

Languages Today

DIGITAL SAMPLE

Closing the Gap



**HOW TO: BUILD
BRIDGES BETWEEN
MFL AND EAL**



**TEACHING AND
LEARNING: TIME
FOR SPEAKING 2020
STYLE**



**IN THE CLASSROOM:
SUPPORTING ALL
LEARNERS**



**7 STARTING POINTS:
DECOLONISING THE
CURRICULUM**



**THE VIEW FROM:
COMMUNITY-LED
LEARNING DURING THE
COVID19 PANDEMIC**



WELCOME

Our theme of **Closing the Gap** has inspired a wide range of contributions on topics such as the ability range, gaps caused by the COVID pandemic arrangements, social and racial equity, professional status of teachers in different contexts, the needs and talents of EAL Learners, resources – and more! But the underlying message of the magazine is how information and discussion can help address these issues, and how many things teachers of languages share, wherever they are, and whichever language they teach.

We have seen this especially in 2020 with the burgeoning of online events bringing together large numbers of language teachers at different points in their careers, and are grateful to ALL volunteers around the country who have given so much time and energy to maintain this momentum. Many of these events seem set to continue whether from ALL, our Branches, Corporate Members or Cultural Partners – keep up to date on the ALL Events pages on the website <https://www.all-languages.org.uk/events/>

We are very excited for the forthcoming Language World conference which will be held online for the first time. Do join us on Friday 12th and Saturday 13th March, where keynote speakers and sessions will be discussing how we can provide **A Rich Curriculum for ALL**. Keynote speakers include Michael Wardle, Professor Li Wei and Do Coyle. For the full list of speakers and sessions, and how you can join us for £30 + vat take a look at our dedicated website www.language-world.co.uk

Thanks, as ever to our contributors – especially to those writing for the first time in LT – to reviewers, editorial volunteers and proof-readers. Once again we proffer an invitation to contribute to ALL's publications online or in the magazine; next LT will take as its theme: **The Big Picture**

If you have an idea for an article

- on principles, philosophy of approach, inclusion, communication, internationalism, language development, citizenship, culture, motivation etc.
- or a resource for review
- or if you would like to be an occasional or regular reviewer yourself please contact info@ALL-Languages.org.uk

Crista Hazell, ALL Development Manager

PS Following the recent launch of the Language Trends survey 2021, please try to find time to respond to it. For more details, review the recent webinar with ALL President Kim Bower, the British Council's Vicky Gough and senior researcher Ian Collen from Queen's University, Belfast here: <http://www.all-london.org.uk/site/index.php/webinars/>

Languages Today

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Post 1A Duffield Road, Little Eaton, Derby DE21 5DR
Tel 01332 227779 Email info@all-languages.org.uk
Web www.all-languages.org.uk



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www.all-languages.org.uk

Do remember that there are extended and additional articles in the LT Extra of the website :
<https://www.all-languages.org.uk/research-practice/languages-today/>



**Language World 2021:
A rich curriculum for ALL**

Friday 12 - Saturday 13 March 2021

THANK
YOU

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NEWS

We bring you the stories that are important to your career

GOT A STORY?
Email us at:
info@all-languages.org.uk

ERASMUS AND TURING

The Government announced in December that it will be withdrawing from the Erasmus programme which has brought benefits to teachers, students and schools in so many ways, not least in the fields of Languages and culture. They also announced a replacement UK scheme called Turing:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-turing-scheme-to-support-thousands-of-students-to-study-and-work-abroad>

ALL members will be concerned to learn of benefits beyond those so far outlined for Higher Education students. Funds for school joint projects, work placements for FE students and CPD opportunities for teachers in UK schools were all part of the Erasmus+ packages, and ALL is seeking clarification on how these will be supported in the Turing scheme. Language teachers will also wish to know how UK participation in e-twinning will be maintained, as our status as a full partner has now also ceased.

