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The Evaluation of BBC Language courses with particular reference to 'Kontakte' and 'Ensemble'.

This paper presents some preliminary findings from two research projects being carried out in the language research units of Brighton Polytechnic and the University of York on the BBC's two multi-media language courses 'Kontakte' (a beginners' radio and television German course) and 'Ensemble' (beginners' French).

Both courses concentrated on the four skills of listening comprehension, speaking, reading and writing, with a marked emphasis on the first two. The components of both courses were 50 broadcasts consisting of 25 television programmes and 25 complementary radio programmes; essential students' course books; practice material on L.P. records or audio-cassettes; Tutors' Notes for use in linked classes, and in the case of 'Kontakte' three colour film-strips each containing 35 frames, offering useful pictorial material allied to programme content. This last element was designed essentially for class use. These two research projects, partly funded by the Governments of West Germany and France respectively and each lasting some two years, are the first attempts at in-depth evaluation of BBC language courses, as BBC licence revenue, in the terms of the present Charter, must be used exclusively for the preparation and production of programmes and their support materials. Help in the past from BBC Audience Research has therefore been peripheral.

The Brighton project, under the direction of Dr. Brian Hill, looked at the use of 'Kontakte' first with home learners and second in a classroom context. The purpose was to find out how these courses were being used and to obtain some indication of their success in achieving their stated aims. At this stage a full assessment of the implications of the investigations is not possible, since a considerable amount of corroborative and interpretative work still remains to be done. Nevertheless a substantial body of information has been generated, which should be of value when planning future broadcasting policy in this area.

In each of the two projects a dual approach was adopted, one strand of the investigation being concerned with establishing the national context of the Learning/teaching situation, using questionnaires and ongoing report cards, the other with a series of in-depth case studies of selected (not representative) individuals or classes using batteries of tests. In this way data was generated on general features of use together with some assessment of foreign language acquisition.

In the first project (the use of 'Kontakte' with the home learner) several interesting and indicative factors emerged. It appeared that the audience had a relatively high standard of education, that they had already demonstrated considerable interest in German and Germany and that the majority had far more experience of grammar/translation than of audio-lingual/visual methods.

From the report cards returned at five-weekly intervals, information on how the programmes were used and assessed was obtained. The research lent general support to the multi-media concept of a joint radio and television course, though as the course progressed the strains of following both radio and T.V. increased and learners showed some tendency towards following a single medium. Little reliable information was generated on the relative effectiveness of the two media, but learners tended to rate the radio element of 'Kontakte' more highly than the television. There seemed to be relatively few of the target audience who could devote more than two to three hours per week to learning the language, and the strain of learning over a long period of time was further emphasized by the fact that approximately two thirds of the audience dropped out before the end. An interesting feature here was that drop-out was not caused primarily by deficiencies in the course itself but by personal reasons: indeed a large percentage of those dropping out expressed a desire to follow another broadcast course.

The effectiveness of the course with the small number of learners tested at frequent intervals appeared high. Although the tests administered were considered hard by some observers, the scores obtained in the three areas of listening, speaking and reading were higher than expected.

The research into the classroom exploitation of 'Kontakte' generated information on how the course was used by teachers and for what purposes. Here again considerable support for the multi-media approach was evident, though the uses made of radio and T.V. differed. Broadly speaking television was exploited more for its potential in "widening the language learning experience", rather than for the specific reinforcement of linguistic structures. Here again radio seemed to be rated somewhat more highly than television, at least in terms of overall use in the classroom.

Teachers also expressed some broadly consistent views on what programmes should contain and the methodologies that should be adopted to achieve their aims. The problems of using broadcasts in the classroom were also analysed.

Groups of students tested at regular intervals showed the same sort of relatively high achievement scores as home learners, but many problems were experienced in running this part of the research due to internal features of the Polytechnic structure and the tests are being re-run with different groups of students.

#### DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS AND METHODS OF ENQUIRY

Several limitations had to be taken into account in designing the research projects and in some cases these need to be considered when evaluating the significance of the data obtained. The main problems were as follows:-

- i) Since Dr. Hill's team were researching programmes that were being recorded only shortly before transmission, it was difficult to assimilate the characteristics of individual programmes into planning. Nor was it possible to build into the programmes elements which might have generated information in a controlled way.
- ii) On the individual circumstances in which programmes were used, a number of uncontrollable variables existed. The variety of user characteristics made any attempt at detailed comparisons between learner performances very dangerous (both with the home learner and the classroom situation).

- iii) The research was linked to a specific course and considerable care had to be exercised in making unsupported generalisations.
- iv) It was difficult in many circumstances to make the distinction between media-based and audience-based information.
- v) No attempt could be made at this stage to test the effectiveness of radio and television vis-à-vis other teaching methods.

With these factors in mind, a research strategy was developed which attempted to generate information in two ways:

- a) A broad-based national enquiry to establish the context of the learning situation and to generate data on such aspects as who was using the course, for what purposes, in what way, plus data on subjective assessment of success.
- b) An in-depth series of case studies which looked in more objective detail at learning success as defined by such factors as attainment of aural performance, attainment of oral performance, attainment of reading performance and improvement of knowledge about the country.

The specific methods used and a brief summary of the results obtained for each section are as follows:-

A) The home-based learner with 'Kontakte'

- i) Following a pilot run on known users of previous courses, a detailed questionnaire was designed to establish a profile of the 'Kontakte' audience. A serious learner was defined as someone who purchased a course book and a reply-paid post card was inserted into Book 1. (The BBC production team's view is that the pre-paid reply card system establishes a profile of a self-selecting 'Kontakte' audience, who are 'serious, confident learners' as opposed to 'serious learners' (see Appendix A). Of those expressing willingness to co-operate in a research project by returning the postcard, a random sample was established,

weighted slightly in favour of beginners, rather than those with previous knowledge of German. Completed questionnaires were received from 601 respondents out of 750 initially sent out.

