unidos.
      D   Nueva York es la más grande ciudad en los Estados Unidos.

Percentage sure = …….% “feel” / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

4. A   Acababan de llegar cuando salimos.
      B   Acababan llegar cuando salimos.
      C   Acababan de llegar salimos.
      D   Acababan de llegar cuando salgamos.

Percentage sure = …….% “feel” / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

5. A   Quienquiera que es, no te podrá ayudar.
      B   Quienquiera que era, no te podrá ayudar.
      C   Quienquiera que será, no te podrá ayudar.
      D   Quienquiera que sea, no te podrá ayudar.

Percentage sure = …….% “feel” / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

6. A   Este libro es el mejor que el otro.
      B   Este libro es mejor que otro.

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C Este libro es mejor que el otro.
D Este libro es el mejor que otro.

Percentage sure = .......% "feel" / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

7. A El está manejando cuando tuvo el accidente.
B El estaba manejando cuando tuvo el accidente.
C El estaba manejando cuando tenía el accidente.
D El está manejando cuando tenía el accidente.

Percentage sure = .......% "feel" / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

8. A Hemos vendido el nuestro pero no vamos a comprar la tuya.
B Hemos vendido el nuestro pero no vamos a comprar el tuyo.
C Hemos vendido la nuestra pero no vamos a comprar el tuyo.
D Hemos vendido la nuestra pero no vamos a comprar la tuya.

Percentage sure = .......% "feel" / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

9. A La planeta en que vivimos es la tierra.
B El planeta en que vivimos es la tierra.
C El planeta en que vivimos es el tierra.
D La planeta en que vivimos es el tierra.

Percentage sure = .......% "feel" / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

10. A Necesito un médico que habla español.
B Conozco a un médico que hable español.
C Necesito un médico que hable español.
D Necesito médico que hable español.

Percentage sure = .......% "feel" / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

11. A ¿Qué hora será? Serían las tres.
B ¿Qué hora será? Sean las tres.
C ¿Qué hora sería? Serán las tres.
D ¿Qué hora sería? Serían las tres.

Percentage sure = .......% "feel" / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

12. A El tiene que discutir el problema con el cura.
B El tiene que discutir el problema con la cura.
C El tiene que discutir la problema con el cura.
D El tiene que discutir la problema con la cura.

Percentage sure = .......% "feel" / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

B Yo no lo sé tampoco.
C Yo no lo sé también.
D Yo lo no sé tampoco.

Percentage sure = .......% "feel" / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess
14. A Es cierto que ellos estén aquí mañana.
   B Es cierto que ellos estarán aquí mañana.
   C Es cierto que ellos estaban aquí mañana.
   D Es cierto que ellos están aquí mañana.

Percentage sure = .......% "feel" / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess

15. A Tienen que estar aquí por el día 25.
   B Para primavera llegarán.
   C Tengo que hacerlo por mañana.
   D No estaré en la ciudad por dos meses.

Percentage sure = .......% "feel" / knowledge of the rule(s) / guess
### Diagnostic Language Test for Italian 2 (adapted from B.J. Richards 2008)

**Name………………………………………………    Date………………..**

Circle the letter (A, B, C, or D) of the sentence that you think is the best Italian.  
**Circle one sentence only.**

Show as a percentage how sure you are of the right answer (e.g. if you’re completely sure put 100%, if your answer is a complete guess put 0%) 

Circle to show whether you answered through your feel for the language, or your knowledge of the rule (could you state it?) or if it was just a guess.

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<td>C</td>
<td>Roberto è il ragazzo meno atletico dello gruppo.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Quando sono arrivati, discuteremo il problema.</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Quando arriveranno, discuteremo il problema.</td>
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Jill Llewellyn Williams ST 06004578
C Quando arriveranno, discuteremo il problema.
D Quando arrivovano, discuteremo il problema.

Percentage sure = …….%  “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess

7. A Non credo che loro sono qui – credo che loro sono qui.
B Non credo che loro siano qui – credo che loro siano qui.
C Non credo che loro siano qui – credo che loro sono qui.
D Non credo che loro sono qui – credo che loro siano qui.

Percentage sure = …….%  “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess

8. A Noi ve ne vogliamo dare.
B Ve noi ne vogliamo dare.
C Noi ne ve vogliamo dare.
D Noi ne vogliamo ve dare.

Percentage sure = …….%  “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess

B Gli studenti vanno in l'Inghilterra.
C Gli studenti vanno nell' Inghilterra.
D Gli studenti vanno in Inghilterra.

Percentage sure = …….%  “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess

10. A Queste amici sono americani e quelle amiche sono italiane.
B Questi amici sono americani e quell'amiche sono italiane.
C Questi amici sono americani e quella amiche sono italiane.
D Questi amici sono americani e quelle amiche sono italiane.

Percentage sure = …….%  “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess

11. A Io dormii, quando squillò il telefono.
B Io dormirò, quando squillò il telefono.
C Io dormivo, quando squillò il telefono.
D Io dormirei, quando squillò il telefono.

Percentage sure = …….%  “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess

12. A Luigi ci aiuta fare i compiti.
B Luigi aiuta ci a fare i compiti.
C Luigi aiuta ci fare i compiti.
D Luigi ci aiuta a fare i compiti.

Percentage sure = …….%  “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess

13. A Ho visto i belli zii e le belle zie.
B Ho visto i belli zii e la bella zie.
C Ho visto i begli zii e le belle zie.
D Ho visto i bel zio e le belle zie.

Percentage sure = …….%  “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess
    B  In questi giorni penso della mia nonna perché è malata.
    C  In questi giorni penso a mia nonna perché è malata.
    D  In questi giorni penso mia nonna perché è malata.

    Percentage sure = ........%    “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess

15.  A  Do i quaderni a Lei. Glielo do.
    B  Do i quaderni a Lei. Gliele do.
    C  Do i quaderni a Lei. Glieli do.
    D  Do i quaderni a Lei. Gliela do.

    Percentage sure = ........%    “feel” / knowledge if the rule(s) / guess
Vocabulary Recognition Test (adapted from Meara & Milton 2003)

French Test 1

Which words do you recognise? Be careful – there are plausible non-words.

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French – Test 2

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**Vocabulary Recognition Test** (adapted from Meara & Milton 2003)

**German - Test 1**

*Which words do you recognise? Be careful – there are plausible non-words.*

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**German - Test 2**

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Note: Once the first test had been taken, a mistake came to light in the number of words in the grid. In order to be able to make valid comparisons (i.e. to measure any change in students' vocabulary base) the same number of words and ratio of real words to pseudowords were used in the second test.
### Vocabulary Recognition Test (adapted from Meara & Milton 2003)

#### Spanish – Test 1

*Which words do you recognise? Be careful – there are plausible non-words.*

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Note: Once the first test had been taken, a mistake came to light in the number of words in the grid. In order to be able to make valid comparisons (i.e. to measure any change in students’ vocabulary base) the same number of words and ratio of real words to pseudowords were used in the second test.

**Vocabulary Recognition Test** (adapted from Meara & Milton 2003)

**Italian – Test 1**

**Which words do you recognise? Be careful – there are plausible non-words.**

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**Italian – Test 2**
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Note: Once the first test had been taken, a mistake came to light in the number of words in the grid. In order to be able to make valid comparisons (i.e. to measure any change in students’ vocabulary base) the same number of words and ratio of real words to pseudowords were used in the second test.
'Spew' Test (adapted from Meara & Fitzpatrick 2000)

Test 1

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>Giardino</td>
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<td>Hören</td>
<td>Escuchar</td>
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Test 2

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<td>Ciudad</td>
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Appendix 7 – Results of Tests

Diagnostic Grammar Test 1:

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Diagnostic Grammar Test 2:

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<tr>
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Diagnostic Tests – Analysis of Choice Factors

French

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>% Correct answers based on grammatical knowledge</th>
<th>% Certainty in the selection of correct answers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>7.56</td>
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<td>35.44</td>
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<tr>
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<td>37.67</td>
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**German**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mean</td>
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<tr>
<td>Test 1</td>
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<td>3.98</td>
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**Spanish**

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>% Certainty in the selection of correct answers</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mean</td>
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<tr>
<td>Test 1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test 2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.41</td>
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**Italian**

<table>
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<th>% Certainty in the selection of correct answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Test 1</td>
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<tr>
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Summary: Comparison between Diagnostic Test 1 & Test 2

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
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<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
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Test of Receptive Knowledge of Vocabulary

Test 1:

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<tr>
<td>(n=23)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French (n=9)</td>
<td>23.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>German (n=6)</td>
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<td>4.63</td>
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<td>Spanish (n=4)</td>
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<td>2.16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Italian (n=4)</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>2.38</td>
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Test 2:

<table>
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<th>Change in score</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total mark: 40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=23)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>24.4</td>
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<td>+8.87</td>
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<td>5.48</td>
<td>+2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Italian (n=4)</td>
<td>13.25</td>
<td>9.71</td>
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## Test of Productive Knowledge of Vocabulary

