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DALDIS

*Digital Assessment for Learning
informed by Data to motivate and
Incentivise Students*

Modern Foreign Language Teaching and Learning Guidelines

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A) Introduction

The aim of this document is to provide a rationale for the curricular approach in Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) within the DALDIS project. Although infused with knowledge and experiences drawn from a variety of national curricula in general, and from the language curricula of the International Baccalaureate in particular, this MFL curriculum is intended to align with the overall DALDIS approach. This means that the learning outcomes must be measurable by digital assessment and follow an interactive approach to motivate and incentivise learners.

The objective of the DALDIS project is to support the education system in helping students progress along the national curriculum and, ultimately, exam success where that is a key measure. This is particularly applicable to learners exposed to more scholastic approaches in MFL. Where learners are exposed to the Content and Language Integrated Learning approach (CLIL), the benefit from the DALDIS project may be less structured but still valid, as it allows them to build on the specific vocabulary and phraseology acquired. There is however a potential to use the DALDIS approach in an immersive manner through the teaching of, for example, science through the English language which will be explored.

This approach to an MFL curriculum identifies four levels; the meta level, the content level, the organisational level and the practical level, which are then subdivided further into sections, with each section being informed by the conclusions drawn in the previous level and section. A summarised, tabular overview is available in Appendix 1.

At the meta level, the fundamental question as to why humans want to learn a language is analysed to provide an initial direction for the curriculum. Further aspects considered are the level of learning, as well as the overall methods and practices deployed to achieve the intended level of learning. The content level is at least in part arbitrary, in that it provides suggestions for topics largely based on subjective experience by the authors and on an unstructured analysis of existing language curricula.

The organisational level looks at tools to be made available to learners to help them make sense of increasingly complex situations. It includes overall grammar aspects and pronunciation rules; the positioning of this level is important, as it is intended to be used as a point of reference and not as a means to an end. For the DALDIS assessment, this is significant because the learning outcomes are not to be measured in terms of theoretical knowledge (e.g. the learner is able to identify the correct form), but in terms of practical outcome (e.g. the learner is able to navigate the situation correctly, aided by the use of the correct form). The difference is significant as this is a pragmatic approach, rather than a theoretical one. The guiding question, with a view of preparing to assess language acquisition, should be: is the learner able to achieve the intended goal?

As an example, let us assume a subject needing to obtain a vaccination in France.

- I need a malaria vaccination so that I can travel to Senegal.

The correct translation into French requires the use of the subjunctive mood, as the subordinate clause is led by a preposition and states a goal dependent on the main clause (*subordonnée circonstancielle de but*):

- J'ai besoin d'une vaccination contre le paludisme pour que je puisse partir au Sénégal.

However, the same meaning can be rendered by just using the indicative mood:

- J'ai besoin d'une vaccination contre le paludisme parce que je vais partir au Sénégal.
(I need a malaria vaccination because I will travel to Senegal).

Both translations are correct and perfectly understandable. The first version may be considered to be more elegant and is certainly more refined, as it shows the mastery of more than one verbal mood. However, in practical terms, that level of refinement does not add anything: we can presume that the subject will still be able to receive the correct vaccination. On the other hand, if the statement is not sufficiently structured according to syntactical and overall grammatical rules, then the subject may well not be able to obtain the correct vaccination, or a vaccination at all:

- Besoin vaccination contre malaria pour aller Sénégal.
(A need malaria vaccination for going Senegal).

Finally, the practical level identifies activities and formats which are best suited to convey an enriching learning experience, aligned with the overall DALDIS aim.

Across the world of education, there has been a clear trend in integrating digital technology to support learning and teaching, and the pressure to continue and even increase the integration is not easing off. The adaptation and the use of digital technology to also address the assessment of learning is only a natural consequence of the trend. However, what should remain in focus is that technology itself does not improve the cognitive processes that take place during the learning experience. In simple terms, no technology can make us smarter on its own, it still needs a pedagogical foundation to guide it. In addition, whilst it is worth remembering that digital technology is a medium used to deliver information, i.e. content in a variety of formats, and that the learning process also covers skills, attitudes and cognitive strategies, it is worth pointing out that technology and pedagogy do influence each other, as shown by Mishra and Koehler in their TPACK Model. Based on their research, we can at least assume two things:

- incorporating technology into the learning and teaching experience impacts the way the material is taught;
- the teacher's specific TPACK knowledge (arising from the combination of subject, pedagogy and technology knowledge) allows for a fruitful integration of technology into the pedagogical approach, providing a significant potential for the improvement of the learning experience.

We know that the *medium is also the message*. This means that digital technology impacts our communication style and content. Some of the changes seem to happen in a natural way, they are not necessarily perceived as changes but perhaps as a natural progression. Before the advent of communication apps, SMS was the main medium of written communication for mobile phones. This caused a wave of concern across an array of experts who were warning that especially young people would lose the capacity to spell correctly or to apply grammatical rules, as SMS technology forced them to express themselves with a very limited number of characters. Out of the necessity to synthesise came new expressions, acronyms like LOL which became used and recognised as neologisms, as actual words. Once chats became more accessible, icons started playing an increasing role in communications. This can be observed for instance by looking at the ever-increasing amounts of smileys and emoticons, and how they are being fine-tuned to accommodate cultural sensitivities

etc. In 2016, a London company made headlines when it advertised a vacancy for an emoji translator – a proof that the innovation brought about by digital technology had indeed altered the way we communicate.

However, since we know that the *medium is the message* and we have experienced first-hand what kind of impact the medium can have, it is easy to mistake the simple use of digital technology in the classroom as a pedagogical innovation. Reading a book provides a different experience than reading a website, or a PDF file on a screen. The activity of reading itself does not change, the cognitive process behind it is the same: readers have to decode an encoded message in order to derive meaning. This merely provides a different means of access, and in many cases an enormous increase in the accessibility of information and knowledge but does not make any more than marginal changes to the cognitive processes used. Various research has shown a different approach in reading websites compared to reading traditional books. The reader's gaze may be attracted to different parts of the text for instance – though this would be a behavioural rather than a cognitive difference. Independently of the medium chosen, reading skills are developed by moving through the same stages (e.g. acquisition of vocabulary, comprehension, evaluation, application, retention, fluency). Similarly, when talking about the redundancy principle, we are not talking about a new phenomenon arising in the digital age. The danger here is that, according to the theory of cognitive load, in a text rich with redundant information, the brain has to process and coordinate the redundant information as well as the essential information, which then needs to be extrapolated. According to the cognitive load theory, having to process multiple sources of information may negatively impact the learning process, which is why instructional designers tend to eliminate redundant material. The same principle is applicable in traditional textbooks too, and instructional designers have been aware of it well before digital technology was deployed in classrooms. However, digital technology may have something inherently redundant, as it lends itself to concurrently present the same information in a variety of forms and detailed elaborations. This is an important aspect that needs to be taken into account when designing online learning and assessment for learning.

We know that digital technology has dramatically changed usage models that have been engrained through generations; we just need to compare shopping habits, music consumption, travel arrangements etc. in the periods before and after the digital revolution. The industries in these sectors have adapted and have become the drivers for more technological advances, to continuously push those changes further.

In the education sector, the usage models are defined by pedagogy, and therefore digital technology ought to consider how pedagogical practices can be improved to change the way we learn and teach. Not only must the implementation go well beyond the delivery of information and the shaping of communication, it must also focus on the learning process. Initial systematic analysis of technology implementation did not take into account the cognitive and behavioural aspects of learning, as is the case for the SAMR model (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification and Redefinition, referring to the degrees of technology integration in the classroom). There seems to be a need for an analysis that integrates those aspects, by connecting the analysis to a model that analyses the thinking and learning process (e.g. Gagne's conditions of learning, Kolb's reflective model, etc.).

In 'Visible Learning', Prof John Hattie points out that *"teachers need to be aware of what each and every student is thinking and knowing, to construct meaning and meaningful experiences in light of this knowledge, and have proficient knowledge and*

understanding of their content to provide meaningful and appropriate feedback such that each student moves progressively through the curriculum levels.” Based on this, it seems only natural that an in-depth analysis of pedagogical value of a technology needs to take into account a more personalised approach to learners.

