The Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants: evaluating policy and practice

**Document prepared for the intergovernmental conference
to be held in Strasbourg on 24 and 25 June 2010**

Language Policy Division

www.coe.int/lang

Table of Contents

David Little, Ireland

Introduction

In some Council of Europe member states migrants who apply for long-term residence permits or citizenship are required to learn the language of the host community, perhaps as part of an "integration contract"; in other member states language learning is voluntary. Sometimes language courses are part of a wider programme of integration and/or vocational training; sometimes the two elements are separate. It is the purpose of the Council of Europe's project on the Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants to facilitate discussion of policy issues in this domain, to share best practice at European level, and where language tests are obligatory, to promote transparency and equity according to internationally accepted codes of practice.

To support policy makers and practitioners, the Language Policy Division commissioned the following texts:

- A concept paper

  The role of languages in policies for the integration of adult migrants (Jean-Claude Beacco)

- Five thematic studies

  The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages *and the development of policies for the integration of adult migrants* (David Little)

  Quality assurance in the provision of language education and training for adult migrants – guidelines and options (Richard Rossner)

  Language tests for social cohesion and citizenship – an outline for policy makers (ALTE Authoring Group (Association of Language Testers in Europe)

  Language learning, teaching and assessment and the integration of adult immigrants. The importance of needs analysis (Piet van Avermaet and Sara Gysen)

  Tailoring language provision and requirements to the needs and capacities of adult migrants (Hans-Jürgen Krumm and Verena Plutzar)

- Five case studies

  Responding to the language needs of adult refugees in Ireland: an alternative approach to teaching and assessment (David Little)

  The role of literacy in the acculturation process of migrants (Hervé Adami)

  Language Learning in the Context of Migration and Integration – Challenges and Options for Adult Learners (Verena Plutzar and Monika Ritter)

  Education: Tailor-made or one-size-fits-all? A project commissioned by the Nederlandse Taalunie (ITTA/Elwine Halewijn and CTO/Annelies Houben, Heidi De Niel)

  Living together in diversity - Linguistic integration in Flanders (Reinhilde Pulinx)

These texts were presented at an intergovernmental seminar held in Strasbourg in June 2008 (a full report of the seminar and the texts are available online).[1]

---

[1] http://www.coe.int/lang/, *Minorities and Migrants* (Seminar 2008)

The present document, which summarises key arguments and approaches presented in the above texts, has been prepared for the international conference on the Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants due to be held in Strasbourg on 24 and 25 June 2010 as a follow-up to the 2008 seminar. The 2010 conference will address language issues related to family reunification, permanent residence, nationality/citizenship, and access to the labour market. It will focus in particular on the evaluation of policy and practice in these areas, and participants will be requested to contribute information concerning how evaluation is, or in the future may be, carried out in their own context. Group discussion will be guided by this document and the questions that it addresses to policy-makers and practitioners.

THE OVERARCHING QUESTIONS THAT WILL FRAME DISCUSSION ARE:

Policy-makers	*Practitioners*
In your context, what principles, including ethical principles, are applied to guide decision-making about language support programmes and language assessment for adult migrants? How do you make use of these principles as criteria against which to evaluate the impact of these interventions?	In your context, what pedagogical/educational and ethical principles are applied in developing and delivering programmes for language support, and the resources required for teaching, learning and assessment? How can teachers best be trained to maximise the impact on the integration of adult migrants of the courses they provide?

1 Council of Europe policy principles and adult migrants

The Council of Europe's primary aim is to create a common democratic and legal area throughout the continent, ensuring respect for the organisation's fundamental values: human rights, democracy and the rule of law. All its actions are shaped by these values and by an enduring concern with social inclusion, social cohesion and respect for diversity.

At the Third Summit of Heads of State and Government, held in Warsaw in May 2005, Europe's leaders committed themselves, *inter alia*, to ensuring that our cultural diversity becomes a source of mutual enrichment and to protecting the rights of national minorities and the free movement of persons:

> *In order to develop understanding and trust among Europeans, we will promote human contacts and exchange good practices regarding free movement of persons on the continent, with the aim of building a Europe without dividing lines. … We are determined to build cohesive societies by ensuring fair access to social rights, fighting exclusion and protecting vulnerable social groups.*

This political Declaration was accompanied by an Action Plan which proposed measures to ensure social cohesion and addressed the management of migration and nationality law, including the acquisition of citizenship.

In keeping with the Warsaw Declaration, the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly has resolved to focus its activities in the field of migration on, among other things, "*promoting intercultural dialogue, fostering tolerance and ensuring the integration of immigrant communities in their host societies*" (Resolution 1511 (2006), § 4.2). The White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue[2] elaborates on these goals, arguing that "*democratic citizenship and participation should be strengthened; inter-cultural competences should be taught and learned[3]; spaces for intercultural dialogue should be created and widened; and intercultural dialogue should be taken to the international level*".[4] These words serve as a reminder that integration is a two-way process and that effective intercultural dialogue depends on acceptance of diversity.