### Results

The questionnaire produced information on the biographical background of respondents and on factors which might affect language learning behaviour. 32.1% of the audience were aged between 41-65, 51.6% between 22-40. 56.7% were male with the majority, both male and female, employed full time (64.6%). The overall standard of education was relatively high. Approximately 50% had experienced some form of higher education and a further 28% listed their last establishment of full time education as grammar or technical school.

As might be expected, an overwhelming 96.5% had English as their native language, but somewhat more surprising was the number of respondents (79.2%) who had already spent time learning a foreign language. The principal language previously learnt was French with some (50%) having formal academic qualifications ranging from 'O' level to a degree. It was also of significance that a relatively large section of the initial respondents had previously followed a course in German and were not therefore 'pure' beginners. A surprising 23.5% of the random sample had followed a previous B.B.C. intermediate course 'Reportage'.

The majority of respondents had learned their language at school and very few had experience of audio-visual or audio-lingual methods. On the other hand, approximately 80% had experienced grammar-translation methods.

In attempting to gain some indication of respondents' reasons for learning a foreign language, possible alternatives were provided to reflect vocational and industrial motivation as well as reasons of general interest i.e., short holidays abroad. Overwhelmingly learners were wanting to learn for relatively low priority reasons: first for holidays abroad, secondly for general interest and thirdly as a hobby.

A slightly different balance was reflected in a question as to why respondents had chosen Germany. Holidays in Germany again came first (58.2%) though "benefit for business and professional reasons" came second (37%). Third equal were "German-speaking friends and relations" and "interest in German culture". (Respondents were asked to tick three of six possible statements in this section).

Considerable interest in Germany as a country was evident in that 73.7% stated that they had already visited Germany, though the majority of this total was made up of people spending less than four weeks on holiday (as opposed to more than four weeks on business).

(i) A progress card was sent to each of the respondents every five weeks. This asked for information on how the programme had been used (viewing and listening hours), whether he/she attended classes and how he/she rated the course components on a four or five point scale. Returns of progress charts were programmes 1 - 5, 596 (79.5%); 6 - 10, 472, (62.4%); 11 - 15, 372 (49.6%); 16 - 20, 316 (42.1%); 21 - 25, 287, (38.3%). It can be seen therefore, that 38.3% of the initial sample are known to have completed the course. It is not known precisely how many respondents continued to follow the course, but declined to send back progress charts. However, the returns from a "drop out" questionnaire indicate that the number of respondents in this category is relatively small.

### Results

An important feature of the investigation was to establish the listening and viewing patterns for this first multi-media course. Information processed to date indicates that most respondents followed both radio and television. Throughout the first twenty weeks, for instance, most respondents followed one television and one radio programme a week, second most popular learning pattern was one television programme per week, third was two television with one radio and fourth two television. Other patterns such as one radio session, or three television and one radio showed

very low scores. An important point is that the number of learners using just radio or just television tended to increase as the course progressed indicating that the demands of following both elements at the same time were considerable.

The most popular broadcast was the T.V. programme on Sunday mornings (38.3%), followed by the Sunday radio programme (22.5%), the Saturday T.V. programme (16.9%), the Wednesday radio programme (15.6%) and the Wednesday T.V. programme (6.6%). The audience for the Sunday T.V. programme was virtually constant throughout the course, but the Sunday radio audience increased its percentage towards the end.

It became clear that the majority of learners were only willing to spend an average of one to two hours per week on their German, including following the programmes and further work by themselves. The next largest category of learners devoted two to three hours per week. An insignificant number were willing to spend five hours or more. This may seem somewhat surprising as a large number of the sample (44%) over the course as a whole were attending evening classes where 'Kontakts' was being used.

Learners were asked to rate the course components on a five point scale. The number of people NOT using television increased as the course progressed (from 9.5% in the first five programmes to 16.7% in the last five). Of those who used it, very few thought it was of no use at all (1%). 10.7% thought it was not very useful though this figure tended to decline towards the end. The majority thought it was quite useful (36.3%) or very useful (39.7%).

With radio the evidence suggests that, although fewer people overall were using it, it was rated more highly, 50% stating radio was very useful as opposed to 19% quite useful.

As the initial sample was taken from people using the book, the national learner reaction cannot be statistically expressed. It is interesting to note that a considerable number of learners (16.7%) were not using the course book during the last five programmes. Generally however, the book was rated highly with 66% "very useful" and 21% "quite useful overall".

The most obvious point to make about the record/cassette element is that most people did not use it (70%). The majority of those who did gave it the rating "not very useful".

iii) A drop-out questionnaire was administered to most respondents who did not return their progress charts. Just over 200 were sent out and a relatively high return of 170 completed questionnaires obtained. Questions were asked as to why learners had given up the course, how they rated the course overall and whether they would follow another radio or T.V. course.

#### Results

It appears that most people who stopped studying 'Kontakte' did so for personal reasons, rather than the fact that they were dissatisfied with the course. 88.87% said that they would use a broadcast language course again.

When respondents were asked to indicate their reasons for discontinuing by ticking any of twelve different categories, the highest scores were: difficulty in finding time for preparation and follow up (48.43%); pressure of work (45.91%); inability to follow 'Kontakte' on a regular basis (32.7%). The most frequently given "pure" course-based reason - irritation with T.V. studio scenes - was only ranked fifth. There was some support for the mixed-media concept. 49.07% of "drop outs" said they would prefer a combined radio and T.V. course, 36.65% a T.V. only course and 14.29% a radio only course.

iv) A local sample of 29 learners was established and tests administered every five programmes to obtain information on their progress in aural/oral and reading skills. To do this, batteries of special tests were constructed, based on the stated aims for the five preceding programmes. Complete test results were obtained for 14 learners, the others having stopped using 'Kontakte' at various stages.



### Results

The single most interesting point to emerge from these figures at this stage is that all scores were relatively high, even though at the time certain independent observers considered the tests rather difficult. No scores fell below 60% and in the reading test 5 a score of 95% was achieved. In terms of the balance between the skills of listening, speaking and reading, the only clear trend to emerge is that reading scored a consistently higher mark than the other two. This is interesting since the course presentation devoted virtually no time to the specific practice of reading. It is also worth noting that in the majority of the tests, those who were eventually to complete the course, i.e., to take all five tests scored significantly higher marks than those who were subsequently to drop out.