At the same time, it is worth bearing in mind that teaching is complex. It is simultaneously mental, social, physical, emotional, practical, behavioural, political, experiential, historical, cultural, spiritual and personal. The above is also true for language education, though the complexity is even greater as it is shaped by the teacher's views of the nature of the language and the socio-cultural setting. In addition to that, since language *is both content and medium*, we must presume that digital technology does have a particular potential to improve and enrich the learning and teaching experience.

Furthermore, assessment, which is a systematic process of evaluating knowledge and skills acquisition, can be empowered by digital technology to explore more in-depth and more meaningful possibilities than the typical end-of-course tests. Assessment for learning in particular, which is based on continuous feedback used to adjust the learning provision and focuses on the improvement of the learning outcomes, uses specific techniques to evaluate the current knowledge of learners. Not only can these techniques be enhanced by digital technologies, there is the potential for them to be substituted with new techniques which will yield deeper and more personalised information about the learning progress for each student.

B) Language Learning

To explain the curricular approach to Modern Foreign Language education MFL, we have segmented the language learning process into 8 sections (see also Appendix 1 for a Summarised overview of the MFL curricular approach). The purpose of the segmentation is to guide the creation of the resources and the instructional design on the DALDIS platform, as well as to create a scheme of reference for the assessment for learning solution.

At the basis of this curricular approach is a constructionist understanding of the importance of the environment and ideas of the learner, as well as the need for the learning activities to construct products which are meaningful to the learner. This inevitably requires an individualised approach to the learning experience, which aligns well with DALDIS' aim to provide a digital assessment for learning solution which makes use of feedback to learners to help them build their knowledge and understanding of key curriculum concepts. The segmentation of the learning process shown below takes this individualistic approach into account.

Where possible and pedagogically useful, we have also drawn comparisons with native language acquisition, in particularly with literacy aspects and with common approaches in strengthening literacy skills among young learners. This is based on the assumption that whilst the behaviours in learning a foreign language differ greatly from learning the native tongue in a native setting, the cognitive processes behind it must at least be similar.

1. The Aim of learning a language

To understand why individuals seek to learn a new language, it might be useful to ask why do we have a language in the first place. As a species, we are very unique in that we can combine sounds in many different ways which will create images and ideas and events in each other's mind. The question we are asking here is not philosophical in nature, but very practical. In talking about the nature of the human brain, Prof Hood shows how the reason for living creatures to have a brain is movement, to be able to navigate their landscape, both in physical but also in social sense. Communication and language are specific skills developed in the most advanced way in human brains which, in essence, further develops our ability to navigate the landscapes we live in, especially the social landscapes. In that sense, a foreign language allows us to discover and to navigate through unfamiliar landscapes, be it physical ones such as cities or specific establishments, trade and business communications, or artistic landscapes such as literature and music. Language learning can be a means to an end, though often it can also be undertaken for personal enrichment – which is another way in which humans distinguish themselves from the rest of the animated world. Connecting the learning of the language to something both practical and desirable is important to construct the above-mentioned *meaningful experiences*.

2. Levels of learning

For any type of communication to be effective, there needs to be an agreed standard of encoding (i.e. talking, writing) and decoding (i.e. listening, reading). This means that at the most basic level, there are **four identifiable levels of language learning: oral**

and written comprehension (receptive skills), as well as oral and written expression (productive skills).

<i>Skills</i>	<i>Oral</i>	<i>Written</i>
<i>Productive</i>	Speaking	Writing
<i>Receptive</i>	Listening	Reading

Figure 1: Four identifiable levels of language learning

Typically, **the ability to comprehend a language precedes the ability to express a coherent message in the same language**. Language exchanges often take place in social situations which are more complex than what is experienced in a typical classroom. Therefore, the above figure can be complemented with two additional layers: interaction, which refers to spoken or written exchanges between two or more individuals, and mediation, which makes communication possible between individuals or groups who are unable to communicate directly and therefore have to resort to translation or interpretation.

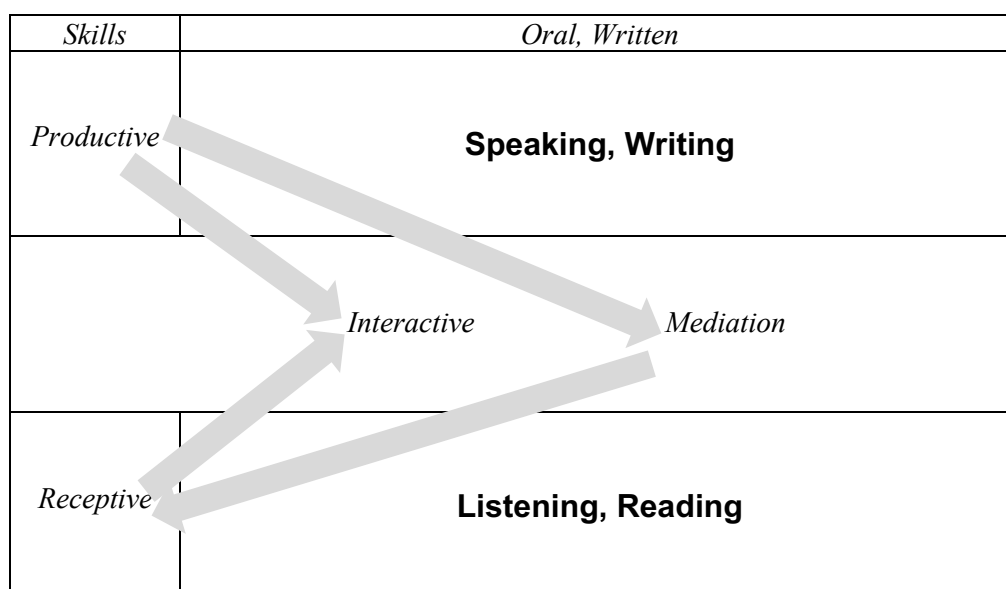


Figure 2: Interactive and mediation skills overlaid on the basic four identifiable levels of language learning

The levels of learning are not only a useful tool to dissect and define a variety of learning stages, strategies, activities etc.; they are also applicable to understand the variety of motivating factors that instigate the learning of a new language. Learners have different objectives; not all will feel the need to be proficient at all four basic levels, probably only a minority will want to learn the skills to be able to mediate between languages and cultures. Learners will also have a variety of expectations, which do not necessarily overlap with the objectives. Since language is communication, it goes without saying that the ability to communicate in the chosen language must be part of

the learner's expectation. However, a pragmatic approach will tell us that the level of expectation will vary among learners. If to pass a test at the end of a course may be the objective of most students, their expectations may be narrower (e.g. be able to understand song lyrics in that language) or wider (e.g. be able to exercise a profession in a chosen language). The success of the learning experience should be measured accordingly to the achievement against both, the expectation and the objective of the learner. This presumes a very personalised approach to the learning and teaching of a language which may not be achievable in standard school settings, due to curricular and other constraints. With the above in mind, we need to highlight though that DALDIS aims to support the formal education system, therefore the primary focus will be the support for curriculum objectives, be they very traditional or more open ended or immersive in their approach. The focus will be on the learning experience in a school system and, ultimately, on supporting the learning towards an exam.

A further distinction has to be made between comprehension of written or oral language. **Written language is usually easier to comprehend, as the text can be read several times, meaning can be inferred from elements such as prefixes, bases, suffixes.** This is particularly true for non-phonemic languages like English (a phonemic language is one where letters always correspond to the same sound). However, this is not necessarily true with languages using a different script (e.g. for native English speakers trying to learn Mandarin). The principal scope of the DALDIS project will be to support the learning of Western European languages: English, French and potentially Spanish, German or Italian.

3. Pedagogies

Language differentiates itself from other taught subjects for a variety of reasons. For the purpose of this paper, it might be useful to remind ourselves of the following unique properties of language as a taught subject. Language is not:

- a) finite,
- b) fixed,
- c) uniform.

In reality, a) applies to other subjects too, though it is important to highlight that language can be a very subjective and artistic expression, thereby creating a potentially infinite number of language forms. Unlike science subjects, though, languages are not fixed, neither in time nor place: languages evolve constantly, both in terms of rules governing them and in terms of vocabulary. Over human history, languages have emerged and disappeared. Chemistry, by contrast, has and will always be there; it is the human comprehension of it that evolves over time. To make matters even more complex, language is not uniform, as reflected by terms such as dialects, sociolects, idiolects, etc. The lack of language uniformity is also highlighted by the presence of various sectorial languages, which becomes particularly relevant in pedagogical approaches such as CLIL, which is briefly described below.

