

Pupil Progress and Assessment in Modern Foreign Languages

In 1998, Black and Wiliam (7-9:1998a) claimed that “learning is driven by what teachers and pupils do in classrooms.” This quotation demonstrates the inextricable link that exists between the three principal constituents of education: the pupil, the teacher and the learning. Both pupil and teacher are afforded the responsibility of the learning wherein the former is encouraged to take charge of their own scholastic journey and the latter acts as a guiding force that endows the voyagers with the necessary wisdom, vision and knowledge to allow them to achieve their goals and progress towards a previously defined ultimate aim. It is evident that some of these aims will differ according to the fundamental diversity that exists between subjects; yet, it is increasingly more apparent that the practice of assessment, in all its divergent forms, continues to exist as the mainstay of the measurement of pupil progress.

In order to highlight the importance of the link between assessment and pupil progress as well as the communication of this progress within the micro-structure (e.g. pupil, teacher and school) and macro-structure (e.g. parents, local authorities and national government agencies) of the education system, particularly within the realm of MFL (Modern Foreign Languages), it is essential to begin by outlining and discussing the various tenets of modern and traditional assessments as well as the advantages and disadvantages of these systems; secondly, some discussion must be afforded to the importance of initial teacher assessment within the context of baseline data and its function; thirdly, the ways in which progression is planned into the scheme of work and how other national educational policies feed into this process will reveal how pupils are given opportunities to assess their own progress; finally, the discussion will deal with the communication of this progress to the necessary parties and the setting of targets.

Furthermore, a range of student data and examples of their work, provided in the appendices, will be referred to consistently in order to exemplify and substantiate those claims made. This information has been collated from five Key Stage 3 students in Year 9 studying French. Their baseline, progress and projected data are highlighted in appendix 1. The rationale behind the selection of these three students is that they are contrasting¹. For example, ES is a student that could almost be considered as being ‘gifted’ yet she does not excel in French and has switched to a lower teaching set. VT, on paper, is the weakest student of the sample yet she has been moved from the second to the first set. MM is a very motivated student who is always keen to succeed; however, he is also severely dyslexic. MB and JD are both high achieving female and male students respectively yet show different rates of progress in the subject.

¹ Students are referred to using their initials in order to protect their identities.

To begin the discussion proper, the focus must begin with the definition of assessment. In recent years, the approach to assessment and its aims have undergone metamorphosis. Brown (266:2005) cites that the most salient changes in this process has been the recognition that, in education, “assessment must be used to promote learning and improvement rather than classifying pupils according to the social hierarchy.” Indeed, making objective comparisons between individuals with reference to specific academic norms in a formal examination setting are useful for universities and employers alike. However, as previously stated, assessment clearly requires a wider conceptualisation to allow *all* pupils to celebrate their *own* progress. To this end, assessment has been reinterpreted as possessing numerous precepts (Addelman *et al.* 143:2000). Firstly, for summative and ipsative purposes, assessment may be used to communicate the nature and level of pupils achievements at various points in their schooling. Secondly, it may be used to judge the effectiveness of educational institutions and the system as a whole; finally, it may be used formatively to enhance motivation by making assessment a part of the continuous learning process. Whichever form assessment takes, Harlen *et al.* (275:2005) and Atkinson *et al.* (200:2002) both purport that assessment, especially the latter, must be embedded rather than grafted into the curriculum so that students ~~and~~ have numerous opportunities to assess their progress and understand the next steps in the teaching and learning cycle.

With regards to MFL, the National Curriculum at Key Stage 3 relies on two approaches to measuring progress and assessment. The first of these approaches is the familiar criterion-referenced assessment system upon which the national curriculum is based. The system is subdivided into four separate Attainment Targets (henceforth, ATs) – namely, listening and responding, speaking, reading and responding and writing – each of which are composed of 8 Levels of Attainment including ‘exceptional performance’ for particularly gifted students. An example of AT4 (writing) is provided in appendix 10. At each stage, pupils are required to develop this skill in various ways; in this case, students begin by copying single words correctly, progress to copying phrases, then writing short phrases from memory, leading onto the production of individual paragraphs and longer texts of varying lengths which include opinions, justifications, descriptive language and descriptions of past, present and future events. Furthermore, a study of appendices 5-8 displays this progress. For example, the work produced by JD clearly shows clear progression from the sentential level, to the paragraph stage and finally the longer text stage. In discussions with JD, he claimed that he was able to advance the quality and quantity of his French due to the understanding he had developed of the different requirements outlined in the level descriptors for Key Stage 3 (Appendix 10).