### Test 1

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<td>31.38</td>
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<td>13.77</td>
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<td>10.4</td>
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### Test 2

<table>
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<th>Change in score</th>
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<td>+14.8</td>
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<td>84.17</td>
<td>41.38</td>
<td>+31.17</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Italian (n=4)</td>
<td>42.47</td>
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<td>-3.78</td>
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</table>
Appendix 8

A Model for the Reactivation of Lapsed Language

Active Learning

- It is important to intersperse structural activities (grammar learning) with immersion activities (reading, watching films, listening to music);
- Memorisation techniques are useful and students recalled a range of ideas from their own learning experience;
- Music is helpful to root language in long-term memory.
- Rote learning has its place but chunk memorisation can be a brake on real understanding if overused;

The case study phase of the investigation allowed the emergence of many ideas for the reactivation of lapsed language skills. These have been organised into the above model and are explained in more detail below. These ideas were disseminated, discussed and developed in Language Awareness sessions with the students of the third cohort.
Sharing the learning experiences of other students allowed good models to be identified. This was particularly useful in examining the best language learning logs;

Productive skills should not be neglected and can be done in private if confidence fails. Students can talk to themselves or keep an internal dialogue in the target language. Awareness of the 'inner voice' (Vygotsky, 1986) allows the careful nurture of speech patterns. Keeping a diary in the reactivated language can allow a development and exploration of language;

Language needs to be manipulated and dissected. It is important to be observant and curious about oddities as a way of finding out how language works;

Grammar revision or any review of the vocabulary base need to be put into practice as much as possible during the period of learning.

Managing Motivation

- Students need to have an idea of what they want to achieve, to explore their objectives;
- It is useful to develop a picture of their ‘ideal self’ and to think about their hopes and aspirations (Dörnyei, 2009) as a tool for increasing motivation;
- An awareness of their own level is important and they should use the Language Audit as a means of identifying their needs and recording action. It should be a dynamic rather than a static document;
- Students can reflect on previous successful learning experiences such as school or examinations and identify what worked well and why;
- It is helpful to seek ways of making boring tasks (such as learning vocabulary) more interesting. Such activities can be turned into a challenge or game e.g. learning as many words associated with a particular topic as possible.

Affective and Emotional Factors

- Students need to develop a robust attitude to error correction. It is important that they are aware of shortcomings and welcome corrections in a positive manner, accepting them as opportunities to improve. Students should encourage native speaker friends to correct them without taking offence. They need to develop an expectation of making mistakes and accept this as a normal part of language learning;
- In reactivation of languages a ‘bottom-up’ approach can be recommended. If students re-start from basics this ensures complete coverage, increases a sense of security and is good for the morale;
- Students should give themselves credit for what goes well rather than being negative about perceived gaps in knowledge and skills. It is impossible to know a language completely, even as a native speaker, and although a constant striving for perfection is good, limits need to be set;
Links between affective elements and cognitive development should be recognised. It is essential to build on one’s love of country and culture to support language learning.

Combining Learning with Leisure Activities
- Mixing work with pleasure helps to support motivation and increases effectiveness as students are more open to language learning;
- By reading material (e.g. novels) that is well known allows students to concentrate on linguistic content while at the same time enjoying the experience of revisiting well loved stories.
- It is enjoyable to watch favourite films or TV series dubbed into the target language and linguistic skills can be reinforced while relaxing;
- Settings on the computer, phones or other technology can be reset to the target language;
- Foreign language websites can be viewed and favourite Internet sites such as Facebook or Ebay can be visited in their target language version;
- Target language music can be used as a background to daily activities;
- Evening classes are good social occasions to use the target language and there are many organisations linked to the target countries (e.g. Alliance Française)
- Language ‘buddies’ are an excellent source of language, both receptive and productive. Students are encouraged to spent considerable time talking (or even just listening) to native speakers of whom there are many on the PGCE programme.
- It is essential to be as sociable as possible with target language contacts, even though time to socialise is limited. This is important not only for linguistic development but also for cultural input;
- Where target language contact is difficult, consider new technology such as webcams.

Professional Practice
- Students can learn a great deal through teaching, which challenges their language skills while reinforcing them at the same time;
- It is important to develop an awareness of language learning beliefs and to identify one’s own credo. This was discussed at depth in Language Awareness sessions;
- Regular activities are more likely to be effective than working in fits and starts. Teachers need to build a habit and commitment to language learning;
- Students should take all opportunities to develop their subject knowledge and understanding e.g. by extensive lesson observations in placement schools;
- It is useful for students to do tasks they set for pupils, to ensure that they understand the needs of the pupils. They need to see themselves as
learners. This can also be achieved by attending evening classes. Their role as learners should be central to their identity as this allows the development of metacognitive perceptions. It is also an excellent exercise in empathy, an essential quality for an effective teacher;

- Finally, students need to develop a fundamental belief of lifelong learning. The most effective practitioners are those who are enthusiastic about learning and are able to share this sense of interest and curiosity with their pupils throughout their teaching careers.
Appendix 9

Sample of a Coding Frame

Data refers to Question 1 of the E Log

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 1</th>
<th>What are your feelings regarding your present level of language skills?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>Initial Coding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 6</td>
<td>• my Spanish is getting worse every day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• I am a bit confused between languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• I can’t follow a conversation in Spanish as easily as I used to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 8</td>
<td>• positive Spanish:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• my level and confidence in this language are not as high as my second language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 16</td>
<td>French:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• I am struggling to express myself fully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• I feel quite stupid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• I am unsure of my ability to teach in the target language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• my Spanish is nowhere near as poor as I thought it was and that I am really quite competent in it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 4</td>
<td>• I did have private tuition last year which helped with my confidence orally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 12</td>
<td>• Moderate confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 14</td>
<td>Student 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I lost a big part of my Spanish</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Speaking Spanish doesn’t come easily or in a spontaneous way.</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>I’m able to understand. I’ve lost my oral skills but I can still catch the idea, the meaning of something</strong></td>
<td><strong>Quite happy with all</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>French is another problem area</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>However I am finding that it is all coming back when I’m going through the course books at the school</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Negative</strong></td>
<td><strong>Better receptive skills</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Better receptive skills</strong></td>
<td><strong>Negative</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Satisfactory</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reactivation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Importance of target language country</strong></td>
<td><strong>Anxiety</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>spoken language</td>
<td>Oral skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>my normal, conversational language is slightly below what it should be</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student 9**
- I am reasonably confident in my language skills, some accuracy problems

**Student 3**
**French:**
- I feel pretty confident enough to teach it, but I'm sure there's still room for improvement

**German:**
- I'm not as confident in teaching it just yet!

**Student 1**
- As I am a native French speaker I am more worried about my English.
- I am not fluent in Spanish.

**Student 2**
- My French oral is good
- My written French needs constantly revising
- My listening is good and reading too

**Student 10**
- Spanish is by far my strongest language and I feel confident using the four skills in relation to this language
- Spanish is also my favourite language and Spain is one of my favourite European countries and therefore I enjoy reading/using the language regularly

**Importance of affective factors**

**Native speakers / English**

**Different skills levels**

**Positive**

**Negative**

**Different skills levels**

**Positive**
I feel a lot less confident in using this language and often confuse it with Spanish.

The thought of going to Italy and having to speak Italian fills me with dread.

Catalan:
- I really disliked Catalan at university and consequently remember only the basic phrases.

French:
- Extremely basic.

General:
- My competence in all four skills in any language diminish really quickly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Anxiety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Importance of affective factors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

E Log 1 - sent 9.10.07

(Student responses listed in the order they arrived)

Highlighted text transferred to the coding frame above

Student 6:

1. What are your feelings regarding your present level of language skills?

I notice that as I don't practice enough, my Spanish is getting worse every day. As I'm already used to dealing with 2 languages in everyday life, I am a bit confused between languages and I tend to let the third language apart. When I have to speak in Spanish, the first words that usually come through my mind are in English, and even if it doesn't seem obvious, I learnt Spanish through French, which means that I am used to translating from French to Spanish or from Spanish to French, and it asks too many efforts for me to translate Spanish into English or vice versa. I am disappointed that I did not make any efforts to speak Spanish more this year, because I can feel that I can't follow a conversation in Spanish as easily as I used to. And because I had to force myself to thinking in English rather than in French, my brain got used to it, and I have to admit that I am too lazy to make this effort with Spanish as well because I am already lost between French and English, so if I add Spanish as a fluent language nobody will understand me!

Student 8:

1. What are your feelings regarding your present level of language skills?

My feelings regarding my present level of language skills are positive because I am working very hard in order to get the level needed to teach at the school. I will teach Spanish language, which is my first language, and German language, which is my third language. English language is my second language and I am trying to improve my English skills because I will be teaching in the UK. Regarding German, my level and confidence in this language are not as high as my second.
language but, as I said before, I am working hard to improve them. Besides, I have not used German Language since 2 years because I have been living in Cardiff and I have been improving my English Language.

