

THE CEFR COMPANION VOLUME:
A KEY RESOURCE FOR INCLUSIVE PLURILINGUAL EDUCATION
CEFR ONLINE WORKSHOP SERIES 2022 #2

Title

**The learner as social agent: Implications for curriculum design
and classroom practice**

Date & Time

3 March 2022, 16.00 CET

Presenter

Bernd Rüschoff

Handout

Examples of classroom tasks

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NOTE: Please look at the activities listed in this handout prior to the webinar session. This is key to their use in the breakout sessions. Thank you.

The activities contained in this handout are suggestions for action-oriented learning activities fostering social agency. In the breakout sessions, you will a) be invited to critically reflect one of these activities and b) share any ideas and sample activities from your own context that – to you – fit in with the idea of fostering social agency in the classroom. Each group will be invited to share their comments as well as ONE own activity that fits in with the construct of language users and language learners as social agents, as described below:

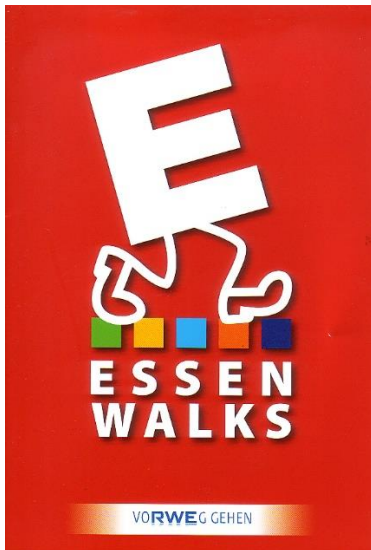
The distinction between receptive, productive, interactive and mediation activities is based on the idea that language users are independent and responsible participants in society. They are 'social agents' and use languages to communicate and interact in the real world; to create and mediate meaning, often in collaboration. They pursue different goals, in several contexts.

Languages are not only an instrument to obtain and exchange information, but also to interpret the world and to build both individual and collective knowledge through interaction and dialogue. Language learning is, therefore, both a cognitive and a social activity. It takes into consideration the interactional and communicative realities, purposes and contexts of real-world language use.

Language education should therefore create learning contexts that encourage learners to grow in their role as social agents, as autonomous and responsible language users. Learners as social agents can then take responsibility for their learning process, and become powerful lifelong learners. This is reflected in promoting an action-oriented approach.

The presentations and materials from all the 2021 Webinars are available at www.coe.int/lang-cefr under the **Newsroom** tab. The video recordings will also soon be available.

Example 1 – The *Essen Walks* Project



In this activity, repeatedly used as part of our school practice track (initial teacher education) in a German secondary school context with students at an age of appr. 15/16 years, learners were encouraged to research their hometown and identify sights and facts that might be of special interest for visitors.

In class, the topic of *city walks* as exemplified by London Walks (<https://www.walks.com/>) is introduced and explored in a first session. Groups are formed, based on learners' special interests and/or the neighbourhoods they live in, and then invited to a) familiarize themselves with the content, structure, and organizational aspects of a tourist walk, and b) research and select points of interest in their chosen area.

Learners then produce informational materials, visuals and cue cards to be used during the walks, and walks are presented and discussed in class. The whole class (groups contributing info on their walk) prepares a brochure advertising the walks. We always try to actually enable groups to actually offer the walks "for real", inviting colleagues, seminar groups and friends to act as audience. As said, this is a project we conduct regularly as part of our school practice track in our EFL teacher education curriculum.

The sample pages shown here are taken from a brochure that students created with the view to offer walks as part of the social program of an international conference we hosted at our university, where the walks were very popular.

▶ THE WALKS

KATERNBERG	WALK 1
STEELE	WALK 2
MARGARETHENHÖHE	WALK 3
WERDEN	WALK 4
KETTWIG	WALK 5
RÜTTENSCHIED	WALK 6
CITY WALK	WALK 7
CLASSICAL ENTERTAINMENT	WALK 8
HEISINGEN	WALK 9

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▶ DEDICATED TO ESSEN

When Essen was chosen as Cultural Capital 2010, I felt that I wanted to make a contribution to my hometown's event.

