Transcript: Scheme of Work Development

Length of Talk: 15:30

Presenter: Nicholas Avery

Slide 1 (0:00 – 1:50):

Hello. My name is Nick Avery. I'm a Resource Developer at NCELP, and in this presentation I'm going to talk about NCELP's Scheme of Work (Scheme of work) development to date. These slides come from a presentation that I gave with Steven Owen at the second residential for specialist teachers from our lead schools in 2019.

To translate the recommendations from the MFL pedagogy review into reality, clearly we need a coherent and workable plan - one that also provides an appropriate Key Stage 3 foundation to build on at GCSE. The project has been demanding; we haven't had a model to follow, as the existing schemes of work that we're aware of have been topic driven, so we're essentially starting from scratch. We've had to be rigorous in adhering to the pedagogical principles, and this has taken a lot of time and has involved many revisions of the draft documents to get them to where they are currently.

At present, Term 1 of Year 7 is available on the [NCELP Resource Portal](#)*. It has now been tried in several NCELP schools, and we will upload the Scheme of work for each term and make it publicly accessible once it's been tried by a number of NCELP schools, who crucially provide us with quality assurance and feedback. This is what will truly test them, and ultimately improve them further.

Note to reader – Term 1 and 2 are now available on the resource portal as on 03/04/2020.

Slide 2 (1:50 – 2:34):

So, today's talk will be as follows: we start with the principles and key features of the Scheme of work. We then have a walkthrough of the Scheme of work document itself. Following that, there'll be a presentation of a resource based on the Scheme of work, and finally a more practical 'search and find' activity. It's worth noting that in this voiceover, we'll just be looking at the first of these points. In due course, we may also upload a voiceover of the second, which is the walkthrough of the scheme of work.

Slide 3 (2:34 – 3:16):

So, following what I said on the opening slide, here are some general things that schemes of work need to do. First, to demonstrate the integration of different strands of MFL pedagogy, grammar vocabulary and phonics. They need to be sufficiently resourced to enable delivery of an appropriate Key Stage 3 curriculum, in line with the MFL pedagogy review. They need to be grammar driven, rather than topic based. And they're to be usable for real world planning purposes.

Slide 4 (3:16 – 4:12):

As for the design features, the broad format of the document, such as column headings, is the same across the different languages.

Though the schemes are grammar-driven, there is a context column, which seeks to give a broad idea of the purpose of the language in any given week, for example describing a thing or person. And the notes column contains explanations of the language selected and ideas for teaching it. We hope this makes it easier to bridge the gap between the weekly planning format and individual lesson planning.

The NCELP resources should also provide possible lesson sequences – two for each week, in fact - and links to other items on the Resource Portal, such as homework sheets.

Slide 5 (4:12 – 5:23):

Here are a few points to note: firstly the objectives for each week are provided in terms of grammar, vocabulary and phonics knowledge to be mastered. The schemes are not tiered, but offer scope for differentiation by the teacher. For example, phonics source and cluster words could provide an additional vocabulary set, as well as the core vocabulary. There are

differing levels of support for each activity - it can be differentiation by outcome in the production tasks.

There are weeks set aside for work on rich, more challenging texts; revision and assessment weeks in terms 2 and 3; and NCELP will be providing the assessment material. And the resourcing of these schemes has already begun. This can be found on the NCELP Resource Portal. We intend to continue resourcing it chronologically, so that it can be used this academic year.

Slide 6 (5:23 – 7:22):

We'll now look at the individual strands in a bit more detail, starting with the grammar. We aim for broad clarity across the 3 languages in terms of the features that we cover, with differences in sequencing owing to the internal grammar of each language.

So, there are these language specific characteristics, which we certainly cater for. So, for example, Spanish has two different verbs for 'to be', and we've built this into the early stages of Year 7. Also, possessive adjectives are less complex in Spanish than in French, for example, as they don't require gender agreement, and so they come earlier in the scheme of work. So it's crucially the internal structure of the language that is driving the scheme of work. We err on the side of slower progression and aim to give plenty of practice of the features introduced, and this really is, more than the explanations, the crucial factor leading to long-term learning.

At the beginning, highly frequent verbs form the basis of the scheme of work, but very soon after we also include regular verbs, and try to build the verb lexicon so that students can begin to actively manipulate verbs which they already know how to conjugate. So these are also taught in the early stages.