Student 16:

1. What are your feelings regarding your present level of language skills?

At the moment I am in France and whilst I understand everything that is said to me I am struggling to express myself fully which I am finding very frustrating. I feel quite stupid and want everybody to know that Spanish is my 1st MFL! I am unsure of my ability to teach in the target language back home. Having said that I have found I know things that the others do not and these makes me feel that I can do it and I am glad I am making the effort to pick it up again. It has made me realise that my Spanish is no-where near as poor as I thought it was and that I am really quite competent in it.

Student 4:

I did have private tuition last year which helped with my confidence orally, and I have started reading a lot in my second language.

Student 12:

1. What are your feelings regarding your present level of language skills? Moderate confidence in language due to not having studied French for over a year and a half.

Student 14:

Sorry to answer so late!!!
I feel like I lost a big part of my spanish: I stopped learning it nearly 6 years ago. My level was excellent but now I just feel like I've forgotten my knowledge, especially verbs and tenses... I would have to review all of them! Speaking spanish doesn't come easily or in a spontaneous way.
I remember some vocabulary but a few things... what is interesting is that when I hear somebody talking spanish or a spanish song, I'm able to understand. I've lost my oral skills but I can still catch the idea, the meaning of something.
I can understand but I hardly speak.
I haven't done nothing in particular to revive my skills because I've already have 3 languages to focus on (english, french and italian) and it's already a lot and I sometimes get "confused"!!
Hope it's going to be helpful.
see you on monday.

Student 15:

Sorry it's late Jill!!

1. What are your feelings regarding your present level of language skills? Quite happy with all with the possible exception of Welsh as I was brought up bi-lingually and seem to have forgotten a lot of it as I left Welsh Medium education when I was 11. French is another problem area as after leaving the academic field I was concentrating on picking up other
languages relevant to where I was living (i.e. Japanese and Spanish). However I am finding that it is all coming back when I'm going through the course books at the school. Little things like 'beaucoup de problemes' instead of 'beaucoup des problemes' are confusing although I was well taught them at school.

Student 13:

1. What are your feelings regarding your present level of language skills?

My feelings for my present level of language skills are the same as they usually are when I am living in the UK; which is to say that unless I am actually living in France or Italy I harbour a nagging anxiety regarding my language skills. Basically, I am concerned that vocabulary, accent and aural comprehension skills are in a constant state of decline. However, I should emphasize that this is not a new sensation, I tend to worry about these things any time when I am not immersed in a foreign language. I feel less anxiety about grammar skills, although I am acutely afraid of making errors in the gender of French words. I feel as if I have never learnt the gender of many simple French words and it seems late in the day to rectify such a huge gap.

Student 11:

1. What are your feelings regarding your present level of language skills?

I would say that I am quite happy with my level of language skills. What I am not happy with is the amount of knowledge that has, for the most part, been 'replaced'. Throughout my education, I always prided myself on being able to recall most learned vocabulary and grammar rules etc. However, once in employment, my focus shifted somewhat. Once specific areas of vocabulary were learned and used on a regular basis (medical and financial), it seems that basic vocabulary seems to have left me, which is quite frustrating. The grammatical rules, however, are still intact.

Another issue is the rustiness of my spoken language. Again, this is partly due to the nature of previous employment, where the conversations entered into were medical and business-like. I would admit that my normal, conversational language is slightly below what it should be.

I would say, however, that this has affected my French (oldest language) more than my Italian.

Student 9:

Jill, in answer to your questions,

1. I am reasonably confident in my language skills, some accuracy problems.

Student 3:

Hi Jill,

Apologies for the late reply-ive been quite busy! For question one, I would say in French I feel pretty confident enough to teach it, but I'm sure there's still room for improvement! For German, I haven't studied it for a number of years now, so I'm not as confident in teaching it just yet! I'd rather focus on being a good teacher first in French before teaching German.
Good luck with the research, hope you will find my answers useful!

Student 1:

I am going to teach French. As I am a native French speaker I am more worried about my English. I found that washing movies with subtitles was very helpful and accessible.

When I came in Wales last year like a French assistant I decided to follow English course at university. I felt more confident because revived English language by using a grammar book was not effective and sometimes boring. Now I am happy with reading and speaking English every day to improve it.

If I would like to revive my Spanish to teach it next year I will buy books. I have a A level in Spanish, I might be able to teach it in year 7 and 8 but I take in consideration that I am not fluent in Spanish. My best way to revive my languages skills is to find a course for few months and after to learn by myself.

Student 2

1. My feelings regarding my present level of language skills, do you mean in English or French? I suppose you mean French.
   Well I my French oral is good and a day doesn't go by that I don't speak French (my partner is French) however my written French needs constantly revising and I would always ask for a check before writing anything on paper definitavely my listening is good and reading too.

Student 10:

Question 1:
I have a degree in Spanish and Italian, studied Catalan as a module for three years at university, have A Levels in Spanish and Welsh and GCSEs in Spanish Welsh and French. Spanish is by far my strongest language and I feel confident using the four skills in relation to this language. Spanish is also my favourite language and Spain is one of my favourite European countries and therefore I enjoy reading/using the language regularly. Italian is my second strongest language although I feel a lot less confident in using this language and often confuse it with Spanish. At the present moment, the thought of going to Italy and having to speak Italian fills me with dread which is extremely disappointing and frustrating as I have a degree in the subject and really love it. I really disliked Catalan at university and consequently remeber only the basic phrases. Unfortunately, both my levels of Welsh and French are extremely basic although I really want to improve my knowledge of these two languages in the future. Personally, I find that my competence in all four skills in any language diminish really quickly and I constantly have to keep refreshing myself with grammar points/vocab etc.
## Appendix 10

### Language Awareness Sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>18 September 2008</td>
<td>Presentation of Research Topic (Powerpoint)</td>
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<td>Discussion of reactivation techniques</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Language Audits</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction of Language Learning Log</td>
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<td>Identification of Language 'buddy'</td>
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<td>Language Testing – Diagnostic Grammar Test</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Receptive Vocabulary Test</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Productive Vocabulary Test</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>15 December 2008</td>
<td>Discussion of Language Learning Beliefs (Klapper, 2006:23)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>BAAL Article</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Memorisation techniques – group discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Student Questionnaire</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9 February 2009</td>
<td>Feedback from Questionnaire</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion of data from student and mentor questionnaires</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Compare and contrast data – discussion points recorded</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Language Learning Logs – discussion based on exemplar copy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Group activity – discussion of language areas causing difficulty</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Review of language files (test results and updating Language Logs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>23 March 2009</td>
<td>Open forum discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Review of Model for reactivation</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Final testing – Diagnostic Grammar Test</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Receptive Vocabulary Test</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Productive Vocabulary Test</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample of Language Awareness Session  
Session 2

Activity 1: Language Learning Beliefs – Group Discussion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Belief</th>
<th>√</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Only intelligent people can learn languages properly.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>B Adults are at a disadvantage compared to children.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>C You can only really learn a language in the target country.</td>
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<tr>
<td>D Language learning is mainly about learning words.</td>
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<tr>
<td>E To speak a language properly you need to know the grammar well.</td>
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<tr>
<td>F It is helpful for students to know grammatical terms.</td>
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<tr>
<td>G The most useful thing in language learning is repetition.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>H Students learn more from examples than rules.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Accuracy develops hand-in-hand with fluency.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J Knowing a rule does not mean knowing a particular structure.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K Learning by heart is an underrated way to learn.</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>L Students need to see something written before they say it.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M Speaking is easier than listening.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>N Reading is the least important of the four skills.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O Writing is the least important of the four skills.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>P Students need to have speaking errors corrected immediately.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q Students need to have all written errors corrected.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>R It is just as unhelpful to have all one’s errors corrected as it is to have too few corrected.</td>
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<tr>
<td>S Contrasting the FL and one’s native tongue is usually helpful.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T Students should not use their L1 in class.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

FL = Foreign Language  L1 – 1st Language

Page 23
Activity 2: Reading and Discussion of BAAL article (See PDP section, Appendix 2)

Activity 3: Discussion Points

1. What has influenced your choice of methods to revive lapsed language skills?

2. How much do you think the way you were taught has influence your choice of methods for language reactivation?

3. Which features of language came back easily / what came back with more difficulty?

4. What sort of language seems the most resistant to loss? Why do you think this is?

5. What do you remember about the way you were taught languages? What seemed to work well, as far as you can recall?

6. What tips would you give to a PGCE student wishing to revive lapsed language skills?
Activity 4: Memorisation Techniques – group discussions

Task:

In your group, discuss possible memorisation techniques (vocabulary, spelling, grammatical structures etc.) and draw up a list of the most memorable and effective.

