# MFL Assessment Rationale on a Page

## Principles

* Assessment is fundamental part of day-to-day teaching; it is not something confined to formal assessments. We constantly evaluate our teaching looking for areas where there may be misconceptions that can be addressed using assessment.
* We assess and feedback on the curriculum that students have been taught.
* All the very best assessment and data management in the world isn’t worth anything if teaching isn’t then adapted in light of it.
* We do not try to do a watered-down version of GCSE assessment in lower years.
* A good assessment model should support a teacher’s work life balance.
* Assessments should be granular in order to draw out where misconceptions lie.
* Assessments should test long term alterations to memory.
* Wherever possible assessments should avoid subjectivity and inconsistency.
* Assessments should allow staff to praise students frequently and specifically.
* Assessments should contribute to the learning process.
* Assessments should encourage a communicative approach to languages.

## In Class Assessment

* Most assessment happens in lessons through questioning during interactive parts of the lesson using a variety of questioning techniques.
* In class assessment happens when teachers are circulating while students are working independently when staff look at students work to spot individual errors or whole class misconceptions.
* In class assessment is likely to be individualised.
* In class assessment is used by the class teacher.

## Formal Assessments

* Formal assessments are granular.
* Formal assessments are used to draw whole class, department or trust inferences about long term learning.
* Formal assessments are standardised across ESW.
* Formal assessments are used by the class teacher to adapt future teaching.
* Formal assessments are used by the head of department or school leadership to inform departmental or school strategy.
* Formal assessments are used by the curriculum design leader to evaluate the curriculum.

**Assessment Rationale**

An assessment is a procedure for drawing inferences about things we want to know. What we usually want to know is: are the children learning what we teach them?

**Fundamental Principles of Assessments**

* Assessments must be aligned to the curriculum in order to make a judgement about whether pupils are learning what we are teaching them.
* Be clear on the purpose of the assessment – we are using assessment as a tool to inform our next steps as teachers to help pupils improve. The reporting aspect is secondary. We are trying to improve learning not prove it.
* Assessments should sample from across the curriculum and relate to the learning objectives of the content covered.
* Assessments should have complete clarity and consistency around the standardisation for classes (timings; conditions; instructions given to children)
* Assessments should be reviewed in light of pupil performance and teacher feedback – we are unlikely to get it right first time
* We think about how you will use assessment synoptically to check learning over a long period of time

**Overview of Assessment in MFL**

## Purpose of assessment:

Assessment in MFL is fundamental to success in MFL. Students, staff and leaders of MFL need to know specifically what they know and where there are knowledge gaps. The danger of an unidentified or unaddressed knowledge gap in a hierarchical subject can lead to years of misunderstanding and therefore demotivation. To support this assessment and feedback should focus on the areas of the curriculum that have been studied both recently and previously. It should make it easy for all stakeholders to identify gaps and adapt lessons. It should also ensure leaders can strategically adapt the curriculum and resources to support overall progress.

### Unsuccessful assessment in MFL:

There are many and varied way that assessment can be unsuccessful in MFL if we agree to the purpose above, some of these are all too common.

* Assessing students on language they haven’t learnt, this comes up repeatedly in textbook resources but also is a regulatory requirement from OfQUAL that at GCSE students are assessed on language that is outside of the shared vocabulary list!
* Using vague and subjective criteria, this criteria is taken from AQA’s A level speaking mark scheme:

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| --- |
| DISCUSSION OF SUB-THEME Assessment Objective 2 |
| Mark | Descriptors |
| 5 | Students responses show that they have a very good understanding of the material on the card. |
| 4 | Students responses show that they have a good understanding of the material on the card. |
| 3 | Students responses show that they have some understanding of the material on the card. |
| 2 | Students responses show that they have a limited understanding of the material on the card. |
| 1 | Students responses show that they have a very limited understanding of the material on the card. |

* Assessments which can be “skewed to show progress”[[1]](#footnote-1), such as were customary under National Curriculum Levels and can still be found with resources using Pearson steps.
* Open book tests which did not assess alterations in long term memory (the OfSTED definition of learning).
* Assessments where there are multiple reasons why a student may have got the answer wrong, hence making it difficult to diagnose. Below is an example of this, it is the first question on the foundation paper from AQA in 2018. The text reads “Room painted pink with bunches of wild flowers…”. From this it would not be clear where to direct students or staff to stop repeat errors if the students didn’t get answer A.



* Similarly, assessment may not be useful if it does not separate out key knowledge (in the above example does the student know that habitación means room), or application of knowledge (can the student imply from a description of a room being decorated with flowers that they are in a house).

