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**COUNCIL OF EUROPE**



**CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE**

**DROITS DE L'HOMME,  
DÉMOCRATIE  
ET ÉTAT DE DROIT**

**PUTTING THE  
ACTION-ORIENTED  
APPROACH INTO PRACTICE**

**METTRE EN PRATIQUE  
LA PERSPECTIVE  
ACTIONNELLE**

Evelyne Bérard  
Danielle Hunter  
Rosanna Margonis-Pasinetti

Aujourd'hui on  
utilisera cette  
version

Pour la version [bilingue \(English et français\)](#), please click ici

We will use this  
version today

NB - Le  
commentaire  
sera en  
anglais et  
français

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présentation, veuillez cliquer ici

Note - The  
commentary  
will be in  
English and  
French

For the [English only](#) version of this  
presentation, please click here



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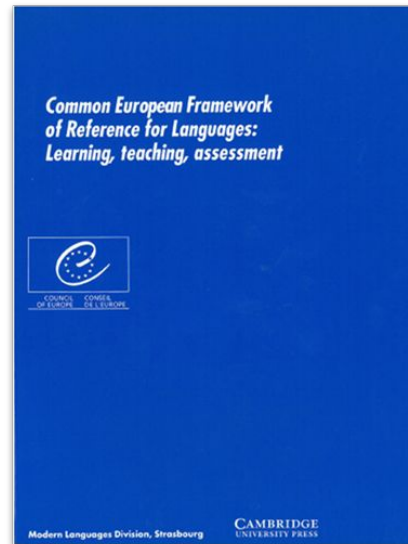
Professor, HEP Vaud (Switzerland)

**Goals: To work together to create, implement, and reflect upon an action-oriented scenario**

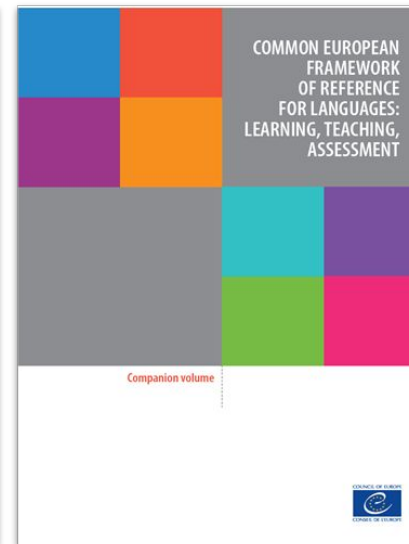
**Meeting Dates: April 7 and May 10**

## OVERVIEW OF THE WORKSHOP

- Overview of some key concepts of the CEFR
  - Action-oriented approach
  - Social agent
  - CEFR descriptive scheme
  - Tasks
  - Plurilingualism and pluriculturalism
- Group discussion about key concepts
- Planning an action-oriented scenario
  - Tasks and sub-tasks
- Helpful tools
- Working groups
- Wrap up



2001



2020

[The CEFR Companion Volume] marks a crucial step in the Council of Europe's engagement with language education, which seeks to protect **linguistic and cultural diversity**, promote **plurilingual and intercultural education**, reinforce the right to **quality education for all**, and enhance **intercultural dialogue, social inclusion and democracy**.

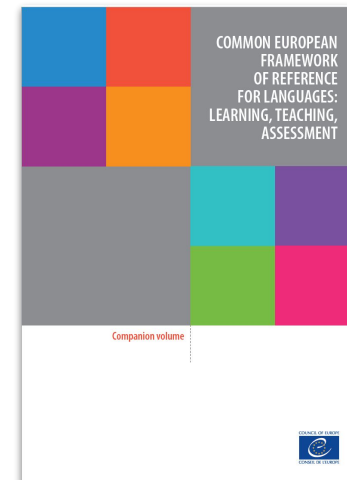
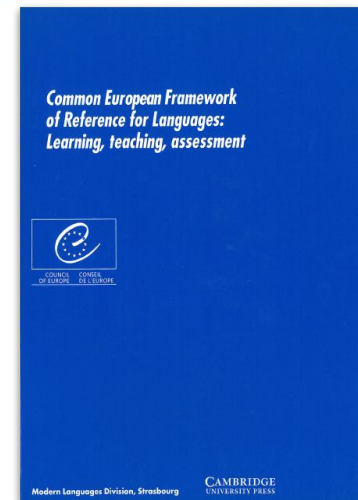
## The CEFR 2001 introduced the AoA:

- “Can Do” descriptors
- collaborative tasks
- focus on interaction and agency

In the last 20 years: bottom-up experimentation by practitioners

## The CEFR 2020 (Companion Volume) therefore:

- presents the AoA explicitly
- refines and broadens the AoA vision



“The approach adopted here, generally speaking, is an **action-oriented** one in so far as it views users and learners of a language primarily as ‘**social agents**,’ i.e. members of society who have **tasks** (not exclusively language-related) to accomplish in a given set of circumstances, in a specific environment and within a particular field of action.”