The method used to teach a language will have a great influence on the didactical aspects of lessons, of the materials used and, as a consequence, on the assessment for learning.

In the Western world, early examples of systematic learning of languages were mainly limited to Latin and, to some extent, to Greek and Hebrew. Those languages were approached contrary to the understanding listed above, i.e. they were seen as being finite, fixed and uniform. In addition, perhaps because they were learned in a context where there was no connection at all to those languages or maybe simply because the teachers of the day did not know better, learning was done by rote. In fact, to this day learning Latin means memorising vocabulary, being able to recite passages and explain grammar and syntax. This grammar-translation method influenced the way MFL was initially approached, with a big emphasis on grammar and memorisation of vocabulary. However, in the 19th Century at the latest this method started seeing some competition from approaches that emphasised **natural learning principles** and whose central premise was that a foreign language could be taught without the use of the learner's native language, provided meaning was conveyed directly through demonstration and action. This completely reversed the grammar-translation method, as teachers were encouraged to let pupils make direct and spontaneous use of the language, accepting the inevitable mistakes as pupils were expected to be **able to induce the language rules over time**. The natural learning method further evolved into the direct method which, among other aspects, focused on instruction in the target language and emphasised acquisition of vocabulary, listening and comprehension skills, as well as correct pronunciation and grammar. The natural method can be seen reflected in the CLIL method (Content and Language Integrated Learning) which appeared in 1994 and which advocates a language immersion approach in a real context. In schools, this is done by teaching other subjects in the target language, while the target language is still taught as a separate subject. In this sense, it replicates what has usually been done with the native language, which has typically used to teach all curricular subjects, including for instructions in MFL lessons. In an increasingly globalised and mobile world, it is worth remembering that often, what is referred to as native language, is actually a MFL to many pupils originating from disparate ethnic backgrounds (in the anglophone world, these pupils are often referred to as EAL learners, i.e. English as an Additional Language). While it would be interesting to examine, compare and contrast the learning experience of EAL students, with particular attention paid to influence of their actual native tongue on the learning outcomes, this would go quite significantly beyond the remit of this paper. However, we must be aware that CLIL as a method is de facto already widely used in schools, albeit not always in a fully conscious manner. Our project partners in Poland, Turkey, Greece and Denmark report widespread use while in Ireland this method is used to teach through Gaelic in specific Gaelscoils, with the aim of preserving the Gaelic language. In addition to that, it is definitely worth mentioning that the CLIL approach is being used to various degrees in professional settings too, in particular to facilitate the learning and usage of English. As the Harvard Business Review reported in 2012, more and more multinational companies are mandating English as the common corporate language. This is important because having a similar approach used elsewhere is likely to make the method more recognisable and more acceptable, especially when the target language is English. There is debate about where and when it is best to apply the traditional and structured method of MFL learning and teaching and the natural CLIL based approaches. This project will decide on a final approach over the summer and early autumn of 2020, and may trial both approaches in different settings.

In addition to the above and taking into account how for example the boundaries of MFL and EAL are getting blurred, it is definitely useful to look at pedagogies used to improve literacy in native language lessons. The 'Simple View of Reading' model

proposed for the first time that while reading is a complex process, it can be broken down into two interdependent processes: decoding (i.e. word recognition) and language comprehension. Though this model was primarily used and further developed to assess reading skills for native language lessons, its implications apply to MFL too. At a very basic level, Simple View of Reading purports that reading requires both, good language comprehension and word recognition. A simple quadrant allows to identify the reading stage of a learner, with a view to identify possible interventions to move the learner towards the top right section:

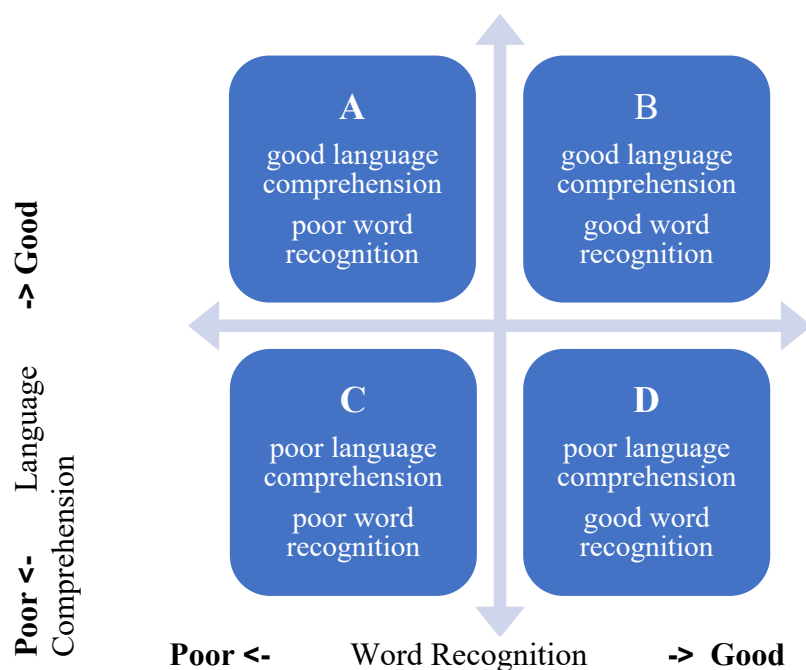


Figure 3: Illustration of the Simple View of Learning model, identifying four levels of reading skills.

Quadrants C and B can be seen as the normal stages in acquiring reading skills: learners start from nothing and work their way to acquire good reading skills. This is true for the learning of both the native language and a foreign language. Quadrant A typically indicates some difficulties, e.g. lack of reading experience in that specific language, which can be the case for instance for EAL learners, or dyslexia. Quadrant D can be an indication of hyperlexia, e.g. young learners who are able to read complex texts well but who do not actually understand the meaning. Learners of a non-native, phonetic language for instance could find themselves quite quickly in the right bottom corner, Latin being a typical example.

As mentioned, the model shown above is very useful to identify suitable interventions. Leaving aside the need for specialist interventions to address more complex issues, as this would go beyond the remit of this paper, we can quickly identify that reading problems may either be at a decoding level, at a language comprehension level, or both at the same time (which is typically the case for ab initio learners). While issues with decoding are actually finite, even for a non-phonetic language such as English, for language comprehension we can identify two further levels. The first one is the **lack of vocabulary**, which is relatively easy to address, bearing in mind the concepts discussed in Section B, Chapter 1 above (aim of learning a language). The second level is more complex to address, as it is connected to **the understanding of syntax and to the reasoning behind it**. This means that a learner, despite being able to read and to understand each word rather well, is not able to comprehend the meaning

conveyed by the text. A good example of this are idiomatic versions, standard expressions or sectorial languages.

Another interesting approach to literacy and reading in particular has been provided by the Reading Rope, an approach to reading developed by Dr Hollis Scarborough and which, among others, is championed by the International Dyslexia Association.

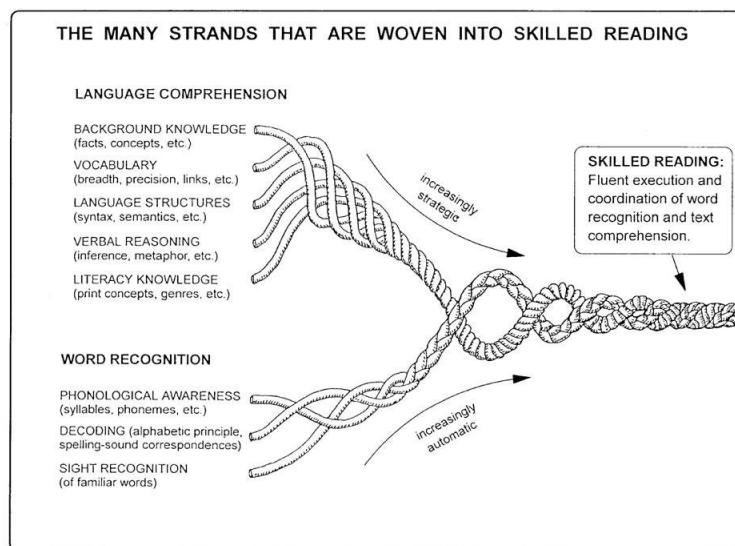


Figure 4: Illustration of the Reading Rope by Dr Hollis Scarborough, image by courtesy of the author.