**For these reasons which are much more coherently explained in by Christine Counsell[[2]](#footnote-2), Daisy Christodoulou[[3]](#footnote-3), we will not be taking a “mini GCSE” approach to MFL assessments until we are at a stage where we have to prepare students for public examinations.**

### Successful assessment in MFL:

* Tests the taught curriculum.
* Provides opportunity to address issues raised.
* Builds on prior modelling (directly by teacher or through task).
* Actively contribute to the learning process.
* Tests long term memory adaptation not short term performance.
* Prepares students for the future where appropriate.
* Support students from disadvantaged backgrounds and students with SEND.
* Makes it easy to identify and close gaps and misconceptions in children’s learning. For example:



With this exemplar assessment we could imply clearly from the wrong answers where the misconception is. The answer is A, if they answered B they didn’t conjugate the verb détester, if the answered C they didn’t keep écrire in the infinitive after an opinion and if they answered D they didn’t understand using apostrophes before vowels.

* Finds opportunities to praise students for their effort and attitude.
* Helps teachers to systematically adapt their planning and lessons to the needs of their students.
* Separates out knowledge of vocabulary, knowledge of phonics, knowledge of grammar, ability to understand both spoken and written target language source material, and the ability to produce the target language.
* Provides information that supports leaders in strategically adapting the curriculum and associated resourcing to improve student progress in languages.
* Gives specific enough feedback that teachers and students have a tight target for improvement. Non-examples of specific feedback include: Revise more, Revise about the topic of school, Complete homework, Use more tenses, Check accuracy, Move from step 3 to step 4/ level 3 to level 4/ grade 3 to grade 4, Try harder. Whereas specific feedback could be: Start sentence writing with an identified and conjugated verb, Develop your answer by contrasting positive and negative opinions, Use who, where, that or if as connectives to form subordinate clauses, When forming the immediate future remember to use an infinitive after *je vais/voy a).*
* Supports a healthy staff work-life balance.

## In class assessment

**Assessment is not merely formal assessments, we assess every time we interact with students and learn more about what they can and can’t do and what they know and do not know. However just because most assessment is not formal does not mean that it is haphazard.**

Lessons start with a DIN, as stated in the curriculum rationale; in order to combat a “can’t do” attitude[[4]](#footnote-4) to languages the DIN is deliberately set up to encourage students and to make them feel successful even if this is at the expense of deeper thinking.

### DIN Strategy

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|  | Key Stage 3 | Key Stage 4 & 5 |
| Format –  | 1. A response to gaps identified in most recent assessment tailored to individual classes.
2. A very multiple-choice questions testing recent/current vocabulary. At least one question will test a high frequency item
3. A verb conjugation (once they have been learnt)
4. A translation testing knowledge from previous units
 | As Key Stage 3As we near exams past paper questions may be used at the class teacher’s discretion |
| Strategy for developing long term memory –  | Verb conjugations, high frequency vocabulary and prior knowledge are all explicitly tested in the DIN  | Flashcards may be produced for independent study. |
| Classroom implementation –  | Students have access to their knowledge organisers and their books to complete these tasks.The teacher circulates throughout the DIN once the register has been taken.The DIN is checked in the lesson targeting students whose previous assessment shows a gap. | As KS3 |

### The rest of the lesson

* Teachers use a variety of AfL questioning strategies appropriate to their school and class. These may include use of mini whiteboards, think pair share, pose-pause-pounce-bounce questioning techniques, cold calling, class surveys, or Kagan techniques.
* Teachers circulate throughout silent tasks, to pick up on common misconceptions or address individual errors.
* Teachers circulate throughout speaking tasks to pick up on common misconceptions and discretely address individual errors.
* Teachers may get students to read target language texts out loud and sensitively deal with misconceptions of phonics, pronunciation or intonation[[5]](#footnote-5).
* Resources deliberately don’t have answer slides on them. This is to ensure that the assessment process is interactive.
* In class assessment is for the teacher not for middle, school or trust leadership. Results do not need to be collated in any form except what is useful for the teacher.
* In class assessment does not need to be standardised and can (and indeed should) be adapted to individual students or groups of students.
* In class assessment are framed using low stakes language.
* In class assessment should be self-marked wherever possible.
* In class assessment positively discriminates for disadvantaged students and students with SEND, targeting them for a greater quantity of thought-provoking questions.
* In class assessment actively contributes to learning by forcing recall. It is not simply ‘weighing the pig’.
* Hinge questions are used effectively when needing to know if a concept has been understood before moving on, this are especially relevant to grammar lessons.
* Teachers are encouraged to adapt any part of the lesson, but especially the Do It Nows to reflect their class’s knowledge gaps based on their in-class assessment.