## Seeing users/learners as **social agents** implies:

- Exercising **agency** within a specific social context, which imposes conditions and constraints
- Involving them in the learning process
- Recognising the social nature of language learning and language use
- Extensive use of the target language in class
- Recognising the interaction between the social and the individual in the learning process
- Encouraging learners to use **all of their resources (cognitive, emotional, linguistic and cultural)**
- Encouraging them to see similarities and regularities as well as differences between languages and cultures
- Developing strategies in **iterative cycles** in order to **plan**, **produce** results, and **monitor** their action

### Above all:

- **Using purposeful, collaborative tasks**, whose primary focus is not language
- **using descriptors** to help design such tasks, observe learners, and/or (self-) assess the language use

**“To be an agent  
is to intentionally  
make things  
happen by one’s  
own actions”**

Bandura, 2001, p.2

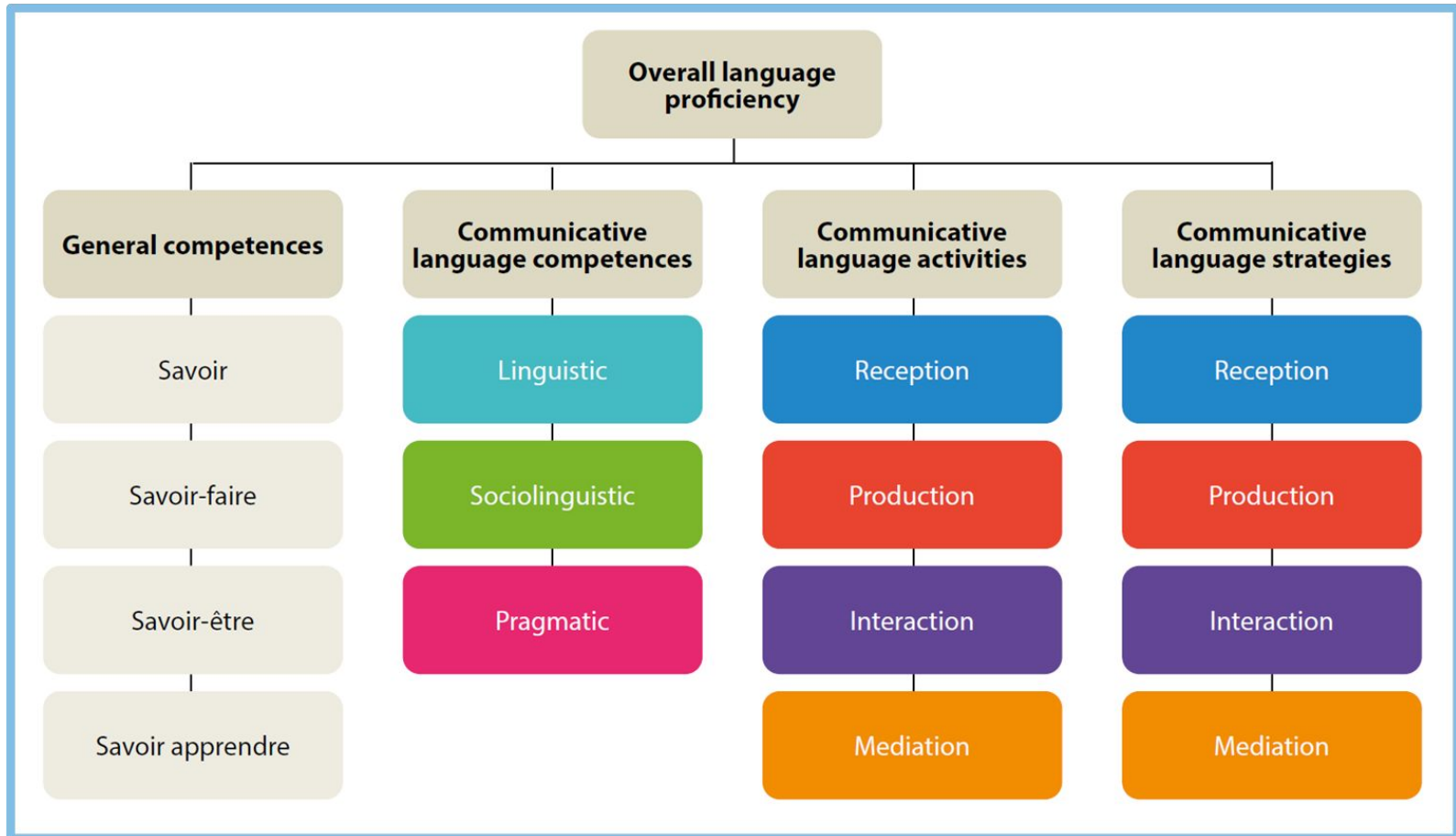


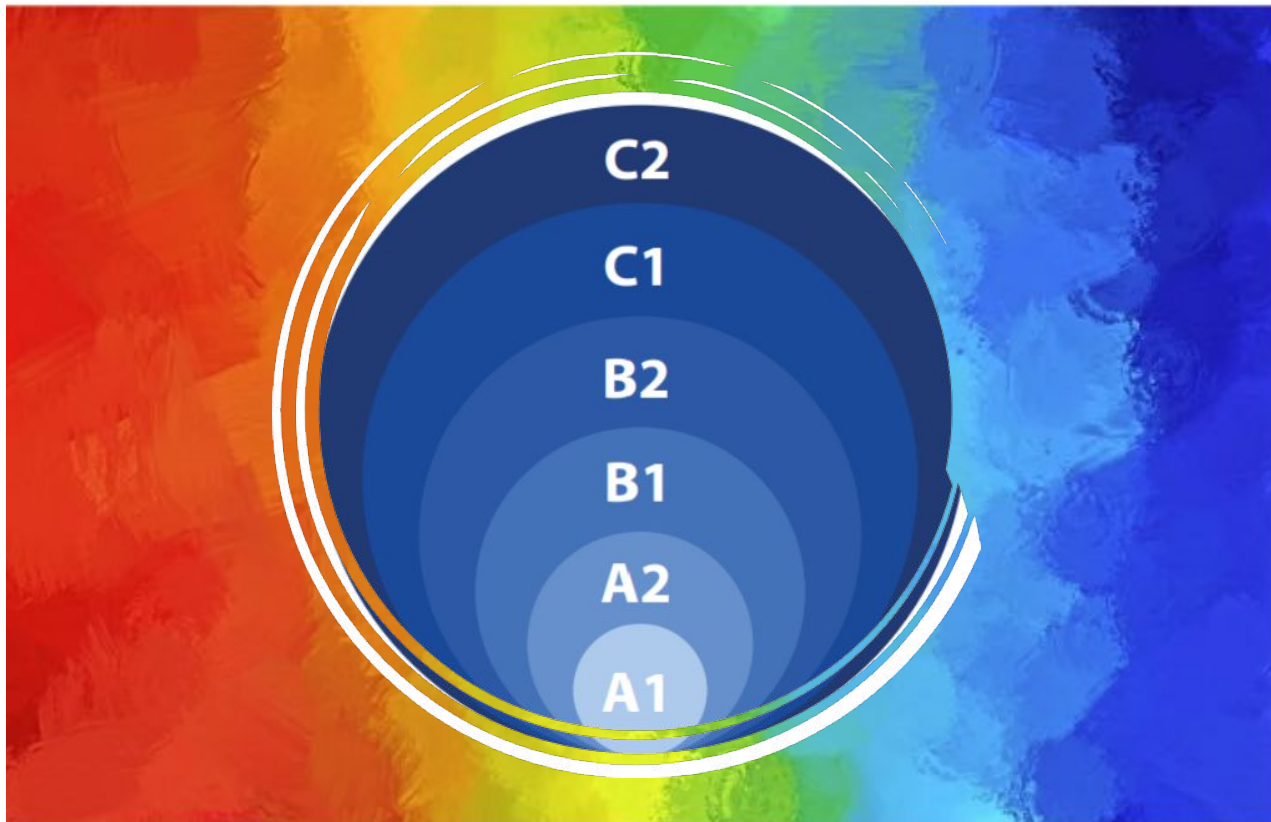
In the AoA learners are seen as *social agents* who:

- (co)-construct meaning
- in real-life tasks
- drawing upon a series of general and communicative competences
- while engaging in communicative activities
- and using communicative strategies