- Word of the day: a word that you encounter at some point and try to use it as many times as possible
- Look for patterns e.g. in French, words ending in -age are usually masculine except image, plage, cage, etc.
- Verb conjugations – writing down tables of words for rote learning
- Mnemonics: Mais Où Est Donc Ornicar? (mais; où; et; donc; or; ni; car)
- Writing out lists of words for memorisation using different colours denoting certain features (masculine, feminine, verbs, adjectives etc.)
- Saying words out loud, chanting or singing them with a rhythm
- Practising grammar rules by memorising examples
- Mnemonics to remember grammar rules (e.g. Mr Advents pram, Mr Damps tavern, Drapers van, Mrs Vandertramp etc. for French verbs taking être)
- Prompt cards
- Visualisation of words (e.g. Linkword)
- Picture and word together
- Look, cover, write, check
- Give yourself a spelling test
- Speaking games with dice
- Write down the word as many times as possible
- Repeat the word as many times as possible
- Parallel text and compare the sentences
- Organise vocabulary by topic
- Look up in dictionary (even when you're fairly sure)

(Gathered from PGCE session 15.12.09)

Activity 5: Completion of Guided Learning Programme Evaluation
(See Appendix 4)
Professional Development Portfolio

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Section 1

Introduction

Professional Development Portfolios (PDP) have become, in differing guises, a common feature of modern educational and professional life. From the Progress files presented to departing Year 11 pupils at school to the professional training logs of registered practitioners in many professions, they are a useful addition to records of the progress we make throughout our careers.

The central concept of such documents is that learners should be empowered to take charge of their own development and training and should use these documents to chart their own progress. This is a first step in developing an independent approach to one’s own professional development and encourages reflection and achievement. However, the portfolio not only charts progress but the process involved with reflection upon this change should also become a tool for further learning.

There is a very wide scope in the structure of the document and the absence of a fixed framework allows the flexibility and freedom to adapt it to the needs of individuals at differing stages of their careers. However, the need to reflect and plan the development of skills is common to all learners and I have found that the PDP has been an essential part of the process of becoming a researcher. During
the years of my study, I have kept a file of documents and a reflective log. The pages that follow are a summary of certain elements of these documents and relate to what are, in my estimation, the most important landmarks of my learning during this period.
Section 2

Personal Reflective Statement

Much of what follows is recorded in my Reflective log. As that document is personal, it is not included in this Professional Development Portfolio. However, there are some general points that I would like to record here.

I was among the last generation to go to a grammar school in the south Wales area and was in a position to make a real comparison between the different systems as my school went comprehensive when I was 14 years old. We had a very rigorous education, though now, as a teacher-trainer, I wonder at some of the teaching methods that were used, such as extensive copying off the board and the subsequent regurgitation of pre-learnt (and not always understood) chunks of information. I do feel that I had a very good secondary education, however.

I did not go to university straight from school but went as a mature student after working for three years as a civil servant. During my time at university, I had to balance my studies with the care of two very small children, one of whom was born while I was a student. This meant that study time was at a premium and I feel that I was not able to realise my full potential. In the years that followed, despite a busy family and professional life, I always kept on learning, whether it
was in-service training or evening classes. I was fortunate to have joined the teaching profession in the 1980s, at a time when training was funded generously and teachers who were committed to professional development, like me, learned to take advantage of all the training opportunities that came their way. I completed my Master’s degree while working full-time as a teacher. I also had another child at this time, once again making studying problematic. I find it difficult to remember how I coped during these years – the Master’s programme I followed required two evenings attendance per week over three years and I took the minimum maternity leave. However, I did complete it and particularly enjoyed the research element of the dissertation, for which I received the highest marks out of all the modules I took.

My degree is in Modern Languages (1983) and I have a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (1984). My Master’s degree, however, is a Master’s in Business Administration (1995), an unusual choice born of a wish to interact with individuals outside the confines of education, within which I had been working for more than a decade at that time. Following my Master’s degree, I returned to evening classes and took first GGCE then Advanced Level Italian (1996 and 1997 respectively), taking a year to complete each one. Seven years later, I returned and took GCSE Spanish (2004), also in one year. Despite a very busy professional life, I have always striven to find time to continue my education.
The opportunity to study for a professional doctorate came quite unexpectedly, while working at UWIC. It gave me the chance to research the topic of language loss in a second language context, an idea that had been at the back of my mind for many years. The opportunity to study this in the context of my role as a teacher-trainer has been very beneficial for my professional development and, hopefully, it will provide a significant advantage for my students and even their future pupils.

Reflection

I have always felt that education is an essential part of my life even though I have not always found myself in a position to take advantage of the opportunities that were offered to me. Much of the difficulties I experienced during my early studies and career were of my own making, in the decision, for example, to have a family and go to university at the same time.

I enjoy challenges, as the above career history suggests and seek change as a way of motivating myself and developing my competences. My personal history is evidence of this need to challenge myself, in the career route I have followed and in the educational qualifications I have chosen to pursue. It is unusual to take a Modern Languages degree, for example, then chose to do a Master’s degree in a totally unrelated subject, in this case, in the field of business administration. This meant that my fellow students were managers and business people, individuals who had a very different outlook and values from my own. I found the
environment fascinating and dynamic, though it confirmed my decision to work in education.

One of my strengths is that I enjoy study and this has helped me to cope with a considerable workload during my professional life and to take on the many challenges that have come my way. This love of study and my own experiences have led me to a belief in the value of education, its lifelong relevance and to put this belief into practice in my own personal and professional life.

My choice of research topic is significant and relates to my students, my past pupils and myself. As a teacher of French, I had often wondered about pupils’ retention of the language that I taught them. I also frequently reflected upon my own language learning and the difficulties that I, in common with all other learners, experience in retaining skills and knowledge. The choice of research study was therefore born of my own experiences and reflects my life as both a teacher and a learner.
Section 3

Personal Reflection on Professional Role

My professional experience can be briefly summarised as follows:

- 3 years working as a Plans Officer in H.M Land Registry;

- 17 years teaching, of which 16 years as a Teacher of French / Head of European Languages in south Wales schools and 1 year as a Teacher of English in a French school (post-to-post exchange);

- 8 years as a Senior Lecturer in the Cardiff School of Education, UWIC;


The study of French, which is my degree language, has been my prime interest and the subject area about which I feel the most enthusiasm. Education, as a discipline, has taken on a secondary role and has become the means by which I can share my love of languages. In my later years as a classroom teacher I became increasingly interested in the wide range of research that has been going on in the domain of education, especially in the field of modern foreign languages. In the past, this was very much the territory of academics.
However, there is a real move towards classroom-based research and, with this in mind, I felt that my research needed to be placed squarely in the framework of professional practice. For this reason, I positioned my research design in the context that was central to my professional duties, in the Modern Foreign Languages teacher-training programme. This has had the benefit of allowing me to work in the area that I know best of all and has allowed me the opportunity of carrying out research that should have a direct benefit to my students and the work that they undertake as part of their training as teachers.

Reflection

As explained in the previous section, I have always felt very strongly that education is central to my life and I also believe that teaching is not merely a job but much more than that. I subscribe to the idea that a teacher should be a reflective practitioner (Schön, 1991) and I have always evaluated my own teaching in an attempt to support pupils’ learning and encourage them to become independent learners and as enthusiastic about languages as I am. I have, however, become increasingly convinced that we have moved on from the teacher as reflective practitioner model and moved into a more interesting area, which is the teacher as researcher. This, to a certain extent, explains the career choices that I have made over the years and my decision to undertake a professional doctorate.
Section 4

Reflection on Learning and Planning for Development

Since working at UWIC, I have had the opportunity to teach on the Master’s in Education programme, which forms part of the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) framework. This has allowed me to develop my understanding of research skills and different methodology paradigms. By teaching on this programme, I have had to hone my understanding of a wide range of research concepts and, coming from a background of school teaching, this has been a considerable challenge for me.

In addition to the skills I have acquired by teaching on the Master’s programme, I recognise that the professional doctorate has provided me with even more challenges and opportunities to develop the skills that have become useful in my research study. An important stage in my development as a learner was to assess my strengths, weaknesses and the training opportunities available to address any shortcomings or gaps in my knowledge. As far as my teaching commitment and other associated duties allow, I have attended an extensive range of training courses, conferences and seminars. This has given me the opportunity to position my research in a wider context and to adapt to my growing knowledge and understanding of research methods. These events will be discussed more fully in later sections.
Reflection

In the early stages of the research, although I had a fairly precise idea of the parameters of my research topic, I had to think very clearly about the way I was going to approach it and how I could fit it into my professional context. By attending training sessions, seminars and conferences, I had the occasion to discuss my research design with many researchers. These events have proved to be extremely useful and have allowed me to think in a way that goes beyond the confines of my habitual work environment and professional practice. It has been refreshing to encounter different perspectives and also to meet new people from diverse fields of research and education. I feel that this has had a significant impact on my research and the reflection that I recorded in my personal log demonstrates that I showed careful consideration of these perspectives and took balanced decisions about the development and improvement of the research design.
Section 5

Skills Analysis and Training

I have been fortunate in having what I consider to be excellent advice from my supervisors and other staff involved in guiding me through the doctoral progress and they have been able to alert me to training opportunities that have been available to me and the rest of the professional doctorate cohort.

The extensive provision of training allowed me the possibility of identifying ways in which I could manage my learning and ensure that any gaps in my knowledge or skills could be dealt with, such as my need to improve my use of modern technology. I attended several sessions on Endnote, SPSS and other applications but came to the conclusion that the time that I would need to master these skills would outweigh the benefits in their use. I therefore came to an informed decision that I would be able to manage aspects of the research manually, such as the data analysis, and that the time that would therefore become available to me could be more beneficially used in other aspects of the research.

