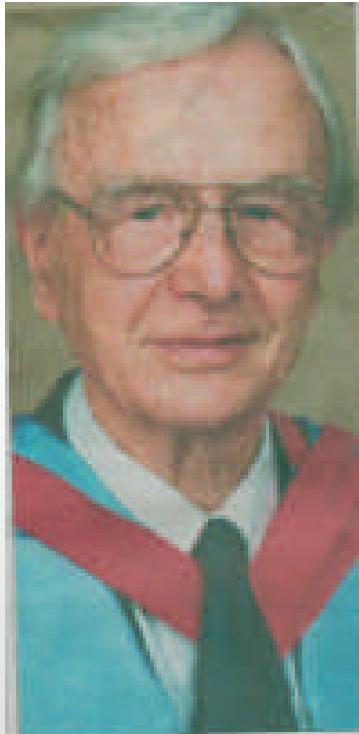


# The legacy of Eric Hawkins

Ros Mitchell

50 years of education at York University  
July 2013

# Eric Hawkins: Key career milestones (Green 1979, 2010)



- Schoolteacher, 1937-40 and 1946-49
- Grammar school headteacher, 1949-64  
(Oldershaw GS, Calday Grange GS)
- Member of Plowden Committee on Primary Education, 1963-66
- Founding Director, Language Teaching Centre, University of York, 1965-79
- Chair of Schools Council Modern Languages Committee, 1968-74

# An early Southampton link ...



The Basque children  
in Southampton  
1937



# An early Southampton link ...



The Basque children  
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# Wartime experience shapes postwar expectations

A progressivist learner centred orientation:

“Education is in the end for freedom. This follows from the political choice that our community has made in favour of democracy. It is a choice periodically reaffirmed ... and one which carries with it the assumption that the individual voter who sanctions the democratic decisions is autonomous. This concept of the autonomy of the individual is crucial. It determines the school’s main role, which is to make people as free as they have it in them to be, within the limits of an evolving democracy...” (Hawkins 1981 p 29)

The wider context:

“A polyglot world... and a European Community” (p 28)

## 1960s educational initiatives

- Shift from grammar + secondary modern pattern to comprehensive schools (Crossland circular, 1965)
- Modern languages extended ‘vertically and horizontally’ to include comprehensive school students and primary school students
- Foundation of Audiovisual Language Teaching Association (AVLA), 1962
- Audiovisual language teaching in primary schools (promoted by Nuffield Foundation from 1963, adopted by Schools Council and relocated to York in 1967)
- Reforms of GCE O Level, introduction of CSE, 1963
- Foundation of Schools Council 1964
- Foundation of CILT 1965
- Foundation of York Language Teaching Centre 1965

# The York Language Teaching Centre

- Designed to complement departments of ‘language’ and ‘English and related literatures’
- Four proposed functions (Hawkins 1999):
  - Service courses for non-specialists
  - Materials development
  - Research in language pedagogy
  - Training of language teachers
- Nuffield-sponsored ‘state of the art’ building, shared with Department of Language, 1967

## Schools-related work of LTC (Green 1979)

- Funded schools developmental projects, e.g.
  - Nuffield/ Schools Council Materials Unit (1967 onward)  
+ production of audiovisual courses *En Avant!*,  
*Vorwärts!*, *Adelante!*, *Yvperyod!*
  - *New patterns in 6<sup>th</sup> form language studies* (Schools Council funded project, 1966-70)
- Research, e.g.
  - Study of language requirements of British industry (Nuffield funding: Emmans et al, 1972)
  - Study of the effectiveness of the language laboratory in school, 1967-70 (Green, 1972, 1975)

## Schools-related work of LTC (contd)

- Work with schools and partnerships in learning
  - Hawkins' personal example: teaching French in local schools (first secondary modern, then comprehensive)
  - Additional engagement of PGCE students with local schools (accompanying school trips, intensive remedial teaching)
  - Reciprocal language teaching in summer courses for language teachers and for 6<sup>th</sup> formers
  - Intensive ESL summer courses for immigrant children (Hawkins, 1971)

## 1970s problems for MFLs in schools

- Universities abandon languages as entry requirement, 1967
- Burstall critique of primary French, 1974
- Her Majesty's Inspectorate critique of languages in comprehensive schools, 1977
- Dropout for languages among boys in comprehensive schools
- Teacher supply problems

Eric Hawkins at  
retirement from  
LTC (1979!)