### B) The classroom exploitation of 'Kontakte'

i) A questionnaire was sent to colleges known to be users of broadcast courses. Of 417 sent out, 179 were returned (42.9%). Information was obtained on numbers using 'Kontakte', on methods of exploitation and on equipment. Subjective opinions were solicited from teachers on the role of language broadcasts in formal further education teaching.

### Results

An overwhelming 84% of institutions were using the course in connection with evening classes, for an average of 2.18 hours per week. Other uses were relatively minor, with service work (15%), examination classes (14%) and optional language classes (10%) predominant. Only 7% of institutions were using the course for businessmen's classes.

When asked whether they were using the courses as core material or as a resource to be used with other courses, 68% of institutions said that they were using the course in the former mode, 11% in the latter, and 20% of colleges were using Kontakte for both purposes.

As far as classwork was concerned, 72% of institutions using the course were using the broadcasts in class. Of these, 23% were using just T.V. 39% just radio and 30% both radio and television. Most colleges were using the broadcast in recorded form (86%), very few live.

When asked to indicate how they used the broadcasts in class, interesting differences emerged between radio and television, presumably as a result of hardware availability, familiarity etc. The most popular uses of the radio programme in class were the use of parts of these to act as a stimulus to oral (52% of colleges) and aural (50%) work. The radio programme was used in its entirety to present new material by 30% of colleges and was the fourth most popular use. In the case of television, however, the playing of the TV programme whole to present material was the most popular use (35% of colleges), followed by stimulus for oral (27%) and aural (23%) work.

Users were asked to rate the effectiveness as classroom teaching aids of certain parts of the radio and TV programmes using the categories 'very useful' 'quite useful' and 'not very useful'. Most users rated the TV studio sequences as 'quite useful', filmed actuality dialogues as 'very useful', TV exercises as 'not very useful' and the gist comprehension passages as 'quite useful'. In the case of radio, most colleges deemed the studio sequences 'quite useful', the actuality dialogues 'very useful', the radio exercises 'very useful', and the 'Hören and Verstehen' passages 'very useful'.

Colleges were also asked to rate the other course components on the same scale. Most users considered the books to be 'very useful', the filmstrips 'quite useful', the records/cassettes 'quite useful' and the Teachers' Notes 'quite useful'.

The figures seem to indicate that, overall, the Kontakte radio programmes were regarded as being more useful as a classroom teaching aid than the T.V. programmes, except in the case of actuality dialogues, where both radio and TV were given the rating 'very useful' by most users. Of the

other course elements, the books were considered more useful than the other package components.

Respondents were also asked to indicate whether they considered the multi-media approach to be better, no better or less effective than courses using just one broadcast medium. 70% considered this approach to be better, 29% no better and 1% less effective.

Teachers were then asked to give their opinions on the wider issues of the use of broadcast language materials. This section of the questionnaire was answered both by those teachers who used Kontakte and those who did not. The following is a summary of their views.

Most respondents were willing to indicate their views on the strengths of broadcast material at the first level of language teaching; 5.6% and 10% of respondents did not give their views on radio and television respectively. Of those responding for radio, the three most popular categories were the provision of a wide range of native voices (78.2%) and the opportunity of using materials outside the classroom (52.9%), and the strengthening of the teacher's position by the provision of a wide variety of source material (52.4%). For television the top four were the bringing alive of the target country (92%), the convenient provision of experiences not obtainable with other media (68.5%), and the strengthening of the teacher's position through the provision of a wide variety of source material, together with the opportunity of using materials outside the classroom (both at 43.8%).

The figures seem to indicate that, in a multi-media language series, teachers in the post-school sector would prefer television to be used to bring the country alive and provide the educational experiences it is well equipped to do, whereas the role of radio is seen more as a source of materials the teacher can readily use. Although both media scored about the same for the introduction of linguistic structures (radio 21.2% T.V. (19.1%), there was a clear preference for radio (40.6%) compared to T.V. (18.5%) as a means of reinforcing linguistic structures. It may also

be of significance that, when asked whether radio and TV programmes are good student motivators, teachers did not score this point particularly highly (radio 24.1%, T.V. 32.1%).

The weaknesses of using broadcast materials attracted less attention; 21.7% of respondents made no indication for radio and 24.4% for television. Of those who did give information, there was much more similarity between the views expressed for radio and T.V. than was the case in the previous section. More found the style of presentation unsuitable for television than for radio, but this may have been influenced by KONTAKTE. Fewer teachers found that keeping a group's attention was a problem with television (5.2%) than with radio (10.6%). Otherwise, views for both media are broadly comparable, the main weaknesses being seen as inconvenient transmission times and lack of recording facilities (radio 53.2%, T.V. 61.8%), the difficulties in integrating programmes into course work (36.9% and 35.3%) and the problems of copyright restrictions (28.4% and 24.3%).

When asked what they thought the broadcasting authorities should be providing for their use, teachers expressed a clear desire (74.3% of respondents) for continuity in programme planning with a range of series at different levels. Possibilities for previewing material (56.1%) and more flexibility in copyright arrangements (42.7%) were the next strongest views expressed. More teachers seemed to want integrated T.V. and radio series (41.5%) than series using just one broadcast medium (9.4%). Only 5% of respondents did not provide information for this section.

As for content, teacher preference for the provision of materials for the four language skills was listening comprehension (70.9%) speaking (55.2%), reading (33.7%) and writing (19.2%). There was a demand for grammar support material from 47.1% of teachers. When asked whether they wanted dramatized or documentary series, 45.9% indicated dramatized material and 58.1% documentary material. The answer rate was again high - only 4.44% of respondents did not reply to this section.

ii) The same tests were administered to five classes of users as were administered to the home sample, but due to various technical and organisational factors very few completed all sections of all tests. The tests are being re-run this year with different classes in an attempt to achieve more satisfactory results.