As regards the linguistic integration of adult migrants, the Council of Europe wishes to make available to its member states existing expertise and good practice in order to facilitate the implementation of human rights standards such as paragraphs 11 and 12 of Article 19 of the *European Social Charter (revised)* (3.5.1996):

> **Article 19 – The right of migrant workers and their families to protection and assistance**
> *With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right of migrant workers and their families to protection and assistance in the territory of any other Party, the Parties undertake:*
> *[...]*
> 11 *to promote and facilitate the teaching of the national language of the receiving state or, if there are several, one of these languages, to migrant workers and members of their families;*
> 12 *to promote and facilitate, as far as practicable, the teaching of the migrant worker's mother tongue to the children of the migrant worker.*

As pointed out in the Explanatory Report on the Social Charter, these two paragraphs were added to the 1996 version because they were considered important "*for the protection of migrant workers' health and safety at work and for the guarantee of their rights in other respects relating to work, as*

---

[2] White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, "Living together as equals in dignity", Council of Europe, 2008. – www.coe.int/dialogue

[3] See also : "Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters" – www.coe.int/lang

[4] Ibid., p.3.

well as in facilitating their integration and that of their families" (§ 11) and because of "*the importance for the children of migrant workers of maintaining their cultural and linguistic heritage, inter alia, in order to provide them with a possibility of reintegration if and when the migrant worker returns home*" (§ 12). Paragraphs 11 and 12 stress the transversality of language issues and reaffirm host societies' responsibility for promoting a plurilingual approach to the teaching and learning of the language of the host country. Such an approach acknowledges all languages present in society and values the ability of individuals to communicate in two or more languages at any level of proficiency.[5]

In keeping with Council of Europe values, the purpose in developing adult migrants' knowledge of the host society and their proficiency in its language should be to promote social cohesion by enabling them to become involved and responsible members of society. It should always be remembered that obtaining citizenship or long-term residence rights is just one stage in a process of integration that continues over many years and needs to be supported by combating any forms of exclusion to which new citizens or long-term residents may be subject. Language and other educational programmes can support the integration process, but they cannot guarantee success in the face of negative conditions in society at large.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:
The role of language support in integration

Help with integration and settling in a new culture and environment needs to span a range of areas. Among other things, adult migrants need some level of competence in the language of the host society, and support for developing this is necessary.	
Policy-makers	*Practitioners*
What are the key objectives of language support for adult migrants in your context?	How do your programmes implement the key objectives of language support for adult migrants?

---

[5] It may be found useful to consult *Integration of Adult Migrants and Education: Extracts from Council of Europe Conventions and Recommendations / Resolutions by the Committee of Ministers and Parliamentary Assembly* (document DG4/EDU/LANG (2008) 4), available online at http://www.coe.int/lang (Resources). It is worth noting that the Council of Europe's concern for the linguistic integration of adult migrants dates back to 1968 and Resolution 68(18) of the Committee of Ministers on the teaching of language to migrant workers.

2   Language policy development: key principles

2.1   Linguistic diversity and cohesion

According to Council of Europe principles, policies for the integration of adult migrants should aim to promote the harmonious coexistence of languages and the persons using them, counteracting stereo-types and ensuring that whatever the circumstances, the varieties of language present in a territory, whether "native" or more recent, do not constitute a pretext for discrimination, segregation, exclusion or isolation. It is in everybody's interest that the "linguistic acclimatisation" of new immigrants should take place as quickly as possible so that society may benefit from the skills that they bring to the labour market and the taxes they generate.

2.2   Integration is a two-way process

According to Resolution 1437 (2005), I.4 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe,

The concept of integration aims at ensuring social cohesion through accommodation of diversity understood as a two-way process. Immigrants have to accept the laws and basic values of European societies and, on the other hand, host societies have to respect immigrants' dignity and distinct identity and to take them into account when elaborating domestic policies.

Integration is different from assimilation precisely because it concerns both immigrants and the receiving society.[6] Whereas the goal of assimilation is immigrants' complete adaptation to the language, behaviour and values of the receiving society, which may entail the loss of their language(s) of origin, a policy of integration requires that immigrants and the receiving country are equally committed to respecting existing identities and creating new common ground for living together. This gives immigrants a chance to make use of linguistic and cultural resources they bring with them and to expand their identity, acquiring new concepts and a new language; it also encourages citizens of the receiving country to see immigrants as people who bring linguistic and cultural enrichment.

The process of integration takes a long time and cannot normally be completed within a few years of arrival. It is thus not enough for the receiving country to provide special integration programmes which migrants must attend immediately after arrival. Rather, as is pointed out in the second edition of the European Commission's *Handbook on Integration*,[7] it is necessary to adapt all kinds of public services to the needs of immigrants, including housing and access to the labour market and education programmes.