**By performing tasks in which they can *act* in the language, the learners further develop competences and strategies**

## CEFR Descriptive Scheme





## Illustrative Descriptors

- Describe what people **can do** in the real-world (action-oriented)
- Help inform planning (e.g., needs assessment, backwards design)
  - *What is it that you want learners to do in the language?*
- Are illustrative - open-ended, incomplete
- Inspire teachers to create tasks (combining descriptors) and design criteria
- Serve as a reference tool
- Bring transparent “sign-posting”
- Inform assessment (not primary use)

Can understand enough to read short, simple stories and comic strips involving familiar, concrete situations described in high frequency everyday language.  
(Reading as a leisure activity, A2)

Can use simple techniques to start, maintain or close a short conversation.  
(Turntaking, A2)

## Action-oriented Tasks

- Learning is directed towards enabling learners to act in real-life, authentic situations
- Learning occurs in context, with the purpose of developing and activating strategies and competences needed to complete the task
- The 'classroom' becomes the gateway to functioning effectively in the outside world in the target language
- Tasks provide direction to teaching, learning and assessment
- **IMPORTANT: The primary focus of the task is not language**

“[...] ‘social agents,’ i.e. members of society who have tasks (not exclusively language-related) to accomplish in a given set of circumstances, in a specific environment and within a particular field of action.”

