

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: Royal Holloway, University of London		
Unit of Assessment: 30 Philosophy		
Title of case study: Enhancing the Teaching and Understanding of Seneca's Moral Philosophy at A Level and Beyond		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: September 2014–December 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): Dr Liz Gloyn	Role(s) (e.g. job title): Reader in Latin Language & Literature	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: September 2013–Date
Period when the claimed impact occurred: August 2017–July 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>Dr Liz Gloyn's research on the philosophy of Seneca the Younger has directly informed how school teachers have taught this topic at A Level. She has produced learning resources – both textual and video – drawing on her research that have shaped the way teachers have approached and delivered the topic. Students have reported (via teachers) how beneficial they found Gloyn's resources, often citing them in written work. Teachers have reported that her research and resources have strengthened their knowledge of Seneca which enhanced their approach to teaching of Roman Stoicism. Gloyn's research has also informed wider public understanding of Seneca's philosophy via public philosophy and talks addressed to non-academic audiences.</p>		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>Gloyn's research has drawn on a combination of social, cultural, and historical analyses to provide an innovative philosophical perspective on Roman Stoicism, in particular the ethics of Seneca the Younger. The centrepiece of this research is a Cambridge University Press monograph offering the first extensive account of Seneca's teachings on the family (R1). It makes significant contributions to academic appreciation of Seneca's thought by using his views on the role of the family and familial relations as an introduction to his wider philosophy. Gloyn argues for the centrality of the family in his thinking about moral development and uses the lens of the ethics of the family to provide an account of the way in which abstract philosophical reasoning and "everyday" practical advice are integrated in Seneca's writings. This research thereby overcomes the problematic distinction between his philosophical and non-philosophical works.</p> <p>Gloyn has also this integrated approach to Seneca's work in a study of his treatise <i>De Consolatione ad Polybium</i> (R2). Whilst Seneca is advising Polybius on how to overcome his grief at the death of his brother, he is also illustrating and applying the Stoic framework of the pursuit of virtue and of reason within his prescriptions for relationships within the family and within society.</p> <p>The treatment of the family is similarly the topic used to illuminate Seneca's philosophy in Gloyn's analysis of his collection of letters, the <i>Epistulae Morales</i> (R3). Gloyn has examined how Seneca applies ethical principles, such as seeing the interests of others as one's own, to the complex real-world situation of life in a Roman household. Going further, she presents an argument that his ideas and ideals pertaining to families may be seen as the organising principle for this entire collection of his writings.</p>		

In research published in 2020 as part of an interdisciplinary collection of essays (R4), Gloyn explored the relationship between fatherhood and leadership. Seneca uses the concept of *clementia* or clemency as a way to articulate the kinds of care that the emperor Nero might show towards his subjects, using the father-son relationship to draw out how the more a leader exercises *clementia*, the more he will enable care – and the more he enables care, the more successfully he will exercise *clementia*.

3. References to the research

- R1: Gloyn, Liz. 2017. *The Ethics of the Family in Seneca*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Print version available from HEI on request. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316535820>
- R2: Gloyn, Liz. 2014: 'Show Me the Way to Go Home: A Reconsideration of Seneca's *De Consolatione ad Polybium*.' *The American Journal of Philology* 135.3: 451-480, <http://doi.org/10.1353/ajp.2014.0032>
- R3: Gloyn, Liz. 2014: 'My Family Tree Goes Back to the Romans: Seneca's Approach to the Family in the *Epistulae Morales*.' In *Seneca Philosophus*, eds. J. Wildberger and M.L. Colish. Berlin: De Gruyter: 229-268. Available from HEI on request.
- R4: Gloyn, Liz. 2020. 'Pater Figure: Leadership, Emperors and Fathers in Seneca and Stoicism.' In *Paradox and Power in Caring Leadership: Critical and Philosophical Reflections*, ed. L. Tompkins. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar: 142-152. Available from HEI on request.
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Evidence of the quality of the research:

R1 is a substantial monograph published by a prestigious university press that reviewers have described as "ground-breaking", "wide-ranging and deeply researched", and "a significant achievement". R2 is published in a prestigious peer-reviewed academic journal. R3 is a contribution to an important edited volume in the field with contributions by leading international scholars. Both R3 and R4 underwent editorial peer review.

4. Details of the impact

Supporting Teachers via Resources

Dr Gloyn's research has supported teachers addressing the work of the philosopher Seneca as part of the OCR A Level in Classical Civilization. When the OCR introduced a section asking students to explore the views of the philosopher Seneca on love and relationships, teachers found themselves confronting a new topic they had not taught before. In need of support, members of the subject community independently identified Gloyn as an expert on the topic and they made contact (S9). She assisted in the detailed development of the curriculum, produced supporting resources, and provided advice on how to teach the unit on Seneca within the A Level. In terms of engagement with this module, [text removed for publication] (S5). Since 2018 Gloyn has given seven talks to pupils and/or teachers on Seneca's thought, recorded a series of 6 video lectures for teachers on MASSOLIT (an online platform providing short video lectures in the arts, humanities and social sciences for secondary schools), and continuously updated her blog *Classically Inclined* with freely accessible resources for teachers.