Active democratic citizenship and social cohesion do not depend on immigrants achieving a certain linguistic competence or knowledge of the history, laws and customs of the host country. Rather, they arise from a complex mix of knowledge, attitudes, habits and competences that include but go far beyond language. The Council of Europe's project "Education for Democratic Citizenship" has defined citizenship as "*always a matter of belonging to a community, which entrains politics and rights, notably political rights. In this sense, the citizen is always a co-citizen, somebody who lives with others.*"[8] This community can be defined at local and national levels, and "*belonging always refers to a level of*

---

[6] See also European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI - Council of Europe), *Annual Report on ECRI's Activities*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2009, pp.11–12: "*Successful integration is a two-way process, a process of mutual recognition, which bears no relation to assimilation.*"

[7] *Handbook on Integration for policy-makers and practioners*, Directorate General Justice, Freedom an Security. Second Edition. European Commission, 2007.

[8] F. Audigier, *Basic Concepts and Core Competencies for Education for Democratic Citizenship* (DGIV/EDU/CIT (2000) 23), Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2000, pp.15–16.

political organisation, a level of authority, and to rights".[9] Citizenship is thus connected with equal rights and dignity.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:
Individual migrants' linguistic and educational background and their present situation

Each migrant, whether newly arrived or already participating in the host society, has his/her individual history in terms of educational and language background, and his/her specific aspirations of life in the host society. In some cases, literacy in the migrant's own language or in the alphabet of the target language is limited. In others, migrants have already achieved a high level of education and/or professional expertise in their own or a third country. The use that adult migrants continue to make of their language(s) of origin, which depends on a wide variety of social, cultural and personal factors, can also play an important role, particularly in the early stages of integration while proficiency in the new language is being developed.	
Policy-makers	*Practitioners*
What measures can be embedded in the handling and support of migrants to ensure that these aspects of migrants' backgrounds are fully taken into account and, insofar as possible, responded to?	When designing and delivering language support, what systems and measures can be used to take account of existing language repertoires, language-learning experience, educational attainment, and personal situation?

2.3   Migrants and plurilingualism

Being plurilingual does not mean mastering an impressive number of languages to a high level of proficiency like a polyglot, but rather developing the ability to use two or more languages with varying degrees of proficiency for different activities (speaking, writing, reading etc.) and different purposes. It is assumed that we all have the potential to be plurilingual because plurilingual competence is a consequence of our genetically inbuilt language ability. Education, whatever its precise form, should ensure the harmonious development of the individual's plurilingual competence in the same way as it promotes the development of his or her physical, cognitive, vocational and creative abilities. Recognition of the diversity of languages in one's own repertoire, in terms of their functions and value, is likely to foster a positive perception of the languages of others; appreciation of plurilingualism thus lays the foundations for intercultural education that promotes linguistic goodwill.

Developing the plurilingual and intercultural competences of migrants
  - allows them to play an effective role in the national and transnational public arena;
  - facilitates democratic coexistence;
  - prevents the serious economic losses represented by the disappearance of speakers of languages whose transmission the authorities have been unable to support effectively (this is especially a danger for the languages of communities recently settled in Europe);

Organising language training for adult immigrants according to the principles of plurilingual and intercultural education means taking account of
  - the language varieties already present in their linguistic repertoires in order, at the very least, to enhance their status and avoid these languages becoming a mark of marginality for the adult immigrants themselves and their children;
  - the actual use of these language varieties in the host society and the role that they play in the social and professional lives of adult immigrants;
  - the language varieties of the host society, which may itself be multilingual;

---

[9] Ibid., p.16.

- the language varieties of the host society to which adult immigrants are actually exposed and which they may acquire by themselves without tuition (these may be different from the host society's official languages – a regional language, for example, or a regional form of a national language);
- the language(s) used at the schools attended by the children of adult immigrants;
- the "foreign" languages taught or used in the host country.

It is understandable that for immediate practical reasons, especially in the arrival and settlement phases of immigration, priority may be given to learning a/the language of the host country. But even if the training offered to new adult immigrants concerns only the language of the host country, some form of plurilingual education should be included**.**

For a fuller treatment of the issues discussed in this section, see

J.-C. Beacco, *The role of languages in policies for the integration of adult migrants,* Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2008.

M. Cavalli, D. Coste, A. Crişan and P.-H. van de Ven *Plurilingual and intercultural education as a project*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2008.

D. Coste, M. Cavalli, A. Crişan and P.-H. van de Ven *Plurilingual and intercultural education as a right*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2008.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:
Plurilingualism and pluriculturalism

The Council of Europe's plurilingual and pluricultural approach to language education is rooted in its concern for social inclusion, social cohesion and respect for diversity.	
Policy-makers	*Practitioners*
What are the implications of a plurilingual and pluricultural approach that takes into account the existing linguistic repertoire and cultural profile of individuals in providing language programmes for adult migrants? What measures can be used to assess whether or not a plurilingual and pluricultural approach is effectively adopted in the design of such programmes for migrants, and, where these are offered, in measures taken to raise awareness of these issues within the host community, especially among employers and those working in public services?	What are the implications of plurilingual and pluricultural principles for curriculum design, teaching and learning resources, and course delivery, and for the evaluation of programmes, including programmes designed for members of the host community?

3 Developing language programmes for adult migrants: a possible approach and some reference instruments

This section presents procedures for translating the principles summarised in section 2 into language programmes, drawing on the reference instruments[10] that the Council of Europe has developed to support this process.[11]

---

[10] See in particular: *The role of languages in policies for the integration of adult migrants (Concept Paper,* 2008*,* Section 4.1)

[11] See the list of documents on p.3 (*Introduction*) and the suggestions for further reading at the end of each sub-section.