In recent years ALL members were active participants in the successful Erasmus+ projects THE LANGUAGE MAGICIAN – <https://www.thelanguagemagician.net/> - an award-winning Primary Languages game that provides assessment data to the teacher,



and ELAPSE – <http://lfee.net/elapse> - providing free online services in developing CLIL approaches for learners aged 8-13.



Last academic year ALL also obtained Erasmus+ funding to allow teacher members to attend LfEE training courses on the continent, exploring CLIL approaches. Twenty nine schools, Primary and Secondary, from England, Northern Ireland and Wales are partners with ALL in this project, now planned for Summer 2021.

Finally ALL is also a partner in the recently launched project Knights of the European Grail co-ordinated by the Goethe-Institut London and aiming to motivate students in Secondary education. Watch out for news!



DfE review of GCSE MFL Content

This review (delayed in consequence of the pandemic) seems, at the time of writing, to be going ahead in early 2021, and a feature (The Debate on Content) is included in this edition. The topic under review is the appropriateness of the content which OFQUAL describes in its GCSE subject criteria requirements thus:

GCSE specifications in Modern Foreign Languages must set out contexts and purposes that:

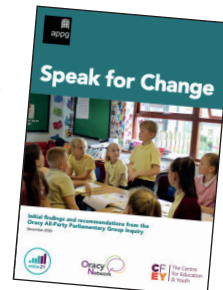
- are of relevance and interest to learners;
- correspond to learners' level of maturity;
- reflect, and are appropriate to, the culture of countries and communities where the language is spoken;
- relate, where appropriate, to other areas of the curriculum.

Be prepared to share your views!

Speak for change

The Oracy All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) has released an interim report which highlights that young people have unequal access to opportunities to develop their oracy skills in schools in England. It emphasises the vital importance of developing students' confidence and competence in spoken language, particularly as the disruption to children's education over this past year is widening the already stubborn language gap.

The Oracy APPG is calling for better support for teachers to embed oracy in their classrooms and raised expectations for pupils' entitlement to quality oracy teaching, in order to harness the untapped potential of oracy to address educational inequality, improve employability and support children's wellbeing as we emerge from this crisis.



Download the report here :
<https://www.oracyappg.org.uk/>

The ALL website hosts a plethora of articles about the importance of supporting Speaking <https://www.all-languages.org.uk/secondary/speaking-endorsement/>

SUCCESS STORIES

Celebrating successes in language teaching and learning from across the country

European Day of Languages 2020

The results of the ALLNE annual national EDOL writing competition are out! <https://www.all-languages.org.uk/about/community/local/north-east/>

Big congratulations to all the schools which entered, and to the language teachers who motivated their learners to take part in this difficult year, and thanks to the judges for their time, commitment, and pleasure in doing their task! 'International City' inspired learners from primary up to Sixth Form to create plans, descriptions, poems and narratives, earning 20 Commendation certificates for individual pupils, and 5 for schools which sent in large entries.

We also thank our sponsors whose support meant we could give 18 prizes this year (with a larger number than usual for older students.) Look out for our competition in 2021!

DO YOU HAVE A
STORY FOR THESE
PAGES?

Email: info@all-languages.org.uk

The Stephen Spender Prize 2020 - A Celebration

From Charlotte Ryland, Director, Stephen Spender Trust

What do hammerhead sharks, the bossa nova, failing brakes and a dog's bark have in common? These images all featured in this year's winning translations – a stunning selection of poems translated into English by children and adults of all ages.

At first the prospect of transforming our usual in-person awards evening into a virtual event was a daunting one, but we quickly discovered the benefits. Young translators could join in without the trek to central London, and parents, teachers, poets and readers were able to tune in from across the world. One of the highlights for me was hearing from one of the translated poets: Pedro Serrano sent in a video from Mexico City, celebrating his young translator and remarking that her version had made him read his poem with new eyes.

We were also able to introduce our new commendations for outstanding teachers – awarded this year to Nadia Siddiqui (The Westgate School), Sabine Pichout and colleagues (Swavesey Village College) and Kilda Giraudon and colleagues (Colyton Grammar School). We look forward to growing this community of committed teachers as we develop the prize in the coming years.

