

TANDBERG CUSTOMER PROFILE

Cambridge School Classics Project



Kathryn Andrus, <http://harpy.uccs.edu/roman>

Bringing the glories of ancient Rome to British classrooms – by videoconference

- **CLIENT:** A Cambridge University-based program to revive the teaching of Latin and classical culture in British primary and secondary schools
- **ACTION:** Acquired two portable TANDBERG 880 videoconferencing systems and advised participating schools in the UK to invest in similar TANDBERG equipment
- **RESULTS:** Proved the viability of videoconferencing to help stem the decline of Latin education despite a shortage of qualified teachers

“I came from a traditional classroom and was very wary at first, but right away the technology won me over. It's very easy to use. I do everything I would in a normal classroom.”

GILLIAN MEAD, LATIN TEACHER
CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL CLASSICS PROJECT

VIDEO HELPS EASE LATIN TEACHER SHORTAGE

Latin is sometimes called a dead language, but don't mention that to Will Griffiths. He heads Cambridge University's effort to revive that ancient tongue and even make it hip among British youth. Despite a national shortage of Latin teachers, he has been succeeding one classroom at a time with help from TANDBERG videoconferencing technology.

"We're trying to make Latin available to everyone who wants to study it," says Mr. Griffiths, who is Director of the Cambridge School Classics Project (CSCP). In addition to videoconferencing, the project relies on books, DVDs, and the web to bring the Roman Empire to life for university-bound teens.

Latin is of course the root of all Romance languages and a major element of English. Mr. Griffiths says people who know Latin can learn modern languages more quickly and -- *ipso facto* -- perform better in the global economy.

"Latin is a very modern subject for a very modern world," he says during a video interview via his compact TANDBERG 880.

TANDBERG AT SCHOOL

Alas, in the past 30 years Latin and classical culture have lost their central place in the British school curriculum. Today, fewer than five percent of students over the age of 11 even have access to a qualified teacher. The rest can gain a simple introduction to the subject through "e-learning" resources, including interactive documentaries and dramatizations produced by the Cambridge project and its partners. But Year 10 and Year 11 students who are GCSE candidates in Latin really do need a live teacher.

That's where the Cambridge project's Gillian Mead comes in. To teenagers around the UK, she is the voice and face of ancient Rome. She meets each group of Latin enthusiasts twice a week for two years by videoconference from the Cambridge University Faculty of Classics.

"Here at Cambridge I have quite a small office," she says, "but it's an effective teaching platform. In addition to the TANDBERG system I have a white board, a document camera and my own PC. Visual stimuli are important. Sometimes I'll put an ancient Roman bowl on the document camera, or just a post card. We've also been known to play Bingo with Latin words."

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TANDBERG 800 set-top unit

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Her students are all "out there" -- in Essex, Shropshire, London or wherever five or more teenage students of Latin can gather. They are a diverse lot. One of her current London classes is based at Barking Abbey School, very few of whose students typically go on to tertiary education.

NE PLUS ULTRA

Mr. Griffiths says he advises participating schools to buy TANDBERG videoconferencing systems. When he lends them a system for trial, it's a TANDBERG 880. This portable set-top unit converts a standard television set or pair of sets into a sophisticated videoconferencing end-point. Graphic presentations can be shown on one screen while the teacher and students continue viewing one another on the other. The clarity of visual images is excellent, with an effective transmission rate of up to 60 fields per second.

"The schools know we get no benefit from recommending one brand over another," Mr. Griffiths says. "Our aim is to make sure the students have a high-quality educational experience. That is not going to happen with web cams or some other cheap kit. The schools with TANDBERG equipment at the far end have had a much better experience."

The kids, of course, have no problem operating the TANDBERG 880, and neither does Ms. Mead, who at the age of 56 describes herself as "very low-fi."

"I came from a traditional classroom and was very wary at first," she recalls, "but right away the technology won me over. It's very easy to use. I do everything I would in a normal classroom. When the kids come in, they start chatting with me, usually about the lesson they just came from. If it was cooking, they'll point to what they cooked or come up to the camera and offer me a sweet."



Onscreen relationships: warm and personal

FAVORABILIS

When she met one of her classes in person recently at London's British Museum, no introductions were necessary. "Being with these kids on screen can be a very personable experience," she says. "It's a great novelty to them at first, and they may spend the first lesson giggling. But by the next meeting they have generally bought into the idea, and we just go to work with no fuss."

One advantage over a conventional classroom is that the students learn quickly to speak one at a time. The Cambridge project also teaches independent learners of all ages by video from their own homes. But the priority of Mr. Griffiths is to continue reviving Latin and classical culture among 14- to 16-year-olds at public and private schools.

"We're expecting the number of schools to increase as the years go by," he says.

ABOUT TANDBERG

TANDBERG is a leading global provider of visual communication products and services. The Company has dual headquarters in New York and Norway. TANDBERG designs, develops and markets systems and software for video, voice and data. The Company provides sales, support and value-added services in more than 90 countries worldwide. TANDBERG trades publicly on the Oslo Stock Exchange under the ticker TAA.OL. Please visit www.tandberg.net for more information.