3.1 Characterising the groups of learners concerned

In the interests of economy it may seem appropriate to create just one kind of language programme for adult migrants, but to do so would be to overlook their extreme diversity. As far as possible course design should be shaped by adult migrants' characteristics and expectations as well as the expectations of the host society. In order to facilitate the formation of groups that are as homogeneous as possible it is necessary to take account of

- the diversity of learners' language needs, which vary according to the linguistic repertoire they bring with them and their status in the host society – political refugees, temporary and seasonal workers, medium- and long-term workers, residents (not citizens), candidates for citizenship, citizens;
- their experience of language learning and use prior to migration – some will have a restricted linguistic repertoire, others will have extensive plurilingual capacities;
- the nature and extent of the education they received in their country of origin – some will have had little or no schooling, whereas others will have professional qualifications;
- proximities, similarities and differences between the language(s) of the host country and adult migrants' languages of origin, especially as regards writing systems and communicative norms;
- the different stages of migration – preparation, arrival, and the successive phases of integration.

For a fuller treatment of the issues discussed in this sub-section, see

J.-C. Beacco, *The role of languages in policies for the integration of adult migrants,* Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2008.

H.-J. Krumm and V. Plutzar, *Tailoring language provision and requirements to the needs and capacities of adult migrants*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2008.

3.2 The analysis of language needs

The analysis of language needs is generally a matter of identifying the communicative situations that learners need to be able to manage effectively (though not necessarily with complete fluency). Language needs can be analysed

- by consulting the learners themselves, provided they can specify their lacks and expectations and the communicative situations they are on the way to mastering;
- by consulting the learners' interlocutors, for example colleagues in the workplace;
- by carrying out large-scale sociolinguistic research that aims to describe the forms of communication within a given social space and the situations in which adult migrants are involved;
- by leaving it to course providers to specify learning objectives and focus on particular communicative situations.

The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* provides a detailed typology of language activities and scaled descriptors that can be used as the basis for these kinds of needs analysis, which are best used in one or another combination in order to achieve a balance between the expectations of the course providers and those of the learners.[12]

---

[12] There is an extensive literature on language needs analysis, some of it produced by Council of Europe projects, e.g. R. Richterich and J.-L. Chancerel, *Identifying the needs of adults learning a foreign language*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1978 and R. Richertich (ed.), *Case studies in identifying language needs*, Pergamon: Oxford, 1983. Particularly relevant to the analysis of the language needs of adult migrants are works that concern themselves with the language of the workplace and/or professional competences, e.g. T.C. Jupp & S.Hodling, *Industrial English*, Heinemann Educational Books, 1975; N. Reeves & C. Wright, *Linguistic auditing*, Clevedon:

For a fuller treatment of the issues discussed in this sub-section, see

J.-C. Beacco, *The role of languages in policies for the integration of adult migrants,* Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2008.

P. van Avermaet and S. Gysen, *Language learning, teaching and assessment and the integration of adult immigrants. The importance of needs analysis*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2008.

H.-J. Krumm and V. Plutzar, *Tailoring language provision and requirements to the needs and capacities of adult migrants*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2008.

E. Halewijn, A. Houben and H. De Niel, *Education: Tailor-made or one-size-fits-all? A project commissioned by the Nederlandse Taalunie*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2008.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

Language support programmes – needs, approach and content

To be effective, the aims and content of language support programmes and the approach to teaching and learning need to be carefully adapted to the real, daily communication and comprehension needs of adult migrants.

Policy-makers	*Practitioners*
In your context, what policy approach is taken to determining the current and future real-life communication needs of adult migrants, and ensuring that programmes take full account of these?	How are programmes designed, and how are teachers trained, to cater for the real and often pressing practical reality of adult migrants' individual needs to communicate and comprehend?
	In contexts where there is more than one official language how is a plurilingual approach exploited to respond to learners' possible needs and acknowledge their achievements, however modest?

3.3 Defining learning objectives: communicative situations, proficiency levels and profiles

There is an increasing tendency to specify the proficiency that immigrants should achieve in a/the language of the host country with reference to the six levels of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR): A1 and A2 (basic user); B1 and B2 (independent user); C1 and C2 (proficient user). However, against this tendency it is important to stress that the CEFR is a reference tool, not a standard-setting instrument. Levels can be useful when it is a matter of certifying learning achievements or comparing language competences, but they can also lead to damaging oversimplification and obscure the central importance of first identifying real-life language needs before going on to design courses and assessment instruments. What is more, setting a single invariable proficiency level for all adult immigrants, especially if it is above A1, amounts to introducing an arbitrary language barrier rather than identifying a threshold for language proficiency that marks an important first step in the long-term process of integration. It also encourages course designers to concentrate on the level in question rather than on the needs of the learners.