## Mid Cycle Assessment

* + Mid cycle assessment take place at the end of each sentence builder.
	+ Mid cycle assessments should be standardised and cannot be adapted across the trust.
	+ Mid cycle assessments should be framed with low stakes language.
	+ The target audience for the data is the class teacher and middle leadership within the department to support students and for the CDL to support curriculum improvement.
	+ The frequency of the assessments means that apart from cursory in class checks that students are on task books do not need to be assessed and therefore marked.
	+ Mid cycle assessments should be peer marked wherever possible.
	+ Mid cycle assessments should take approximately half a lesson to complete, mark and take in data. Data can be taken in in lesson as long as it is done sensitively and students have the option to say their scores secretly if they wish.
	+ Data is uploaded onto shared databases and can easily be downloaded for teachers to see common themes and individual performance and then adapt future teaching.
	+ Students will write in silence in exam conditions. They should not communicate in any way. They must not have access to their booklets, their knowledge organisers, dictionaries or prior assessments. Classroom displays do not need to be hidden unless they are very specifically helpful.

1) Multiple Choice Questions focused on the knowledge contained within that sentence builder. The questions types here try hard to follow the guidance of Daisy Christodoulou’s work and should force extensive thinking and processing. There are also question testing prior knowledge once appropriate.

2) A translation into the Target Language, this is broken into sections for ease of self-assessment. There is a small error tolerance to emphasis prioritising confidence and communication over a “perfection or nothing” approach. We accept that while there is a small tolerance this may lead to inconsistency, however it is more important that languages are seen as approachable, especially in the early years of language development.

3) A key skill done on rotation within the learning cycle.

1. Phonics, the teacher reads words or possible words and the students have to identify which word is being said using their phonic knowledge. This is especially important in French. We use the teachers’ own voices as this more closely models their experience in the classroom. When reading teachers should speak at a slow pace, with clear diction. They repeat each word or possible word once, they should not repeat it more than once in any situation. Teachers should sound natural with typical emphasises and intonation but should not exaggerate or use voice tone to make the answers unnaturally clear or give hints. We accept that this may lead to slight inconsistencies between classes but believe it is worth it to ensure students are not assessed in a way that is unnatural.
2. Listening, the teacher reads short texts and students have to pick out a key detail. These are written to ensure students can identify key details form extended texts but should not deliberately confuse with distractors that would not naturally happen in language. We use the teachers’ own voices as this more closely models their experience in the classroom. When reading teachers should speak at a slow pace, with clear diction. They repeat each short text, they should not repeat it more than once in any situation. Teachers should sound natural with typical emphasises and intonation but should not exaggerate or use voice tone to make the answers unnaturally clear or give hints. We accept that this may lead to slight inconsistencies between classes but believe it is worth it to ensure students are not assessed in a way that is unnatural.
3. Reading, the students are given 4 short texts and have to identify who says what or one longer text from which they have to extract information. As with the listening these should ensure that the test is more than spotting key words but is not deliberately confusing in an unnatural way.
4. Grammar, each learning cycle should have an overriding grammatical arc. These assessments specifically test word level grammatical accuracy.

## End of Learning Cycle Assessment

* End of cycle assessments should be standardised and cannot be adapted across the trust.
* In preceding lessons students should have writing, to this mark scheme, modelled to them, teachers can use the bullet points from the actual assessment but should not draw students’ attention to this. Students should not in any way be expected to prepare a text to be memorised and reproduced.
* Students will write in silence in exam conditions. They should not communicate in any way. They must not have access to their booklets, their knowledge organisers, dictionaries or prior assessments. Classroom displays do not need to be hidden unless they are very specifically helpful.

The end of Learning Cycle Assessment has two parts, they should both take place in the same lesson, but students should not have both parts of the assessment at the same time. It is possible that in some cases the assessment will take all lesson, contingency plans should be in place if students finish early. These will depend on the individual class and school contexts.

Independent writing. This should not be given to students while they still have Part 1. Students are given three open questions that allow them to showcase their written Spanish. One of these will test prior knowledge. These are given in Spanish and English. Some planning techniques are shared as well as the mark scheme. The mark scheme has been designed to get the best balance of making it clear on how to improve, clarity for students and a fair workload for teachers and may be adapted for different stages of the students’ language journey. Ie it would be inappropriate to test absolute novices on tense formation.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Content | Complexity | Extension | Opinions & reasons | Verbs/Tenses | Accuracy |
| 3 | All bullet points answered relevantly and clearly | Used more complex vocabulary and 2 or more Golden Phrases | Extended response through comparing time frames | Contrasted opinions with each other with reasons | Had 5 or more correctly conjugated verbs | 1 mark each for mostly:- Accurate spellings/accents- Accurate agreement- Accurate use of small words- Correct use of infinitives with opinions- No contradictions |
| 2 | Two bullet points answered relevantly and clearly | Used a rich variety of vocabulary and 1 or more Golden Phrases | Extended response with subordinate clauses | Gave a variety of reasons for opinions | Had 3 or more correctly conjugated verbs |
| 1 | One bullet points answered relevantly and clearly | Used some variety of vocabulary | Extended response with connectives | Gave opinions with simple reasons | Had 1 or more correctly conjugated verbs |

\*Criteria subject to adjustment and improvement.