Registration for the 2021 prize will open in January. In the meantime, do check out the young translators' videos on our YouTube channel: <https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLuMwUHyZ5IHcPvt5wagPVeolzDX02olpc>

Celebration of Speaking

Look out for news of a national Celebration of Speaking involving ALL and many of our brilliant partners at the British Council and the cultural and linguistic bodies in the United Kingdom!

As a community dedicated to supporting motivation for language learning, as well as the professional development of teachers, this informal partnership project aims to give everyone something positive to look forward to at this gloomy time of the year and in the complex situation where we all find ourselves.

The idea is : Celebration ! The context is : Online ! The principle is : Open to all ! and the light-hearted task is : make a digital clip of yourself speaking a language other than English, no longer than 90 seconds. These clips will be collated online to share the love of speaking another language (one you are learning, one that is part of your family history, etc.)

Entrants could choose from:

- recording a short presentation about something they are interested in
- reciting a short text – a poem or song lyric?
- performing with someone else a roleplay, sketch, dialogue
- **or something else!**

(Entrants of school age would, of course, not film themselves, but speak over an image, an avatar or a screen they have created.)

The project partners will each select a favourite clip (just based on personal taste; there are no criteria) which we plan to celebrate publicly at an event in March. The celebration will be called : **Express yourself !**

RESOURCES

The latest in language support materials

Compiled by Resource Reviews Editor: Carol Hughes

WOULD YOU
LIKE TO BE A
REVIEWER?
Email: info@all-languages.org.uk

In this issue we have a variety of resources which will support learners across all key stages and in all three main languages taught. Whether you are considering using music or film in the classroom, need extra cover sheets during these challenging times or are looking to support your examination students, you will find something here of interest. Thank you to all the reviewers and the publishers who have supplied the resources.

AQA GCSE 9-1 French Vocabulary Revision Cards (also available for Spanish and German)

Words: Isabelle Jones, ALL Council

This resource includes 200 cards to revise, practise and test yourself on the vocabulary for every main topic / theme of AQA French GCSE 9-1.

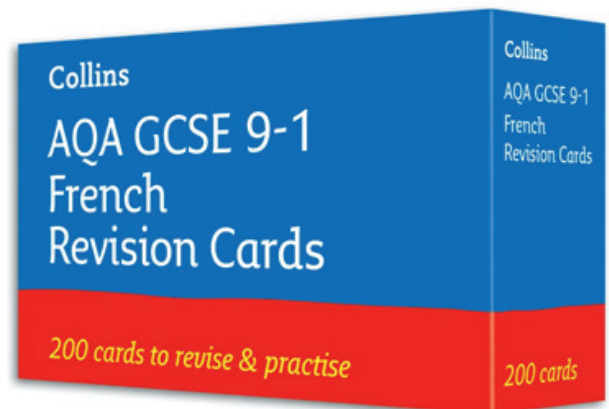
All cards are colour-coded by theme on one side: 1. Identity and Culture, 2. Local, National, International and Global Areas of Interest and 3. Current and Future Studies and Employment.

On the same side are words or phrases in French. The vocabulary is also labelled - masculine, feminine, plural noun, adjective, verb, adverb as appropriate, unless they are set phrases. Irregularities for gender or number are displayed for adjectives and nouns but interestingly, no irregularities are signposted for verbs, which are all simply

displayed in the infinitive form.

On the other side of each card is the translation of key vocabulary into English with a short example sentence in French, also translated into English. The layout is very clear, and the size of the cards and box make this a good revision tool for students, easy to carry around, mix up and then test yourself on the go.

This resource could be used in class by the teacher as part of a revision starter, as well as independently by students at home to support regular vocabulary learning and self-testing. It enables retrieval practice and helps with vocabulary retention, making it easier to do cross-topic revision and consolidate vocabulary knowledge as the GCSE course progresses.



This certainly is a resource that could be recommended to any French GCSE student, but especially to students who need additional support retaining basic vocabulary across all topics and enjoy using more tactile resources.