In line with the DoE's guidance, students preparing for the A Level are expected to study Seneca's concepts of relationships directly from his own writings. However, the relevant passages are scattered across multiple works, rendering it difficult for teachers to identify and provide access to suitable readings. The syllabus also requires students to pay critical attention to scholarship on Seneca but again does not offer guidance on how to access and engage with such scholarship. Gloyn's 2017 monograph offers one of the few extended scholarly discussions of the required topics of love, relationships, and desire in Seneca. In dialogue with the teaching community, Gloyn wrote over a dozen targeted topic summaries on her blog (*Classically Inclined*, S7) designed to support teachers in their preparation of lessons: i) a collection of translations of the known fragments of Seneca's *De Matrimonio* that is otherwise unavailable; ii) accessible summaries of relevant key ideas of Stoic thought; iii) overviews of different scholarly

approaches. The blog posts have been read over 9,490 times since the first was published in 2018, the most popular post being the suggested primary sources, with approximately 2,380 views. Caroline Bristow, Director of the Cambridge School Classics Project who worked at OCR at the time, has described Gloyn's resources as 'invaluable to teachers' (S6). She also noted that 'The new requirement for students to make use of scholarship in their longer essays caused great stress, and many teachers cite this blog series and Dr. Gloyn's other work as incredibly useful and accessible for them and their students. I run the OCR training for teachers of Classical Civilisation and I point to Dr. Gloyn's work as an excellent resource at almost every session.' Similarly [text removed for publication] (S9).

Contributing to Teachers' Professional Development

As part of shaping the delivery of the OCR curriculum, Gloyn spoke at a Classical Association Teaching Board (CATB) training day for teachers of A Level Classical Civilization in 2019. The aim of the day was to enhance the knowledge of teachers on the different areas of the new syllabus and to provide support to teachers to help them to 'upskill themselves not only in terms of their knowledge of the ancient sources and context, but in terms of a wealth of scholarly material as well' (S1). Unfortunately, the textbooks commissioned and produced by OCR did not include appropriate recommendations for further study. Given this lacuna, Rob Hancock-Jones, Head of Classical Civilization at Townley Grammar School who convened the CATB training day, invited Gloyn to speak because she had already published 'very useful resources for the Love & Relationships module on her blog, and as such she was requested as a speaker from multiple members of the Classics teaching community' (S1). The event attracted over 100 teachers (each with an average of 16 students per year), of whom more than 20 took part in Gloyn's session with many of the day's feedback comments referring to the usefulness of her talk. Since the training day, Rob Hancock-Jones has 'certainly noticed in the online Classics teacher communities that there is now much less frequent and less intense concern over the scholarship requirement in A Level Classical Civilisation. Part of this, I like to think, is down to the assistance given by Liz and others at the CATB event' (S1).

Following her contribution to the content and delivery of this part of the curriculum, Gloyn has continued to support teachers as well as students in person through invited talks at schools, including Beaconsfield High School, Camden School for Girls, Chigwell School, Eltham College, and the Jewish Community Secondary School in London. Chris Lord, Head of Classics at Chigwell School stressed that 'the way she ran the seminar really engaged our students and raised the level of both our discussion and subject knowledge. I also felt much more confident teaching this part of the course' (S1). These talks also encouraged teachers to discover other resources provided by Gloyn including her blog (S1 and S2).

Teachers have used Gloyn's translations and passage selections to introduce pupils to Seneca's principles and her blog posts have not only been assigned to students as set reading but used by the teachers themselves to develop their confidence and competence in delivering this topic. This is demonstrated by testimonials referring to Gloyn's support as 'invaluable' in alleviating their fear of teaching philosophy and instead providing confidence (S1 and S2). In many cases, they refer to Gloyn's blog *Classically Inclined*, which has been a key source of information for them, such as where to find Seneca's philosophy that we should enter marriage even though we cannot guarantee perfect outcomes (S7). Responses to Gloyn's tweets have also demonstrated the reach of her work – such as 'An invaluable teaching resource for OCR Class Civ A Level' and 'Preparing to teach Seneca's view on Love and Relationships to students, and @lizgloyn's brilliant blog is proving SO useful' (S7). Furthermore, James Miller, the Head of Department of Classics and Philosophy at Durham Sixth Form Centre stated 'when I have gone into other centres to help them with aspects of this A Level I have directed them to the blog too. It is no exaggeration to say that our teaching of this part of the module is built around Dr Gloyn's work' (S2).

The Classics Library, a website to support teachers that has 2688 active members, includes a number of resources developed by Gloyn and it links to Gloyn's blog (S5). There are [text removed for publication] of the *Love and Relationships* discussion group, in which teachers

share resources. [text removed for publication] (S5). Quotes from teachers using The Classics Library include [text removed for publication] (S5).