Whilst the Reading Rope bears many similarities with the Simple View of Reading model discussed above, it introduces concepts around the execution and coordination of the reading process which are also applicable when analysing literacy in an MFL. Furthermore, these concepts can provide interesting insights into the acquisition of skills through language. For instance, the National Strategy for Literacy and Learning in Science published in 2004 by the United Kingdom's Department for Education already stressed the importance of literacy for learning in general, and for learning in STEM subjects in particular. For MFL, this is an important aspect to consider when we talk about CLIL or other full immersion learning methods, as linguistic weaknesses may hamper the learning process in other subjects. However, the opposite appears to be true as well, in that **strong literacy skills may facilitate the learning of other subjects**.

Even though **frontal teaching** still persists in teaching languages, and to a certain degree at least for good reasons, globalisation and digital technologies have enabled two fundamental innovations: CLIL, as stated above, and self-study (self-study here is understood as having the potential to include e-learning, online learning, distance learning, etc.). Because the world population is much more mobile nowadays than even a few decades ago, it is easier to find personnel capable of delivering CLIL lessons. Digital technology has allowed the flourishing of language learning apps, access to a seemingly infinite amount of content in a variety of forms in possibly all surviving human languages, as well as some defunct ones. In fact, contemporary education models do encourage a level of self-study, which can go far beyond the typical homework set for students. The recent measures taken by education systems across the globe in response to the 2020 pandemic certainly reflect this.

For the purpose of this project, we consider that MFL teaching will predominantly take place in school in a teacher-led environment, with or without CLIL implementations, with a good degree of self-study and with a free and unhindered access to internet, both in the classroom and at home.

Furthermore, since assessment for learning ought to look at the teaching as well as at the learning process, this project will consider assessment as an integral part of the pedagogical approach.

4. Topics

Considering the above-mentioned need to construct *meaningful experiences* and the desire to navigate through a variety of landscapes, it becomes apparent that the choice of topics is crucial for successful MFL education. Furthermore, it is within the topics that language really comes alive and starts assuming particular meanings. Exercises aimed at vocabulary acquisition should be informed by the topics chosen, not the other way around.

As we have seen, language can be varied and infinite and therefore its uses must also be. This means that in order to identify a suitable starting point, we may start by identifying what the intended use of the language learned is. Using this information as the starting point, we can start suggesting suitable topics. The figure below simplifies the approach for illustration purposes. The overlapping area corresponds to the topics likely to be most useful for the intended use of the language learned:

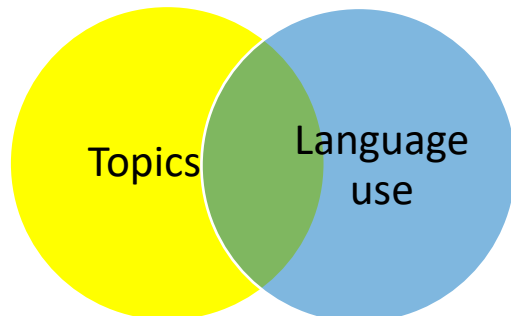


Figure 5: An overlap of the intended use of the language learned and the topics likely to be pertinent for that use helps to identify relevant topics to cover.

The overlapping area in Figure 4 can be further analysed with a constructionist lens, as shown in the next figure below. The inner core relates to topics within the personal sphere of the learner, including the immediate proximity, other people we interact or wish to interact with, as well as places we visit or wish to visit. Questions around these topics could be such as “What is your name?”, “What do you like to eat?”, “Who do you live with?”, “Where do you go on holiday?”, etc. The environmental sphere includes generic topics that are not necessarily tied to the personal sphere, but which may well be sooner or later. Finally, the sectorial sphere covers topics that require specialised knowledge and are usually for the sake of a specific subject, for instance legal for law students etc.

It goes without saying that this approach takes a very subjective, learner-centred stance in language learning, as the spheres below are very often different for each learner. However, for school students of a given age range there are often similar familiar contexts such as going to school, sports, media and entertainment, travel and

these form common contexts for learning. As already mentioned in the previous chapter, language can be a very subjective form of expression, and the figure below only further confirms. Furthermore, such a subjective approach also takes into account that the motivation to learn a language will greatly differ from learner to learner, and it builds on the intrinsic motivations of individuals to learn a language.

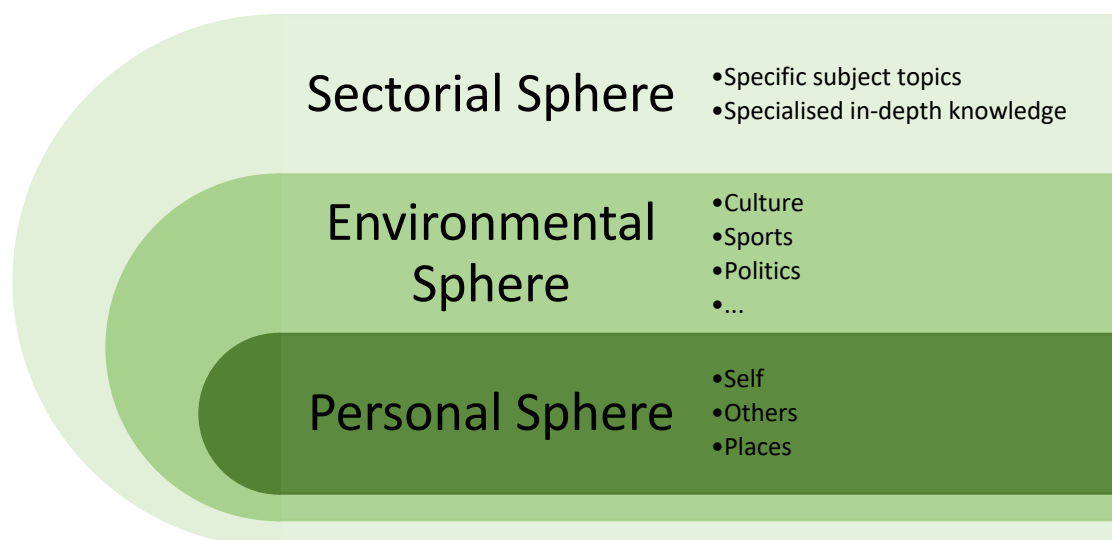


Figure 6: A suggested hierarchy of topics to be covered in MFL languages, on the assumption that topics in the personal sphere are more meaningful for the learners.

5. Tenses

Even though the learning of how to correctly use and formulate tenses is usually covered in grammar sessions, the tense of a sentence conveys a specific meaning and, therefore, we are considering it here as being **part of the content aspect of a language**. The importance of verbs in a language can be shown by referring to one of its synonyms (or sub-groups, depending on the point of view): **action word**. Without them, there is no action, nothing takes place. The tense used indicates whether the action has taken place or still will take place, or whether it has not taken place but, in the view of the speaker, should have taken place.

In Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development, the ability to identify places in space and time represent an important step of childhood development, which usually takes place during what he called the 'concrete operational stage' between the age of 7 and 11. The ability to order events by time, including succession, simultaneity and synchrony, as well as the ability to compare them by including them in an overall structure, are at the basis of a mature notion of time. Verbs in particular, and tenses in general, are necessary linguistic tools to be able to express that mature notion. Where basic vocabulary may be able to indicate a place in space, verbs and tenses allow to indicate a place in time. Together they help to recognise and express topics along the space-time axis, as shown in this simple:

"We used to buy our milk directly from the farmer".

The expression '*we used to*' provides a continuum in the past, whereas 'directly' and 'farmer' provide information about the space where the action took place. Together, they form the actual content of the sentence, which is why we consider tenses as part of the content aspect of a language.

6. Language Organisation

To allow for common understanding, a language needs to be encoded and decoded following a common standard applied to the five main components of a language (phonemes, morphemes, lexemes, syntax and context). Grammar is applied to provide a recognisable organisation of the language.