As I have always thought of Essen as a city worth living in, with its lovely landscapes and its warm-hearted, down-to-earth people, I believe that guests from all over the world should be shown the often hidden beauty of its quarters.

That was the beginning of a project in which 15-year-old students from Helmholtz-Gymnasium and students of the University of Duisburg-Essen started preparing five Essen Walks, offering a look behind the scenes of this unique city.

We all welcome our international guests and hope they will enjoy Essen as much as we do.

Angelika Osieck

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▶ WALK 1

KATERNBERG

Romantic Farms and Co@l Mines

Essen Katernberg serves as a prime example of new development in Ruhrgebiet. We want to describe its origin from a small farming village to an industrial centre in the 20th century and give you an impression of how the district was influenced by coal mining.

Our tour starts at the Katernberger Market – we will visit a very old farmhouse, typical miners' dwellings, and the Zeche Zollverein.

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Example 2 – Encounter Project: Meet & Greet with an English speaking person

The basic idea of encounter projects is to provide learners with the opportunity to have direct contact and interact with speakers using the target language. The principle idea behind all encounter projects is the face-to-face encounter with speakers of the target language and the learners subsequent processing and sharing the experience and information gathered in class. They can take place either in an L1 environment if there are members of the L2 culture around or in the L2 environment (class trip or school exchange). In cooperation with local schools – part of our school practice network – we often invite school classes to our (English) department, and colleagues make themselves available for encounters with groups of school kids. Another option to adapt to local context is that learners research target language communities in their L1 environment, e.g. speakers of English in Germany, or contexts in which English is commonly used as a language of interaction.

Step 1: At school: Learners are prepared for the encounters, e.g. by introducing, reflecting, and practicing Q&A and interviewing techniques. Groups are formed and the logistics of visiting the university are shared. Groups prepare for the encounters, establish topics and issues they might want to focus on, prepare questions, cue cards, etc, ...

Step 2: At university: An introductory session = ice-breaking encounter and general welcome with all involved is held.

Step 3: At university: Each group spends a period of time with a colleague assigned to them, conducts recorded interviews and has informal chats, sometimes also observes the colleague „in action“, i.e. sits in in a suitable seminar etc..

Step 3: Back at school, student groups prepare posters, using Piktochart or a similar tool, based on recordings, pictures and notes taken

Step 4: Groups share their poster and present their “encounter” in class

Step 5: Wrap up and follow-up

On the following pages you find a few (anonymized) sample posters:

Adam von Wald

Character traits:

- goal-oriented
- self-confident
- goofy



"Every bad experience is also a good experience."



Main information:

- received his Bachelors in German studies with an additional concentration in international political economy
- teaches in the area of language practise and American cultural studies



FROM:



TO:



America:

- polite
- just agree / do not want to get any negative attention
- very expensive (15.000\$ just for school lessons)
- professional sports teams
- all universities have their own stadium
- many parties, events and clubs
- own "lifestyle"
- living on campus
- active demonstrations
- go on the streets
- want a fast change
- do work overtime
- help costumers to get what they need



language



university



politics



business

Germany:

- very direct/straight-forward
- say what they want to say
- just for education
- going home after education
- nothing special happens
- are not that active
- say what they want but then just wait for a change
- more respect for separation between business and free time
- go home after finishing work

Emigration

Advantage:

- new start / new chance
- see something different
- like an adventure
- discover the world
- freedom
- make new friends
- learn a new language
- get to know a new culture

Disadvantage:

- visa issues
- people treat foreign people like "shit"
- "We do not want you"
- you have to fight for your rights
- it is not easy to find a place to stay
- many places are temporary



Conclusion:

Adam von Wald



... loves the German language
 ... loves discussing, which he considers to be typical for the German culture
 ...thinks it was a good decision to go to Germany even if it was hard to get to the point where he is right now
 ... will always call his native home his real home
 ... claims that everything deals with luck
 ... regrets nothing