Transforming Student Understanding

Alongside events and resources aimed at supporting teachers, Gloyn has also produced material more directly targeted at students, as well as speaking at events such as Sovereign Education's topic study day on the Seneca A Level unit. In particular, Gloyn has created a number of videos for students in two Seneca based courses hosted on the MASSOLIT learning platform, which provides short video lectures in the arts, humanities and social sciences for secondary schools. This includes six videos on 'Seneca's letters' (S8). Since August 2018, the videos have been watched 4,294 times (S4). The founder of MASSOLIT, Chris Tudor, explained that Gloyn was commissioned to produce these courses due to her 2017 book, her blog, and because she was accessible by being 'active on Twitter' (S4). He also affirmed the significance of the courses to users: 'The course on Love and Relationships was particularly useful as it covered a particularly difficult section of the specification. 'Difficult' because Seneca is inherently difficult, plus the specification was remarkably indeterminate on what parts of Seneca students should concentrate on' (S4).

Students' responses to the resources and talks by Gloyn have been highly positive. Her talks have been described by students as 'inspirational' (S7) and 'engaging' (S1) ways to connect with and understand better potentially challenging material. Students have also actively engaged with Gloyn's targeted topic summaries when teachers have asked them 'to read them for homework and then discuss the ideas covered in class' (S2). This has encouraged an interest in the philosophy of Seneca and other philosophers for further study: '[the blog] encouraged two of my students to go on to study Philosophy at university ... we have five of the sixteen students who are continuing with Classical subjects at university. They are most keen to know what type of research the academics that are going to be teaching them are undertaking' (S2). Students have also utilised Gloyn's blog to integrate into other parts of their education: 'One of my students used some of the ideas she had studied in Love and Relationships, including Seneca, in her English coursework. Another student is now studying Classics at university. As part of her contribution to the school's Classical Society, she explained some of Seneca's views to younger students in the school. Again, the blog played an important role here' (S2). Another example of the impact of Gloyn's work beyond Classics classwork comes from Claire Brice, Head of Classics at Bedford Girl's School, who records 'One student emailed me during the lockdown period to say that she was so glad we had studied Seneca and that she was really into Seneca's Stoicism now in a personal way' (S2).

Further evidence of the impact upon students is the examiner's report (S6), providing figures for students opting to answer the Seneca exam questions and describing where students have referred to Gloyn as part of their answer. Jenny Jones, a former teacher at Burgess Hill Girls School explained that 'the blog was essential for their exploration of friendship, which later appeared as an examination question, in terms of both material and ideas' (S2). This demonstrates both that students are confident to answer questions on Seneca, and that Gloyn's work is of key significance in this area and thus students feel it is important to reference her in relation to Seneca's philosophy.

Contributing to Public Understanding

Beyond UK schools and universities, Gloyn's research on the philosophy of Seneca has impacted upon wider understanding of Seneca's philosophy, Stoicism, about how Stoicism might be beneficial for people today. Professor Massimo Pigliucci, Chair of the Department of Philosophy at the City College of New York, immediately saw the importance of Gloyn's work and wanted to make it more widely known outside academia. He has since written a series of short essays relating to Gloyn's work on his popular blog that have been viewed approximately 8,100 times since 2018. He has commented that Gloyn's work 'is leading to a renewed understanding of the depth of Seneca's philosophy in the academic community, as well as to a wider appreciation of it among the general public. I regard this particular combination, a dual academic/public impact, as a model for scholars in any field' (S3). Gloyn was also an invited

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speaker at Stoicon 2018, a large public event (350 attendees) exploring the relevance of Stoic philosophy for people today. Her talk about Seneca was recorded and is available freely online (approximately 1,300 views). She has since contributed to and been invited to join the editorial board of *The Stoic* magazine (S10). Through these channels, Gloyn's research on Seneca has impacted on the ways in which modern admirers of Stoicism understand Stoic thinking about leadership, family, and relationships.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- S1: A collection of testimonials from teachers who attended Gloyn's workshops and training
- S2: A collection of testimonials from teachers who have interacted with Gloyn's blog
- S3: Testimonial from Professor Massimo Pigliucci, Chair of the Department of Philosophy at the City College of New York
- S4: Testimonial from Chris Tudor, Founder of MASSOLIT
- S5: Testimonial from [text removed for publication] Classics Library
- S6: Testimonial from Caroline Bristow, Director of the Cambridge School Classics Project and compiler of the OCR A Level syllabus, as well as the OCR A Level Examiners Report for Classical Civilisation H408
- S7: A collection of social Media and blog responses to Dr Gloyn's work
- S8: A link to Dr Gloyn's resources on MASSOLIT <https://www.massolit.io/courses/seneca-letters-liz-gloyn>
- S9: Testimonial from [text removed for publication] Bancroft's School [text removed for publication]
- S10: Links a statement and documentation of Dr Gloyn's work with Stoicon and within the Stoic community