

MAXIMISING POTENTIAL: Points for reflection: Unit 6

MAKING LINKS

Linking the curriculum to the learners' world

Linking, in some form or other, has cropped up in a number of places in this programme. It is an important theme because it can point to ways of enriching the programme on offer to learners. The idea of modern language learning taking place in an enclosed environment, with no links beyond the classroom door, is unthinkable – this is, after all a subject essentially concerned with the wider world – yet potential links with pupils' personal worlds are sometimes overlooked.

Think locally as well as globally

This may be because we tend to think of languages as **foreign** – something **over there**, not **right here**. The result may be to distance some learners from the subject to the extent that they find it difficult to comprehend its relevance for them. Any measures, even local ones, that bring the outside world into the modern languages classroom or take the classroom out into the world, help to counteract the feeling of detachment and contribute to a sense of relevance for the learner.

One way of expanding this aspect of the curriculum is to think in terms of ever-increasing circles whose centre is the classroom and whose outer limit is of global proportions; curricular activities can range from pinning up work or posters in the corridor outside the classroom to taking part in an expedition to study or assist a third world country.

Make comparisons

Access 2 in Modern Languages introduced the requirement for pupils to make comparisons between aspects of life in a country whose language is being studied, and learners' own communities. Such linking of what is distant, foreign and alien with what is close, familiar and comfortable is relevant and reassuring for pupils at any level, but especially to those who are struggling with language and with motivation to learn. The task sheets in this section suggest ways of building such links into programmes of work at all levels.