National Consortium for Languages Education

Deep Dive 45: A principled and informed approach to teaching the 'new' GCSE

Introduction to Deep Dive Sequence

Following the NCLE webinar on teaching the 'new' GCSE specification for languages, we invite you to extend your learning and understanding through a curated sequence of units from Language Educators Online (LEO), our dedicated professional learning platform for languages education.

Informed by teacher response to our pre-webinar survey and national response from the 2026 examination period, we have designed this sequence to help you deepen your subject and curriculum knowledge and apply it directly to your classroom practice. The new qualification embeds new discrete examination skills, such as dictation and read aloud tasks, and is centred around a minimum core of language and grammar. These changes highlight the need for strong subject knowledge and principled practice, areas which make a meaningful difference to learner outcomes. Research demonstrates that teachers' subject and curriculum knowledge is closely linked to pupil attainment, teaching confidence and the ability to respond to local context (Barnes, 2006; Forbes, 2025). This pathway brings together pupil and teacher testimony, expert demonstration and practical classroom examples to support you in strengthening these foundations while keeping learners' voices and experiences at the centre.

The units underpin the fundamentals of the revised GCSE specification, common misconceptions, and examples of teachers creating compelling opportunities for learners to practise key skills, build secure pronunciation, develop adaptive use of language and grow their confidence.

We have organised the units into several curated pathways. These can be completed asynchronously – independently or collaboratively. Whether you are refining your own practice, supporting colleagues or shaping departmental approaches, this sequence offers a clear, research informed route into the new GCSE that is both practical and inspiring.

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CORE UNIT

Deep Dive 45 Part One: Principles of assessment and the 'new' GCSE

Explain_AFS: 4. A 'new' GCSE, a 'new' opportunity: Revisiting the curriculum | NCLE

Key question: What has changed in the 'new' GCSE?
Explanation of the specification
Video material: Teacher and awarding examining body views on the revised GCSE specification

15 min

CORE UNIT

Choose a pathway

1. **Principles of assessment**
2. **Teaching approaches and strategies**
3. **Linking assessment practice to other key areas**

Deep Dive Pathway 1: Principles of assessment

Sequence	LEO Link	Notes / Content	Timing
Engage	Explore_AFS: 5. Assessment as dialogue with our learners | NCLE	**Key question:** How can we shape the assessment process through formative dialogue? Dialogic teaching (Alexander, 2018) Formative assessment principles (OECD, 2002) **Video material:** Views from Key Stages Three, Four and Five learners Reflexive Questions	**18 mins**
Explore - Explain - Elaborate	Explore AFS: 6. The classroom as a social learning space | NCLE	**Key question**: How do we invite learners to be a part of the assessment process? **Classroom practice:** Etherow Language Network	**12 mins**
Evaluate	Explain_AFS: 9. Remaining creative at GCSE | NCLE	**Key question:** How can we foster creative practice when teaching GCSE, and why is it important to do so? Going beyond the three pillars; an opportunity to experience rich input (Porter et al., 2022) **Video material:** Teacher advocacy for creativity at GCSE Reflexive Questions	**15 mins**

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Deep Dive 45 Pathway 2: Teaching approaches and strategies

Sequence	LEO Link	Notes / Content	Timing
Engage-Explore-Explain	Explain_AFS: 5. The 'new' GCSE and the 'new' tasks | NCLE	**Key question:** How can we enact effective practice of key skills in preparation for the GCSE? Explanation of the 'new' tasks in the specification **Video material:** Teacher approaches to teaching 'new tasks' **Classroom practice:** Solent Language Network	**20 mins**
Explain-Elaborate	Explain_AFS: 6. Rich learning contexts | NCLE	**Key question:** How can bring an authentic realm to GCSE pedagogy? Analysis of lesson plan for GCSE lesson, guided by Reflexive Questions **Classroom practice:** Beeleigh Language Network	**15 mins**
Elaborate-Evaluate	Elaborate_AFS: 7. Adapting target language to meet learner needs | NCLE	**Key question:** How can we adopt an integrated skills approach to help learners prepare for GCSE and access authentic material? Classroom practice: Derwent Language Network	**15 mins**

Deep Dive 45 Pathway 3: Linking assessment practice to other key areas

Sequence	LEO Link	Notes / Content	Timing
Inclusive classroom culture	Explore_AFS: 9. Error correction in the languages classroom | NCLE	**Key question:** How do we foster a positive and developmental error correction culture in the language classroom? Five fundamental questions about corrective feedback (Hendrickson, 1978) **Video material:** Teacher and learner views on the purpose of making errors in language learning **Classroom practice:** Cotswolds School, Solent Language Network	**20 mins**
Spiral Curriculum and sequencing	Explore_PP: 9. The Spiral Curriculum (Bruner, 1960) and classroom practice | NCLE	**Key question**: What role does the Spiral Curriculum play in our practice? Spiral Curriculum (Bruner, 1960) **Video material:** Teacher explanation of the impact of the spiral curriculum on practice **Classroom practice:** Beeleigh Language Network Reflexive Questions	**11 mins**
Home Heritage and Community Languages (HHCL)	Explain_AFS: 10. Valorising all our languages | NCLE	**Key question:** How can we valorise a learner's full linguistic repertoire through teaching practice and exam accreditation? The importance of languages across all areas of education (Bullock Report, 1975) **Video material:** Teacher and learner views from five Language Networks on the role of HHCL Pause for Thought	**14 mins**

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