It is important to emphasise that the CEFR offers much more than a six-level scale of language proficiency. For each of its levels it provides "can do" descriptors for five communicative activities: listening, reading, spoken interaction, spoken production (for example, giving a presentation), and writing. This means that it can be used to build up competence profiles to be addressed by teaching pro-

grammes and/or achieved by learners. New and established immigrants are likely to have everyday language needs that are both predictable and specific – managing daily life (shopping, travel, banking etc.), employment, relations with public services (local council, police, post office, health service etc.) or schools, and social relations (in the neighbourhood, district etc.) – but that vary according to the migrants' social context and the nature and stage of their migration. It should be noted that the CEFR was not developed with professional and workplace communication in mind and thus should be used with caution in relation to these domains of language use.

For a fuller treatment of the issues discussed in this sub-section, see

Council of Europe, *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, Cambridge University Press, 2001.

D. Little, *The* Common European Framework of Reference for Languages *and the development of policies for the integration of adult migrants,* Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2008.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:
Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)

The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* facilitates quality and effectiveness in language learning, teaching and assessment. It promotes a transparent and coherent approach to language education and assessment, offering a system of reference levels, and a wide range of descriptors of language competencies that, used with proper consideration for the context and aims of language learning, can be an invaluable resource in the development of programmes and the selection of methods and materials. The levels of the CEFR are increasingly used to indicate the level(s) of proficiency that immigrants should achieve in a/the language of the host country.

Policy-makers	*Practitioners*
In your context, what account is taken of the principles and action-oriented 'can do' approach of the CEFR, and in particular the reference levels, in language support programmes and the assessment of adult migrants' language competence?	How are the reference levels and resources contained in the CEFR and other Council of Europe instruments drawn on and adapted to the context of use and the needs of adult migrants when designing curricula and syllabuses for language support programmes, and procedures and instruments for language assessment?

3.4   Determining course objectives: linguistic content

After specifying the communicative situations to be mastered and the level of proficiency to be achieved, the next step is to establish linguistic objectives in the strict sense of the term: vocabulary, word forms, orthography, grammar, the organisation of texts, etc. This phase is essential if the goal is to promote harmony of practice across one or more programmes, but less important when teaching is organized on the basis of projects or macro-tasks. The definition of linguistic objectives necessarily goes beyond the CEFR, whose descriptive apparatus is language-independent. For several languages so-called reference level descriptions have been developed that specify the linguistic resources needed to perform different communicative activities at different CEFR levels – for example, writing a postcard at level A1, a task that corresponds to the descriptor "*Can write simple isolated phrases and sentences*".[13] Where available, these reference level descriptions can be used to determine the linguistic content of language courses for adult migrants; indeed, at least one of them has been

---

[13] CEFR, p.61.

compiled with the needs of adult migrants in mind[14]. An alternative approach is to proceed directly to an analysis of the formal characteristics of the different discourse genres employed in the communicative situations adult migrants need to be able to deal with, and here techniques for analysing discourse are likely to be useful.[15]

3.5   Intercultural considerations

If integration is a two-way process, the learning by adult migrants of a/the language of the host society should be matched by acceptance of the languages they bring with them. Those responsible for the implementation of integration policy may wish to encourage positive attitudes towards these "new" languages in order to avoid linguistic intolerance. From primary school onwards such attitudes should be fostered as a form of linguistic politeness or civility. In addition lessons that focus on language awareness should teach that mastery of the official/national language(s) is extremely variable even among native speakers, that linguistic diversity in societies is normal, and that adult immigrants, like other foreign residents and tourists, can communicate effectively using all the languages in their repertoires. Room should be made for migrants' languages of origin within the educational system, though not necessarily in the form of systematic instruction. Immigrants themselves as well as the host society are responsible for ensuring the transmission of their languages of origin, which are an important resource, if only in economic terms.

When it comes to granting citizenship, knowledge-of-society tests can establish common points of reference but they cannot create a common memory; and because they focus on factual knowledge such tests cannot guarantee adherence to the values of the majority community or the adoption of its customs, modes of dress, diet, etc.

The level of proficiency in a/the language of the host society required for nationality varies significantly from country to county (from A.1.1 to B.2). This variation depends on criteria that are not always explicit and reflects different conceptions of citizenship that have their roots in different legal traditions. When the level required is defined as one that allows adult migrants to "function" in society, the diversity of their situations may have been overlooked, together with the perception that they themselves may have of their language needs after "functioning" in the host society for five or more years (such self-analysis can, of course, generate the motivation to learn more). When level A1 is required, this may imply recognition of the need to support the first phase of integration into the host society and the activities that characterise it, but also acceptance of the fact that it is integration that develops communicative proficiency rather than the reverse. When the level required is B2, which goes well beyond what is functionally necessary for many social groups, the implication is that the linguistic behaviour of candidates for citizenship should be identical to the linguistic behaviour of citizens; and such behaviour is seen not in terms of its functionality but as a sign of belonging to a "national" cultural community.