Council of Europe, 2001, p. 9

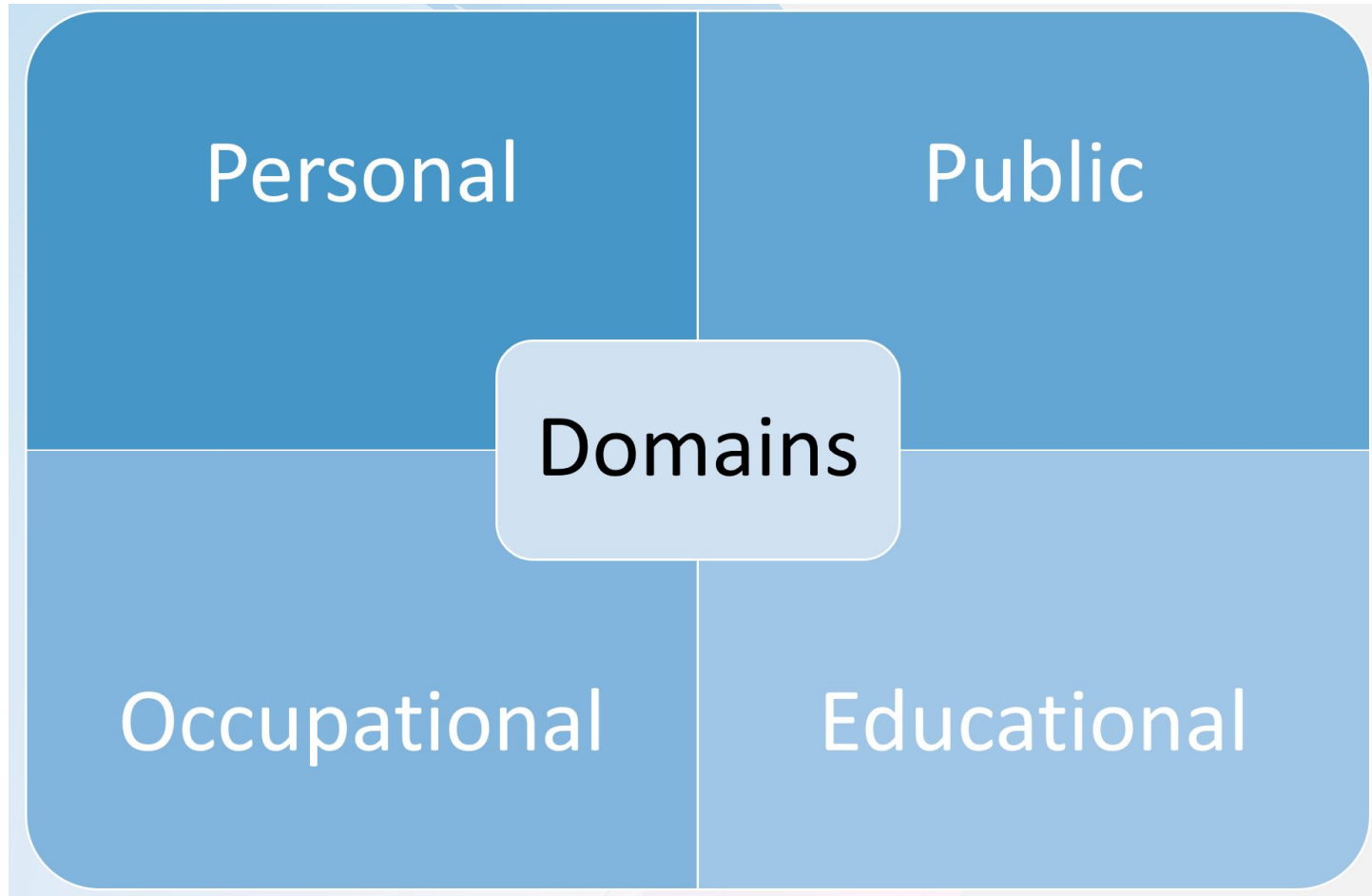
# Action-oriented Task

## Checklist

### Key Elements:

- ✓ Action is **purposeful** with real-life application
- ✓ There is a **clearly communicated goal** to be accomplished that results in a **product or outcome**
- ✓ Learners process **authentic texts** and **real life experiences**
- ✓ Learners **exercise agency** in an **authentic social context**
- ✓ There are **conditions and constraints** (e.g., that promote critical and creative thinking)
- ✓ Learners work **collaboratively**, helping the progress of others
- ✓ Learners **draw upon** existing and newly developed **competences**
- ✓ Learners make choices and **think and act strategically**

Modified from: **Hunter, D.**, Cousineau, D., Collins, G. and Hook, G. (2019). **Action-oriented Approach Handbook**. Ottawa: Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers.

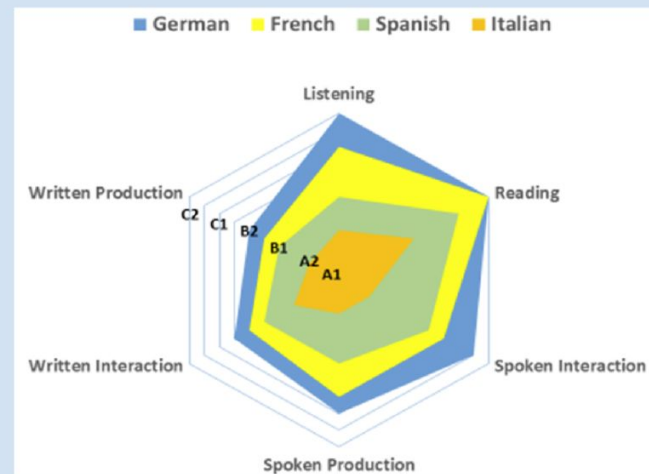


NOTE: CEFR Companion Volume, [Appendix 5](#): Examples of Use in Different Domains for Descriptors of Online Interaction and Mediation Activities (p.191)

# Plurilingualism and Pluriculturalism

Plurilingualism:  
the **dynamic and developing**  
linguistic  
**repertoire** of an  
individual  
user/learner  
(CEFR CV, 2020: 30)

*Plurilingual competence is defined as the ability to use a **plural repertoire of linguistic and cultural resources** to meet communication needs or interact with people from other backgrounds and contexts, and enrich that repertoire while doing so. ... (Beacco et al, 2016: 20)*