MORE INFORMATION

Collins GCSE

Collins, 2020, 200pp, RRP £12.99

collins.co.uk/mflrevision - School price £6.50 (excl. VAT)
ISBN: 978-0-00-839933-7

Teachers who flourish: why MFL teachers stay in the classroom

Words: Lisa Probert, ALL Oxfordshire, ALL Council

This ALL publication looks at some of the challenges facing MFL teachers and how practising teachers respond to them. Throughout the publication, there are questions for reflection and discussion, encouraging the reader to engage with the text on a personal and practical level. These questions could form the basis of departmental discussions or support individual reflection e.g. around the time of a personal review. Because the publication is based on a survey of practising teachers, the points made feel valid and relevant, and readers can easily identify themselves with the responses given to the survey questions. The

findings outlined in the section on teachers' motivations to stay in the profession provide a framework against which colleagues can measure their own feelings.

The publication highlights the importance of the environment for MFL within a school, and the role of a supportive SMT, as well as discussing the importance of teacher identity and the relevance of opportunities for professional development. It also outlines key issues around balancing workload.

It could be used by colleagues at various stages of their careers, as the questions it poses are relevant to

all. Teachers might use it to evaluate whether they wish to continue working in their current role, or which professional development opportunities they would like to pursue. The book might also give them confidence to seek promotion or look to move to a different establishment. Teachers might also use it to reaffirm their personal commitment to working with young people and motivating the next generation of language learners, an aspiration ALL Members all share.

MORE INFORMATION

Teachers who flourish

Dr Jane Jones & Professor Anna Lise Gordon

ALL Publications, 2020, 24pp, **Cost £14.99**

<https://www.all-languages.org.uk/product/teachers-who-flourish-why-mfl-teachers-stay-in-the-classroom-by-jane-jones-and-anna-lise-gordon/>



Onatti Film Clips

Words: Janine Turner, Macclesfield

In language teaching, variety has always been the spice of life. Peppering my lessons with short film clips has always helped my teaching, but sometimes it seemed difficult to find film that was accessible and relevant and appealing. The *Onatti* sequence of films has managed to capture relevance and accessibility and challenge. I just loved them!

Onatti offers a selection of short films in French, Spanish and German which invite classes and teachers to slip into that country's culture, music, attitudes and humour, to immerse in the language and to have a lot of fun in the process. The contexts of the films exude *Frenchness/Spanishness/Germanness*, the actors are young, nicely wacky and the dialogues are delivered at a speed that is easily understood and appreciated by language learners. In addition to the film dramas, there are interviews with the actors, who demonstrate how natural and animated a "chat" about a GCSE topic can be.

I can see that teachers could use the film stories in the immediate aftermath of covering topics such as clothing and colour, planning a party or going on a journey, however these clips might be used initially as pure entertainment – they are all funny, surprising and quirky – with follow-up taking its cue from the *Onatti* worksheets. They suggest multi-choice questions, translations or pair work involving word-cluster patterns. Having run foreign language drama workshops in my own school, I can see that the transcripts lend themselves to possible performances in groups. Great, that the interviews with the actors on familiar topics such as travel do NOT include transcripts. A chat at GCSE is intended to be something spontaneous, not scripted. Teacher might allocate 2 or 3 of the questions to a pair of pupils and invite them to adapt these. Great too, that the questions become less generic toward the end, allowing opportunities for pupils to tackle less-travelled questions. And great that each actor

reinforces the joy of learning a language as a means of learning about others.

It is likely that the world-wide-experience of living through Covid-19 restrictions will form part of future schemes of work. Each of the interviews about Corona gives a basis for wide discussion. I like the way that they are all dated, capturing each country's efforts to control the virus in the autumn of 2020. Having listened to all of them, I felt suitably educated about the different responses across the three nations. Every country tells its own Covid-story. And *Onatti* films help you tell it.

MORE INFORMATION

www.onattifilms.com

£55 + VAT for annual subscription

Website Review

Bravo - music based Spanish learning.