Every training course I attended was useful in different ways, even if it was only to allow me to make a decision about whether I could use the expertise that it offered. One course that I attended that had very unforeseen outcomes was the UKGrad sponsored ‘Effective Researcher’ two-day course in Cardiff. On the first
day, the activities did not seem to have much point. We were organised into groups and had to undertake activities such as moving buckets of water with string and bamboo canes or sorting out Lego block according to size and colour. By the end of the two days however, the activities led me to a better understanding of my own personality. I realised, for example, that although I enjoy group work, I will not allow myself to be hurried through tasks by others until I am clear about what we have to do. I also realised that I can be dominant in a group if I choose, but that quite often I prefer to stand aside and let others take the lead, only stepping in when the task needs firmer direction. I found this new knowledge very surprising and the fact that I had only come to this self-awareness by seemingly pointless activities even more surprising.

Other training opportunities linked much more closely with the research study and I was fortunate in that I was able to attend a CILT training course in London in the early weeks of my registration on the programme. This allowed me a very clear insight into modern languages research from the early weeks of the research study and also allowed me the opportunity to discuss projects with other researchers and discover the common pitfalls of such work. I undertook such skills training throughout the years of my research and aspects of these research activities will be explored in the next section.
Section 6

Research Activities

It would not be possible to discuss all the activities undertaken during the years of this research but the range of skills development and related events can be usefully summarised as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Benefits to Research Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching on the Master’s in Education Programme (CPD framework).</td>
<td>Opportunity to learn about research methods and different research paradigms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading the Independent Study module of the Master’s programme.</td>
<td>Experience in learning about scholarly articles and how they are constructed; reinforcement of development of understanding of research methodology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance at School of Education seminars.</td>
<td>Learning about the wider context of educational research beyond my own specialist field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance at the training courses that form part of the professional doctorate programme.</td>
<td>New skills such as interviewing techniques, literature searches, data management and analysis, ethics, Endnote and SPSS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact with other researchers and practitioners.</td>
<td>Data gathering, generation of new ideas, confirmation (or not) of research judgements, links with other researchers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference and Seminar papers.</td>
<td>Peer review of work, locating gaps in research, seeking expertise and new ideas, increasing self-confidence, communication skills honed, networking, establishing self as part of the research community, identification of future research themes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management of the Guided Learning Programme.</td>
<td>Students’ improved language skills and knowledge as well as introducing them to the field of research in action, data gathering, enhanced understanding of language attrition and reactivation, research material for dissemination.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Instead of going through the above list of research activities in chronological order, I shall pick out the most significant features of my development during this period and discuss the effects that these activities had on my learning and on the progress of the study.

The contacts that I made during the above research activities proved to be extremely useful in the progress of the study. In fact, networking has proved to be far more beneficial than I could have anticipated. In tackling Language Attrition, which is a very neglected field of research, I have had to rely on approaching other researchers to try to identify ways of accessing the limited literature in this field. In a chance conversation with Professor Mike Grenfell of Southampton University at a CILT ITT conference at Keele University, he was able to give me the name of Dr Graham Porte of Granada University. Dr Porte is a specialist in First Language Attrition (L1) and when I emailed him, he directed me to Professor Lynne Hansen of Brigham Young University, Hawaii, who is an expert in Second Language Attrition (L2). She pointed me to a bibliography on the Internet that proved very useful in gathering background for the literature review of this research. What was probably more important, however, was the encouragement and interest in the study expressed by such individuals. I have found researchers to be not only helpful but also very generous with their time and support in my endeavours. I feel that it is essential that established researchers should encourage new ones and I am happy to report that this has
been my experience. I hope that I shall have the opportunity of repaying this debt by encouraging new researchers in years to come.

Conferences proved an excellent opportunity for developing my research knowledge and testing the data that I gathered during the period of the study. I have been a member of the Association of Language Learning (ALL) since 1983 and attended many of their Language World conferences over the years. Since I have become a teacher-trainer, I have also attended some of the CILT ITT conferences. In becoming involved in research, I decided that the time had come to move from being a delegate to presenting a paper. This would have many benefits for me in that I could put my research up for peer review and identify any flaws or gaps before it had progressed too far. I also anticipated that it would open up new avenues of research for me and allow me to become more independent in managing my study.

LLAS/CILT Languages in Higher Education Conference, York University
8 & 9 July 2008

The first opportunity presented itself in the Language and Linguistic Area Studies (LLAS) CILT Higher Education Conference at York University. This was high profile conference with keynote speakers such as Dr Lid King, the government’s National Director for Languages. I submitted an abstract in January 2008 and was pleased to receive a favourable response in March. My paper was well received and I enjoyed the process of presenting it. In the brief discussion that followed, one of the questions that stuck in my mind was whether I would have
difficulty in motivating my students to take part in the study. I remembered answering that I did not expect any such problems as I assumed that the students would be motivated by their need to have good language skills in order to operate effectively in the classroom.

This question came back to mind during the following year and proved to be prescient. The students who had participated in the earlier case study phase of the investigation were enthusiastic volunteers. However, in the following year, during the action research phase of the study, the guided learning programme became the focus of efforts of the whole cohort, not just those who volunteered. Although students from that year were not coerced into taking part, there was an expectation that they would, communicated to them by their tutors. I had anticipated that they would all be willing participants but in fact, due to the pressures of the PGCE programme, there was a residue of reluctant participants, making me reflect on the observations of my questioner a few months earlier. I had chatted with her in the few moments following my presentation and she had noted down some names of useful researchers on motivation (among which were Zoltan Dörnyei) and this scrap of paper became very useful in the months that followed as I realised I had underestimated the students’ willingness to comply and that I needed to read up on motivation in order to manage the intervention more appropriately. I believe that this is a clear example of how important it is to keep your mind open and to engage with other researchers, as you can never anticipate the route that your research will take.
BAAL Conference, Swansea University
11 – 13 September 2008

My second conference proposal, which was also successful, was submitted to the annual meeting of the British Association of Applied Linguistics (BAAL), a conference that took place at Swansea University in September 2008. This was an international event with representatives from all over the world. By this time I had had the opportunity to analyse the data collected from the cohort of the previous year and had devised the form that the guided learning programme was likely to take. This therefore gave me the opportunity to present material from the previous conference and to augment it with new ideas.

I was able to attend presentations by a wide range of different researchers from all over the globe. Not only were their conference papers enlightening but they also tested my understanding of this field to the limit. I was certainly in Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development (1978) and some of what I heard stretched beyond the limits of my understanding. However, I have come to realise that, as a learner, this is the environment in which I thrive and I enjoy the challenge of such situations. Coming from a background of modern languages teaching, where we are used to referring to ourselves as ‘linguists’ I found that the applied linguists were completely different in outlook and seemed to be scientists rather than the languages specialists I had imagined, though they were also that.
My paper was scheduled for the final day, a Saturday. In comparison with the highly technical presentations, I was aware that my presentation, being very much practice-based, provided a sharp contrast. However, it was well received and had a good audience who seemed to be very favourable towards the themes discussed in my contribution.

I had anticipated that the most positive outcome would be the airing that my research would receive and the confidence that a positive response would give me. However, although this was the case, I was surprised that the most significant benefit I derived from the conference was in the incidental discussions with other delegates. After attending some of the presentations and chatting with the presenters after their talks, I explained to them what I was trying to do and asked for their advice. It was in this way that I learned about the diagnostic grammar and the vocabulary tests and other delegates were generous with their time and patience in helping me to solve problems that had arisen in different practical aspects of my research.

The conference also led to the chance to present at later seminars, giving me further opportunities to have my research peer reviewed. I was asked more very interesting questions, allowing me to continue to think critically about my research design and the available literature. On one occasion I was asked a very interesting question about the difference between language knowledge and language skills, which led me to return to my reading and explore the literature
on linguistic competence and performance. Such encounters proved to be
enriching and had a very positive effect on the way that the research developed.

At another seminar, my fellow tutor on the PGCE programme was present and
she was able to give additional insights into the way that the guided programme
had worked and the ways in which we had managed it.

