Guidance for the Publishing of
Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) Teaching Resources

Introduction

This document is written for authors and publishers of MFL teaching resources for school-age pupils. It will also be useful for teachers and other interested parties. It outlines the features which are associated with high-quality resources, in line with domestic and international research.

The term 'teaching resources' covers anything that is published to support the teaching of a range of MFL. This includes textbooks, workbooks, teacher's guides and other materials, in print or digital form. It could apply to a complete scheme of work covering several years. Equally it could apply to a more focused resource produced with a more specific aim or outcome in mind.

A description of well-written resources is set out below under the following headings:
1. General principles
2. MFL content
3. Tasks and exercises
4. Representation and design
5. Supporting teachers
6. Assessment and review
7. Authors and editors

Teaching resources have most impact when supported by high quality teacher professional development.

1. General principles
A high-quality MFL resource:
1.1   Should support the latest version of the curriculum, where published directly for it, for Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3, GCSE and A level.
1.2   Inspires and enthuses pupils, encouraging a thirst for knowledge, and motivating them to towards a working understanding of MFL either for further study or to enable them to be MFL literate citizens.
1.3   Should aim to broaden pupils' MFL knowledge and understanding beyond minimum examination requirements. While textbooks may take a particular approach to MFL and should take note of examination needs, they should not be narrowly targeted on particular specifications as this may lead to a focus purely on passing the test.

2. MFL content
The content of a high-quality MFL resource:
2.1   Is presented in a structured, coherent and connected manner. It shows clear progression from one aspect of language learning to another while remaining flexible enough for teachers to adapt their use to individual classes.
2.2   Ensures concepts are presented and developed in a detailed, step-by-step way to avoid gaps in learning, and at appropriate points.
2.3   Develops the acquisition and retention of vocabulary and language about language (terms of grammar etc.).

2.4   Text is accessible with regard to the age and ability levels of pupils at whom it is aimed, and language is used clearly and concisely.

2.5   Correct and precise linguistic and grammatical vocabulary is introduced early, used consistently and is related to English where appropriate.

2.6   When new concepts are introduced, these are related to key concepts with which pupils are already familiar. Explicit connections are made to prior learning.

2.7   Aspects of ideas that are likely not to be immediately clear to pupils are highlighted and explored in depth.

2.8   A detailed, well-paced approach to grammar is included.

2.9   Addresses patterns, links, phonics, memorisation, pronunciation and linguistic structures.

2.10 The link between the written and spoken word is retained to enhance memory and confidence.

2.11 It underpins engagement with cultural content.

2.12 It uses standard idiom as well as noting the latest slang.

2.13 It includes good glossary and grammar summary.

3. Tasks and exercises

High-quality MFL tasks and exercises:

3.1   Activities are provided to support progression in learning, and build on prior learning. They should:
- embed accuracy and fluency
- develop language through use and build confidence in listening, speaking, reading, writing, translation, speaking and listening, recognising the links between these skills and blending where appropriate to ensure a good balance between them, and making full use of listening and reading texts to encourage production of language by the pupils
- encourage independent language use in spoken and increasingly over time in written form.

3.2   Activities are sequenced to give pupils a sense of structure.

3.3   Opportunities are provided to listen to text read by native speakers, and for pupils to read longer texts.

3.4   Provision is made for the appropriate level of challenge according to age and stage. Some include the use of engaging and relevant contexts, including from other continents, appropriate to the age and ability of the pupil and to the aspect of MFL being studied.

3.5   Tasks and exercises require pupils to check their work for errors and continually improve their accuracy.

3.6   Tasks are varied so that they involve pupils in a range of cognitive processes. Where appropriate to age and ability, these could include:
- consolidation and practice
- investigating, conjecturing, hypothesising, generalising and summarising
- explaining, reasoning, and proving
- applying, interpreting and analysing.

3.7   Resources provide homework and out-of-school activities that give the opportunity to continue the development of fluency and understanding.

3.8   Engaging practice activities allow extended application of concepts and techniques, allowing exploration and varied application.

3.9   Activities should include open-ended tasks requiring pupils to be creative and allowing the teacher to extend with their own/topical material.

4. Representation and design

A high-quality MFL resource:

4.1   Supplies a clear, consistent rubric to support learning.

4.2   Uses images judiciously and with regard to their impact on language learning.

4.3   Uses images relevant to pupils' age and ability levels.

4.4   Uses relevant cultural information in illustrations.

4.5   Uses non-stereotypical material.

4.6   Uses a variety of source material, including websites.

4.7   Where there are both textbooks and digital materials they have a coherent and consistent approach. Different ways of presenting ideas reinforce one another by exploiting the advantages of each medium.

5. Supporting teachers

A high-quality MFL resource supports teachers:

5.1   Textbooks should offer a clear structure and methodology.

5.2   Content should offer a wide collection of material and a wealth of practical ideas.

5.3   Material provides approaches suitable for teachers of varying degrees of confidence, including those trained in one language but having to teach in another, and non-specialists.

5.4   Any teacher's guide or other material provided for teachers supports the enhancement of teacher knowledge and pedagogy. It provides guidance on effective use of the materials, including good extension. It also provides further information about the tasks the pupils are engaging in, including points that should be drawn out.

5.5   Offers extra resources, for example for more-able or more experienced pupils, or support for those who work at a slightly slower pace.

5.6   Materials include answers and transcripts to listening exercises.

5.7   The resources take account of high-frequency errors. Guidance enables teachers to anticipate and plan how to tackle these.

5.8   Where lesson plans or teaching schemes are provided, they are informed by research and ideas of effective teaching. This would include the constructive use of mistakes and misconceptions, providing a range of different activities in lessons, and encouraging pupils to think about the application of MFL to everyday contexts and other curricular subjects.

5.9   Resources work best when supported by high quality teacher professional development.

5.10   An answer book for children can be helpful.

5.11   Supplies a good glossary of key target language to be used by teachers and pupils, a grammar summary.

5.12   Supplies guidance on ideas for facilitating pupil target language use.

6. Assessment and review

A high-quality MFL resource supports good assessment practice by providing:

6.1   Opportunities for both formative and summative assessment of learning in listening, speaking, reading and writing.

6.2   Assessments which give both pupils and teachers the opportunity to review learning and to check pupils' understanding. This applies both to language, knowledge and skills in using standard techniques and the ability to apply understanding in new or unfamiliar situations.

6.3   Assessments which allow both pupils and teachers to measure progress and inform future learning.

6.4   Materials should include activities at the start of each set of learning activities to identify

whether the pupil has a secure grasp of the necessary pre-requisites for the next unit/module of learning.

6.5   At the end of each block of learning, well-designed assessment should check the extent to which the pupil has grasped key concepts and techniques and should not be narrowly focused on examination questions alone.

6.6   The use of grammatical structures over different topics.

6.7   Cross-referencing to grammar, vocabulary and learning strategy sections to help pupils revise.

7. Textbook authors and editors

A high-quality MFL resource is:

7.1   Authored and reviewed by people with expert knowledge, experience, skills and credibility.

7.2   Subject to stringent and independent quality assurance measures.

7.3   Authored and edited by experts who draw on research evidence and on accrued professional experience.

7.4   Trialled, reviewed and refined in the light of trial data, wherever it is possible to do so.

7.5   Scheduled so that authors and publishers are given sufficient time to write and trial materials.