This variation of requirements shows that what governs the criteria for access to citizenship is not the nature of the language skills but the different conceptions of citizenship, which are rooted in varying legal traditions (*jus soli, jus sanguinis*, etc), which give rise to these linguistic requirements. This means that the language skills which the person must demonstrate are not envisaged per se

---

[14] J.-C. Beacco, M. de Ferrari & G. Lhote, *Niveau A1.1 pour le français : Référentiel et certification (DILF) pour les premiers acquis en français*, Paris: Didier, 2006, the application of which is illustrated by S. Etienne, *Créer des parcours d'apprentissage pour le niveau A1.1*, Paris: Didier, 2008. A different approach to the specification of linguistic content appropriate to the different CEFR activities and levels is taken by M. Glaboniat, M. Müller, P. Rusch, H. Schmitz & L. Wertenschlag, *Profile deutsch*, Berlin & Munich: Langenscheidt, 2005.

[15] An illustration of this approach, applied to the determination of linguistic objectives in the context of history and biology teaching at school, can be found on the *Platform of resources and references for plurilingual and intercultural education*" (www.coe.int/lang) – Section "Language(s) in other subjects".

(functionally) but as a sign of belonging to a "national" cultural community, not to a legal community of citizens.

3.6   Organising language programmes

In order to achieve these linguistic and cultural goals, it is necessary to adopt a suitable educational approach taking account of their living conditions, the adult migrants' previous relationship with the educational institution and their educational habits (eg the relationship with the teacher). Such efforts to take account of educational cultures is geared to preventing the misunderstandings that can arise in the classroom and obstruct learning processes.

Council of Europe member states may regard the provision of language courses for new and settled immigrants as one of the responsibilities arising from their immigration and integration policies. If they do, they will have to decide whether courses are to be optional or obligatory (which can have a significant impact on learners' motivation) and how they are to be paid for. When courses are obligatory it is necessary to ensure that it is practically possible to attend them – that they take place at a manageable distance from where the learners live and are scheduled at appropriate times, that childcare is available, etc. Arrangements can vary considerably, for instance:

- Courses are free but compulsory and must be taken within a fixed period of time following arrival in the host country; penalties attach to non-attendance and/or failure in the final assess-ment.
- Courses are either free or must be paid for by the individual immigrant; though optional, attendance is recorded; learning outcomes are assessed; and although there is no requirement to achieve a specified level of proficiency, fees are reimbursed in part or in whole on the basis of attendance and/or successful learning outcomes.
- Immigrants are given financial support to attend courses (receive allowances, are provided with subsidised loans etc.) in return for an undertaking to achieve a certain proficiency profile as a condition for obtaining a long-term residence permit.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:
Obligatory and optional programmes

Many Council of Europe member states regard the provision of obligatory or optional language programmes for new and settled immigrants as one of the responsibilities arising from their immigration and integration policies. These may be run by state-sector bodies or by other providers on behalf of the state. They may be linked to mandatory or optional tests. There may be incentives and/or sanctions related to course attendance.	
Policy-makers	*Practitioners*
If such programmes are provided in your context, are they obligatory or optional? What is the impact of this on learning? What steps are taken to measure the impact of these programme? If the introduction of such programmes is being considered, should they be optional or obligatory?	What is the likely impact on learner motivation and learning outcomes of optional versus obligatory courses? What are the implications for programme design and delivery? What steps can be taken to ensure that participants continue to attend and remain motivated?

Funding of language support

For language support to be effective, considerable time is needed. On the other hand, migrants themselves very often do not have financial resources to pay even a portion of the cost of this support. This puts pressure on public funds.	
Policy-makers	**Practitioners**
If there are insufficient public funds available to pay for all the language support needed, what principles can be used to decide how funds are allocated, how long individuals can benefit from funding, whether migrants have to bear or share the cost, and whether participation is obligatory?	How can teaching programmes be made most effective and efficient in terms of financial cost and positive impact on the lives of migrants? What role can IT and blended learning play in this, if any?

3.7 Evaluating learning outcomes

Evaluation is an integral part of all programmes of learning. It is important for learners to know how they are progressing, what they have already achieved, and what they need to focus on in the future; and equally important for course designers and providers to know whether learners' needs are being met.

A portfolio approach

The Council of Europe's European Language Portfolio (ELP)[16] offers one way of making assessment central to teaching and learning. Designed to foster the development of learner autonomy (a matter of learners doing things for themselves), the ELP provides the owner with checklists of tasks (e.g., *I can introduce myself and say where I come from*) arranged according to the levels and language activities of the CEFR. These can be used to plan, monitor and evaluate learning from day to day, week to week and month to month. Note that individual learners may work simultaneously on tasks at two or more levels; for example, listening tasks at B1, spoken interaction tasks at A2, reading and writing tasks at A1. At longer intervals learners can record a summary self-assessment in the language passport, using the self-assessment grid from the CEFR. In versions of the ELP designed for use by adult migrants[17] the goal-setting and self-assessment checklists focus on domains of language use and communicative tasks that previous analysis has shown to be especially relevant. The checklists provide a general framework for the language programme and can be used to identify needs that are (i) common to all participants in the programme, (ii) shared by some but not all participants, and (iii) specific to individual participants. Programme delivery can then proceed via whole-class, group and individual learning activities that are planned, monitored and evaluated in the individual learner's ELP.[18]

---

[16] For details see http://www.coe.int/portfolio/ The Council of Europe did not develop a single version of the ELP but defined the Principles and Guidelines according to which ELPs should be developed. By the spring of 2010 104 ELPs had been validated and accredited by the ELP Validation Committee.