As tutors in the PGCE modern languages programme, the research has had a
significant impact on our professional practice by giving more prominence to the
subject knowledge and skills of our students, an area that had been less
emphasised in previous years. It led to an awareness that, despite the pressure
and time constraints of the PGCE programme, we could make a valuable
intervention that would support student learning and encourage reflection on the
importance of their continuing role as learners throughout their teaching careers.
This has been equally true of the tutors: we have learned alongside the students
and have a clearer idea of how to manage the reactivation of lapsed language
and how to support the students as they attempt to undergo this process. The
lessons from this investigation and the considerable data collected ensure that
there is much material for dissemination and further study of this area of
research. I propose to present the findings of this investigation at future seminars
and conferences and to write up elements of this research in the form of journal
articles.
Both LLAS/CILT and BAAL requested that those who presented papers submit them as written articles following the conferences. These papers are included in the appendices of this professional development profile. The BAAL article has been issued in CD form and has been allocated an ISBN number. The LLAS/CILT article can be found on the organisation’s website and is available on http://www.llas.ac.uk/resources/paper/3228.
Appendices

Appendix 1  LLAS / CILT Conference Paper

Appendix 2  BAAL Conference Paper

Appendix 3  Seminar Paper Powerpoint

Appendix 4  Documents relating to attendance at Training Events and Conferences
Reactivating lapsed language skills: an exploration of language memory

Author: Jill Llewellyn Williams

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Abstract
Training to be a teacher is a stressful undertaking but for trainee language teachers, whose linguistic skills are under constant and close scrutiny from mentors, tutors and pupils, this can be a particularly challenging time. Many students, for a variety of personal and professional reasons, allow their language competence and confidence to decline. This study investigates ways of reactivating lapsed language skills in the context of a PGCE programme where students have been invited to take part in a reflective activity to identify effective ways of regaining their former linguistic competence and to contemplate useful strategies to maximise their language memory and ways to develop effective learning styles. This research project is nearing the end of its initial stage and it is intended that the findings will form the basis for a guided learning programme for the next cohort of modern foreign languages trainee teachers.

This article was added to our website on 01/06/09 at which time all links were checked. However, we cannot guarantee that the links are still valid.

Table of contents
- Introduction
- Review of research literature
- Research design
- Bibliography

Languages in Higher Education Conference 2008: transitions and connections
This paper was originally presented at our conference: transitions and connections, 8-9 July 2008.
Introduction
For all students of languages, the effort they make in acquiring new language skills is tempered by the almost sure knowledge that the hard work they invest in this process is undermined by the steady erosion of time; wearing away the vocabulary and structures they work so hard to commit to memory. The simple fact that human beings forget languages was first drawn to my attention at a very young age, during annual visits to an uncle who lives near Oxford. He had left his native Wales during the Second World War to serve in the RAF and had married locally. During our summer visits, my father would attempt to converse with him in Welsh, their first (and only language until they started school) but fail. My uncle has always maintained that he has forgotten his mother tongue. As a child, this seemed to me impossible. Later, as a teacher of French, I reviewed the idea of the temporary nature of language memory as I observed my pupils. Some seemed to retain nothing of the skills or knowledge acquired in a previous lesson, even though it had only been a few days before. Finally, as a language learner myself, I have been able to observe this process first hand in my own efforts to retain languages that I have learnt over the years.

In more recent years, as a teacher-trainer, I have noticed that my concerns regarding the transient nature of language skills have been shared by many trainee teachers, particularly those who, for personal and professional reasons, have taken time off between the completion of their language degree and their teacher training programme. The aim of this research into language memory has been to explore ways of reactivating lapsed language skills and can be summarised in the following research questions:

- How best can students reactivate and recall previously learnt language skills?
- Which type of language seems most resistant to loss?
- Which learning methods have allowed students to maximise their language memory over a significant period of time and how can these methods be adapted for future use?
- What impact does a clearer understanding of this process have on student learning?

These questions lie at the heart of the research aims of this study, which are to explore language loss by gathering data on this process from trainee teachers in the form of reflective logs, questionnaires and focused interviews. The data provided will form the basis of a guided learning programme, which will help trainee teachers to identify and use strategies to reactivate lapsed language skills in order that they might face the challenges of the classroom with renewed self-confidence and increased linguistic competence.

Review of research literature
In looking for current and recent research findings to support the aims of this study, the scope of the review was organised into three distinct areas:
• How we acquire language
• How we lose it
• How we can get it back

This meant, in practice, a review of learning (language learning in particular), a study of language memory and loss and an exploration of how we can support the language learner.

Learning
In the study of learning, there is a vast quantity of research that was extremely difficult to navigate. Contact with mentor-colleagues and visits to partnership schools have made me aware of how much schools are in the thrall of whatever is the latest fashion in learning style. These have been well documented elsewhere. Following his review of over three hundred initiatives on learning styles, Frank Coffield (2005) warns:

The field of learning styles suffers from almost fatal flaws of theoretical incoherence and conceptual confusion… the logo for the learning styles movement should be Dichotomies R Us.

Learning has also been increasingly linked with neuroscience, with initiatives such as Brain Gym, Accelerated Learning and the concept of Left and Right brainers. Yet again, there are voices of caution, amongst them John Geake (2005), who advises:

Ban disconnected approaches to teaching by ignoring Left and Right brain nonsense, expelling MI from curriculum design, and eradicating VAK from pedagogy. Rather, encourage neural connectivity by promoting joined-up thinking, and rewarding creative analogising. And do lots of old-fashioned gym.

However, the wide range of research into learning is a positive context for this study, as long as it is not restricted to the straitjacket of one particular approach. The vast amount of research into learning styles and strategies can only benefit a study of this nature, as long as we keep an open mind about the effectiveness and validity of such approaches and as long as we, as language learners, continue to reflect on the process.

Language learning
In reviewing language learning styles, three different approaches suggested themselves: Grammar-Translation, Audio-Lingual and Communicative Language Teaching. The Grammar-Translation method, inspired by the Greek and Latin tradition, is familiar to me as a method used in the early years of my grammar school education. In my school, this had an uneasy partner in the form of the Audio-Lingual approach and my first years of learning French were a combination of these two methods. My experience of learning Latin, however, was firmly rooted, as you would expect, in the Grammar-Translation method.
Latin, at that time, was committed to memory by rote learning and it is surprising that, despite its neglect, I can still retrieve large chunks of Latin such as *sum, es, est, sumus, estis, sunt*. I wonder if the chunks of audio-lingual phrases would be so easily retrievable had I not continued with my study of French? The loud beep, which instructed the teacher to move to the next slide, is, however, firmly lodged in my memory. Finally, Communicative Language Teaching also has a resonance for me in that it was the method in which I was trained as a Languages Teacher in 1983. These methods and approaches form a backdrop to my study of language loss and initial discussions with trainee teachers have made me consider whether, when we strive to reactivate lapsed language skills, the way we were taught influences our chosen strategies.

**Language memory and loss**

In the search for literature relevant to language loss, in contrast to the research into learning, I was faced with a relative dearth of literature. I attempted to concentrate my research in the areas suggested by the following key words: *language memory; language recall; language retention; language reactivation; lapsed language; dormant language: language loss*. None provided access to the literature that was needed to support this study. Fortunately, in reading literature connected with the field, I encountered the term *language attrition*. This provided me with a rich vein of research relevant to the study, though much of the literature is connected with first language attrition (interesting in the context of my uncle but not relevant to the study in hand). Second language attrition is the field that provides a useful context to this study.

Recent research ([De Bot and Stoessel 2000](#)) can be summarised as showing that, in our efforts to retrieve lapsed languages (in this instance, items of vocabulary), language can be sorted into three categories:

- language we are able to recall
- language we are able to recognise
- language we are able to neither recall nor recognise.

It is the final category that is the most interesting. This research has demonstrated that when lexical items that have been neither recalled nor recognised (and have apparently been forgotten) are placed in a new batch to be re-learned, they are more easily retrieved in a later test, suggesting that they were not truly lost at all but that some residual trace was left in the language memory. This phenomenon is known as ‘savings’.

While this is good news indeed, the bad news is that current research is still seeking to find ways to reactivate these traces of lost language memory: “There is clearly a retention of linguistic knowledge over a long period of time… but how best we can activate them is still unclear.” ([De Bot and Stoessel 2000: 352](#))
In one study of language loss, where experimentation of this process, using pseudo-words instead of real vocabulary, it was concluded that: “Current methodologies for studying large-scale lexical processes like language loss leave a lot to be desired.” (Meara 2004: 151)

This is not encouraging for small-scale studies such as the one undertaken with my students. Added to this is the acceptance that previous large-scale studies have tended to use either single items of vocabulary or pseudo-words, whereas the one I have in mind relates to real language in its wide complexity. This makes the task of identifying strategies to combat language attrition in a complex, real-language context rather a tall order.

Supporting the language learner
While literature on Second Language Attrition has not been particularly encouraging, there is a wealth of research into ways of supporting the language learner. Richardson (2000: 28) identifies three approaches to learning: the deep approach, which relates new knowledge to prior learning; the surface approach, which relates to task demands; and the strategic approach, which allows the learner to organise the time and effort required by the learning. All of these approaches are useful and relevant to trainee teachers. In the design of a guided language programme, it is also worthwhile bearing in mind the attributes of good language learners, as recognition of such characteristics would be an important feature of the design of such a programme. These have been summarised as:

- being active
- having technical know-how and developing language as system
- being willing to practise and use the language
- having a personal learning agenda
- being self-evaluative
- being sociable
- constantly looking for meaning. (Stern, cited in Grenfell 2007: 9)

It is also useful to keep in mind the distinction between a learning style and strategy which, according to Oxford (2003) is that learning styles are general approaches to learning or solving a problem whereas learning strategies are specific actions or behaviours consciously used to achieve a goal. In the context of a guided learning programme, strategies are more relevant and worthwhile approaches to the challenge of reactivating lapsed language skills and knowledge.