<https://learnwithbravo.com/>

Words: Lisa Stevens, ALL Primary Steering Group

Bravo - music based Spanish learning is a project aimed at children from reception to year 6 (4-11 years old) that uses music as the tool to teach Spanish. It aims to promote intercultural and social skills as well as develop knowledge and understanding, and is designed with two groups in mind; the non-native speaker (ELE) but also the child with Spanish speaking heritage (Herencia), who wants to develop their inherited language skills.

The resources are available from the website and are downloadable once purchased. There are individual packs, or units that contain resources from a number of packs; for example, the unit 'We introduce

ourselves' contains materials from the Instruments, Greetings and Emotions packs. Materials are accompanied by separate lesson plans for ELE and Herencia and for each topic pack there are teachers' notes, activity suggestions and linguistic/lexical structures covered, as well as an abundance of resources.

The starting point is the song which comes in audio and video form (with and without subtitles) and forms the basis of all activities. Songs are cleverly written to include both questions and answers, and to showcase structures that are developed in the resources. Each set of 'fichas' includes around 20 separate activities that can be

printed off, covering a variety of skills, and concluding with a summative assessment activity with Herencia students having a slightly different final sheet offering the opportunity to give extended responses. There are also pupils' resources which offer opportunities for independent work.

The advantage of purchasing a 6-lesson unit is that you get several topics in one, including detailed notes, plus a 'Genially' presentation for each lesson with sound files. Looking at the abundance of materials and the detail of the plans, I would say that they could easily extend beyond 6 single lessons of 55-60 minutes.

I found the materials engaging and well thought out, and the songs are certainly earworms! I particularly liked the variety of activities offered to review and rehearse a small pot of vocabulary and structures, and the slightly different activities for Herencia learners. I can appreciate the cyclical approach taken to revisiting and reinforcing skills and knowledge across activities, topics and units. I feel that it's a resource that could be used equally by non-native and native speakers, both independently at home as well as within a classroom context as part of a scheme or as a standalone unit.



The German Quiz Challenge

Words: Wanda Marshall

<https://www.goethe.de/ins/gb/en/spr/unt/kum/dfj/gqc.html>

The German Quiz Challenge is a new, free, interactive teaching and assessment tool created by the Goethe-Institut. It is designed for learners aged 13 to 16 and consists of a series of activities presented around the lives of five Munich-based skateboarding friends. Pupils read and listen to conversations, and complete vocabulary and grammar exercises relating to what they see and hear. The tasks comprise multiple-choice activities and gapfills, and the topics range from sports, fitness and health, to travel, food and environmental issues.

There are four chapters which pupils work through individually; each can be completed in one session or you could spend time pre-teaching some of the vocabulary covered (a complete script is available, so teachers can differentiate

for the needs of pupils). At the end of each chapter there's a Team Challenge – a set of eight pub-quiz style questions relating to general knowledge of German-speaking countries. Throughout the session pupils' scores are recorded and saved on the teacher's dashboard and when it comes to the Team Challenge pupils can immediately see which team is winning, which is hugely motivational and great fun – it can get noisy at this stage!

The Challenge is great for reinforcing the grammar, vocabulary and structures commonly introduced in the first two years of learning German in UK classrooms, and for teachers to assess pupils' progress, and the Goethe-Institut runs monthly training sessions to help you get started with

the technology. Overall, the Challenge is well worth doing with your upper KS3 or KS4 classes, either as consolidation, an assessment tool, a motivational boost, or simply as a fun reward activity with your pupils.

The German Quiz Challenge
Goethe-Institut



Linguascope Cover Lesson Worksheets – Year 7 Spanish Part 1 & Part 2

Words: Jane Driver, ALL Peterborough

Most Language teachers are already familiar with the Linguascope website and know how engaging and fun their activities are for students; as well as being good resources for starters and plenaries, they also provide support for homework and cover lessons. What you might not know is the Linguascope range of worksheets differentiated by year group and collated into handy, printable books.

Teachers at Queen Katharine Academy in Peterborough have trialled the resources with their Year 7 classes and this is what they had to say about them:

Teachers can use the worksheets to set as cover, homework or as an independent task to reinforce what has been learnt in lessons. Additionally, they can be used as a printed booklet for bubble closures during COVID, in case

students don't have access to a laptop.