[17] For example, the Milestone ELP, which was developed collaboratively by agencies in Germany, Finland, Ireland, The Netherlands and Sweden.

[18] For a detailed account of how the ELP has been used in needs-based English language courses for adult migrants with refugee status in Ireland, see D. Little, *Responding to the language needs of adult refugees in Ireland: an alternative approach to pedagogy and assessment*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2008.

Language programmes for adult migrants are often required to cater for a wide range of educational backgrounds and previous language learning experience. In some programmes of this kind a European Language Portfolio (ELP) has been introduced and used as a means of individualising learning and facilitating self-assessment.

Policy-makers	*Practitioners*
Has use of an ELP been considered for the context in which you are working, for example as an alternative or complement to language testing? What factors have influenced or would influence a decision to introduce it?	How does, or how could, use of an ELP add value to language programmes for adult migrants, and to the assessment of learning outcomes at individual and group level? What are the implications of introducing it?

To test or not to test?

Language tests specially designed for immigrants serve one of two purposes: either to determine whether the individuals concerned may enter the host country in the first place or, if they are already resident in the country, to determine whether or not they have achieved a required level of proficiency in a/the language of the host community. Tests that serve the former purpose are usually administered in intending immigrants' country of origin, and their level depends on the immigration policy of the country in question. The test is likely to be designed independently of any course of instruction, and it will reflect the perceived needs of the receiving country rather than the needs of the would-be immigrants.

It is easy to understand the attraction that tests have for policy makers: they appear to be scientific and objective, which puts their results beyond dispute; and they have the advantage that they are relatively cheap to administer on a large scale, especially if their administration can be automated. However, using tests for immigration and citizenship purposes is considerably more complex than it may at first seem, and before deciding to introduce them it is necessary to address the following questions:

- Might it be more appropriate to use another form of assessment, rather than a test?
- Might it be appropriate to use two or more methods of assessment in combination?
- What use will be made of the test results?
- What consequences will a test have for society?
- What will be the impact of a test on the migrant?
- What will be the impact of a test on the migrant's community?

Each assessment method has its own particular advantages, relating to characteristics such as impact on the candidate, interpretability of results, standardisation and reliability of results, cost and practicability. Tests that are designed, constructed and administered according to internationally accepted standards have the following advantages:

- Results are highly standardised and reliable, so that it is easy to compare candidates across the same or different administrations.
- Candidates are assessed with a high degree of independence and objectivity.
- Large numbers may be tested in a short space of time.

It is important to recognise that no assessment is ever completely free of error; indeed, all test results are predicated on there being a certain inevitable margin of error. Every effort must be made to

minimise the possibility of negative consequences arising from test use by, among other things, reducing the possibility of error, rather than aiming to remove it completely. It is also important to recognise that large-scale tests cannot easily take into account the personality traits, learning history and personal history of individual candidates. If a candidate performs badly in a test, his or her true ability may be underestimated. This means that the overall benefit that it is hoped will accrue from administering the test has to be considered in relation to the consequences of failure, since some of the decisions determined by test results may be based on inaccurate information.

When the mode of assessment has been selected, it is essential to give careful consideration to the use that will be made of assessment results and the consequences they will have. Possible consequences (which include changes in teaching and learning practices) should be carefully weighed during the planning phase, and research needs to be done during the process of assessment in order to discover what the actual consequences are.

If it is decided to use a language test, policy makers need to be sure that it is developed to fulfil the need identified and that it functions as intended. Test fairness is a particularly important issue, since unfair tests may result in migrants being denied civil or human rights. The work of ensuring that a test is fair should begin in the planning phase and continue throughout the operation of the test. There are a number of easily-available standards which provide guidance for developing and administering fair tests.[19]

For a fuller treatment of the issues discussed in this sub-section, see

ALTE Authoring Group, *Language tests for social cohesion and citizenship – an outline for policy makers*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2008.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:
Language tests

In an increasing number of contexts, language tests are used to determine whether or not adult migrants meet the criteria that have been set for access to citizenship, residence, family reunion etc. Internationally accepted good practice in language test design and administration requires that such tests are fair, objective, valid and reliable.

Policy-makers	*Practitioners*
If tests are used in your context, what steps are taken to ensure that they conform to international good practice? In what areas, if any, is further improvement desirable? What measures are taken to ensure adequate public information about the tests and to assess their impact on the migrants who take them?	How do test designers and providers ensure that their tests are fit for purpose and conform to international good practice in terms of design, content and test administration? What complementary measures are or can be used to assist learners and teachers in assessing progress?

---

[19] For example, ALTE Code of Practice (http://www.alte.org/quality_assurance/index.php); ILTA Code of Ethics (http://www.iltaonline.com/code.pdf); JCTP Code of Fair Testing Practice in Education ; (http://www.apa.org/science/FinalCode.pdf).