Based on personal, anecdotal evidence, grammar is typically the single most common reason for learners to feel bored, daunted or even repelled by a language. Yet, at the same time, grammar is the single most important structural aspect of any language that ensures communication takes place.

A compromise needs to be reached, whereby grammar is given the subservient role it deserves: grammar helps to make sense of a language, not the other way around. Grammar is a useful tool to make sense of unfamiliar passages, to deconstruct and reconstruct sentences and paragraphs.

Strictly speaking, grammar is not needed for the basic, primordial aim of the language: simple communication can take place with no cognition of it.

The importance of grammar in language learning increases as the learner's expectations grow and the objectives become more ambitious. Specific grammar aspects that create most difficulties can be identified, following the 80/20 approach. For instance, prepositions in Romance languages can be tricky to learn, especially when they contract with an article. Some prepositions require an article, but not all of the time. When they do, they need to agree by number and gender with the noun. Articles also present some difficulties. This means that by focusing on the correct use of prepositions, learners will also automatically learn how to use the correct article and understand how agreement works.

The following is a typical example for an exercise on prepositions handed out during a lesson of Italian as MFL¹. Learners are given sentences with gaps to fill; they are made aware of the correct preposition required, as indicated in the title of the exercise; however, they need to ensure the correct agreement by gender and number. The sentences are not necessarily connected in terms of narrative. They may introduce new vocabulary but, since they are covering various topics, the new vocabulary may not always be targeted.

¹ © Daniele Arati, 2019

1. Preposizione ‘di’

Esempi:

Questo è un bicchiere di vetro.

Lui lavora nell’industria del vetro.

1. La Sicilia è un’isola Italia.
2. Questa è la maglia difensore Atalanta.
3. Non ho più notizie Mario. Sai come è andato il suo esame matematica?
4. Lei solito non esce mai prima cena.
5. Ho trovato le chiavi macchina mamma Maria.
6. La finestra mio ufficio si affaccia su Piazza Popolo.
7. Il mio film preferito è ‘*Il Signore anelli*’.
8. Qual è l’indirizzo caserma carabinieri di Firenze?
9. All’andata, prenderò il treno 6 e 45; al ritorno prenderò il treno 1 e 20.
10. In Italia, la festa mamma si festeggia la seconda domenica maggio.

This kind of exercise, based on the approach shown in Appendix 1, can be further integrated with the curriculum, for instance by covering one of the topics (e.g. ‘me’) and tenses mentioned (e.g. ‘past’), and using a narrative format rather than a simple list of loose sentences:

Erano i primi ... maggio e il signor Sonaglia era riuscito a procurarsi tre biglietti per Juventus - Atletico Bilbao. Avevo quindici anni. Io sono andato in piazza Derna a prendere mio padre in tipografia. Mi ricordo il rumore ... quel luogo, il caldo ... piombo. Poi il signor Sonaglia ha detto: c’è tempo, andiamo all’albergo ... spagnoli. Mi sono chiesto se potevo riconoscere Dani, Irureta o Churruca, e soprattutto se potevo vedere il leggendario portiere Iribar, una specie di Zoff spagnolo.

Il bello ... partite è aspettarle – questa è stata la mia partita ... vita.²

There are at least two advantages to this narrative format:

1. it enables a real-life narration of a topic close enough to the learner (in the example below, football is used); potential new vocabulary is thereby eased into the narrative;
2. it allows for a follow-up activity in a narrative form, which can then be used to evaluate more than just the grammatical topic covered (e.g. the learner is asked to summarise their own experience of a similar situation); see also Example 1 below; this means that an appropriate assessment exercise can cover several aspects, as shown in Example 1 below.

² Text adapted from the article by Maurizio Crosetti on “Repubblica” online newspaper published on 29.09.2019, as part of the series called: “La partita della vita”, and used in XXX, 2019

7. Formats

As we are moving towards a closer integration of digital technology, we have the opportunity to use a variety of rich formats to teach, to promote meaningful interaction, to revise, to discover, etc. Learning a new language means to be able to listen to it (audio, video), to read it (text), to observe it (images, video) and to express it (in any format). Referring to paragraph 2 above, this approach allows to cover all four levels of learning illustrated in Figure 1 above (*four identifiable levels of language learning*).

From a purely technical point of view, it is important to note that the digital definition of a format is crucial for learning platforms, so that the chosen resources can be used, tracked, assessed, etc. At the same time, digital formats have the potential to increase engagement from the learners. This potential needs to be exploited firstly because it provides additional value to the learning experience, secondly because there is an expectation among learners that they will be offered engaging, digital learning opportunities. This last consideration leads us directly to an instructional design point of view, in which it is important to bear in mind the redundancy principle mentioned in Section A above. Some activities will lend themselves well to certain formats, while they may not as well in another format. However, it is important to remember that some very basic formats may be best suited for specific activities, without the need to build complicated solutions for the simple purpose to please the eye. In order to walk learners through a process, for instance, a simple checklist can be very helpful: the focus has to be on the learning process. This means that an optimised balance between functionality and aesthetics must be struck. In fact, using a variety of styles and formats, in a single activity or across a number of activities, can be as engaging as the pure aesthetics of a format.

8. Resources

The number of resources available have increased exponentially thanks to the advances in digital technologies. However, this does not mean that analogue resources are superseded or no longer desired. Role-plays for instance are still a very useful and interactive way to let learners practice their language skills in a controlled environment. What changes however is the place where the role-play takes place (in the classroom, online on video call, etc.) and how it can be used for assessment for learning (e.g. record and share the role-play). Similarly, crosswords can be a captivating way to learn and improve vocabulary with a gamified approach. The learning experience can be stretched by asking learners to create their own crosswords, for their peers to solve. Instead of asking students to create a crossword by hand, though they can be pointed to free crossword generators available online³, in order to focus on the actual linguistic exercise. It can be envisaged for a similar crossword generator to be integrated in a learning platform. The same can obviously be said for numerous other tools and resources which focus on a variety of language usages, be they presentation tools, quizzes, word searches, comic strips, etc.

³ These are two examples of free, online crossword generators:

<https://www.toolsforeducators.com/crossword/crosswordmaker.php?p=&to=1>

<https://www.puzzle-maker.com/CW>

C) Assessment for Learning and MFL

1. Types of Assessment

In order to measure learning outcomes, there are two types of assessment commonly mentioned in an education setting: summative (assessment of learning) and formative (assessment for learning). Both types play an important part both in the teaching and learning of MFL; in modern education, both are typically interconnected and synchronised. To be most effective, assessment needs to be planned and integrated into every lesson, in order for the teacher to have a good overview of the learning outcomes after each lesson, after a sequence of lessons and at the end of the course. This is particularly significant because it informs the teacher about the individual learner's readiness to move to the next stage.

For the purpose of the DALDIS projects, two major factors were considered:

1. Pure reliance on summative assessment of a subset may lead to generalisations about the learners' progress in all aspects of the target language. For example, a standardised comprehension test does not reveal much about the inference skills of a learner, yet those skills are very useful in real life situations.
2. Overall, learners working with the DALDIS method are likely to do so while studying for a formal qualification; this means that they will be assessed against a set of external criteria, which is likely to create some dissonance due to the differing goals and strategies of the external assessment.

In other words, since relying on summative assessment can lead to complications and since DALDIS learners are likely to sit some formal tests anyway, it makes sense for this project to focus mainly on formative assessment (with the exception of a summative pre-assessment, as explained in the next chapter). Furthermore, formative assessment does not necessarily need to be carried out by the teacher, learners can also directly and profitably carry it out through forms of self- or peer assessment. The active involvement of learners in their own assessment has the potential to produce greater commitment to the learning experience, as they may feel more empowered and in control. Learners are obviously more likely to understand the learning goals and assessment criteria if those are discussed with them, potentially even devised with them, rather than imposed on them. In other words, it will encourage *students to review their work critically and constructively, and involve them in identifying the learning goals that they will work towards* (Black and William, 1998). Encouraging learners to reflect on their own work and on the work of their peers is an important language teaching strategy as it promotes higher-order thinking skills. Furthermore, whilst the ability to self-assess is a crucial skill needed to become an independent learner, it does not require a complex structure, as shown by the figure below.