The benefits to enhance teaching and learning are in the variety of activities and vocabulary that can enhance the students' learning and promote their independent skills, as well as the grammar explanations which help them to complete the activities with minimal teacher input.

Students responded well to the resources and, even

though some of the word searches had lots of words to find (which some initially found a bit daunting!), they wanted to complete them and engaged fully with the range of different activities.

MORE INFORMATION

Linguascope, 2020,
104 pages, £19.99

ISBN: 1-908540-86-9 (Part 1) /
1-908540-87-7 (Part 2)

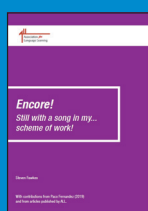


ALL Editions

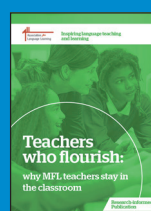
Perfect for Heads of Department (new and established), for colleagues who have new trainee teachers coming in to the department and team, for teachers who wish to refresh schemes of learning with song and creativity, for everyone who wishes to be mindful of their own as well as their team's wellbeing and for those who have not yet read Primary Blogs. We have something for all of you, written by members for members. The Inspiring Teaching and Learning series e-books and our newly released: German Activities for KS3/ S1-2 all available in our shop: www.all-languages.org.uk/product-category/resources/



Effective Mentoring of Trainee Teachers



Encore! Still with a song in my scheme of work



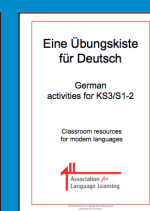
Teachers Who Flourish: why MFL teachers stay in the classroom



The Head of Languages Handbook



A selection of Primary Blogs



Eine Übungskiste für Deutsch



...CONTENT

ALL encourages members to respond individually to this Consultation, which may have a short turnaround.

In November 2019 the government launched a review of subject content for GCSE Modern Foreign Languages. The process of this review was interrupted by the pandemic, but at the time of writing we anticipate that the review consultation is imminent, and may already be live when you read this.

What content are we talking about?

In key stages (KS) 2 and 3 in maintained schools, the only prescription about content is in the National Curriculum (NC) Programme of Study (PoS) which is highly flexible. Schools can select content (themes, for instance) which suits their community best.

After Year 9 a Language is no longer a statutory NC subject and schemes of work tend to focus on the content of their selected GCSE specification; some schools indeed start to do this in KS3. It is the content of this specification that is under review.

Here LT presents contributions from partners:

What are your views?

What content is appropriate for teaching, and for assessment of your learners?



NALA carried out a survey among language teachers:

The languages curriculum and disadvantaged students from which LT extracts some findings:

The majority of language teaching professionals who responded, feel that the current GCSE content disadvantages:

- socio-economically deprived students
- students with less typical family life, e.g. children in care
- those who are less able
- those with special educational needs

The majority of respondents feel that this disadvantage impacts on pupil motivation, engagement, and performance.

A number of teachers explained that the background of the students often meant (they) had little personal experience on which to base answers to examination questions ... the personal nature of tasks could be distressing ... (and) questions often mistakenly assume that students have 'cultural capital'

'I always need to give the children ideas of what they can say.'

'I ALWAYS find myself telling them that they need to show off their Spanish not tell the truth, which curbs the opportunity for spontaneity.'

Over 95% of respondents said that ... students find it difficult to make up answers when they have no experience or understanding of a context... and felt that they had to cover these contexts, as well as their languages curriculum, thus eating into valuable teaching time.

Teachers commented on the cognitive load of having to imagine something and remember what has been imagined, as well as find the correct language.

'They ... have to remember what they have said ... and then remember the story that they have created.'

Respondents identified some topics as more problematic than others. Family and friends, house and home, holidays, leisure activities, charity and volunteering, lifestyle, social issues and work were rated the most challenging for disadvantaged or vulnerable students.