### Results

A number of general points can be made about the test results obtained. The first is that, as with the group of home learners, the general level of proficiency achieved in the three skills as measured by the Brighton tests is very high - scores of over 90% were achieved and at no point did scores fall below 50%. To this extent one can say that Kontakte was successful in achieving its stated aim. The second point is that those students completing all tests always performed better than those who did not, hinting at the rather obvious point that attendance on a regular basis will result in good test scores. Although there is no direct link between high attendance and completion of all tests, an analysis of attendance overall indicates that mean test scores go up as average attendance increases, thus reinforcing the point.

The Brighton team points out that a fuller appreciation of the significance of the 'Kontakte' research must await the results of a more sophisticated evaluation at present in progress. When this is completed it is hoped to achieve some indication of the importance of such factors as previous language learning experience, educational background and reasons for starting the course. It should also then be possible to consider the body of data obtained in a broader perspective and to distinguish inter-supportive categories.

The French multi-media course 'Ensemble' (see Appendix B) has only just ended and the evaluation project going on at the Language Teaching Centre of the University of York, under Professor Eric Hawkins has come up with its preliminary findings, a selection of which are set out below. As the data is already extensive, I have selected those sections of the greatest

interest to the BBC's Further Education departments when formulating their forward policy. This project has been concentrating on the individual adult student at home, which is the prime target audience for both 'Ensemble' and 'Kontakte'.

The following information is taken from the replies to the questions on the pre-paid postcard inserted into 20,000 copies of the students'

Book 1. 1684 cards had been received by November 1975 when this summary was compiled.

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Under 25	303	17.93
25-30	252	14.96
31-40	334	19.83
41-50	284	16.86
51-60	247	14.67
61-70	156	09.26
Over 70	52	03.09
No reply	57	03.38

Knowledge of foreign languages

French

Good	82	04.87
Some	1103	65.50
None	499	29.63

German

Good	57	03.38
Some	338	20.07
None	1289	76.54

Italian

Good	19	01.13
Some	125	07.42
None	1540	91.45

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
<u>Spanish</u>		
Good	23	01.37
Some	155	09.20
None	1506	89.43
Students with a knowledge of other languages	186	11.05
<u>Previous BBC French Series</u>		
Yes	313	18.59
No	1331	79.04
No reply	40	02.38
<u>TV watching time</u>		
Tuesday 6.40	1052	62.47
Wednesday 12.05	390	23.16
Sunday 10.10	1225	72.74
<u>Radio listening time</u>		
Wednesday 7.00	824	48.93
Sunday 3.00	629	37.35
<u>Attending French classes</u>		
Yes	482	28.62
No	1173	69.66
No reply	29	01.72

The following results are taken from the Initial Questionnaire. 1500 were sent out of which 1183 (nearly 79%) were returned by December 31st 1975.

SECTION A Learning Environment

1. When following Ensemble do you normally use the items below?

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
a. Black and white TV	586	49.54

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
b. Colour TV	632	53.42
c. VHF radio	721	60.95
d. Other radio	442	37.36
e. Record playing equipment	260	21.98
f. Cassette tape recorder	345	29.16
g. Reel-to-reel tape recorder	81	06.85
h. Text-book	982	83.00
 2. Are you attending a French class at a local centre?		
a. Yes	502	42.43
b. No	663	50.04
c. No reply	18	01.52
 3. Please indicate the number of people in your home, including yourself.		
a. One child not yet at school	98	08.28
b. One child at school	159	13.44
c. One adult at work	463	39.14
d. One adult at home all day	490	41.42
e. Two children not yet at school	41	03.47
f. Two children at school	148	12.51
g. Two adults at work	392	33.14
h. Two adults at home all day	151	12.76
i. Three children not yet at school	6	00.51
j. Three children at school	70	05.92
k. Three adults at work	104	08.79
l. Three adults at home all day	16	01.35
m. Four children not yet at school	None	
n. Four children at school	17	01.44
o. Four adults at work	29	02.45
p. Four adults at home all day	3	00.25



	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
q. More than four children not yet at school	1	00.08
r. More than four children at school	6	00.51
s. More than four adults at work	5	00.42
t. More than four adults at home all day	4	00.34

4. Below we have listed some factors which might affect the way you learn from Ensemble, by preventing you from watching and listening to the broadcasts, or interfering with your private study. Indicate those which you think may apply in your case.

a. Family commitments	479	40.49
b. Social, sporting or voluntary activities outside the family circle	420	35.50
c. Pressures of a full-time job	461	38.97
d. Pressures of part-time work	127	10.74
e. Courses of study apart from Ensemble	180	15.22
f. Ill-health	49	04.14

SECTION B Previous language learning

1. What is your native language?		
a. English	1155	97.63
b. Any other	28	02.37
2. Have you ever spent time in the past studying a foreign language seriously?		
a. Yes	820	69.32
b. No	337	28.49
c. No reply	26	02.20

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
<b>3. Where did you learn your foreign languages?</b>		
a. At home	211	17.84
b. At school	618	52.24
c. At college or university	67	05.66
d. Residence abroad	97	08.20
e. Evening class	271	22.91
f. Other means	24	02.02
<b>4. Which methods have you used for learning languages?</b>		
a. Classroom tuition in school	609	51.48
b. Evening class	313	26.46
c. Radio course	169	14.29
d. TV course	255	21.56
e. Self-tuition from books etc.	301	25.44
f. Private tuition	49	04.14
g. Correspondence course	47	03.97
<b>5. If you ticked classroom tuition in Q4, please indicate which types of tuition you have experienced.</b>		
Audio-visual	72	06.09
Audio lingual	64	05.41
Grammar translation	623	52.66
<b>6. Please indicate whether you possess any of the following qualifications in French.</b>		
a. GSE	28	02.37
b. GCE 'O' or SCE 'O'	237	20.03
c. GCE 'A' or SCE Higher	32	02.70
d. College leaving cert. or dip.	13	01.10
e. Degree	8	00.66
f. Other qualification or course which did not lead to a qualification	127	10.74