Field trip to the UDE

10 FACTS ABOUT:

Julian Sudhoff



- 1 -professor for Teaching English as a Foreign Language & Applied Linguistics 
- 2 -has a Ph.D. in bilingual teaching, a TESOL and a teaching degree for Gymnasium and Gesamtschule 
- 3 -is a native German 
- 4 -has visited some friends in San Francisco & studied in London, has contacts to America, Scotland, Australia-> developed interest in English 
- 5 -likes the British culture and their kind of humor 
- 6 -English is a part of his everyday life (his working life is very much influenced by the English language)
- 7 -he also studied Biology 
- 8 -at first, he wanted to become a doctor but after having had serious medical troubles in a foreign country and seeing people die in the hospital, he changed his mind 
- 9 -his opinion on bilingual lessons: good, because you use English in the content of the lesson-> use it in real life (work field)
- 10 -his opinion on the importance of cultural interest: language is connected to culture-> if you learn about a language, you should learn about the culture 

Countries he has got connections to



BY: Sina Wiegand, Ronja Jordan, Aleya Baser, Lina Steinhoff
06/21/2017

Cultural differences

N. F. : ; C. N. : ; S. A. : ; R. : ; K. : ;



Elena Furlanetto

Profile

- Born in Italy
- Studied in Venice
- Went to Austria and the USA,
- Lived in Dortmund, Berlin and Essen after that

Languages: Italian, English, German (French, Greek)

"Acceptance is the key moment for feeling integrated."

Plans for the future: Applying for German citizenship, becoming a professor, having a family

Most of the time, she speaks English

Bad experiences



Good experiences



Wrong stereotypes about people



German sounds hard and aggressive



This gesture means "delicious" in Italian (question mark)

Work at university



Loves research more than teaching

much training: 11 years for all

friendly and a good climate
Friends here at university

6 years for the PHD

students aged 18-->25 from all around the world

powered by



Example 3 – Online Interaction/Exchange: Topic going/living abroad: focus on summer camps

The topic is connected with a unit in the textbook used in secondary school in Germany (grade 10 = appr. 15/16 years)

Based on the textbook, teacher & learners further explore the topic = summer camps based on a video (YouTube) and materials available on the internet, e.g. websites explaining/advertising summer camps. Learners are prepared for further exploration of the topic in groups, prepare and conduct online exchanges with partners in the US - existing personal and/or established via teacher – and then share, exchange and reflect information gathered with other groups based on group presentations.

Pre task: Collaborative & interactive exploration of topic and activity

Teacher & learners prepare, discuss and form groups

Establishing a mindset for intercultural exploration

Step 1: Groups discuss and prepare for activity

Groups decide on mode and type of communication with partners abroad and establish rapport with these

= social agency, digital literacy, intercultural awareness, real-world/own-world connection. taking charge of learning process, ...

Step 2: Groups interact with external partners & gather information on topic

= social agency, online interaction & collaboration, cross cultural interaction and mediation, gathering exchanging information, plurilingual/pluricultural repertoires come into play,

Step 3: Groups interpret & process information gathered,

if needed conduct further research in additional (online et al.) resources, prepare report to class, reflect delivery format, choice of presentation mode & medium

= social agency, digital & educational literacy, cross cultural interpretation & mediation, building collective knowledge through interaction, ...

Step 4: Group presentations & discussion in class

= social agency, mediation across the board, sharing information & opinion, exchanging and reflecting collaboratively gathered and interpreted information

Step 5: Language focus

= collaboratively expanding linguistic and applied social agency related/relevant language awareness

Example 4 – Focus on cultural and intercultural awareness: Using song in the language classroom

Soon after its original release in 1990, teachers began to use Billy Joel's song „We didn't start the fire“ as a starting point for project-based learning, initially focusing on groups of learners researching the actual content behind names, events, etc. listed in the song and creating and sharing explanatory hypertexts, websites or presentations to be discussed in class or even published for a wider audience.

We often integrated such projects into the school practice sessions we conduct in cooperating with local schools, where we also asked learners to reflect the song's more American perspective, and then add a few stanzas with content from a more European or even German/local context.