Furthermore, progression through assessment is salient in the application of the National Languages Strategy (NLS) published in December 2002. The initial intention of the NLS was to introduce an objectives framework, similar to that of the National Literacy Strategy, which sought to help language learners “...progress regardless of which language they study to create effective language learners.”

(DfES, 2003). Although some cynics have prophesied the impending doom of the National Curriculum for MFL (see Mitchell, 2003), others have welcomed the change who see the NLS and framework as a “refocus of attention on the notion of pupil progression.” (Heilbronn, 47:2004). Although not explicitly used in the classroom, the natural progression of the objectives through the stages of introduction, reinforcement and application is evidenced in the extract of the scheme of work (appendix 4) and in the work of the students. Firstly, in terms of grammatical progression, before entering Year 9, students in the final stages of Key Stage 3, have a basic knowledge of the essential temporal structures required to achieve Level 5: for example, the past, present and simple future tenses. Progression is salient when all students are required to put the elements together for the first time. The work of MB (appendix 5) shows the initial use of the present tense where the objective was also to use varying negatives apart from *ne...pas*. The work at the end of term 2 shows the use of the perfect tense. The final and most recent example of writing shows the use of all these tenses in a longer piece of writing. This progression is highlighted in the objectives framework from Year 8 (8S7), where students are required to “understand simple sentences using high-frequency verbs in the past, present and future) to 9S3 where this has developed into the application stage: “using verbs in different tenses to extend meaning.”

Hitherto, it would appear that the progression of students throughout the year, measured through varying forms of assessment, is self-evident: at least within the realms of AT4 Writing. Prior to highlighting the importance of initial teacher assessment to inform planning and ensure student progression, a brief analysis of the other ATs and the students’ attainment in these areas is important: especially when comparisons are drawn between national expectations towards the end of Key Stage 3 and these five contrasting students. According to National Curriculum guidelines published by the DfES students are expected to work within the levels 3-7 except in the initial stages of Year 7.² By the end of Key Stage 3, the expected attainment for the majority of pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 is level 5/6. The progression towards these national expectations is evident in the attainment of students in AT3 Reading (appendix 3) who are measured through classroom assessment on a day-to-day basis. JD, MB and MM show steady progression from levels 4-7 throughout the year proving that they have in fact exceeded national expectations in AT3. VT shows a slower development pattern throughout the year, nevertheless, she is consistently achieving the national average. Conversely, ES shows very little progression in this area and, furthermore, a lack of assessable work in her exercise book. It is possible that the readjustment of sets for ES has had a detrimental effect on her achievement; however, her attitude and effort in the subject are also other contributing factors. It is evident that progress has, therefore, been made by these students throughout the year in AT3 by the majority of

² Despite the fact that Year 7 students work are expected to work at levels 1 and 2 in the initial stages of language acquirement, students do progress quickly to levels 3 and 4. Furthermore, with the introduction of the National Framework for MFL at Key Stage 2 it is possible that students arriving at secondary school in Year 7 may have already surpassed levels 1 and 2.

students and, as a consequence, many have reached the national standard expected at Key Stage 3 for MFL. A similar trend is salient in student progression in the other Attainment Targets (appendix 2).

Having discussed and evaluated the journey made by these students throughout the year, it is necessary to look at the progression made by students throughout the year in MFL by contextualising their attainment in terms of initial baseline data, end of Year 8 attainment and the suppositions that can be made by using this data to predict the pathway that may lie beyond Key Stage 3. Pachler and Field (208-212:2001) maintain that Initial Teacher Assessment (ITA) provides contextual information against which student attainment and progression can be explained. For example, student NFER scores, calculated using a variety of cognitive, verbal and non-verbal assessments, as well as formally examined NCAT scores can inform a teacher's planning as well as assisting a department to project what level a particular student should reach by the end of the course of study. The NFER scores of these particular students reveal that MB and ES are slightly underachieving. Conversely, JD and MM are overachieving and this can possibly be attributed to their good work ethic and consistent motivation to improve.