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	
7. Reasons for wanting to learn French.			
a. General interest in France, its language, people and culture	721	60.95	
b. French will be of benefit to me in my job	209	17.67	
c. I hope to go to France in the holidays	619	52.32	
d. I have French-speaking friends or relatives	243	20.54	
e. Now that we are in the Common Market, increased knowledge of and contact with our European neighbours is very important	425	35.93	
f. Language learning is an interesting hobby which helps to keep the mind alert	651	55.03	
8. If a similar course to Ensemble had been available in another language, would you have preferred to study a language other than French?			
a. Yes	101	08.54	
b. No	1029	86.98	
c. No reply	53	04.48	
d. If your answer was 'yes', say which language(s) you would have preferred to study.			
German	47	Latin	1
Spanish	22	Dutch	1
Italian	22	Welsh	1
Russian	4	Greek	1
Hindi	2	Swedish	1
Persian	1	Japanese	1
Chinese	1	Portuguese	1
Gaelic	1		

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
9. Have you ever been to a French-speaking country?		
a. Yes	904	76.42
b. No	227	19.19
c. No answer	52	04.40

SECTION C General Information

1. Sex:

a. Male	560	47.34
b. Female	602	50.89
c. No reply	21	01.78

2. Age:

a. 21 years and under	77	06.51
b. 22 to 40	482	40.74
c. 41-65	495	41.84
d. Over 65	113	09.55
e. No reply	16	01.35

3. Age at which full-time education was completed

a. 14 years	173	14.62
b. 15	194	16.40
c. 16	255	21.56
d. 17	137	11.58
e. 18	100	08.45
f. 19	24	02.03
g. 20	33	02.79
h. 21	62	05.24
i. 22	62	05.24
j. Over 23	71	06.00
k. Not yet completed	44	03.72
l. No reply	28	02.37

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
4. Type of educational establishment last attended on a full-time basis		
a. Elementary school	117	09.89
b. Secondary modern school	189	15.98
c. Grammar/Technical school	299	25.27
d. Comprehensive school	35	02.96
e. Technical college or college of Technology	108	09.13
f. Teacher training college	80	06.76
g. University or polytechnic	171	14.45
h. Other	148	12.51
i. No reply	36	03.04
5. Professional category		
a. Employed full-time	605	51.14
b. Employed part-time	100	08.45
c. Housewife	242	20.46
d. Student	58	04.90
e. Retired	121	10.23
f. Teacher	78	06.59
6. If you make satisfactory progress with Ensemble, would you hope to continue your French studies next year?		
a. Yes	996	84.19

The following results are taken from the Progress Questionnaire sent to 1500 students of the course. 871 replies were received by the end of March 1976. All totals are expressed as a percentage of 871.

SECTION A

1. Which TV broadcast do you usually find is most convenient for you to watch?
- |                                      |     |       |
|--------------------------------------|-----|-------|
| a. TV programme on Tuesday at 7.05pm | 343 | 39.38 |
|--------------------------------------|-----|-------|

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
b. TV programme on Wednesday at 12.05pm	59	06.77
c. TV programme on Sunday at 10.10am	423	48.56
2. Which radio broadcast is usually most convenient for you to hear?		
a. Radio on Wednesday at 7.00pm	436	50.06
b. Radio on Sunday at 3.00pm	309	35.48
3. How often do you watch the TV programme?		
a. Never	25	02.87
b. Once each week	423	48.56
c. Twice each week	304	34.90
d. Three times each week	56	06.43
e. Occasionally	52	05.97
4. How often do you listen to the radio programme?		
a. Never	152	17.45
b. Once each week	428	49.14
c. Twice each week	113	12.97
d. Occasionally	172	19.75
5. How much time do you usually spend working on French each week, excluding the broadcasts?		
a. 0 - $\frac{1}{2}$ hour	183	21.01
b. $\frac{1}{2}$ - 1 hour	200	22.96
c. 1 - $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours	139	15.96
d. $1\frac{1}{2}$ - 2 hours	80	09.18
e. 2 - $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours	75	08.61
f. $2\frac{1}{2}$ - 3 hours	79	09.07
g. More than 3 hours	95	10.91

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
6. Which elements of the course do you usually use each week?		
a. Textbook and TV and Radio and Records/Cassettes	204	23.42
b. Textbook and TV and Radio	343	39.38
c. Textbook and TV programme	204	23.42
d. Textbook and Radio programme	43	04.94
e. TV and Radio programmes	24	02.76
f. Textbook and records/cassettes	36	04.13
g. TV programme only	20	02.30
h. Radio programme only	4	00.46
i. Textbook only	19	02.18
7. Do you prepare the lesson before watching the television or listening to the radio programme?		
a. Always	32	03.67
b. Sometimes	463	53.16
c. Never	272	31.23
8. Please rank the four skills below in their importance for you, using a number-scale 1 to 4 where 1 = most important and 4 = least important.		
a. Understanding spoken French		
1	427	49.02
2	344	39.49
3	28	03.21
4	17	01.95
b. Expressing yourself in spoken French		
1	371	42.59
2	371	42.59
3	75	08.61
4	25	02.87

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
<b>c. Reading French</b>		
1	56	06.43
2	67	07.69
3	573	65.79
4	132	15.15
<b>d. Writing in French</b>		
1	11	01.26
2	31	03.56
3	137	15.73
4	613	70.38

9. List the four skills in the order in which you find the Ensemble course is successful at teaching. The most successful will be number 1 on your list.

**a. Understanding spoken French**

1	395	45.35
2	296	33.98
3	128	14.70
4	8	00.92

**b. Expressing yourself in spoken French**

1	261	29.97
2	288	33.07
3	213	24.45
4	63	07.23

**c. Reading French**

1	112	12.86
2	167	19.17
3	419	48.11
4	139	15.96



	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
d. Writing in French		
1	55	06.31
2	73	08.38
3	68	07.81
4	628	72.10

SECTION B Answered by students following television programmes regularly.