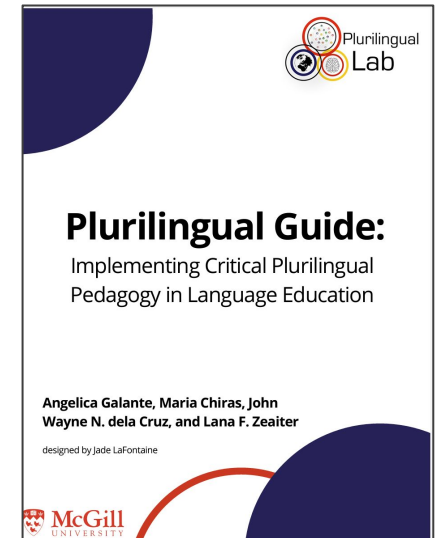


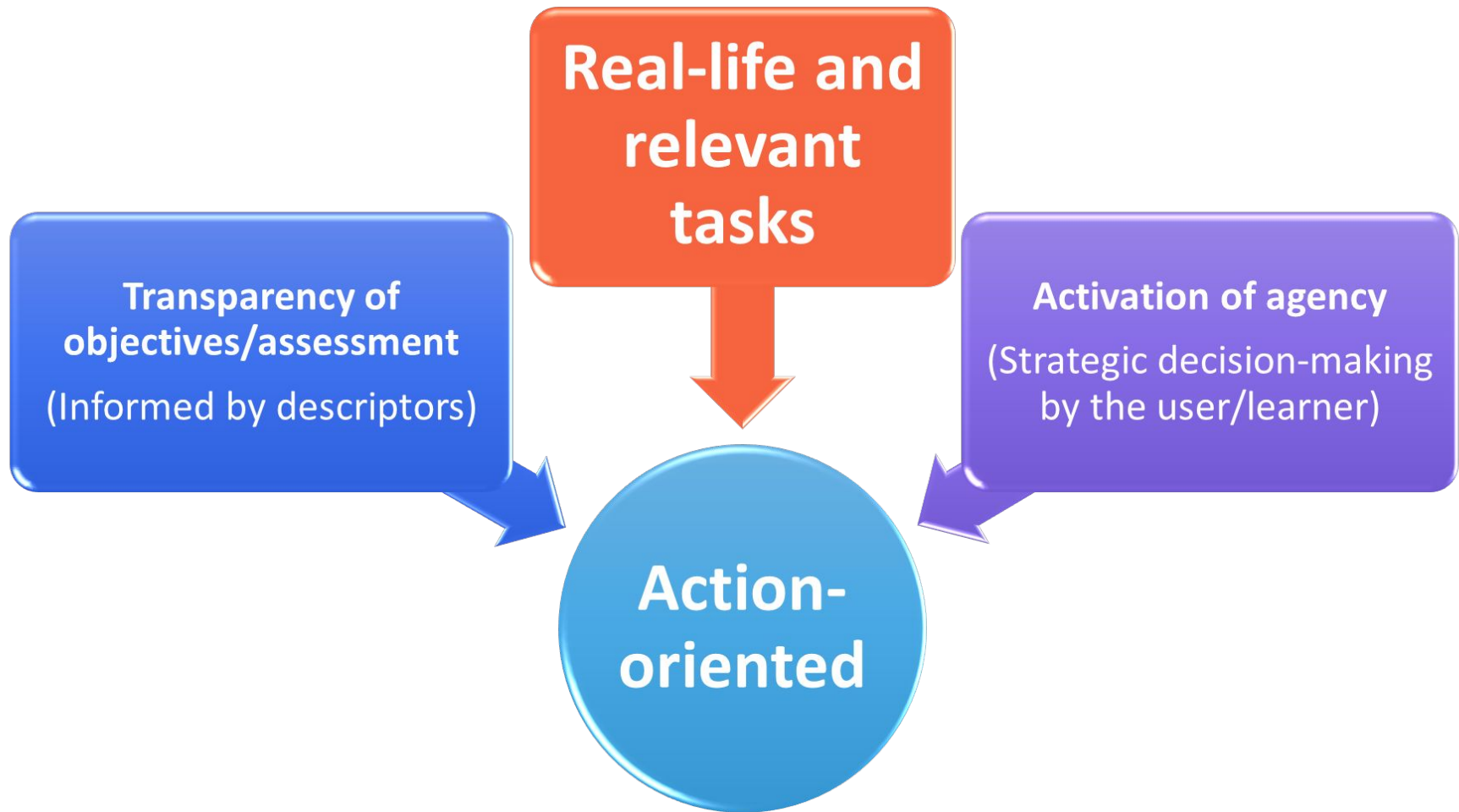
A plurilingual profile in the CEFR CV (Figure 8, p.39)



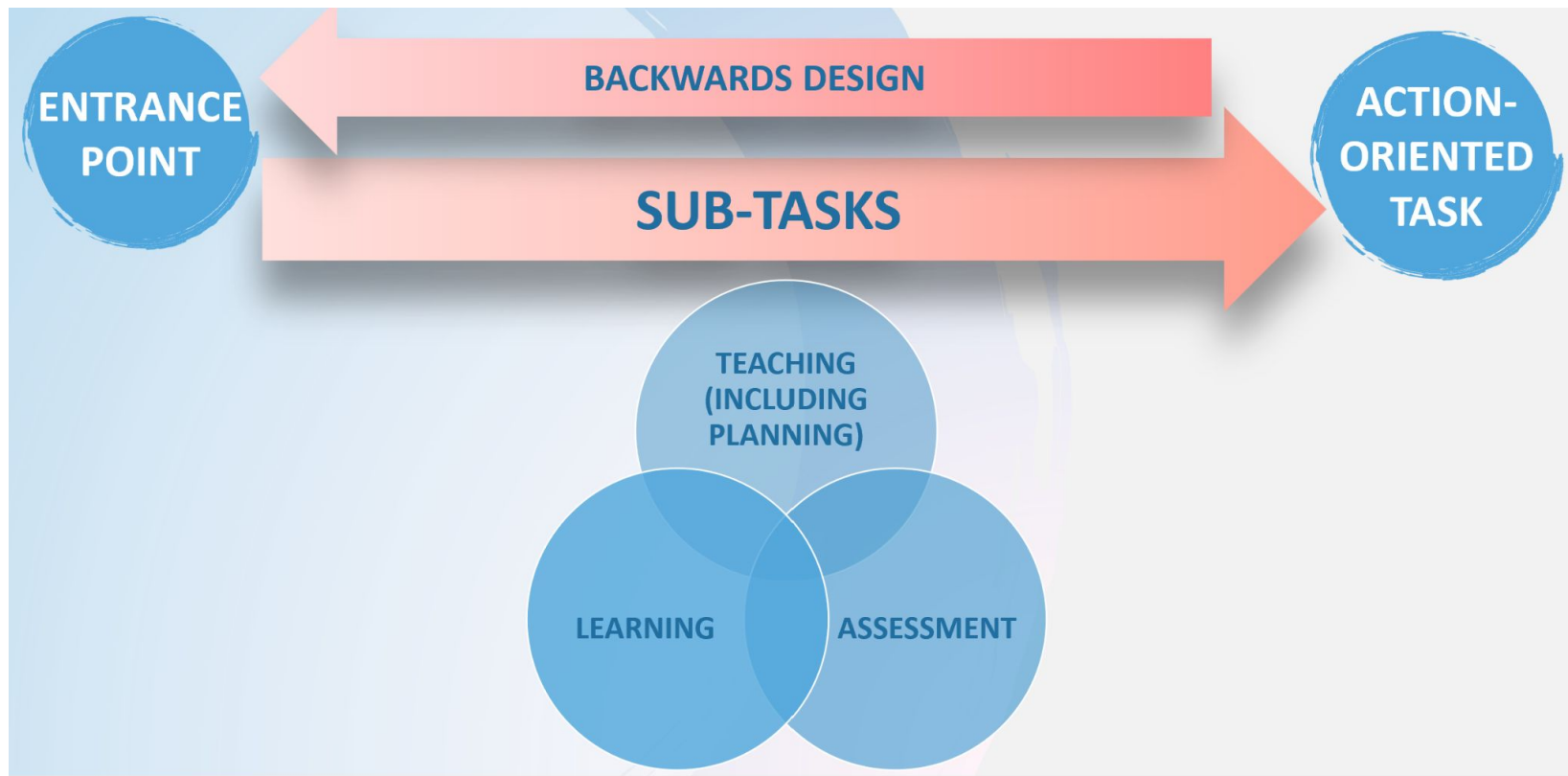
## 5 Pedagogical Strategies for Plurilingual Education