In addition, this information can be used subsequently as a benchmark to inform the department and parents on the progress of a particular student and whether they are on target to reach their projected goal. For these five pupils, this is evidenced on the Progress Check, which is distributed to parents and staff at the end of each half-term, where each subject has a coloured coded box system to signify whether students are underachieving, on target or overachieving. At a glance, both student and parent can see whether enough progress is being made and whether ^{ew} ~~new~~ targets need to be set. Although this system is not always reliable, particularly for Gifted and Talented students who may have extremely high projections, it still provides an ultimate goal which students can strive to achieve. In addition, this information can aid the department in its predictions for final Key Stage 3 levels, which are eventually submitted to the government so that standards can be carefully monitored on a national scale.

It seems appropriate to conclude, therefore, that the link between student progress and assessment, whether summative, formative, evaluative, diagnostic or ipsative, is vital if student and teacher are to measure actual progress. Furthermore, having a sound understanding of the assessment system for each AT in MFL undoubtedly supports students to continue to progress throughout Key Stage 3. Finally, there is an argument for the important role played by initial teacher assessment in the projection of levels of attainment. Based on these facts and the evidence of the five students, it is self-evident that student progress is attestable in MFL.

Word Count: 1,969

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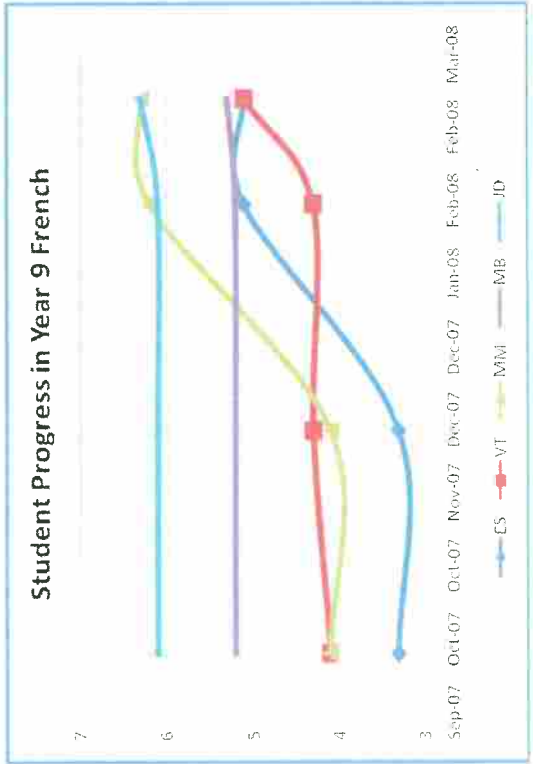
Year 9 Student Data

September 2007-May 2008

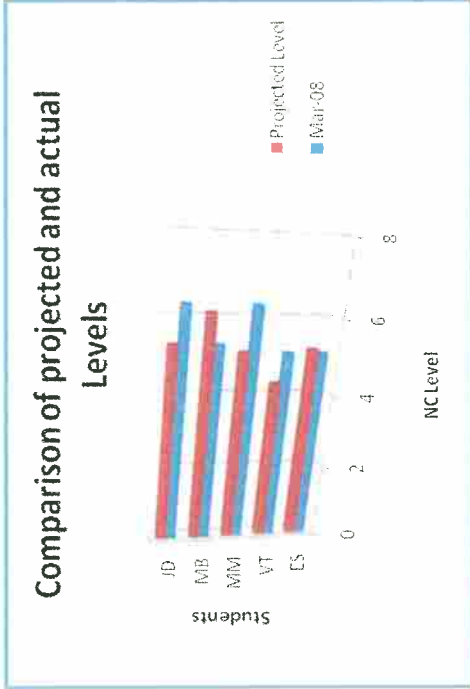
Table 1: Student base line, progress and projected data.