1. Please rank the different parts of the TV programme in their order of usefulness to you by numbering them 1 to 5. 1 = most useful, 5 = least useful.

a. Grammar presentation

1	368	42.25
2	209	24.00
3	109	12.51
4	64	07.35
5	37	04.25

b. Opening situation

1	288	33.07
2	217	24.91
3	201	23.08
4	59	06.77
5	21	02.41

c. Renard

1	28	03.21
2	109	12.51
3	179	20.55
4	345	39.61
5	124	14.24

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
d. 1'Amour de la vie		
1	33	03.79
2	41	04.71
3	93	10.68
4	137	15.73
5	483	55.45
e. Exercises		
1	80	09.18
2	211	24.23
3	203	23.31
4	179	20.55
5	111	12.74
2. Do you find that the new language content of each television is		
a. Too great?	145	16.65
b. Just right?	587	67.39
c. Too little?	71	08.15

SECTION C Answered by students using the textbook regularly

1. Rate the usefulness of the different parts of each lesson in the textbook by numbering them 1 to 6. (1 = most useful, 6 = least useful).		
a. Opening situation		
1	205	23.54
2	133	15.27
3	105	12.06
4	141	16.19
5	112	12.86
6	43	04.94

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
b. Renard		
1	4	00.46
2	64	07.35
3	107	12.28
4	143	16.42
5	175	20.09
6	243	27.90
c. Radio dialogues		
1	204	23.42
2	127	14.58
3	120	13.78
4	95	10.91
5	87	09.99
6	93	10.68
d. Grammar explanation		
1	263	30.20
2	201	23.08
3	135	15.50
4	71	08.15
5	51	05.86
6	23	02.64
e. General background notes		
1	20	02.30
2	81	09.30
3	103	11.83
4	159	18.25
5	173	19.86
6	204	23.42

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
<b>f. Exercises</b>		
1	61	07.00
2	144	16.53
3	171	19.63
4	137	15.73
5	127	14.58
6	101	11.60
2. Are you usually able to understand and learn the essential parts of each lesson before you have to move on to the next one?		
a. Yes	664	76.23
b. No	115	13.20
3. Do you think that there is sufficient opportunity to revise what you have been learning?		
a. Yes	539	61.88
b. No	249	28.59
4. When you are doing exercises in the book, do you usually		
a. Write out your answers?	319	36.62
b. Just say the answers yourself?	460	52.81

SECTION D Answered by students listening regularly to the radio programme.

1. How easily can you understand the dialogues?		
a. Very easily	185	21.24
b. With some difficulty	381	43.74
c. With great difficulty	40	04.59
d. Not at all	3	00.34
2. Do you find that the new language content of each programme is		
a. Too great?	95	10.91
b. Just right?	537	61.65
c. Too little?	28	03.21

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
3. Do you feel that there is enough opportunity provided to repeat or say things in French in the radio programme?		
a. Yes	464	53.27
b. No	168	19.29

SECTION E

Below are a number of comments about the course made by different students.

Say whether you agree or disagree with them.

a. I would prefer to see and hear 'ordinary' situations in French homes rather than the serial story 'l'Amour de la vie'.		
Agree	527	60.51
Disagree	308	35.36
b. I find the background noise (traffic, etc.) too distracting. (l'Amour de la vie)		
Agree	339	38.92
Disagree	492	56.49
c. The characters in 'l'Amour de la vie' speak too quickly and not clearly enough.		
Agree	597	68.54
Disagree	224	25.72
d. Renard is much too childish for adult learners.		
Agree	237	27.21
Disagree	589	67.62
e. There is too much photography and not enough conversation. (l'Amour de la vie)		
Agree	335	38.46
Disagree	484	55.57
f. Since I find it helpful to see the speaker's face and lips, I do not feel that Renard is very helpful.		
Agree	276	31.69
Disagree	555	63.72

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
g. The sense of fun in the TV programmes helps me to learn and remember.		
Agree	695	79.79
Disagree	139	15.96
h. I would prefer to see much less explanation in English in the programmes.		
Agree	101	11.60
Disagree	741	85.07
i. There should be more explanation in English.		
Agree	296	33.98
Disagree	519	59.59
j. All the dialogues, including 'l'Amour de la vie', should be in the book.		
Agree	631	72.45
Disagree	177	20.32

1000 final questionnaires were sent out and 532 returned by the 31st May 1976.

1. If you attended an evening or daytime class as well as following Ensemble, did your teacher use the Ensemble materials with you?		
a. Each lesson	140	26.32
b. In most lessons	20	03.76
c. Occasionally	12	02.26
d. Never	74	13.91
2. Did you find that the programmes you watched or listened to were		
<u>Television</u>		
a. Too long?	2	00.38
b. About the right length?	360	67.67
c. Too short?	150	28.20
<u>Radio</u>		
d. Too long?	22	04.14
e. About the right length?	378	71.05
f. Too short?	60	11.26

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
3. If Ensemble Radio programmes were to be re-run, would you recommend them to absolute beginners?		
a. Yes	336	63.16
b. No	138	25.94
4. If Ensemble television programmes were to be re-run, would you recommend them to absolute beginners?		
a. Yes	374	70.30
b. No	144	27.07
5. Preferred times of broadcasts for adult learners of languages at home.		
a. Monday morning	32	06.02
b. Monday afternoon	80	15.04
c. Monday evening	312	58.65
d. Tuesday morning	30	05.64
e. Tuesday afternoon	74	13.91
f. Tuesday evening	356	66.92
g. Wednesday morning	44	08.27
h. Wednesday afternoon	82	15.41
i. Wednesday evening	332	62.41
j. Thursday morning	28	05.26
k. Thursday afternoon	82	15.41
l. Thursday evening	320	60.15
m. Friday morning	22	04.14
n. Friday afternoon	50	09.40
o. Friday evening	210	39.47
p. Saturday morning	148	27.82
q. Saturday afternoon	58	10.90
r. Saturday evening	64	12.03
s. Sunday morning	318	59.77
t. Sunday afternoon	132	24.81
u. Sunday evening	86	16.17