Language learning strategies, according to Klapper (2006) can be divided into four categories:

- Cognitive (inference, deduction, memorising, clarifying, for example)
- Metacognitive (such as planning, identifying problems, self-evaluation)
- Communication (which would include paraphrasing, circumlocution and use of synonyms)
- Socio-affective (such as cooperation with peers, contact with native speakers).

Memorisation strategies are especially interesting in the context of a programme to support language reactivation. Cotterell (2003: 242), in her review of study skills, lists the following strategies:

- mnemonics
- active listening
- association techniques
- written notes repetition
- personalising information
- self-awareness of existing knowledge.

Of course, good language learners, as described above, are not always consciously aware of the strategies they use, nor are the strategies equally useful for all learners. Nevertheless, an audit of student learning strategies would provide a useful and fruitful basis for a language reactivation programme.

**Research design**
The research study has come to the end of its initial phase and a significant amount of data has been gathered. This has been done by means of a focus group, a reflective e-log, student interviews, mentor questionnaires and interviews with fellow teacher-trainers from other higher education institutions. These will be briefly described below.

The initial data were gathered by means of a focus group meeting with trainee teachers. Students discussed the strategies they had chosen to get their language skills up to an acceptable level in preparation for starting their teacher-training programme. The trainees had chosen a wide range of methods. This ranged from digging out old textbooks, re-learning grammar rules and doing exercises that illustrated these rules. At the other extreme, some trainees had simply exposed themselves to the language in its oral or written form, by reading magazines, watching language films and listening to the radio. It was interesting to note that the older students seemed to favour the former approach whereas the younger students tended to favour the latter. It seemed likely that all students had selected methods that they had used at school – hardly surprising given that we instinctively revert to familiar, tried and tested strategies.

The next year’s cohort of students were used for more systematic data gathering and the information provided by the focus group allowed a list of questions to be drawn up that went some way towards answering the research questions listed in the introduction above. These questions were divided into groups of two or three and sent to students by email at intervals of a month or so. Students were
encouraged but not obliged to participate or respond to these questions. However, many did and over the months a great deal of interesting and useful reflection took place and added to the corpus of this study. The data gathered in these e-logs was further supplemented by interviews with individual students.

As it is important to provide this study with the perspectives of other interested parties, a questionnaire was also sent to mentors in partnership schools, asking them to reflect upon the linguistic difficulties experienced by trainee teachers who had been placed, over the years, in their schools and asking them whether they thought the language skills of trainees had declined and also which feature of language (such as vocabulary, pronunciation, knowledge of grammar) caused the trainees ongoing difficulties. For ethical reasons, they were asked not to comment on this year’s trainee teacher(s) and to generalise. It is accepted that generalisations are inadvisable but it is hoped that some useful information can be gleaned from the exercise.

Finally, interviews took place with some fellow providers of initial teacher training programmes in order to explore their experiences and identify what has worked well for them while at the same time identifying pitfalls to be avoided.

To date, much very pertinent and useful data have been gathered and it is in the process of being evaluated and analysed. This will form the basis for the guided learning programme that will take place in future months. It is anticipated that the programme will include a range of strategies and approaches that will help the trainee teachers to unlock the language skills and knowledge that is lost in the dusty corners of their memories. In addition to improving their language skills, it should also provide a useful meta-learning experience that will be of particular interest to them as future teachers, encouraging them to reflect upon the learning process that will benefit not only themselves but also their pupils. As confident and competent language teachers, they will be able to withstand the scrutiny of their mentors and tutors as they use their language in the unfamiliar and unnerving environment of the classroom with increased ease and confidence.

**Bibliography**


Use it or Lose it: retrieving lost language skills from the dusty corners of memory

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Background

Students training to be languages teachers not only have to learn the craft of the profession but are under constant pressure to maintain their language skills, especially as they put their language competence under the close scrutiny of their mentors and university tutors in the nerve-wracking environment of the classroom. This study of PGCE modern foreign languages students and their attempts to reactivate lapsed language skills is nearing its final stages. It is aimed at students who, for professional or personal reasons, have allowed their language skills to decline and need to reactivate them to be able to teach effectively.

The study of language attrition (De Bot et al 2000, Høst, 2001, Meara 2004) has proved particularly fruitful in researching this field. In the initial stages of the investigation, an extended case study was undertaken to gather data on language loss and relearning. This was done in means of a focus group, a reflective electronic log undertaken by PGCE languages students and interviews with selected students, staff and tutors from other teacher training institution as well as questionnaires to mentors in partnership schools. These data have provided a basis for a guided learning programme currently taking place in the school of education. Students have been encouraged to reflect on the process of language attrition and to identify strategies that have allowed successful language regeneration.

Results and Analysis

Initial findings from the case study phase of this investigation support the findings of Hansen (2001), that language skills and knowledge, once learned, are not necessarily lost but might become inaccessible with disuse and can be retrieved with the right cues. Finding these cues, however, is problematic and identifying ways to reactivate language is still unclear (De Bot & Stoessel 2000).

Students who took part in the focus group and kept an electronic log tended to be divided in their approach to reactivating their lapsed language skills. Many returned to the grammar books of their school days while others chose to 'expose' themselves to the language, concentrating on reinforcing their receptive skills by reading and listening to the target language in an unstructured way. Interestingly, the choice of approach tended to depend on the age of the students, the older ones resorting to grammar exercises typical of the O Level examination teaching methods while the younger students of the GCSE generation concentrated on working on communicative language skills. Students seemed to return instinctively to the ways they had first learned languages, though when this was pointed out, they were keen to accept the validity of alternative methods. All recognised that a variety of approaches was likely to be the most effective and complete way to reactivate lapsed languages.

The personality of the student also played a significant part in their choice of reactivation method. Many students chose to attend evening classes or to spend time with native speaker students in order to reinforce their oral skills. Other students preferred to study alone, using a wide range of texts and recorded materials. For many the choice of method was dictated by their circumstances and the need to balance language studies with the demands of their teacher training programme. Many were unable to attend evening classes as they needed time to prepare lessons for their school experience. Some students found ways to combine leisure with language learning, such as listening to foreign language music, reading favourite books (such as Harry Potter) in the target language or simply following foreign language recipes to cook their dinner. All participants recognised that maintaining and improving their language skills was an essential part of their professional development.

Guided Learning Programme

The action research phase of the investigation is the culmination of the study and students in the current cohort benefit from the experiences and reflections of the previous students. The intervention started with an audit of language skills at the beginning of the academic year followed by diagnostic testing of both grammatical and vocabulary knowledge. This has established a useful baseline against which the intervention can be measured.
Students then undertake to complete a language log on a weekly basis, recording not only the language activity but also their reflections on its usefulness and effectiveness. No guidance is given in the first weeks about the nature of the tasks to be undertaken, though at later stages tutors may suggest different types of activities if a lack of balance becomes evident. Students also find a language partner and university sessions allow for a long lunch break so that the partners can spend time together and speak in the target language. The increasing number of foreign native students undertaking PACE programmes in order to qualify as modern languages teachers provides a useful resource for British trainee teachers and the support offered to the latter can frequently be repaid by help in understanding the British educational system or proof reading assignments. These contact hours are mutually beneficial and an essential element of the guided learning programme. After a period of 10 weeks the programme is due to be evaluated by students and tutors and adjustments can be made where necessary.

To date, most students have been very supportive of the aims of the programme, recognising that language competence is essential for effective performance in the classroom, as well as making them more employable. Some students, inevitably, have found it difficult to balance the demands of their training with the need to maintain and improve their language skills and knowledge. However, as subject knowledge and understanding is one of the standards for Qualified Teacher Status, they recognise that this is an essential part of their professional development. The potential benefits of the programme go beyond the maintenance and improvement of students' language skills - the experience should give them a timely reminder of what it is to be a learner, a valuable lesson in empathy for these new teachers. Students have the opportunity not only to reacquaint language skills but to reflect on the process of metalearning, a process that will allow them to develop into confident and competent teachers.

References


Supporting Trainee Language Teachers
Retrieving lapsed language skills

Jill Llewellyn Williams
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Scope and Research Design
- How we acquire language
- How we lose it
- How we can get it back
- PGCE trainee teachers
- 3 cohorts: 2008 - 2009
- Case Study phase
- Action Research phase: guided learning programme

Personal Perspective
- Background
- Experience
- Knowledge base
- Professional role

Review of current research
- Learning styles and strategies
- Language learning methodologies
- Student support
- Linguistics

Research Questions
1. How best can students motivate and recall previously learnt language skills?
2. Which type of language seems most resistant to loss?
3. Which learning methods have allowed students to maximise their language memory over a significant period of time and how can these methods be adapted for future use?
4. What impact does a deeper understanding of this process have on student learning?