Colleagues at UCML comment:

The aims expressed in the GCSE specifications, along with learning outcomes such as beginning to acquire 'knowledge about how language works', acquiring 'new knowledge, skills and ways of thinking', developing 'language learning skills' and 'strategies' and becoming autonomous learners, are likely to be applauded by university teachers since they provide a sound foundation for further study at A-Level and beyond.

In terms of progression and motivation, we need to overcome issues of severe grading in MFL and to counter the negative perceptions of its lack of relevance to our young people.

Secondary students should ideally see language learning as something which has personal benefits and can be an enjoyable part of their lives, and not something that they think will never be achievable. Perhaps now is the time to lose the term 'native speaker' in reference to expected language competence at GCSE. This will not lower standards just highlight the point that successful communication depends on mutual understanding.





Photograph by Mamadi Doumbouya for Vulture.com



Judith Rifesser

Judith is a practising languages teacher, the Association's Deputy HMO and a long-standing ALL London committee member.

THE LAST WORD:

Our common purpose

In her 2009 TED talk, Nigerian writer and feminist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie warned, as per the title of her presentation, of the 'Danger of a Single Story'. Drawing on her own personal experience, she elucidated the risks of stereotypes, and how reinforcing them through what we say and do leads to a single story being told. These single stories are intrinsically linked to the notion of power, because power not only dictates which stories are being told but also which stories are seen as definite, as 'the truth'. But, as she asserts, we must recognise the complexities of humanity and by extension the multiplicity of stories that exist. These different stories, like our lives, are inherently bound to each other.

Languages and cultures are linked too, and language(s) teachers are advocates of the cultural and linguistic richness of our diverse communities, with a professional duty to ensure that all our students feel welcome, safe and represented in our classrooms. Whichever sector or context we work in, whichever language or languages we teach or learn, the onus is on us collectively to raise awareness, to engage actively and to be spokespersons and allies in initiatives and campaigns for anti-racism, inclusion, language development and education for all.

We are champions, continuously raising awareness, whether at work or not, of the importance and need for learning languages to the rest of the world, continuously seeking new ways to convince the doubters.

We are explorers who know what a treasure it is to be able to learn more about other cultures and languages. We have felt what it means to overcome the fear of making mistakes in order to communicate, and then experienced the joy and excitement of being able to converse in another language. We have allowed space in our lives for new people, words and ideas, which have become interwoven in ours. It is in our classrooms that pupils might discover a new side of themselves through a supported immersion in other languages and cultures. It might be a space for a fresh start where learners re-discover learning as something exciting. We can help our non-language specialist colleagues develop ways of celebrating our learners' home language(s) and culture(s) too.

We are practitioners who know about the power of a community, and of continuously learning with and from each other. In his work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), Paulo Freire emphasises the idea of *praxis*, that is the need to reflect and then act, continuously improving and learning

as both teacher and pupil. What has become obvious during the Covid-19 pandemic, perhaps even more than ever before, is the strong community that language(s) teachers have built, here in the Association for Language Learning, to support each other, to cheer each other on, and to share our knowledge and resources for the benefit of all our learners.

We are firm believers that there is more in us that unites us than separates us. Our classrooms are spaces where learners are able to explore the differences but also the similarities between languages and cultures. This does not mean that we overlook the diverse, embodied experiences we each have. Rather, we fight for the acknowledgement that each and every one of us lives on this planet and is responsible for making this world a better, kinder, more humane place. In the words of María del Carmen Salazar¹: 'Schools should be spaces where all students feel supported as their multiple identities evolve within a meaningful sense of achievement, purpose, power and hope'. We work towards this aim every single day in our language classrooms and together, as a community, in the family of ALL.

¹ (2013) A Humanizing Pedagogy: Reinventing the Principles and Practice of Education as a Journey Toward Liberation. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X12464032>



Association *for*
Language Learning

More Open Secrets of the website
www.ALL-languages.org.uk

Shortcuts (as in the Membership page)

For trainee teachers:

'ALL as you do your training'
<https://www.all-languages.org.uk/student/>

For NQTs:

'ALL as your language teaching career begins'
<https://www.all-languages.org.uk/student/starting-out>

For Primary language teachers:

'ALL as your Primary career progresses'
<https://www.all-languages.org.uk/primary-2/>

For Secondary language teachers

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Language Zones are under the tab called Research and Practice.