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
6. Do you agree with the suggestion that every fourth programme should be a revision lesson on what has been taught in previous lessons?		
a. Yes	426	80.08
b. No	96	18.05
7. Do you feel that the first few minutes of each programme should be devoted to revising the previous week's lesson?		
a. Yes	428	80.45
b. No	98	18.42
8. Indicate whether you agree or not with these comments from Ensemble students.		
1. The actors tended to speak too fast.		
a. Agree	258	48.50
b. Disagree	250	46.99
2. I learnt more French this year than in years at school.		
a. Agree	328	61.65
b. Disagree	124	23.31
3. I feel that the pace of lessons was much too fast - it would be better to have more instruction and less material in each lesson.		
a. Agree	228	42.86
b. Disagree	276	51.88
4. Instead of L'Amour de la vie, it would have been better to have had an English person trying to use and learn French in France - one could have identified with their mistakes and learned with them.		
a. Agree	372	69.92
b. Disagree	138	25.94
5. The course does not give the impression that the authors really know what it is like to be an absolute beginner in French.		
a. Agree	202	37.97
b. Disagree	308	57.89



	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
6. In spite of some minor criticisms, I feel that this was an excellent course and I have learnt a great deal of French from it.		
a. Agree	488	91.73
b. Disagree	38	07.14
9. Do you intend to follow the continuation course next year?		
a. Yes	490	92.11
b. No	30	05.64

Although it is too early to say in precisely what ways the Brighton and York findings will influence future BBC foreign language courses, the following points are already being discussed by the Executive Producers in the Further Education television and radio departments.

1. Adult students following broadcast language courses are on the whole not prepared (or not able) to devote more than 1 to 2 hours each week to the study of that language, including the broadcasts.
2. There appears to have been an age and sex shift in the audience, which looks as though it now includes almost as many men as women (and slightly more for 'Kontakte'). The audience appears on the whole to be somewhat younger than the audience for language broadcasts of 3 to 4 years ago. This may be due to the changed style and format of the programmes.
3. Reading seems to be more popular among students of broadcast courses than hitherto.
4. The home student's need for face-to-face consultation and counselling indicates that the broadcasters should develop even closer links with evening classes and try to increase

the new provision of residential Summer Schools on a regular basis, in addition to the many long-established 'weekend courses'.

5. More help and encouragement should be given to the student throughout the course to help him to use the course components effectively. Attractive presentation in the book, at regular intervals, would be better than in the introduction, which is not on the whole read. Self-assessment tests should become a regular feature of the books. More book space (and possibly airtime) should be devoted to the techniques of learning.
6. Some programme time should be devoted to student feedback.
7. All spoken texts, whether actuality or dramatised, should be printed in the books.
8. The future role of audio-cassettes and long-playing discs needs to be thoroughly examined.
9. The transition to the second-level course on radio needs to be more carefully signalled and prepared for. Cross-referencing between the two broadcast media could be increased.
10. The use of recorded and filmed 'actuality' dialogues is a powerful motivator which makes the language live for students.

Dr. Brian Hill, Brighton Polytechnic.

Mr. Brian Howson, University of York.

Miss Sheila Innes, BBC Further Education.

November, 1976.

BBC PRESS SERVICE

APPENDIX A

BBC PUBLICITY DEPARTMENT 12 CAVENDISH PLACE,  
LONDON, W1A 1AA \* 01.580.4468  
TELEVISION CENTRE, LONDON. W12 7RJ\* 01.743 8000

RELEASED SIMULTANEOUSLY BY THE BBC AND THE EMBASSY OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC  
OF GERMANY IN LONDON

SUCCESSFUL BBC STUDENTS GO TO GERMANY

A pig-breeder's wife with responsibility for 400 pigs as well as four children, a young man recently made redundant and a 62 year old retired matron are among the six BBC language students who have won a trip to Germany. They achieved most through the BBC's first combined radio and TV language course for beginners in German, 'Kontakte'. Out of the 2,500 people who sat an Achievement Test five women and one man have been awarded travel bursaries by the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany for a two week trip to Germany.

The 'Kontakte' course was devised by the BBC Further Education Departments to provide absolute beginners with a "survival" kit in the German language. The course combined weekly radio and TV programmes with books and records. Linked evening classes were available in many areas. Six travel bursaries were offered by the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany for the most outstanding students.

The University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate devised and processed the Achievement Test which was taken by 2,500 candidates. The top 50 were invited to write letters about themselves and from these, 17 were interviewed by a panel in London. The successful six were chosen on the basis of their interview.

Frau Lohmeyer, Cultural Counsellor of the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in London was a member of the interviewing panel. She talked to the students in German. "I was delighted by the high standard that everyone reached," she said. "It is remarkable to think that a year ago none of these

people could speak German. Now they will have no difficulty in understanding or making themselves understood when they take their bursaries and visit Germany." Frau Lohmeyer was so impressed by all the students she met that she is arranging for each one to receive a consolation prize - if they did not make the top six.

The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany have already offered six similar travel bursaries for the most outstanding students who follow 'Wegweiser' (Signpost) the second stage radio course which starts on Radio 3 this autumn.

The BBC Executive Producers responsible for 'Kontakte', Sheila Innes (TV) and Edith Baer (Radio) cannot be sure exactly how many thousands of students followed 'Kontakte'. "But one thing is certain," says Sheila Innes, "the first course book was among the top ten in the paper-back best seller list on three occasions last autumn."

Edith Baer is confident that there will be an enthusiastic audience for 'Wegweiser'.

#### SUCCESSFUL KONTAKTE STUDENTS

The six successful students were:

- MISS AGNES DICKIE 62, retired as Matron of the Military Maternity Hospital Woolwich seven years ago. Beith, Ayrshire.
- MR. RICHARD GARDNER 34, recently made redundant from the quality control department of a PVC manufacturing company. Married with three children. East Bergholt, Colchester.
- MRS. BRENDA HARRISON 32, former primary school teacher. Married with two young children. Involved in local attempts to arrange a 'twinning' with a German village. Bardsey, Leeds.
- MRS. KATHLEEN LANKIN 44, acts as farm secretary and record keeper for the family pig farm, which has 400 pigs. Married with four children. East Otford, Kent.
- MISS JANICE POWELL 27, Teacher, Head of Modern Language Department, Shaftesbury Girl's High School. Her own languages are French and Russian. Shaftesbury, Dorset.

MISS MARY STOCKTON 38, works in a special school for seriously handicapped children. Maidenhead.