No.	Student ID.	Gender	Remarks	Base Line Data				Progress Data 2007-2008					Projected Data				
				NFER Ave	Verbal NFER	Key Stage 2 Results			Final Year 8 NC Level in Fr	Oct 2007	Nov 2007	Dec 2007	Jan 2008	Feb 2008	Mar 2008	Projected NC Level	Projected GCSE Result
						Ma	Eng	Sc									
1.	ES	Female	Moved from WFr1 to WFr2	114	107	4	4	5	3a	3a	3a	5c	5b	C			
2.	VT	Female	Moved from WFr2 to WFr1	96	96	4	4	5	4c	4c	4a	4a	4a	D			
3.	MM	Male	SEN (dyslexia)	100	102	4	4	5	4c	4c	4c	6a	5c	C			
4.	MB	Female	High Ability	129	117	5	5	5	5b	5b	5b	5a	6c	B			
5.	JD	Male	High Ability	109	115	5	5	4	6c	6c	6c	6a	5a	B			

Graph 1



Graph 2



Key

- Significantly underachieving
- Underachieving
- On target
- Achieving above average
- Achieving significantly above average

Colours signify student attainment in relation to the progress made towards achieving their projected National Curriculum level in MFL highlighted in Progress Reports.


Year 9 Student Data

September 2007-May 2008

Table 2: Progress made by students in each of the Attainment Targets (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) recorded through National Curriculum levelling.

		ES	VT	MM	MB	JD
End of Year 8 Levels	AT1	5	4	4	5	5
	AT2	3	2	3	4	5
	AT3	4	4	4	5	5
	AT4	4	4	5	5	6
October 2007	AT1	5	5	5	5	5
	AT2	3	3	4	6	5
	AT3	4	5	4	5	5
	AT4	5	4	5	5	6
December 2007	AT1	5	5	5	5	5
	AT2	3	4	6	6	6
	AT3	4	5	6	5	5
	AT4	5	4	6	5	6
February 2008	AT1	5	6	6	6	6
	AT2	3	4	6	6	6
	AT3	5	5	6	5	5
	AT4	5	4	6	5	6
March 2008	AT1	5	6	7	6	7
	AT2	3	4	6	6	6
	AT3	5	5	7	7	7
	AT4	5	4	6	6	6

Key

 Represents where students have progressed from the previous progress check


Year 9 Student Data

September 2007-May 2008

Table 3: Progress made by students in Attainment Target 3 (reading) through the year assessed through various exercises.

Student ID.	Final Year 8 NC Level in AT3	Attainment Target 3 Assessments (Reading)														
		Oct	Oct	Oct	Dec	Dec	Jan	Jan	Jan	Feb	Feb	Mar	Mar	April	April	May
ES	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4						5		
VT	5	4	0	5	4	0	4	5	0	0	0	5	5	0	0	6
MM	4	0	5	5	4	0	4	5	6	7	0	5	5	6	7	6
MB	5	4	5	5	4	6	4	5	6	0	0	5	5	6	7	6
JD	5	4	5	5	4	0	4	5	6	7	6	5	5	6	7	6

Key

 Represents where students have progressed from the previous progress check.

 Highest level achieved by student in reading to date.

 Information not available due to lack of written evidence

Year 9 Scheme of Work – A Summary

This scheme of work is based around the text book *Expo 3 Rouge* published by Heinemann.

	Topics	Linguistic Teaching Point
Unit 1	Television and the media	Direct Object Pronouns
	Film	Perfect Tense
Unit 2	Daily routine	Reflexive Verbs and Perfect Tense
	Talking about what you read	Near Future Tense
	Describing what you read	Past, Present and Future
	Planning what you will do	Future tense with 'on'
	Talking about the future	Using the synthetic future with 'quand'
Unit 3	Learning why languages are important	Complex sentences
	Talking about illness	Idiomatic expressions with 'avoir'
	Healthy Living	Negatives
	Understanding and giving advice	Imperatives
	Talking about what you used to do	Imperfect Tense and using 'qui'
	Learning about France	Using adjectives
Unit 4	Making travel arrangements	Using different tenses in sentences
	Arranging hotel accommodation	The conditional
	A visit to an attraction	Using indirect object pronouns

EXAMPLES OF YEAR 9 WORK: Attainment Target 4 (Writing)

MB

V
 Pour être en forme,
 je ne mange pas frites.
 Je joue au hockey deux fois
 par semaines
 je ne mange que fruits

Level 2-3: Writing about healthy living
 This activity shows elements of L3 as the student has composed three sentences principally from memory with readily understandable spelling (e.g. jour > joue). The absence of an opinion notwithstanding, this is compensated by the use of more varied and complicated negatives (*ne...que*).