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Keynote Speakers



Professor Do Coyle -
Professor of Languages Education and Classroom Learning at University of Edinburgh and an international expert in the field of CLIL



Professor Li Wei -
Professor of Applied Linguistics at the UCL Institute of Education, University College London



Michael Wardle -
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hosts a recently completed report: 'MFL curriculum, pedagogy and assessment reform at GCSE: an investigation of teachers' views'

This review invited correspondents from the State and Independent sectors to share their views on (a) the MFL curriculum and (b) the GCSE examination. The whole of this short report is a fascinating read. Here LT selects some of their findings to inform the current debate.

Curriculum content - Teachers were asked to choose their top five from 13 statements of what they would like their students to achieve by the end of KS4 'in an ideal world', then rank these. This shortened ranking shows the top and the bottom five:

I want my students to...

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• be able to understand and appreciate other cultures• be open to and curious about the wider world• be able to carry out simple transactions in the target language• be able to have a simple conversation in the target language• be able to have a conversation about things that interest them | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• have a firm grounding in the grammar of the language• be able to use the language accurately• be able to read for pleasure in the target language• be able to understand TV programmes and videos in the target language• be able to listen to and understand music/songs in the target language |
|--|--|

Exam content - A dominant theme is the importance attached to developing students' knowledge of other cultures and a positive, tolerant attitude towards these. This emerges ... as something which they feel should be assessed at GCSE. ICU has not been assessed in examinations to date, and it is perhaps hard to see practical ways of doing so; nonetheless, it is important, in our view, to be aware of the high value which teachers place on this aspect of MFL learning.

Correspondents saw 9 statements describing potential content and were asked to rank them. This shortened and simplified ranking shows the top and the bottom three:

The exam should...

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• assess how well the student can use the language to communicate information related to their own life• include tasks that assess the range of vocabulary learners can use and understand• assess students' understanding of the cultures of the countries where the target language is spoken | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• include exercises that test specific vocabulary knowledge• include formal grammar exercises• assess the same kind of things that it assesses now |
|---|--|

Other points LT notes include the importance language teachers attach to inspiring students to love languages, and the development of

- the four language skills, with speaking being a particular priority
- understanding of how language works
- students' confidence.



The Independent Schools Modern Languages Association offers these views:

Content matters. It matters because language is always used to communicate about something. A language is emphatically not just a serendipitous, meaningless product at the confluence of grammar, vocabulary and phonics. A language is the image of what and how we think. It is the lens through which we understand and articulate the world.

For too long, GCSE content has been unfair and underwhelming. The bland trinity of hobbies, home life and holidays has under-impressed learners for three decades, with catastrophic consequences. Not only does this neutral, banal content mask the amazingly rich experience of discovery and cultural de-centring that language learning can and should involve, it is also incredibly alienating for learners from less affluent and more deprived backgrounds. Moreover, a focus on plausible, practical uses of the target language makes it very easy for those secondary learners who can't feasibly imagine needing to use their German, Spanish or French in their travel or professional plans to reject language-learning entirely.

Instead, it is through content that we can excite and enthral our learners – just as is the case in every other humanities and liberal arts subject. Content is the means we connect learners to target language communities and their identities. Content drives interest and motivation. This is at the heart of language learning motivational research. Not only that, but what we are learning to understand, say and write is critical to how we understand the purpose of language learning in the first place: through content, we show young people what the value of language learning is. Rather than telling them how great it is, we give them visceral, undeniable experience of it.

The full ORA report is here :

<https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:1f797d25-98b4-4b89-863a-779b2348ae20>

The NALA report link is in the President's Blog.

Longer versions of this article and of the contribution from UCML is also in the LT Extra area of the website.

<https://www.all-languages.org.uk/research-practice/languages-today/>

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