1. Cross-linguistic comparisons
2. Cross-cultural comparisons
3. Translanguaging
4. Translation for mediation
5. Pluriliteracies (note-taking, make use of different types of resources and materials)





## Planning Action-oriented Scenarios



# DISCUSSION

Salle 1	en français		Room 6	in English
Salle 2	en français		Room 7	in English
Salle 3	en français		Room 8	in English
Salle 4	en français		Room 9	in English
Salle 5	en français		Room 10	in English

## BEYOND:

Learning about the language (e.g.,  
grammar)

Language as code

Four Skills  
(Speaking, listening, reading, writing)

Linear

Prescribed

Fixed

Teacher led

Input/Output

School subject

“Native speaker”



## TO:

Living the language (real-life application)

Language as action/collaboration

Integrated modes of communication  
(reception, production, **interaction, mediation**)

Non-linear

Flexible

Dynamic (changes over time)

Student centred

Co-construction of meaning (via mediation)

Life trajectory

Proficient speaker

## Building an action-oriented task



*"AoA-inspired practices are influenced by context-related factors."*  
(Piccardo & North, 2019: 6)

## Scenario Ideas

Theme	Scenario
<b>Integrated Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviewing a local historical site on a travel website</li> </ul>
<b>Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organizing a fundraising campaign to support a local charity</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental Stewardship</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementing a composting program</li> </ul>
<b>Arts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning a musical recital at a nursing home</li> </ul>
<b>Healthy Relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hosting a social event over lunch</li> </ul>
<b>Physical Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designing a personalized workout plan</li> <li>Planning a trip to the local farmer's market</li> </ul>
<b>Mental Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning a wellness expo</li> <li>Speaking to your doctor about mental health supports in the community</li> </ul>
<b>Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inviting a knowledge keeper from a First Nations community to speak</li> <li>Ensuring community compliance with accessibility laws</li> </ul>
<b>Safe Communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Getting emergency assistance after an accident</li> <li>Proposing speed bumps to slow down traffic in front of a local daycare</li> </ul>
<b>Financial Literacy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating a monthly budget on a fixed income</li> </ul>
<b>Mathematical Literacy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ordering flooring and wallpaper for a room to be redecorated</li> </ul>
<b>Technology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Convincing a family member to purchase the latest smartphone</li> </ul>
<b>Entertainment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Critiquing a film online</li> </ul>
<b>Social Life</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organizing an evening out for friends visiting from out of town</li> </ul>
<b>Education and Career Life Planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sharing your education plan with a counsellor</li> <li>Attending a job interview</li> </ul>
<b>Workplace</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing a workplace health and safety display board and training</li> </ul>

Hunter, D., Cousineau, D., Collins, G. and Hook, G. (2019). *Action-oriented Approach Handbook*. Ottawa: Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers.

# Examples of Tasks

A1

Proposing a  
Local Hero

A2

Proposing a  
Name for a New  
School

B1

Proposing  
a School  
Name Change

B2

Proposing a Street  
Name Change

Hunter, D., Cousineau,  
D., Collins, G. and  
Hook, G. (2019).  
*Action-oriented  
Approach Handbook*.  
Ottawa: Canadian  
Association of Second  
Language Teachers.



## Exemple : Proposing a School Name Change, B1

For decades, the local school has been a source of pride and the heart of your community. Built in 1867, generations of families have attended the historic building, named after an important local politician. Recently, the past actions of that politician have been called into question. It is alleged that the local politician held discriminatory views and engaged in inappropriate behaviour. There has been a push to change the name of the school. Soon, you will have the chance to present your position at the school board meeting. You will only have eight minutes to present your argument using a slideshow. Representatives of the school board will ask you questions.