Level 3-4: Extract of a visit on holiday

When compared with the previous activity, this extract shows elements of L3 including the use of an opinion ("c'était amusant"). There is also evidence of longer sentences with the inclusion of the connectives ("mais"). This text was also largely produced by drawing on largely memorised phrases such as the **temporal** marker "l'année dernière" and the use of the perfect tense. Interestingly, the student **the** use of a dictionary is evidenced here with the creation of the phrase "scooter de mers."

l'année dernière je suis allé à
 pont. l'été je fais avec
 Jack. Nous avons fait un
 scooter des mers pour l'été
 c'était amusant mais je suis
 tombé.

Consequentes Paragraphs

Normalement, je vais à Dunmow avec Verity et Camille. J'aime Dunmow parce que Helena Romanes est très gentille. ~~Je vais~~ Mais l'année dernière, je suis allée à ~~Angleterre~~ Angleterre avec mes ~~compagnons~~ qui s'appellent Luke et Rosie. Je n'aime pas les avions, donc, j'ai voyagé en vélo. Mais il y avait un problème avec ~~le bus~~ ^{le problème}. J'ai visité ~~les~~ ^{deux} ~~bons~~ ^{très bons} ~~à~~ ^à Rome. Ça va être fascinant.

Level 6: Description of a holiday

This piece of writing shows substantial progression from the previous pieces. Primarily, the piece is significantly longer and despite the fact that there is a lack of paragraphing. The piece shows evidence of a range of tenses in the past (je suis allée), present (je vais à Dunmow) and future (j'irai, ça va être) as well as the use of opinions (j'aime...) and occasional justification (parce que les bons sont délicieux). There is also the use of the more complex relative pronoun "qui" with a following clause.

Si vous cherchez la grand
 Tour Eiffel Hotel Verte est
 l'evenement situé entre la
 Eiffel tour et le Sacre-
 balcon. Il y a deux lit à
 cinq minute de la plage et
 dix minute de la Sacra.
 Outre des chambres ont TV-
 satellite - pour les visiteurs
 La hotel Tu profiteras visites
 La Baie Eiffel tour et
 Admire la Basilique de
 Sacre coeur de Paris est
 au dernier Montmartre la
 haut de la cite. Aussi,
 cherchez Larc Ne
 Triomphe - construit il y a
 pour Napoleon tout par
 semaine si vous restez 2 Deux
 semaines.

Elements of Level 7: Tourism Leaflet for Paris

This particular piece of writing is the original draft of the tourism leaflet presented above. Although this text has been categorised as a level 5 writing the fact that the student has actively involved himself in the redrafting of the piece is a skill which is outlined in the criteria for level 7. Furthermore, there have been improvements made in the redrafting process where the original phrasing was slightly unclear.

Normalement, je vais a Ecole avec
 mes parents. Tu vas - pour Ecole
 parce que les ~~travaux~~ sont
 pittoresque et mes parents les
 adorent mais l'année dernière je suis
 allé a Paris avec mes amis qui
 supplient James et Reese. Je
 même pas le ferry donc j'ai
 voyage en train mais il y avait
 un problème le train est tombé
 en panne et nos avion. parce nos
 bagages. C'est un désastre

Elements of Level 6: Disastrous Holiday Description

This piece of writing shows clear progression of the student from the previous piece. There is salient reference to the past, present and future tenses in a range of different forms. There is also a range of connectives used including the more sophisticated "donc". The student has also created a relative clause with the relative pronoun "qui". Furthermore, the student is applying previously learnt structures such as the past tense to this topic. Finally, the student includes a range of opinions and justifications as well as simple **descriptive language**. There are **orthographic** issues but these may be attributed to student's dyslexia.

EXAMPLES OF YEAR 9 WORK: Attainment Target 4 (Writing)

JD

1. J'ai mal à la gorge ✓
2. Il a mal à l'oreille ✓
3. Nous a vent mal au ventre
4. Elles ont mal aux yeux
5. Vous avez mal à la main

Elements of Level 2-3: Maladies

This collection of reasonably accurate sentences would seem to be quite a simple task; however, the manipulation of tenses from infinitives, which was completed as a starter, was completed from knowledge taught in the previous lesson.