After the assessment data is uploaded onto shared databases and can easily be downloaded for teachers to see common themes and individual performance and then adapt future teaching. The target audience for this data is primarily the teacher themselves but it may also be used for school and trust leadership to ask relevant questions and may be the basis for reporting home.

Superteaching week may be used for addressing common grammar misconceptions, reteaching topic content, modelling and redrafting essays or work towards routinisation and automaticity.[[6]](#footnote-6)

# Year 11-13 Overview of Formal Assessments

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Year 11 | Year 12 | Year 13 |
| Low stakes quizzes | DIN- see KS3 modelThroughout the year-see guidance for Key Stage 3. These are used to diagnose and create useful feedback for students | DIN- see KS3 modelEnd of unit assessments done in class. Each assessment targets vocabulary from that unit but build on common language and structures.Peer marked. | DIN- see KS3 modelEnd of unit assessments done in classEach assessment targets vocabulary from that unit but build on common language and structures.Peer marked. |
| PPE | Past Listening, Reading and Writing Papers Assessed formally during trust PPE weeks.Speaking assessed partially the weeks before PPE weeks.PPE assessment used to benchmark and to give students experience of exams.Teacher marked. | Listening, Reading and Writing Past AS paper done in PPE weeks.Literary topics covered at end of learning cycle.IRP ideas shared.Teacher marked. | Listening, Reading and Writing Past A level paper done in PPE weeks.Literary examinations completed in PPE weeks.Speaking PPE completed informally in lessons.Teacher marked. |

# Key Questions

### What inferences do we wish to make from assessment in your subject?​

Teachers wish to make inferences about knowledge gaps and how best support students.

Middle and Senior leadership wish to use data from formal assessment to ask pertinent questions.

Curriculum Design Leadership wish to use data to evaluate and improve the curriculum.

### How does assessment fit in with the curriculum progression model?​

By focusing on assessing what has been taught. If the students can show that they have learnt the curriculum and the curriculum shows progress then students will be making progress. In class assessments show if students are making the progress within the curriculum. End of cycle assessments demonstrate whether the curriculum is fit for purpose.

### How do we assess knowledge gained over time as a proxy for learning rather than just performance?

Both in lessons using the DIN rationale, in all activities within the lesson which test prior tenses and grammatical frequency, high frequency vocabulary and often bring up prior topics. More formally in Mid Cycle and End of Cycle assessments that have areas specifically dedicated to testing and retrieving prior knowledge.

### How does assessment in your subject support team members/leaders and senior leaders to be able to diagnose curriculum areas of strength and those for improvement?

By making the formal assessments specifically target separate discreet curriculum areas.

### How does your assessment rationale plan to make marking and feedback manageable for members of your team?

Book marking in KS3 is replaced by mini assessments and feedback takes place during the subsequent DINs. A lot of the written assessments should be self or peer assessed.

### How does your assessment rationale plan to make recording and tracking of data manageable for members of your team?

It uses trust wide data management systems, training videos are shared by the CDL.

### How does (pupil) preparation for formal assessment systematically support disadvantaged and SEND pupils?

It supports whole school systems to target PP students and enable the graduated response tool to be used. Modelling for writing exams specifically focuses on skills that might be otherwise assumed by a middle-class centric approach. Translation skills are practiced for homework which supports disadvantaged students.[[7]](#footnote-7)

1. Howard K & Hill C (2020) *Symbiosis: The Curriculum and the Classroom* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Counsell, C. (2018) Blogpost – ‘Senior Curriculum Leadership 1: The indirect manifestation of knowledge: (B) final performance as deceiver and guide.’ <https://thedignityofthethingblog.wordpress.com/2018/04/12/senior-curriculum-leadership-1-the-indirect-manifestation-of-knowledge-b-final-performance-as-deceiver-and-guide/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Christodoulou, D. (2016). *Making Good Progress? The Future of Assessment for Learning*. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. OfSTED (2021) *Research Review Series: Languages* [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. NCELP (2019) *Summary Rationale for Teaching Phonics* [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Conti G & Smith S (2019) *Breaking the Sound Barrier; Teaching Language Learners How to Listen* [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. EEF (2021) *Teaching and Learning Toolkit: Homework* <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/homework> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)