Slide 7 (7:22 – 9:44):

The NCELP approach to grammar teaching greatly reduces chunking of rope-learned language. Instead we want to teach students how to truly manipulate verbs themselves, and it's not to say that we are against chunking *per se* - in our vocabulary column we've chosen a select few target language phrases which are really common in interaction in the classroom,

and have great communicative value, so for example asking 'how do you say such and such in English or in the target language'.

We've chosen a few chunks, but we've considered these vocabulary items to be taught at the beginning, and certainly in the grammar we want to break it down and teach students how to manipulate language themselves. When we introduce these features, we do so in pairs. We might have a previously-taught form of a verb that's presented with a new one. Their meanings are contrasted - we do this because it's not really optimal to present all of the different forms of the verb at once, because that leads to cognitive overload.

And we may well introduce and practise them over a 2 week period, so you might introduce, for example in French, the *je*, *tu* and *il* forms of the verb, and you might contrast in one activity *je* vs. *tu* and in another one, *tu* vs *il*, so you're drawing different comparisons between them, but at any point, there'll be two features that appear in an activity. Possibly after extensive practice, we might consider an activity with three forms, but this would be once students are really comfortable with the different features.

Slide 8 (9:44 – 10:29):

When you look at the scheme of work, you'll see that the revisiting of grammar is incorporated into the grammar column, rather than in separate columns, and this should make progression easier to follow and see how new features are related to those which are previously taught. Where possible, real communication gaps are planned into the practice activities rather than mechanical tasks.

And activities are not tiered, but do allow for differing levels of support to be provided, for example in the amount of vocabulary help offered, and for a variety of levels of outcome in the production tasks.

Slide 9 (10:29 – 12:20):

Next, vocabulary.

On average, 10 new words are presented each week. There are slightly fewer words in some weeks, and slightly more in others, but the vocabulary load balances out over the course of the year.

Our choice of vocabulary was informed by several concerns. First was word frequency - we chose words that were largely within the 2000 most frequent in the language. We also want to build a verb lexicon from the early stages so that students have a bank of regular verbs that they can use to create new sentences as they learn to manipulate them.

Our word sets also contain words of different word classes. This offers greater potential for sentence creation from the start than, say, a list of 10 nouns that will just fill a slot after a verb.

At the same time, our words are selected to support the grammar, and so, in a week where we focus on adjective agreement, for example, we would choose a greater number of adjectives than we normally would.

And finally, we chose words with their relevance to the grammar and phonics in mind, so particularly in the early stages, we thought about whether a word was transparent enough in terms of the phonics - that is, whether the learners would already be familiar with most or all of the SSCs within it.

Slide 10 (12:20 – 13:12):

In terms of revisiting, we try to maximise encounters with vocabulary taught, as this is crucial for long-term learning.

First we plan for systematic revisiting of new words three and nine weeks after they are taught, mainly as homework tasks using sites like Quizlet. This allows teachers to make use of often-limited class time to present and explain new language.

Secondly, resources are also carefully designed to weave in words from previous weeks. And the scheme of work also points out further opportunities for revisiting words where they fit well with the grammar focus of the lesson and/or the context of language use, and there is a notes column for this.

Slide 11 (13:12 – 14:08):

The scheme of work also includes explicit teaching of the key sound-spelling correspondences (SSCs) in each language. These are envisaged as short bursts of practice each lesson to be supplemented with further development activities.

The schemes of work take slightly different approaches in that French, which has the most SSCs to cover, consistently teaches two new SSCs each week.

In Spanish and German, SSCs are introduced either individually, or in pairs or groups of closely connected SSCs, so for example, we have in Spanish the *CA*, *CO*, *CU*, and these are taught together.

In teacher notes we try to highlight additional opportunities to practise previously learnt SSCs in new vocabulary items when they arise.

Slide 12 (14:08 – 15:04):

To teach and practise phonics, we've chosen a set of source and cluster words. Our selection is, again, informed by frequency, and some words are also cognates, and so more accessible to L1 English learners.

We try to use words whose meanings can be captured in a gesture or a picture so that they can be easily elicited. Their meanings can be learnt incidentally and should be consolidated through ongoing practice once the SSCs have been introduced.

Some of the phonics words can occur in the set of vocabulary to be formally taught that week. It could be in the same week as it's presented, or in a later week, at which point it should be already quite familiar.

Slide 13 (15:04 – 15:30):

That concludes the first part of the session. For those listening to this voiceover, as I mentioned earlier we hope to also upload a voiceover of the second part of this session, which was the walkthrough of the Scheme of work itself, so watch this space, and yeah, thank you for listening.