ASSESSMENT, MARKING, RECORDING AND REPORTING

Productive language skill: WRITNG

Nº	Activity	Features	Implications for teachers
1	Labelling, listing and vocabulary tests	These "low level" activities reflect knowledge of the TL but demonstrate no application skills	Useful as interim assessments; self-assessment is possible
2	Writing messages	The ability to communicate the message is important; tasks can be differentiated	The teacher needs to reward successful communication; over-correction can be inhibiting
3	Repetitive drill exercises	Tasks are not authentic but have diagnostic value	Such exercises serve as useful interim assessment; their content should not be divorced from the communicative context
4	Essays and free expression	The integrative nature of the tasks means that poor knowledge can hide an ability to write and vice versa; successful application of process skills can be shown through clarity of expression; essay writing is not authentic but pupils tend to consider it to be a valid assessment task	The teacher should separate grades for knowledge and process skills

Productive language skill: SPEAKING

Nº	Activity	Features	Implications for teachers
1	Whole class question and answer	Pupils may lack the confidence to contribute despite being able to do so; general tone and enthusiasm of the class are subjective indicators for achievement	The teacher needs to structure and target questions carefully in order to acquire a general picture of the entire group's achievement
2	Stuctured role play	The amount of time needed constrains manageability; assessment criteria are particularly important and the content needs to be defined; there is a need to distinguish between memory skills and the ability to build language independently	Making needs to be focused on particular criteria; instructions must be clear; communicative competence should be the focus
3	Open-ended role play	Allow pupils to produce language independently; future learning needs can be identified; it can be difficult to relate criteria to individual's competence	As making can be subjective, clear criteria need to be identified; one outcome could be the identification of personal objectives and targets for future development
4	Information gap in pairs/groups	The ability to communicate the message is important; reliability is low as the reaction of the partner is unpredictable; the direct experience is authentic but lacking in objectivity	The teacher is the observer; pupil self-assessment is a feature of this activity
5	Oral presentation	Explicit criteria are particularly important and the content needs to be clearly defined	Pupils need to be briefed in advance of the presentation; there is potential for peer assessment to support the teacher's judgements
6	Oral essay responding to stimuli	Pupils need to be familiar with the task type and the content; there might be tensions between the open-ended nature of the task and the invariably limited linguistic means of pupils	Performance requires rehearsals; peer assessment is possible if all are aware of the criteria; grading should be based on board indicators
7	Conversation/interview	Realistic conversations require an integration of speaking and listening skills; the authenticity of such a direct assessment reduces validity and reliability	The teacher should allow pupils to lead the conversation and react to the unexpected; qualitative comments should be reflected in the grades awarded

Receptive language skills: LISTENING AND READING

Nº	Activity	Features	Implications for teachers
1	Multiple choice, e.g. true/false, ticking correct answers	A carefully designed test focussing on specific aspects can distinguish between pupils who understand, know and/or can do and those who cannot/do not; analysis of results can identify areas of weakness; the system does not allow for an understanding of why pupils fail; reliability is high but validity is low; there is the danger of pupils guessing	In order to allow for remedial action, analysis needs to take place on an individual basis
2	Gap filling	There is a danger that pupils know/understand what is required but unable to show it due to deficiencies in productive language skills; the method is easily manageable and marking allows for simple indication of right or wrong	The activity lends itself well to end-of-unit test; the integrative nature of the task makes it difficult to identify and act upon problems
3	Labelling in the TL	Easy to administer but little more than a vocabulary test; content than rather application of knowledge is tested	The teacher needs to select appropriate moments to use such tests; use early in a unit of work allows shortages in knowledge to be addressed
4	Selecting the correct answer from a range	Allows pupils to demonstrate their receptive skills (listening, reading) without having to rely on their productive ones (speaking, writing); allows for guessing	There is need to analyse results to identify the reasons for the answers given; teachers should ensure that pupils, apart from demonstrating the final outcome, are able to reason the process so that purposeful feedback can be given
5	Matching language to symbols/images	The method is reliable if all the symbols are recognisable; it is manageable but does allow for guessing; it provides little useful information for	The activity is mainly suited to end-of-unit tests; marking, on the basis of the identification of right and wrong, is simple; self- and peer-marking can be used

		future teaching	
6	Note taking	Integrative nature; careful categorisation is required in order to identify pupil's strengths and weaknesses	Grading needs be based on board and comprehensive indicators in order to take full account of the evidence generated
7	Recognising false statements relating to a passage	The understanding of gist can be identified through simply marking right/wrong; there is a risk of alternative interpretations of the text by pupils	Pupils can mark their contributions themselves although a detailed teacher-led feedback session can be useful
8	Answering comprehension questions in the TL	Pupils must be aware of the need to answer in the TL; it needs to be clear whether comprehension or the ability to respond accurately in the TL is being assessed	The teacher needs to mark the work him/herself to ensure consistency; qualitative feedback (written comments), as opposed to grades, should reward accurate expression
9	Sequencing and re-assembling texts	The reason for pupil's choices should be more important than the final product; the process is not reliable, but it is valid and manageable	Opportunities to discuss the process should be provided rather than simply grades awarded; feedback could be given through peer discussion
10	Summaries	Pupil's development can be monitored if the focus is on the process; the risk is that productive skills are assessed instead of comprehension; validity is high, despite the low level of reliability	Pupil's plans, application and knowledge should be assessed separately and qualitative comments be attached to any grades; grades should be allocated to the different skills displayed

Pachler, N & Field, N. "Learning to Teach MFL in the Secondary School" Ed. Routledger Falmer p.207