The first three bursary winners attended linked classes. The second three learned their German at home using only the books, records and broadcasts.

30 July 1975

BBC FURTHER EDUCATION - INFORMATION SHEET

ENSEMBLE

BBC MULTI-MEDIA FRENCH COURSE 1975-6

Autumn 1975 - Spring 1976

1. Introduction

The BBC's Further Education Departments in Radio and Television are working together to produce in 1975 the first multi-media French language course to be broadcast in Britain.

ENSEMBLE is a non-vocational course, designed primarily for adult beginners studying at home. However, students will be encouraged to enrol in local classes where possible.

As with previous language courses, the BBC is hoping to interest colleges of further education and adult education centres in providing courses in parallel with this new French series; a leaflet giving details of such linked classes will be available to interested students on request.

2. The aims of ENSEMBLE

The aims of the course are three-fold: first, to teach students to speak basic French applicable to a wide range of everyday situations; second, but of equal importance, to help students understand what French people say in return; and third, to present a picture of contemporary France. The course, pitched at a modest level, will provide a sound linguistic framework for those wishing to continue studying French with second and third level courses, while providing a lively and contemporary new start for those whose school French never reached the point of enabling them to speak up with confidence.

3. Background to the project

This major project has been developed for a number of reasons; these are:

- (a) the prime importance of French as a world language;

- (b) the demand for a working knowledge of the major European languages as a result of closer ties with Europe;
- (c) the better understanding of France and the French, which comes from being able to speak the language;
- (d) the opportunity for those who simply want to learn French for the pleasure of mastering a new skill to do so by the varied and attractive means which the BBC can offer.

4. The course

ENSEMBLE will consist of a number of components which make up a flexible system. These are:

- 24 television programmes of 25 minutes each. These will contain dramatised sketches, an animated cartoon and a weekly drama story about a young Frenchman who breaks off his studies in Paris and travels through France, doing a variety of jobs and meeting various people. The story will be filmed on location in, Provence, Bouches-du-Rhône, Burgundy and Paris.
- 24 radio programmes of 30 minutes each. These are centred on unscripted interviews and real-life conversations recorded on location in France, and will also contain explanations, practice and exercises. The programmes will be presented mainly in French, but English will be used wherever it is felt it would be helpful to students. There will be additional holiday programmes providing extra listening practice and revision.
- 2 course books, containing the scripted and unscripted dialogues, the text of the animated cartoon, a résumé of the television drama story, explanatory notes, exercises

and a glossary. Every sixth chapter will contain revision material, a grammar summary and a self-assessment test. The books will be illustrated with drawings and photographs.

2 long-playing records (also available as cassette tapes), containing selected dialogues from the radio and TV programmes.

2 sets of teachers' notes - containing suggestions for exploiting the course materials in class, and the full scripts of the television drama story. The drama story will be designed to increase understanding of spoken French, and will thus be pitched at a slightly higher linguistic level than the other parts of the course.

It is felt that to publish drama scripts in the course books might discourage or mislead some students.

However, previous experience has shown that there is a demand for complete scripts, particularly among teachers.

(N.B. There will not now be any accompanying colour filmstrips, as was stated in Information Sheet No.1.)

The combination of radio and television will not mean an increase in linguistic content; both media will cover the same structures each week and reinforce rather than duplicate each other. However, the differing treatments (e.g. real life conversations, drama) and variety of situations will inevitably entail some additional vocabulary.

Neither radio nor television will leave a particular teaching item to the other medium: their contributions have been conceived as complementary, and although it will not be absolutely essential to follow both radio and television, each will reinforce the other. The keynote of ENSEMBLE is flexibility, and the student can meet his individual needs by selecting from the range of materials available.



The average weekly study requirement for students will be approximately 5 hours:

Half an hour Television (and if possible the repeat),

Half an hour Radio (and if possible the repeat),

Two hours classwork (where relevant),

Two hours homework.

5. The team

The linguistic consultant for the project is Dr. John Hoss of the University of Essex. Dr. Hoss works in The Language Centre at Essex. He was actively engaged in the "Orleans Project", a study of modern spoken French, and has previous experience working for radio as co-author of the second-year course Rendez-vous à Chaviray.

The author of the television drama story is Antoine Tupal, a professional writer living and working in France. His many works include the novel "Tempo", several "feuilletons" for French television, including "Les Chevaliers du Ciel", and an Oscar-winning scenario for the film "Les Dimanches de Ville d'Avray" (shown in this country as "Sundays with Cybele").

The achievement test could serve as a stepping stone in any future course of study and in particular for a second-year radio course the BBC is planning as a follow-up to this multi-media venture in 1976-7.

It is hoped that the French Government will offer a number of bursaries, on a regional basis, to selected students who have followed the ENSEMBLE course and taken the assessment test. The French Government will also provide funds for an evaluation of the teaching materials to be carried out by the University of York.

7. Linked classes

The BBC values highly the collaboration of teachers who use its language series, and hopes that as many colleges and centres as possible will be able to make an early decision about using ENSEMBLE. Sample television and radio programmes are being prepared, and teachers wishing to attend preview meetings are invited to complete and return the form enclosed with this bulletin.

Further details of the project, including the price of books and records, will be available later.

8. Transmission details

Partly to help evening classes, but also in response to widespread public demand, there will be a carefully programmed sequence of transmission times.

The course starts in Autumn 1975, and the transmission dates are:

- 24 television programmes starting 30th September 1975 on  
Tuesdays at 6.40 p.m. on BBC-2; repeated on Wednesdays  
at 12.05 p.m. on BBC-1 and Sundays at 10.00 a.m. on BBC-1.
- 24 radio programmes starting 1st October 1975 on Wednesdays  
at 7.00 p.m. on Radio 3 (medium wave); repeated on  
Sundays at 3.00 p.m. on Radio 4 (VHF).

This transmission pattern gives teachers the opportunity to preview the programmes and encourage students to watch and listen at the weekend.

March 1975  
Educational Broadcasting Information (30/BC)  
BBC Broadcasting House  
London W1A 1AA