## Eric Hawkins at retirement from LTC (1979!)

... and still a  
defender of  
'languages for all'  
(see 1973 AVLJ  
debate with Harry  
Ree and 1979  
AVLJ paper)

## New policy initiatives

- National Congress on Languages in Education (NCLE: Perren 1979, Trim 1980)
- The ‘Language Awareness’ movement (Donmall 1985)
- The ‘Graded Objectives in Modern Languages’ movement (Buckby et al 1981; Page 1996)
- ‘Merger’ of GCE O Level and CSE: Introduction of General Certificate of Secondary Education, 1988
- Policy discussion and reorientation leading to introduction of National Curriculum (including ‘languages for all’: DES 1987)
- Formal definition of languages curriculum as ‘4 skills’ (i.e. Attainment Targets, with a ‘ladder’ of levels to be climbed: DES/WO 1990)

## Hawkins' curriculum ideas for an Anglophone setting (Hawkins, 1981)

- Distinguish 'educational' and 'instrumental' rationales for language learning
- All children should receive a coherent language education including:
  - Mother tongue study
  - Foreign language study
  - Language awareness study
- 'Educational' foreign language study for all can be justified on two grounds: knowledge and questioning of culture(s), plus language awareness
- 'instrumental'/ 'vocational' foreign language study should be available in the later stages of education for those who need it

# Hawkins' curriculum ideas (contd)

'Educational' foreign language learning should include:

- 'Training of the ear' (esp. In primary school)
- Grammar study/ analysis of 'patterns'
- Focus on meaning (rehearsal vs performance)
- Intercultural encounters and immersion experiences
- An accessible 'apprenticeship' language (Spanish not French!)

"The objectives of the [5 year] secondary school apprenticeship are:

- To gain insight into language;
- To learn how to learn a language;
- To sharpen the tools of learning while relishing the experience  
... "(1981 p. 93)

Post-16, "languages of choice" should be learned by intensive methods

## Language awareness proposals

A new subject called "The Study of Language" in the secondary school. . . pupils would examine the function of language . . . learn about language acquisition, as future parents . . . analyse linguistic prejudices . . . study by means of field work the effectiveness of language in a variety of contexts . . . The programme would also include contrastive studies of LI and L2. (Hawkins, 1974: 62, in Hawkins 1992)

# Hawkins' re-statement of principles 2005

- I am arguing for a *preparatory* ... apprenticeship up to KS4, an apprenticeship that would include quite a lot of 'learning how to learn' and the basic introduction to 'awareness of language' that is necessary to make a purposeful choice of foreign language possible....
- The 14-19 course could then offer a variety of pathways, both vocational and academic, in which (most important) the *choice of pathway would be made by the learner.* (p 5)

“The early introduction to foreign languages that is needed must be an integral element of a radically re-gearred linguistic apprenticeship whose purpose is clearly educational, not instrumental, preparing pupils to make informed and apt choices at the (adolescent) instrumental stage and to attack that stage properly equipped with the tools for language learning. That was precisely the aim of the movement which has come to be called ‘awareness of language’ (AOL).” (Hawkins 2005, p 8)

## Hawkins' 2005 proposals by Key Stage

Key Stage 1	Focus on mother tongue development with intensive one to one tutoring for disadvantaged learners; include early 'training of the ear' esp. through singing
Key Stage 2	Encounters with a range of languages, including taster learning experiences, focusing on 'education of the ear'; Incorporate different languages into a wider concept of literacy; Work on language awareness, including awareness of multilingualism/ range of languages in the school /the locality;
Key Stage 3	Intensive study of a single 'apprenticeship language';, leading to a GCSE-equivalent standard The language to be chosen by the school, but could include local heritage languages taught reciprocally; Focus on learning how to learn, laying foundations for later study
Key Stages 4 and upward (14-19)	The 'instrumental' stage of language learning, where students would study selected languages by choice, using intensive approaches

## Commended projects (Hawkins 2005)

- EVLANG (Candelier 2003)
- Coventry Pathfinder project (+ community languages: )
- ‘Discovering Language’ project, Esme Fairbairn foundation

## Conclusions: the Hawkins legacy?

- An educational philosophy which is primarily about the overcoming of social disadvantage, the development of the individual, and the promotion of democratic and humane values
- Rejection of ‘instrumental’ language teaching before age 14-16
- Promotion of ‘educational’ rationales for language teaching, including an ongoing commitment to ‘language awareness’, to intercultural understanding, and to linguistic apprenticeship i.e. learning how to learn
- i.e. Profound contradictions with the recent National Curriculum model (defined levels in discrete skills), with an instrumental early start, and with outcomes based curricula more generally????
- An ongoing challenge to current standards-based orthodoxy

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# Thankyou !

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