



What is digital video in MFL?

Video has been a key resource in foreign language teaching for several decades, but teachers were limited when it came to creating their own video-based teaching resources or working with pupils in the classroom creatively. However, advances in digital video technology mean that the creation of high quality and extremely versatile footage is now affordable and within the reach of teacher ICT skills. The focus on all four language skills and the real-life appeal that digital video can offer pupils has huge potential to motivate and improve standards in the MFL classroom.

Digital video as a teaching resource

Teachers now have the potential to integrate digital video clips as a regular feature of teaching resources. There are a variety of sources of useful clips providing linguistic and/or cultural content. For example, footage from private holidays abroad or school trips, clips sent by partner schools in target language countries, or recordings made of the Foreign Language Assistant. Commercially available material is also an option, such as the Barcelona/Berlin/Paris Digital Video Clips Collections from the [Digital Video Library](http://www.dvlibrary.org.uk/) (www.dvlibrary.org.uk/). Such clips can be integrated into PowerPoint presentations or interactive whiteboard slides; they can be embedded into or linked to a worksheet in Word; they can be posted on a website or burned onto CD; they can be saved onto a network and accessed directly by pupils.

The value of such clips should not be underestimated. They can expose pupils to different target language voices and offer visual context and lip movement to help develop competence and confidence in listening. The wealth of cultural information that moving images of the target language country provide can lead to animated discussion about the differences and similarities between the UK and other countries.

Another teacher-led use of digital video is that of self- and peer assessment. Simple 'point-and-shoot' recordings of pairwork practice can be made available to pupils via the network in a subsequent lesson for analysis. The dramatised role-play performed for the class with props and inevitable humour can be recorded for later review or for use as a resource with other classes. Recording individual pupils as they practise their GCSE oral presentation can also be extremely useful for building confidence and constructive self-review.

Digital video technology

All you need to create useful clips is a digital video camera, computer and editing software. MFL teachers are highly likely to need a microphone and headphones as well for best sound quality recording, and ideally a tripod. Becta offers detailed advice and information on purchasing and choosing technology. The computer used for editing needs to have a fast processor, ample storage space and Firewire ports (or video capture card for analogue cameras). Be aware that your computer may need to process as much as 10 minutes of footage for just 1 minute of finished film. Some common software titles are Moviemaker (comes free with Windows XP and later), Pinnacle Studio (PC software with reasonable educational pricing) and iMovie (for use with Apple Macs.) For more information, see the digital video section on the [Becta Schools site](http://schools.becta.org.uk/index.php?section=te&rid=533) (http://schools.becta.org.uk/index.php?section=te&rid=533).

Pupils using digital video

Digital video offers a new means of communication and audience for pupils' target language work. You must consider parental permission from the outset, however, as the school is likely to need to store, screen and publish footage of the children. Check your school policy for guidance.

Pupils have opportunities to practise all four skills in the target language as they work on a video project. They need to plan, write and review a storyboard, script and shot-list. They speak and/or listen as they film target language footage. They may decide to create audio and text-based assets to integrate with video footage. They listen and relisten as they edit. The power of their product to persuade or entertain or inform their audience can be further enhanced by the use of still pictures or transitions (e.g. fades, dissolves). As pupils start to create their own digital video clips, they also begin to develop a better understanding of the language of film. For example, a shot filmed from above can create a sense of vulnerability; the use of key soundbytes at the start of a short report can heighten interest and impact.

Becta conducted a Digital Video Pilot Project in 2001-2002, providing equipment and guidance to 50 UK schools working across the curriculum. This research discovered that the use of digital video can stimulate and support the development of problem-solving skills, negotiation, thinking, reasoning and risk-taking, as pupils were obliged to work in teams. They took different roles, such as director, camera operator, presenter, researcher or editor. The pupils were encouraged to predict what would look good, to test it out, make judgments and then try out new solutions. You can find out more about the impact on learning and classroom dynamics in the full report at <http://partners.becta.org.uk/index.php?section=rh&rid=11258> together with details of other research into the medium.

Some simple ideas for a digital video project in MFL might be:

- weather forecast;
- 'point and speak' introduction of the school to send to an exchange partner;
- reading of a poem aloud, to focus on expression and meaning;
- interview of a 'famous person';
- news report;
- recording of narrative and preparation of subtitles to overlay on video clips provided by the teacher;
- TV advertisement.

This work can be published in various ways, raising the profile of MFL in school. For example, a display could be set up for parents' evenings, school open days or international events, such as the European Day of Languages. It can be used as a teaching resource for other classes, with the pupils' permission, or copies made for individual pupils to keep with their Progress File. Work could be sent to a partner school or published on the school website, or entered into a national competition such as the [Becta Creativity in Digital Media Awards](http://www.becta.org.uk/corporate/display.cfm?section=21&id=2663) (www.becta.org.uk/corporate/display.cfm?section=21&id=2663) or the [European Award for Languages](http://www.cilt.org.uk/eal/index.htm) (www.cilt.org.uk/eal/index.htm).

Further information

The use of digital video for educational purposes is well-supported in the UK. Join the [Digital Media Community](http://schools.becta.org.uk/index.php?section=il&catcode=talk_t&rid=549) (http://schools.becta.org.uk/index.php?section=il&catcode=talk_t&rid=549) at Becta and take advantage of the email forum. Technical advice is also available on the digital video section on the [Becta schools site](http://schools.becta.org.uk/index.php?section=te&rid=533) (http://schools.becta.org.uk/index.php?section=te&rid=533);. You can read the full report from the [Becta Digital Video Pilot Project](http://partners.becta.org.uk/index.php?section=rh&rid=11258) (http://partners.becta.org.uk/index.php?section=rh&rid=11258), or order the very useful CD ROM, Digital Alchemy: Using Digital Video Assets Across the Curriculum, or booklet, Using digital video in teaching and learning booklet, both from [Becta Publications](http://www.becta.org.uk/corporate/publications/) (www.becta.org.uk/corporate/publications/). The [British Film Institute](http://www.bfi.org.uk/education/) (www.bfi.org.uk/education/) offers training, publications and advice, as does [Media Education](http://www.mediaed.org.uk) (www.mediaed.org.uk) and Film Education [http://www.filmeducation.org]. CILT, the National Centre for Languages conducted a research and development project in 2004-05 with language colleges to study the potential of digital video in the MFL Classroom. Visit the [CILT](http://www.cilt.org.uk/) (www.cilt.org.uk/) and [Languages ICT](http://www.languages-ict.org.uk/) (www.languages-ict.org.uk/) websites to find out more.

To read about tried and tested ideas for using digital video, try searching the Useful ICT ideas, effective language lessons database on the Languages ICT website.

Note: Information in this booklet has been collated by a number of practising teachers and advisers and is accurate to the best of our knowledge at the time of writing. CILT and ALL do not take any responsibility for inaccuracies contained within. The inclusion of any software products and/or companies within Languages ICT guidance does not imply endorsement by CILT or ALL in any way.