Language Teaching approaches
- Grammar-Translation
- Audio-Linguual
- Communicative Language Teaching (Krapp 2006)

Does the way we were taught influence the way we learn and the way we choose to regain language skills?
Language Attrition

- Repression Hypothesis: language is lost in the reverse order of that in which it has been learned
- Signs of language attrition: not the "lost" of certain items but an increase in the time needed to retrieve them
- Information, once learned, is not lost. It becomes inaccessible with disuse, but is retrievable with the right cues
  (Hansen, 2000)

Recent Research

"There is clearly a retention of linguistic knowledge over a long period of time... but how best we can activate them is still unclear"
(De Bot & Stoessel 2000)

Language Attrition

- No age advantage
- Regression hypothesis: last learnt is first forgotten
- Higher proficiency advantage
- Initial learning plateau resists attrition
  (Hansen 2000)

Challenges in Language Attrition research

- Language is more complex than vocabulary items
- We can't see inside people's heads to see how vocabularies are organised and how this interacts with vocabulary loss
- "Current methodologies for studying large-scale lexical processes like attrition leave a lot to be desired"
  (Meira, 2004: 151)

> 'Boulogne Ferry Effect'

Language Attrition

- Recall – the ability to actively come up with words in the target language
- Recognition – the ability to be able to show passive recognition of words in the target language without being able to actively produce them
- Language which can neither be recalled nor recognised
  (De Bot & Stoessel, 2000)

Language is complicated

(De Bot & Stoessel, 2000: 151)
Research design – case study
• Focus group
• Reflective e-log
• Student interviews
• Mentor questionnaires
• Interview with ITT providers

Results to date
• How best can students reactivate and recall previously learnt language skills?
  • Exposure to language (receptive skills, target language contact)
  • Structural review (grammar, vocabulary, bottom-up approach, teaching)
  • Combination of both methods

Action Research phase
• Planning for Action Research
• Guided learning programme
  • Language audit
  • Language ‘buddy’
  • Learning log

Results to date
• Which type of language seems most resistant to loss?
  • Very varied findings – depends on students’ learning experiences
  • Receptive knowledge
  • Pronunciation
  • Basic structures (if well learnt)

Data Analysis
• Establishment of baseline data
  • French, German, Spanish, Italian
  • Diagnostic grammar testing
  • X-Lex test (receptive vocabulary)
  • Word association test (productive vocabulary)
• Re-test and review

Results to date
• Which learning methods have allowed students to maximise their language memory?
  • Not rote learning / chunk memorisation
  • Language manipulation activities
  • Strategies that strengthen learner autonomy
Results to date

- What impact does a clear understanding of this process have on student learning?
- Awareness of own language proficiency
- Empathy
- Motivation
- Insight into learning process – creation of sharing strategies

Thank you for listening

All comments and suggestions gratefully received.

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References

Appendix 4

Documents relating to attendance at training events and conferences

Document 1  CILT ITT Conference
8 & 9 September 2006
Manchester

Document 2  CILT MFL Postgraduate Research
20 November 2006
London

Document 3  CILT ITT Conference
7 & 8 September
Keele 2007

Document 4  Language World Conference
30 & 31 March 2007
Oxford

Document 5  Language World Conference
11 & 12 April 2008
Oxford

Document 6  Language World Conference
3 & 4 April 2009-05-16
Leicester

Document 7  LLAS / CILT Languages in Higher Education Conference
8 & 9 July 2008
York

Document 8  BAAL Conference
11 – 13 September 2008
Swansea

Document 9  Research Student Skills Week (UWIC)
18 & 19 March 2008
Cardiff

Document 10  The Effective Researcher (UKGrad)
12 & 13 May 2008
Cardiff
Conference

Teaching learning and research: Making the links

Date

Friday 8 and Saturday 9 September 2006

Venue

Chancellors Hotel and Conference Centre,
Manchester

Content of this event

- Research as a means of developing classroom practice
- Assessment for learning
- The new standards for QTS
- Developing a community of practice through the ITT MFL website
- Developing quality in mentoring

Opportunities to follow up

- Participation in the ITT MFL website forum
- Participation in the Jane Jones’ discussion on Assessment for Learning (ITT MFL website)
- Suggestion for development of new materials for ITT MFL website
- Writing articles for the Links bulletin (CILT)
- Participation in existing ITT networks
- Use of Extension Courses to widen recruitment to ITT
- Collaboration with colleagues in the light of the new Standards
- CILT website www.cilt.org.uk/cpd

CILT Training events provide opportunities to:
- access up-to-date and relevant information;
- increase professional knowledge and understanding;
- consider teaching, planning and assessment;
- take responsibility for own professional development;
- plan for positive action to engage, motivate and improve the quality of pupils’ learning.
Course or conference

A Rough Guide to MFL Postgraduate Research:
A one-day workshop to support new MFL research postgraduates

Date
Monday 20 November 2006

Venue
CILT, the National Centre for Languages, London

Content of this event

This day is aimed at new postgraduate research students in the fields of Modern Foreign Languages and other language and linguistics-related areas. The workshop covered a range of topics, from the services available from CILT and the Subject Centre to online resources and networks, as well as practical advice on carrying out and writing up your research.

Opportunities to follow up

- CILT, the National Centre for Languages
  http://www.cilt.org.uk/
- Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies
  http://www.ltas.ac.uk/
- Intute
  http://www.intute.ac.uk/
- PORT: Postgraduate Online Research Training
  http://port.ligs.sas.ac.uk/
- AHRC Research Training Network in Modern Foreign Languages
  http://grs.sas.ac.uk/postgraduate/researchtraining.html

in partnership with

The Higher Education Academy
Languages, Linguistics, Media Studies

CILT Training events provide opportunities to:
- access up-to-date and relevant information;
- increase professional knowledge and understanding;
- consider teaching, planning and assessment;
- take responsibility for own professional development;
- plan for positive action to engage, motivate and improve the quality of pupil learning.
Conference

Accelerating language skills through the strategic classroom

Date

Friday 7 and Saturday 8 September 2007

Venue

Management Centre, University of Keele

Content of this event

- Research into language learner strategies in MFL
- Assessment for learning
- Up-date on the National Strategy for Languages
- Using film with KS3
- Primary language learning
- Tackling issue around diversity in languages
- Researching bilingual learners
- Dramatic story telling in MFL
- Developing the use of target language with pupils
- Research into the KS3 Framework for MFL

Opportunities to follow up

- ITT MFL website
- Links bulletin (CILT)
- Language Learning Journal special edition on language learner strategies Summer 2007
- CILT website: www.cilt.org.uk/cpd

CILT Training events provide opportunities to:

- access up-to-date and relevant information;
- increase professional knowledge and understanding;
- consider teaching planning and assessment;
- take responsibility for own professional development;
- plan for positive action to engage, motivate and improve the quality of pupil learning.
Language World
CONFEERENCE & EXHIBITION

This is to certify that

Jill Llewellyn Williams

attended

Language World Conference
30-31 March 2007
at
University of Oxford

Signed on behalf of the Association: _________________________________

Association for Language Learning
150 Railway Terrace, Rugby CV21 3HN
Tel: 01788 546443 Fax: 01788 544149
Email: info@ALL-languages.org.uk
www.ALL-languages.org.uk
Registered Charity No: 1001826
Language World
CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION

This is to certify that

Jill Llewellyn Williams
attended
Language World Conference
11-12 April 2008
at
University of Oxford

Signed on behalf of the Association:

Jill Llewellyn Williams

University of Oxford
Certificate of Attendance

This is to certify that

Jill Llewellyn Williams

has attended

Course or conference

Transitions and connections – 2008 Languages in HE Conference

Date

Tuesday 8 and Wednesday 9 July 2008

Venue

York University

Content of this event

Plenary, workshop and presentation/discussion sessions on the following themes:

Working across sectors
Transition between school and university, stimulating demand for language degrees, outreach activities, lifelong learning, qualifications and accreditation, widening participation

The curriculum
Specialist degrees, intercultural communication, ab initio language learning, student mobility and the year abroad, less widely used less taught languages/community languages, assessment, applied languages/languages for the professions

The language learning environment
Technology and innovation in teaching, copyright and digitisation, sharing resources - repositories, learning objects etc., distance programmes/supporting students abroad, collaborative teaching and learning

Languages and employment
Engaging with employers, the language professions, accreditation, employability, entrepreneurship, teacher training, staff development

Opportunities to follow up

Proceedings from this conference will be available from Autumn 2008 on the official conference website:
www.las.ac.uk
Swansea, 13 September 2008

This is to confirm that

**Jill Llewellyn Williams**

attended the 41st Annual Meeting of the British Association for Applied Linguistics,
held at Swansea University, 11-13 September 2008.

Dr Tess Fitzpatrick
Programme Chair, BAAL 2008
University of Wales Institute, Cardiff - Athrofa Prifysgol Cymru, Caerdydd

Certificate of Attendance
Research Student Skills Week 2008

Thesis – 13 March
Getting Published – 18 March
Viva – 19 March

Jill Llewellyn Williams

[Signature]

Professor Daniel O’Leary
Dean of Graduate Studies
Research Students Skills Development Programme

Certificate of Attendance

This certifies that
Jill Llewellyn Williams

attended
“The Effective Researcher”
12 – 13 May 2008

Eluned