Figure 7: A simple example of a revision chart (self-assessment) for a learner of German, on the topic of 'School'. The informal annotations are helpful to recall information and indicate a level of metacognition.

2. Purposes of Assessment

At its very basic, assessment is commonly understood to measure progress of the learner; in other words, to help teachers and learners understand where they are on their learning journey. Learners in particular ought to be able to describe their own progress in way that can be fully understood by themselves and by the teachers. While some research also puts emphasis on motivation and enjoyment, these aspects are still framed as a means to facilitate progress.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to define progress in language learning cannot in a linear way. Unlike exact sciences like mathematics, learning a language involves many aspects which cannot always be reliably or validly measured (e.g. intonation, cultural awareness, inferring skills, etc.), yet those aspects should be included in language teaching to enrich the learning experience. It is also important to note that the levels of language learning illustrated in Figure 2 are likely to display progress at different rates and, therefore, progress may need to be redefined for each level of learning.

Generally speaking, progress in MFL can be defined as moving towards the goal of becoming an independent, self-sufficient user of the target language. The required, or indeed desired degree of autonomy will inevitably vary according to a variety of factors (e.g. age of the learner, stage of the learner, type of qualification sought, etc.). Very importantly, when defining a goal to reach we should also be able to define the starting point. To this end, typically summative assessments are used either as a pre-assessment (e.g. in the form of an entry exam) or as a post-assessment (e.g. an exam leading to a certificate, which then in turn can serve as a pre-assessment for further education). For the purpose of the DALDIS project, a summative pre-assessment will need to be carried out to enable a targeted offering based on the needs, strengths and weaknesses (starting point) and ambitions (goal) of the learner. In addition, quick tests could be envisaged to regularly assess recall of specific topics (e.g. grammatical

concepts, vocabulary) but without aggregating scores over a period of time, as this would create the counter-productive reliance on summative assessments to accurately reflect progress.

An independent review conducted by the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) in the United Kingdom in 2017, highlighted a series of factors that contribute to the progress in language acquisition. For instance, *'successful linguists have an awareness of their skills as a learner; they are reflective learners who interact with feedback and are prepared to learn from their mistakes'*. Other factors include *a keen interest in the culture and traditions of other countries* and *a 'curiosity about how a language works'*. This enables them to identify patterns which they can then try to apply in their own language production (decoding, inferring).

Very importantly, though, language learners are good listeners and willing to communicate with confidence; they are not afraid to make mistakes, are open to feedback and *'are willing to practise and apply new grammatical structures and new vocabulary to different contexts and situations'*. This is very closely aligned to our concept of 'being able to navigate a situation' mentioned in the introduction.

A secondary goal of assessment, though of not lesser importance, is to inform teaching practices and curricular focus which, in turn, have a great impact on learners' progress. This is why great emphasis has been placed on the alignment between teaching methods and assessment methods: *the greater the harmony between the two, the more likely that the outcomes of each will correspond* (Atkinson and Lazarus, 2002). Since assessment for learning looks at the learner during the actual learning process, it enables the teacher to plan tailored interventions to support the specific needs of the learner in that specific moment in time.

With this in mind, the purpose of any assessment can no longer be only to measure progress of the learner (i.e. looking back through a summative assessment, or analysing the status quo through formative assessment forms), but it must include a forward-looking statement that covers further progression and, if necessary, remediation. Furthermore, since there is clear evidence of the role of transversal skills in successful language acquisition, as shown by the aforementioned review by the SSAT, it is imperative that those skills are also included when assessing language learning.

For the DALDIS project, progression in language learning implies clearly planned structures, lessons and schemes of work, so that substantial repetition occurs only when intended. This means also that topics will need to be revisited in a revised fashion, with expanded demands and challenges from a linguistic point of view. As a consequence, progression will also imply a deepening of content as well as a broadening of contexts, hand in hand with the development of all levels of learning. The broadening of contexts in particular will lead to an increased cultural awareness and, hopefully, intercultural understanding.

3. Assessment Strategy

Any assessment strategy should be infused by the pedagogy and methods used in teaching, not the other way round. In an age when PISA scores and school league tables seem to matter more than they should, it is important to stress that assessment serves a purpose for learning, without it being a purpose of learning.

In this context, it is useful to recall the following principles of learning (Jones and William, 2008):

1. Meet the students at their level of knowledge.
2. Students must be active in the process.
3. Introduce learning objectives which the students need to understand.
4. Students need to talk about their work using language learning activities based on peer and self-assessment.

In this sense and as previously mentioned, progress within the context of DALDIS will be assessed against the ability of the learner to navigate specific situations, which means there will be considerable scrutiny of the autonomous use of the target language. Assessment will be embedded in the learning process, taking into account that language learning involves frequent mistakes as well as high expectations for learners. This assessment will naturally cover fundamental aspects such as the manipulation of sound (pronunciation, intonation, morphology, etc.) and the organisation of structure (grammar, syntax, etc.). Those two aspects can then be further subdivided into the broader categories of fluency and accuracy (Atkinson and Lazarus, 2002):

Fluency	Accuracy
<i>achieving a task</i>	<i>pronunciation</i>
<i>conveying a message</i>	<i>accent</i>
<i>making meaning</i>	<i>grammar</i>
<i>being creative</i>	<i>spelling</i>
<i>effective communication</i>	

Figure 8: Formative assessment criteria in MFL, based on Atkinson and Lazarus 2002

Any assessment should offer learners an opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge learned and how they are able to apply it. In addition, an MFL assessment should look for the *communication of meaning with the understanding and expression of ideas, as well as appropriate management of social and cultural 'dimensions' of the language* (Grenfell and Harris, 1999).

This approach to formative assessment will contribute to make the assessment activities very similar to the actual learning activities in the classroom. In addition, it removes the norm-referenced aspects of assessment, which looks at the performance

of the rest of the group and considers the average group result as the norm. This is significant because if we agree that there is a wide disparity of individual needs, motivations and conditions for each language learner, we have to agree that assessment needs to be personalised too, as far as possible.

Another important consideration is the justification of assessment. Within the DALDIS project, assessment will primarily be done to help the learner navigate through their learning experience, identifying weaker and stronger points, in preparation for their next steps and activities. It is always worth remembering that learning a language is anything but a passive process, learners need to be actively engaged in creating their own understanding of both the language and the learning experience. In this sense, formative assessment techniques are meant to help learners develop the skills necessary to acquire their desired language level.

Specific online exercises for each of the identifiable levels mentioned in Figure 1 above will provide immediate and specific evidence and feedback on the learner's ability to retain, understand and apply specific curricular content. This will allow the system to suggest pinpointed activities, according to the structure shown in Appendix 1 below.

4. Setting targets

A crucial aspect of the assessment strategy is the setting of targets. These are meant to support the learners' further progress in their use of the target language, be it in continued formal education (e.g. move to a higher proficiency class) or in real life situations. Targets are set to indicate to every learner which 'next step' to take in their journey of language acquisition, in a logical and systematic manner. Typically, targets are set in accordance with formalised standards (attainment targets) split into levels of proficiency and differentiated against the identifiable levels of language learning (see Figure 1 and Figure 2 above). The more that the students are involved in setting these next steps themselves, the more they learn and the more they also learn about the skills involved in language learning. In fact, good language learners are particularly apt at identifying their next steps and only need minimal assistance.

To be effective, targets for learners should be:

- negotiated with the learners
- achievable and realistic
- relevant and pertinent
- limited in number
- concise, focused and specific
- supported with suggestions for actions
- associated with clear criteria for success

The following is an example of how targets can be set with the involvement of the learners in a French class:

Specific targets for French		My own targets	
T1	Ensure agreement of tenses, gender and number.	T6	<i>I want to speak better</i>
Comment	<i>I need to make sure I use female articles and endings when referring to female nouns</i>	Comment	<i>Do you mean: I want to improve my pronunciation? If so, try to watch a French film with English subtitles, you will be able to hear and understand the narrative</i>
T2	Use a range of connectives.	T7	...
Comment		Comment	
T3	Widen your vocabulary.	T8	...
Comment		Comment	
T4	Use expressions of time and frequency.	T9	...
Comment		Comment	
T5	Use a variety of tenses proficiently	T10	...
Comment		Comment	
Actions I will take over the next term to achieve my targets			
A1	...		
A2	...		
A3	<i>I will learn the spelling and meaning of at least 12 new words per week</i>		
A4	<i>I will include 3 different tenses in every piece of extended writing</i>		
A5	...		