To prepare for your presentation:

- Research other communities that have experienced a similar situation
- Review the protocol for a school board meeting
- Speak to other community members to gather their perspectives
- Share your idea at a school-level meeting to convince more people to support your position (e.g., student council meeting, parent committee meeting)

At the meeting:

- Present your argument to convince the school board representatives (remember that it is a formal meeting)
- Answer questions

### Sub-Tasks

#### Description of Sub-Tasks to Build Identified Competences:

Description of Sub-Tasks to Build Identified Competences:	Language Activities Used:	Competences Stressed:
<b>Sir John A. Macdonald: Class Discussion</b> After watching the video clip " <i>Should schools bearing Sir John A. Macdonald's name be changed?</i> " <sup>109</sup> the class discusses the controversy taking place across the country around schools bearing his name.	Reception Interaction	Linguistic Pragmatic
<b>Talk of the Town: Inside/Outside Circle (annex 11)</b> Learners interact with others, discussing the school name, in a social setting.	Interaction Mediation	Sociolinguistic Linguistic
<b>School Board Policy and Procedures (annex 5)</b> Learners review the renaming policy and procedures for the school board to better understand the process and to inform their arguments.	Reception	Pragmatic
<b>Points of View: Café Conversations (annex 6)</b> Learners interact with others to hear the points of view of various stakeholders regarding the school name.	Interaction	Pragmatic
<b>Planning My Arguments</b> Learners gather information and build their arguments for the final task performance.	Reception Production	Linguistic Pragmatic
<b>How to Apply to Speak at a Board Meeting</b> Learners review the procedures for speaking at a board meeting and submit a written request.	Reception Production	Linguistic Sociolinguistic
<b>A Board Meeting In Action</b> Learners attend or watch a video clip of a board meeting in action.	Reception	Pragmatic Sociolinguistic
<b>Creating a Slideshow Presentation</b> Learners gather skills to build an effective slideshow presentation.	Reception Production	Pragmatic
<b>Building My Presentation</b> Learners build their presentation for the final task.	Production	Linguistic Sociolinguistic Pragmatic
<b>Gathering Support from the School Council</b> Learners deliver their presentation at the school council to gather local support.	Production Mediation Interaction	Linguistic Sociolinguistic Pragmatic



Hunter, D., Cousineau, D., Collins, G. and Hook, G. (2019). *Action-oriented Approach Handbook*. Ottawa: Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers.

*Your collaboration*

**SAMPLE SCENARIO TEMPLATE**

SCENARIO:		DOMAINS:	CEFR LEVEL:
DESCRIPTORS (ACTIVITIES – THE WHAT): <i>Production, Reception, Interaction, Mediation</i>		DESCRIPTORS (COMPETENCES – THE HOW): <i>Linguistic, Socio-linguistic, Pragmatic</i>	
DESCRIPTORS (PLURILINGUAL AND PLURICULTURAL)			
TASK:			
LINK TO CURRICULUM USED IN YOUR INSTITUTION (IF APPLICABLE):			

Note: General Competences (i.e., declarative knowledge, skills and know-how, existential competence, and ability to learn) are always combined with language competences (i.e., linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic) to complete a task. Although there are not descriptor scales for general competences, they are an important component of language proficiency.

SUBTASKS:		
DESCRIPTION OF SUBTASKS <i>Subtasks build the competences needed to complete the task</i>	LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES: <i>Production Reception Interaction Mediation</i>	LANGUAGE COMPETENCES: <i>Linguistic Socio-linguistic Pragmatic</i>

ASSESSMENT		
FOR	OF	AS

Modified from: Hunter, D., Cousineau, D., Collins, G. and Hook, G. (2019). *Action-oriented Approach Handbook*. Ottawa: Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers.

## Recommended steps for collaboration:

- Introductions
  - Name, country, your role in education, what you teach, ideas for a task that interest you (if you already know)
- Determine how you would like to work together to create scenarios
  - For example: Stay as one group (stay in main breakout room), subdivide into smaller groups (leave main breakout room and [use additional workspace room - claim room on Padlet](#))
- Determine a direction for your task by considering
  - the CEFR descriptors
  - Your own contextual factors (e.g., school curriculum, access to technology)
- Select descriptors
- Create the task
  - Consult the checklist
  - Be creative! Compose the task like it is really happening!
  - **SHARE YOUR TASK [ON THIS PADLET](#) (BE PREPARED TO SPEAK TO YOUR TASK)**
- Create sub-tasks
  - Determine what the learner needs to do to complete the task
- Think about possible assessments
- If needed, make plans to connect with your group after the meeting
- **FOR THE NEXT MEETING: BE PREPARED TO REFLECT ON HOW THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SCENARIO WENT**



Extra  
workspace  
QR Code



Task sharing  
QR Code

# Helpful links - Searchable Descriptors

COUNCIL OF EUROPE  
 CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)

Home News and events The framework Key concepts Descriptors Ideas for implementation Resources

You are here: Democracy and Human Dignity > Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) > The framework > The CEFR Levels

## The CEFR Levels

Some of the instruments produced within the Council of Europe have played a decisive role in the teaching of so-called "foreign" languages by promoting methodological innovations and new approaches to designing teaching programmes, notably the development of a communicative approach.

They have facilitated a fresh approach to communicating these teaching methods in a manner potentially more conducive to operational appropriation of unknown languages. By thus identifying language needs, they were able to pinpoint the knowledge and know-how required for attaining this communication "threshold."

The CEFR organises language proficiency in six levels, A1 to C2, which can be regrouped into three broad levels: Basic User, Independent User and Proficient User, and that can be further subdivided according to the needs of the local context. The levels are defined through 'can-do' descriptors. The levels did not suddenly appear from nowhere in 2001, but were a development over a period of time, as described below.



### The CEFR: a turning point

The first specification of this "threshold level" was formulated for the English language (*Threshold level*, 1975), quickly followed by French (*Un Niveau Seuil*, 1976). These two instruments have been used de facto as models for the same type of reference instruments that were produced subsequently for other languages, but they were adapted to suit the peculiar features of each language.