Elements of Level 4-5: Maladies

This particular example of writing is quite interesting because it shows evidence of the student attempting to reach level 5 with the use of two tenses and ("je ne mange pas" and ("Je arrêter fumez samedi dernier") and the inclusion of opinions ("j'adore"). There are also some interesting turns of phrase such as "moi faiblesse" and temporal markers such as "demain". This student may have **improved** his worked if he had been given the opportunity to redraft his work.

Bonjour, Je J'adore les fruits, et ne mange pas hamburgers-fruits! Pour être en forme j'ai mangé une tomate et pomme. Aussi, Je arrêter fumez Samedi dernier. Moi faiblesse le ventre légère. Je ne mange pas fast-foods. Demain Je fait du kickboxing!

Hôtel Ville Verte

Si vous cherchez un hôtel excentré et pas du tout tranquille, l'hôtel des Astres est idéalement situé, nous ~~trouvons~~ ^{trouvons} 15 chambres avec lit ^{ca} grossier, ~~ce~~ toilet qui sont mauvais et fenêtre ~~est~~ ^{est} restaurant ~~spécialité~~ ^{be}.
 Les spécialités du restaurant sont la Spaghett. ou vomit, le macaron de ^{éternuement} et aigle surduch.

Bientôt ^{mais} nous aurons un grande piscine où des crocodiles habitent.
 Chambres sont € 1098.69 chaque.
 l'hôtel a ouvert le lundi dernier
 maintenant il a ouvert maintenant comme d'habitude


Elements of Level 5-6: Hotel Advert


This piece of writing has elements of levels 5 and 6. For example, the student has successfully attempted to compose a descriptive piece about an atypical hotel that has many problems. There is evidence of a range of past tenses as well as present tenses. There are also some interesting turns of phrase such as "pas du tout" and "idéalement situé" and basic paragraphing which correlates with the change of tenses. Generally, the meaning is very clear even with the attempts made to use more complex structures such as the relative clause.

EXAMPLES OF YEAR 9 WORK: Attainment Target 4 (Writing)

VT

- 1) Michel platini jouait au foot
- 2) Florence Arthaud faisais de le voile
- 3) Alain Prost jetais pilote de formule 1
- 4) Bernard Hinault faisais du vélo
- 5) Suzanne leglen jouait au tennis



 Si vous cherchez la tranquillite en
 l'hotel. la restaurant Specignites
 un francas. 20. chambres avec balcon
 et 15 chambres avec vue sur la
 mer. Toutes nos chambres ont
 une suite. Parking privé. 

Elements of Level 2-3: Sentences describing sportsmen

The phrases in this piece of writing were taken from an activity where the vocabulary had originally been taught at the beginning of the lesson. This activity was testing whether students could form sentences that described what particular sports 'used to' be practised by famous sportsmen. Although there is no evidence of personal opinion, which would qualify this as a level 3, accuracy is reasonable and the syntax of the phrasing does not hinder meaning.

Elements of Level 3-4: Description of Hotel

This piece of work shows clear progression from the previous piece of work due to the fact that it is written in full sentences. Furthermore, there is evidence of a more complex awareness of the language with the agreement of adjectives and nouns ("toutes nos chambres"). Also, there is a clear attempt to use a complex "si-clause." Although the piece does not always read clearly, the meaning is still conveyed and fulfils the purpose of such a piece of writing.

Elements of Level 5: Holiday Description

This example of text shows clear progression from the previous piece of work. The student is now writing in continuous sentences and has attempted to include a range of temporal markers ("normalement") and connectives ("mais"). There is also the inclusion of at least two different tenses many of which are being reapplied from memory to different contexts. This may account for the loss of accuracy e.g. "Je voyage." There is also evidence of the student using a dictionary or glossary to find unknown vocabulary with the creation of the phrase "mon ami imaginaire". Finally, there is the inclusion of opinion.

Normalement, je vais à France
avec me papa, Mais l'année dernière
je suis allé à Paris avec Kentucky
mon ami imaginaire. Je voyage à cheval
mais il y avait un problème il a
fondus. J'ai visité un tablette France
que j'aime les garçons Laissez prochains
j'irai à benetton's, chomier.