Figure 9: Example of personalised targets with learner's active involvement

In the example above, inspired by a resource sample provided by the Times Education Supplement, the teacher has identified specific areas for the learner to improve. For each target, the teacher has asked the learner to leave a comment, to show they understand what is being asked. Learners are also requested to specify their own targets, for which the teacher will provide their own comments. Finally, learners suggest any action they may take in a defined period in order to reach the targets. This example includes all the criteria for effective targets set above. Whilst there is some level of negotiation and direct involvement of the learner, the direction and pace of the learning is clearly set by the teacher.

Targets can be proficiently set against existing rubrics, i.e. a list of criteria used to grade assignments or exams. Knowing what criteria will be used to assess progress is helpful in defining what needs to be done to meet those criteria.

The rubric below is an example of criteria used to grade work submitted by learners of Spanish.

	25 pts	15 pts	9 pts	1 pts	Unscoreable 0 pts
Purpose/Task	Accomplishes the task; includes many details that are clearly connected to the development of the task, but there may be minor irrelevancies.	Accomplishes the task; includes some details that are generally connected to the development of the task, but there may be some irrelevancies	Accomplishes the task; includes few details, some of which may be only loosely connected to the task. There are many irrelevancies.	Attempts to accomplish the task; makes some reference to it but provides few or no supporting details.	Is blank Is illegible Is not written in Spanish. Inadequate attempt. Is not handed in.
Organization	Exhibits a logical and coherent sequence throughout; provides a clear sense of a beginning, middle, and end. Makes smooth transitions between ideas.	Exhibits a logical sequence; provides a beginning, middle, and end.	Attempts to provide a logical sequence and/or the beginning or ending is abrupt or unclear.	Exhibits little order; provides a series of separate sentences and/or disconnected ideas.	Is blank. Is illegible. Is not written in Spanish. Inadequate attempt. Is not handed in.
Vocabulary	Includes a wide variety of vocabulary that expands the topic, but there may be minor inaccuracies.	Includes a variety of vocabulary related to the topic.	Includes basic vocabulary; some vocabulary may be inaccurate or unrelated to the topic.	Includes limited vocabulary and/or most vocabulary is inaccurate or unrelated to the topic.	Is blank Is illegible Is not written in Spanish. Inadequate attempt. Is not handed in.
Structure/ Grammar	Demonstrates a high control of structure/grammar: correct subject-verb agreement, correct tense, correct noun-adjective agreement, correct word order, and correct spelling (including accent marks). Errors do not hinder overall comprehensibility of the passage. (Errors 0)	Demonstrates some control of structure/grammar: correct subject-verb agreement, correct tense, correct noun-adjective agreement, correct word order, and correct spelling (including accent marks). Errors do not hinder overall comprehensibility of the passage. (Errors 1-10)	Demonstrates some control of structure/grammar, but errors due hinder overall comprehensibility. Or writing is below achievement level. (Errors 11-16)	Demonstrates little control of structure/grammar. Errors impede overall comprehensibility of passage. (Errors 17+)	Is blank Is illegible. Is not written in Spanish. Inadequate attempt. Is not handed in.

Figure 10: Example of a rubric set to grade work of learners of Spanish. Created by user alsawyer27 on iRubric (www.rcampus.com).

The rubric provides a good level of detail, allowing the teacher to differentiate work submitted. The added value of the rubric however is just the help it provides for the grading, but also for the indications it provides for the individual targets to be set.

5. Challenges when assessing for learning

There are particular challenges encountered by classroom teachers when assessing for learning, in particular for oral work. The most common challenge is the size of the class, which can make it difficult regularly observe and hear learners speak the target language independently. In particular, a great deal of the work produced in class is practice, which means learner follow a pre-defined pattern copying or imitating language production (both oral and written), hence there is intrinsically little independent production.

Another very specific challenge arises when the levels of language mastery present in the class vary. Even when the MFL subject is split along the lines of ‘beginners, intermediate and advanced’, there will always be learners who are either ‘inbetweeners’ or drop out at the extremities (they are either too poor to sit in the beginners class or too good to sit in the advanced class). Especially for the top achievers in each category, there will be few people in the classroom who can provide the stimulus needed to extend the scope of their language production. At times, even the teacher will not be able to contribute, especially if the teacher is neither a native speaker of the target language nor a trained MFL teacher.

6. Technologies to assess MFL

Successful learning can be correlated to the involvement of the senses. Being able to observe, imitate, hear and manipulate in various formats (rhymes, songs, etc) are powerful tools that trigger the innate learning skills of otherwise illiterate toddlers to acquire a deep knowledge of their native tongue. Current mainstream education is working on adapting Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to render learning more visible, more tangible and more concrete, since most learners find the acquisition of complex conceptual knowledge hard. This is still in contrast with the longstanding tradition in mainstream formal education to emphasise abstract thought and complex symbol systems (Goodyear and Retalis, 2010). To add to the complexity, most ICT tools used in formal education were originally designed for other usage models (e.g. consumer products like the iPad, business reporting tools like PowerPoint), which means they cannot always be used to their full potential in an educational sense. In fact, one of the great challenges for educational technology is to create tools, resources and powerful learning environments to enable learners to make use of their innate learning abilities to come to understand things which are not otherwise directly available to the senses (Goodyear and Retalis, 2010).

ICT can provide a multitude of useful solutions and interactions. As an example, multimedia and hypermedia technologies can create content using a combination of different formats (text, audio, images, graphs, animations, videos, hyperlinks and interactive solutions). This transforms the learning experience from *'hunting and gathering knowledge to assessing and evaluating knowledge'* (Solanki, 2012). In other words, technology can enable learners to easily touch, record, watch, store, share and interact with enriched and meaningful content.

Similarly, technology offers huge potential to assess the learning experience. However, it is important to note that whilst no assessment technology is in itself formative, almost any technology can be deployed in a formative way (Pachler, Mellar, Daly, Mor, William, 2009). This requires for the technological dimension to remain inseparable from the pedagogical parameters: therein lies the complexity of any technologically supported formative assessment, as it requires the synchronisation of social, pedagogical and technological systems.

The importance of feedback in learning in general and in language learning in particular has been highlighted several times so far. In this respect, modern technologies can offer considerable advantages, since they can be very dynamic, adaptive, constant and, very importantly, always available. An interesting example of a proficient deployment of technology to provide interactive feedback has been provided for the learning of Mandarin, a language where each written character has a lexical tone which is stable when isolated from other words, but is influenced by other characters in a sentence situation. While in a typical classroom setting learners are usually told about the right tone for individual characters, interactive solutions allowed to produce dynamic feedback depending on the contextual use of the characters (Zhang 2005).

Current technology offers innovative ways to learn and teach a language. It may sound obvious that if technology disrupts the way we learn and teach, the way we assess learning and teaching should also change. However, the assessment for learning may present the bigger challenge, and not just for MFL.

The DALDIS project contributes to this challenge initially in two main ways:

1. By providing an organised formative assessment technique for teachers and students to apply with feedback to guide and support further learning, and
2. A very close alignment with the curricular approach and learning progression used in classrooms to provide a very practical learning support tool.

Additional question types being added in the DALDIS project including short text answer, CLOZE (fill the gap questioning) and MMCQ (multi multiple choice questioning) will support richer more open-ended learning. Further the potential to add audio and video files can support comprehension and pronunciation exercises to the experience. There is the further potential to develop a rich syllabus linked content-based solution around the initial formative assessment question sets. The syllabus linkage and support of curriculum-based learning progression is a key difference between the DALDIS approach and other technology-based language learning supports.

D) Assessment Examples

Example 1 – Writing:

The method exemplified here can be utilised for Modern Foreign Languages. The curricular aims can be connected to content knowledge and skills, the same way as it is done for other subjects. The reading text used here is the same shown under B6 above and is a simplified and very succinct summary of a boyhood memory about a football match.