In order to meet the teaching and certification requirements, the level concept as defined was extended to cover specification of levels lying immediately below and above the threshold level. In the light of the developments in this field, particularly as regards the CEFR, other levels were developed for a number of languages. These proficiency levels constitute one of the origins of the six-level scale of the CEFR.

Launched in 2001, the CEFR marked a major turning point as it can be adapted and used for multiple contexts and applied for all languages.

The CEFR is based on all these achievements and has developed a description of the process of mastering an unknown language by type of competence and sub-competence, using descriptors for each competence or sub-competence, on which we shall not go into further detail here. These descriptors were created without reference to any specific language, which guarantees their relevance and across-the-board applicability. The descriptors specify progressive mastery of each skill, which is graded on a six-level scale (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2).

However, for textbook authors, teachers and other professionals, the specification set out in the CEFR may appear excessively broad, particularly since individual languages are not addressed. The [Reference Level Descriptions](#) (RLD) for national and regional languages, which provide detailed content specifications for different CEFR levels, have been developed to address this issue.

CEFR : three tables used to introduce the Common Reference Levels



### SHORTCUTS

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR)

Newsroom

The framework

Key concepts

Descriptors

Ideas for implementation

Learning, Teaching, Assessment

Purposes of the CEFR

Resources


events

### The CEFR online :

[CEFR - Companion volume \(2020\)](#)

[CEFR Descriptors \(Searchable\)](#)

## Helpful links - Searchable Descriptors



No	CEFR Descriptor Scheme (updated)	Mode of communication	Activity, strategy or competence	Scale	Level	Descriptor
12	Communicative language activities	Reception	Oral comprehension	Overall oral comprehension	A1	Can follow language which is very slow and carefully articulated, with long pauses for them to assimilate meaning.
13	Communicative language activities	Reception	Oral comprehension	Overall oral comprehension	A1	Can recognise concrete information (e.g. places and times) on familiar topics encountered in everyday life, provided it is delivered slowly and clearly.
29	Communicative language activities	Reception	Oral comprehension	Understanding conversation between other people	A1	Can understand some expressions when people are discussing them, family, school, hobbies or surroundings, provided the delivery is slow and clear.
30	Communicative language activities	Reception	Oral comprehension	Understanding conversation between other people	A1	Can understand words/signs and short sentences in a simple conversation (e.g. between a customer and a salesperson in a shop), provided people communicate very slowly and very clearly.
49	Communicative language activities	Reception	Oral comprehension	Understanding as a member of a live audience	A1	Can understand in outline very simple information being explained in a predictable situation like a guided tour, provided the delivery is very slow and clear and that there are long pauses from time to time.
64	Communicative language activities	Reception	Oral comprehension	Understanding announcements and instructions	A1	Can understand instructions addressed carefully and slowly to them and follow short, simple directions.
65	Communicative language activities	Reception	Oral comprehension	Understanding announcements and instructions	A1	Can understand when someone tells them slowly and clearly where something is, provided the object is in the immediate environment.
66	Communicative language activities	Reception	Oral comprehension	Understanding announcements and instructions	A1	Can understand figures, prices and times given slowly and clearly in an announcement by loudspeaker, e.g. at a railway station or in a shop.
80	Communicative language activities	Reception	Oral comprehension	Understanding audio (or signed) media and recordings	A1	Can pick out concrete information (e.g. places and times) from short recordings on familiar everyday topics, provided they are delivered very slowly and clearly.
95	Communicative language activities	Reception	Audio-visual comprehension	Watching TV, film and video	A1	Can recognise familiar words/signs and phrases and identify the topics in headline news summaries and many of the products in advertisements, by exploiting visual information and general knowledge.

## Useful links: Examples of tasks

LINCDIRE Project (English):

<https://lite.lincdireproject.org/all-scenarios-2/>

FIDE (French, Italian, German):

<https://fide-info.ch/fr/ressources-didactiques/scenarios>

CoE CEFR Workshop Handouts:

- Developing an Action-oriented Pathway in the Classroom (English): [LINK](#)
- Le volume complémentaire du CECR : qu'a-t-il de nouveau pour l'enseignement des langues ? (French) [LINK](#)



# Breakout Room Options

Please choose your group (main room) based on your language preference and the level that you teach.

	<b>MAIN ROOMS (Start here)</b>		<b>EXTRA WORKSPACES (If needed)</b>
Room 1	French / A1 and A2	Room 11	Reserve the space on <a href="#">Padlet</a>
Room 2	French / B1 and B2	Room 12	Reserve the space on <a href="#">Padlet</a>
Room 3	French / C1 and C2	Room 13	Reserve the space on <a href="#">Padlet</a>
Room 4	French / Policy makers	Room 14	Reserve the space on <a href="#">Padlet</a>
Room 5	French / Teacher trainers	Room 15	Reserve the space on <a href="#">Padlet</a>
Room 6	English / A1 and A2	Room 16	Reserve the space on <a href="#">Padlet</a>
Room 7	English / B1 and B2	Room 17	Reserve the space on <a href="#">Padlet</a>
Room 8	English / C1 and C2	Room 18	Reserve the space on <a href="#">Padlet</a>
Room 9	English / Policy makers	Room 19	Reserve the space on <a href="#">Padlet</a>
Room 10	English / Teacher trainers	Room 20	Reserve the space on <a href="#">Padlet</a>



Padlet  
QR Code

Sharing our action-oriented tasks (Padlet)

[Link to the PADLET](#)





*Thank you!*