The National Curriculum Level Descriptors for MFL

Attainment Target 4: Writing

Level 1

Pupils copy single familiar words correctly. They label items and select appropriate words to complete short phrases or sentences.

Level 2

Pupils copy familiar short phrases correctly. They write or word process items [for example, simple signs and instructions] and set phrases used regularly in class. When they write familiar words from memory their spelling may be approximate.

Level 3

Pupils write two or three short sentences on familiar topics, using aids [for example, textbooks, wallcharts and their own written work]. They express personal responses, [for example, likes, dislikes and feelings]. They write short phrases from memory and their spelling is readily understandable.

Level 4

Pupils write individual paragraphs of about three or four simple sentences, drawing largely on memorised language. They are beginning to use their knowledge of grammar to adapt and substitute individual words and set phrases. They are beginning to use dictionaries or glossaries to check words they have learnt.

Level 5

Pupils produce short pieces of writing, in simple sentences, that seek and convey information and opinions. They refer to recent experiences or future plans, as well as to everyday activities. Although there may be some mistakes, the meaning can be understood with little or no difficulty. They use dictionaries or glossaries to check words they have learnt and to look up unknown words.

Level 6

Pupils write in paragraphs, using simple descriptive language, and refer to past, present and future actions and events. They apply grammar in new contexts. Although there may be a few mistakes, the meaning is usually clear.

Level 7

Pupils produce pieces of writing of varying lengths on real and imaginary subjects, using an appropriate register. They link sentences and paragraphs, structure ideas and adapt previously learnt language for their own purposes. They edit and redraft their work, using reference sources to improve their accuracy, precision and variety of expression. Although there may be occasional mistakes, the meaning is clear.

Assignment 1

A comparison of the differences and similarities observed in the teaching strategies and classroom management styles between KS2 and KS3 in MFL.

A comparison of the differences and similarities observed in the teaching strategies and in the classroom management styles between KS2 and KS3 in Modern Foreign Languages.

In light of the comments made by Johnson in the *Languages Review* (2007) and the publication of the KS2 Framework for Languages in 2003, it seems increasingly more appropriate to analyse and evaluate the provision for Modern Foreign Languages (henceforth, MFL) in England. Many linguists, teachers and professionals have welcomed the government's commitment to language learning; in fact, Adonis (1:2005) believes that these fundamental, albeit cautious, steps will secure "the nation's languages capability and a vision of languages as a *lifelong skill*." Despite the air of positivity, many have stepped back from the hype and deliberated over some of the challenging issues that may potentially arise from its introduction: in particular, those issues concerning transition between KS2 and KS3. Bolster *et al.* (1:2004) believe:

"...if MFL is to be coherent across the different phases of the curriculum, then continuity in teaching and management strategies are essential if the subject is to be successful."

By drawing attention to the specific ways in which the subject content will be taught and managed at both ends of the educational spectrum, the quotation also highlights the importance of the overarching theme of continuity in MFL across the Key Stages. These will be at the forefront of this discussion. However, before elaborating further on these themes, it would be beneficial to describe, from a historical perspective, MFL education and learning in England as a means to contextualise the discussion.

Before the introduction of the National Curriculum in 1988, MFL was considered to be a speciality subject reserved for the academic elite. Even with the advent of comprehensive secondary schools in the 1960s little was done to alter this inequitable approach. Nevertheless, entitlement became statutory for all secondary students in the late 1980s and remained at the core of the National Curriculum until recently. As a result of the reassessment of priorities for students coupled with perceived falling standards in other subjects, MFL was stripped from the Key Stage 4 curriculum with the intention to degrade it to the lower echelons of KS2 by 2010. In response to the readjustment, experts in the field of MFL pedagogy, such as Kirby (6:2007), purport that the change was in the "national and international interest." Furthermore, partly due to the publication of the *Common European Framework for MFL*, the changes have encouraged the British government to streamline the age at which children learn a foreign language throughout England and bring this provision into line with the rest of Europe.

Evidently, MFL teaching and learning has had a turbulent history but the future is perhaps more promising. Hawkins' Model for MFL (121:2001) advocates a bipartite approach to language learning and teaching: Stage 1, *language apprenticeship*, (Key Stage 2) will equip primary children with the tools for language learning and Stage 2 will involve intensive immersion in one FL at KS3. Considering teaching strategies and classroom