- Reading text:

- 1 Erano i primi maggio e il signor Sonaglia era riuscito a procurarsi tre biglietti per Juventus
- 2 - Atletico Bilbao. Avevo quindici anni. Io sono andato in piazza Derna a prendere mio padre
- 3 in tipografia. Mi ricordo il rumore quel luogo, il caldo piombo. Poi il signor Sonaglia
- 4 ha detto: c'è tempo, andiamo all'albergo spagnoli. Mi sono chiesto se potevo
- 5 riconoscere Dani, Irureta o Churruca, e soprattutto se potevo vedere il leggendario portiere
- 6 Iribar, una specie Zoff spagnolo.
- 7 Il bello partite è aspettarle – questa è stata la mia partita vita.

- Assessment

questions

1. Grammar

Fill the gaps by inserting the correct preposition

- 1 Erano i primi **di** maggio e il signor Sonaglia era riuscito a procurarsi tre biglietti per Juventus
- 2 - Atletico Bilbao. Avevo quindici anni. Io sono andato in piazza Derna a prendere mio padre
- 3 in tipografia. Mi ricordo il rumore **di** quel luogo, il caldo **del** piombo. Poi il signor Sonaglia
- 4 ha detto: c'è tempo, andiamo all'albergo **degli** spagnoli. Mi sono chiesto se potevo
- 5 riconoscere Dani, Irureta o Churruca, e soprattutto se potevo vedere il leggendario portiere
- 6 Iribar, una specie **di** Zoff spagnolo.
- 7 Il bello **delle** partite è aspettarle – questa è stata la mia partita **della** vita.

2. Comprehension measured against the items and sections assessed in the MFL curricular approach (see also Appendix 1)

LEVEL	QUESTIONS	ITEMS ASSESSED ⁴
ENTRY	<p>In what month was the game played?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> A March</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> B May</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> C June</p>	2A
INTERMEDIATE	<p>In che mese si è giocata la partita?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> A marzo</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> B maggio</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> C giugno</p> <p>Riporta le parole con il seguente significato:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comprare (rigo 1) • hotel (rigo 4) 	2A 4
ADVANCED	<p>In che periodo di maggio si è giocata la partita</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> A alla fine del mese</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> B verso il 15 maggio</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> C all'inizio del mese</p> <p>Descrivi le seguenti parole:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tipografia (rigo 3) • leggendario (rigo 5) 	2A,2D 4 6B,6C

⁴ The items assessed refer to the table in Appendix 1

3. Expression measured against the items and sections assessed in the MFL curricular approach (see also Appendix 1)

LEVEL	QUESTIONS	ITEMS ASSESSED
ENTRY	<p>Who did go to the match with the narrator? </p> <p>How do we know where Atletico Bilbao come from? </p>	<p>2A 4</p>
INTERMEDIATE	<p>Chi è andato alla partita con il narratore? </p> <p>Secondo il narratore, qual è l'aspetto più bello di una partita? </p> <p>Che emozioni può aver provato il narratore allo stadio, e perché? </p>	<p>2A,2D 4 6B,6D</p>
ADVANCED	<p>Secondo il testo, chi era il portiere più bravo, Iribar o Zoff, e perché? </p> <p>Scrivi una breve sintesi della partita Juventus-Atletico Bilbao, così come la immagineresti tu. </p>	<p>2A,2D 4 5 6B,6C,6D</p>

Example 2 – Oral:

This method can also be used for oral assessment, and DALDIS will definitely provide great opportunities for this, especially with oral comprehension from audio files. The same text used for the written assessment can also be implemented for the oral assessment to offer continuity, e.g. by focusing on specific passages that precede or follow the situation described in the written assignment. The text can then be recorded by a narrator or turned into a dialogue and recorded in audio or video format. The example shown below is a specific snapshot of the same story used in Example 1 above, much less simplified and summarised:

Ci ha dato l'appuntamento a metà pomeriggio, io e papà lo abbiamo raggiunto in pullman da Settimo Torinese. Avevo quindici anni. Io sono andato in piazza Derna a prendere mio padre che si era appena tolto il grembiule nero: a quel tempo i tipografi lo indossavano per proteggersi dall'inchiostro e dal grasso della macchina rotativa. Il rumore di quel luogo, il caldo del piombo. Poi il signor Sonaglia ha detto: c'è tempo, andiamo all'albergo degli spagnoli. E così abbiamo fatto. Quell'hotel si chiamava "Ambasciatori" e io ricordo questi calciatori baschi, li rivedo mentre salgono sull'autobus che li porterà allo stadio Comunale.

The oral assessment can also be differentiated in order to evaluate various levels of comprehension.

1. Comprehension measured against the items and sections assessed in the MFL curricular approach (see also Appendix 1)
[N.B. Both questions and answers should be recorded in writing]

LEVEL	QUESTIONS	ITEMS ASSESSED
ENTRY	How old was the narrator? <input type="checkbox"/> A 10 <input type="checkbox"/> B 15 <input type="checkbox"/> C 16	2B
INTERMEDIATE	Quanti anni aveva il narratore? <input type="checkbox"/> A dieci <input type="checkbox"/> B quindici <input type="checkbox"/> C sedici Descrivi le seguenti espressioni: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lo abbiamo raggiunto • c'è tempo 	2B 4
ADVANCED	Da cosa proteggeva il grembiule nero? <input type="checkbox"/> A dal caldo e dal rumore <input type="checkbox"/> B dall'inchiostro e dal grasso <input type="checkbox"/> C dalla macchina rotativa Usando la tua immaginazione, descrivi i seguenti luoghi: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • la tipografia • l'albergo 'Ambasciatori' 	2B,2D 4 6B,6C

2. Expression measured against the items and sections assessed in the MFL curricular approach (see also Appendix 1)
 [N.B. The questions should be recorded in writing, whereas the answers should be recorded as audio or video format]

LEVEL	QUESTIONS	ITEMS ASSESSED
ENTRY	Where did the narrator meet his father? Where did the coach take them?	2B,2C 4
INTERMEDIATE	Chi è si trovava in piazza Derna? Che mestiere faceva il padre del narratore? Che impressione hanno fatto i giocatori baschi sul narratore?	2B,2C 4 6A,6C,6D
ADVANCED	Racconta le fermate fatte dal narratore prima di arrivare allo stadio. Secondo te, quante persone c'erano davanti all'albergo Ambasciatori, e cosa facevano?	2B,2C 4 5 6A,6C,6D

APPENDIX 1 – Summarised overview of the MFL curricular approach

	Section	Item	Comments, examples	
1	Aim of Learning a Language	Being able to NAVIGATE through a variety of situations in life	Considers language as a structured system used by humans to communicate. Communication can be one to one, one to many, or one to self.	META LEVEL
2	Levels of learning	A) Written comprehension	First step in language acquisition	
		B) Oral comprehension		
		C) Oral expression		
		D) Written expression	Creates hesitation by exposing limitations	
3	Pedagogies	A) Teacher led		CONTENT LEVEL
		B) Self-study		
		C) CLIL approach		
		D) Assessment		
4	Topics to be covered (automatic introduction to basic vocabulary)	A) ME		
		B) OTHERS		
		C) PLACES		
5	Tenses to be used (usually part of grammar; here considered at the content as a segway to language organisation)	A) What is now (present)		
		B) What has been (past)		
		C) What will be (future)		
6	Language organisation (actual assembling of language for communication; used as a tool of reference, not as a means to an end)	A) Phonetics		ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL
		B) Spelling		
		C) Syntax (actually part of grammar, but singled out for specific focus)	start from basic, e.g. SVO; used to introduce basic topic, e.g. personal attributes, relationships, etc.	
		D) Grammar	Identify major pressure points with the 80/20 approach	
7	Formats (play across structures, automatically widen vocabulary; definition of formats is crucial for learning platforms)	A) Text	poems, short stories, novels	PRACTICAL LEVEL
		B) Images	ads, posters, comics, cartoons	
		C) Audio	songs, speeches; use for spelling test, to test comprehension	
		D) Video	short films, ads	
8	Resources (to be used and to be created; use malleability of language to illustrate structures, play of words, widen vocabulary)	A) Puzzles	crosswords	
		B) Role play		
		C) Poems		
		D) Short stories		
		E) Drama		
		F) Multimedia		

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