3.8 Quality assurance in programme design and delivery

Language courses for adult migrants are often entrusted to specialist agencies, associations, or private, municipal or local bodies. Syllabuses may be developed locally, and the training of the teachers providing the courses (who may be professionals or volunteers) can vary greatly. A key issue is then the extent to which the institutions responsible for such provision have the infrastructure, expertise and resources to meet the following key criteria:

1. Providers of language courses for adult immigrants should be well acquainted with the national and/or local priorities upon which public funding for the provision is based.

2. Migrant students' collective and individual language learning needs vary widely, as do their situations in the host country. Procedures must be established for analysing their objective needs, designing needs-based courses, and developing teaching approaches that are capable of responding to their subjective needs.

3. Realistic course objectives, "outcomes", and "deliverables" that respond both to the needs of course participants and to national/local priorities should be specified by the course provider, and the language learning goals established for the programme must be achievable by a majority of learners.

4. Taking course objectives and desired outcomes fully into account, the following basic parameters of the course must be determined:
   - the maximum overall length of time in hours that learners are required, permitted and/or able to attend courses;
   - the length of course modules in hours, i.e. the way in which learners' language learning is structured;
   - the proportion of the course that will involve face-to-face learning as opposed to on-line or other self-directed learning;
   - the proposed dates, timetable and location of courses;
   - whether learners have to pay any fees from their own resources, and whether other barriers to access exist;
   - the degree of learner choice within the programme, which should be determined partly with learners' subjective needs in mind;
   - the manner and languages in which the provision is described in the information given to intending learners.

5. An appropriate curriculum and valid course outlines and syllabuses should be devised in response to learners' objective needs and with regard to the length and intensity of the programme. The curriculum should be referenced to the CEFR and take into account the intercultural aspects of migration, especially the challenges faced by migrants in adjusting to a new cultural (in many cases, multicultural) environment.

6. Robust systems and procedures should exist to ensure that suitable and competent staff are available to deliver the programme. These must take into account:
   - the language teaching competences needed;
   - the number of teachers required;
   - the number of teachers already in post, or the number and characteristics of any that need to be recruited;
   - the training and support that teachers will need before and during the course;

- other staff needed for academic co-ordination, resources administration, student welfare etc., and the skills and experience required of them.

7. It must be determined what books, equipment, IT resources, and other learning materials are needed, and funding must be provided to acquire them and make them available to students and staff.

8. Systems and resources must be put in place to enable the staff to assess learners' language proficiency at appropriate stages and in an appropriate manner, using techniques that are compatible with the aims of the courses as well as with the teaching/learning orientation and the cognitive experiences of the learners.

Some public, private, national and international organisations have done valuable work in this area. For example, the quality assurance and accreditation scheme developed by EAQUALS, the European Association for Quality Language Services, which has been in existence since 1991, looks in detail at all aspects of language course delivery, taking into account the languages being taught and learnt, the context, the background of the students and other salient factors[20]. At national level, the French authorities have recently put in place a similar formal system for awarding a public quality label (Qualité français langue étrangère1). This is awarded by the "Centre international d'études pédagogiques" to centres providing courses in French as a foreign language in France which have successfully undergone inspection. These and other such schemes, indicate that the following basic instruments and criteria are needed:

- A. Specific and relevant accreditation criteria.
- B. A Code of Practice and/or Charters.
- C. Reference to international standards and principles, such as the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.*
- D. Quality assessment or accreditation checklists.
- E. A self-assessment scheme for institutions delivering courses.
- F. Self-help training guides for managers and staff.
- G. A corps of well-trained and appropriately experienced auditors[20]

A well-designed and well-managed international accreditation scheme for migrant language programmes would contribute significantly to the achievement of Council of Europe policy goals in this domain. Such a scheme would seek to ensure that basic standards and internationally bench-marked criteria were met by a broad range of eligible institutions operating in diverse situations. The aim would not be to create an exclusive club of high-quality providers, so widespread acceptance of the scheme and its accreditation procedures would be essential. It is assumed that within such a scheme there would be mechanisms for enabling providers to share experience and know-how, and thus to build on one another's knowledge and expertise in order continually to improve the quality and effectiveness of language learning programmes for adult migrants.

For a fuller treatment of the issues discussed in this sub-section, see

R. Rossner, *Quality assurance in the provision of language education and training for adult migrants – Guidelines and options*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2008.

---

[20] For further information on the EAQUALS accreditation scheme, including key reference documents, see http://www.eaquals.org/.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:
Quality assurance

When language courses for adult migrants are organised in parallel with or outside the national/regional education system, they need to be governed by quality assurance procedures so as to ensure maximum effectiveness, and value for money and time invested.

Policy-makers	Practitioners
What approach is taken to quality assurance in your context? If no quality assurance procedures are in place, what measures should be introduced to facilitate the evaluation of the quality and effectiveness of provision? How can the benefits of internal procedures for quality assurance best be combined with impartial external audits or accreditation?	In your context, what practical procedures exist (or are under consideration) to regularly evaluate the quality of programmes from the point of view of participants and those responsible for delivery? What impact do such procedures have (or would they have) on programme delivery? How are the results of quality assurance measures, both internal and external, taken into account in programme development?