More recently, projects of this kind began to focus on encouraging learners to create a kind of „Present Day `We Didn't Start the Fire´ Song“, asking students to assume the role of Billy Joel by rewriting his song using more learner relevant present day events.

Billy Joel's "We Didn't Start the Fire" Year by Year (1949-1989)

1949: Harry Truman, Doris Day, Red China, Johnnie Ray South Pacific, Walter Winchell, Joe DiMaggio

1950: Joe McCarthy, Richard Nixon, Studebaker, television North Korea, South Korea, Marilyn Monroe

1951: Rosenbergs, H-Bomb, Sugar Ray, Panmunjom Brando, "The King and I," and "The Catcher in the Rye"

1952: Eisenhower, vaccine, England's got a new queen Marciano, Liberace, Santayana goodbye

CHORUS

We didn't start the fire
It was always burning
Since the world's been turning,
we didn't start the fire
No we didn't light it
but we tried to fight it

1953: Josef Stalin, Malenkov, Nasser and Prokofiev
Rockefeller, Campanella, Communist Bloc

1954: Roy Cohn, Juan Peron, Toscanini, Dacron

Look at the following websites, the first of which also contains the lyrics of the song, for examples of such activities:

<https://www.henry.k12.va.us/cms/lib/VA01000023/Centricity/Domain/2324/We%20Didnt%20Start%20the%20Fire%20Project%20Overview.pdf>

<https://www.cusd80.com/cms/lib6/AZ01001175/Centricity/Domain/721/We%20Didnt%20Start%20he%20Fire%20Project.pdf>

<https://sites.google.com/site/cwpoetryproject/-we-didn-t-start-the-fire>

In the presentation leading into the breakout sessions, an update on very recent options, very much rooted in the learners' current real-world contexts and experiences, will be reported for further consideration by the breakout group reflecting this type of project.

Example 5 – Comprehension and mediating through digital output

(Activity 2, Webinar 2/21- March, Bernd Rüschoff)

In this activity, used in a German secondary school context with appr. 15/16 year old students, learners read and discussed an extract from the play *Breath of Life* by David Hare. The focus reading and classroom reflection was on stereotypical views, and this issue was further developed in class. Groups of learners were then invited to create a short photo soap that addressed the issue of stereotype, following up on the slightly humorous sarcastic tone in the extract. The photo soaps were created using Comic Life, a very versatile tool that, though easy to use, allows for creating photo soaps and comics with a professional touch.

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„Mediating“ Responses to Literature

Madeleine: That's how they are. Because they are richer than everyone else, so they have to insist their dramas are more significant.
(Madeleine shakes her head)
And my God, all that behaviour in restaurants ...

Frances: What behaviour?

Madeleine: Even here, on the island, you hear them in restaurants ...

Frances: Who?

Madeleine: Americans.

Frances: Oh.

Madeleine: 'Does this chicken have skin on it?' What's that all about?

Frances: You tell me.

Madeleine: This incredible fear. This terror. What's the waiter meant to say?

Frances: I don't know.

Madeleine: 'No, this chicken never had a skin. This chicken shivered skinless in its coop at night, just pure flesh and feather, terrified it might one day give an American a calorie.'

(Hare 2002: 10) >>> EXAMPLE of PRODUCT

Bernd Rueschoff

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„Mediating“ Responses to Literature

SOMEWHERE ON A HIGHWAY

A PHOTO-SOAP BY
GREACE BURLIA,
LEONIE A VERENA

By the way, does Rome belong to Germany?

Oh yeah! I've heard of this famous sausages and 'sauerkraut'

Bloody hell! That's disgusting!

Actually, I think they eat it every day!

Bernd Rueschoff

Example 6 – Collaborative negotiation of creative output: writing poetry

Expressing personal response to poetry & image



- 1) What sort of dog is this?
- 2) What might it be made of?
- 3) What and how does it feel?
- 4) Where is it going?
- 5) Where is it coming from?
- 6) Write down five adjectives which, for you, describe the appearance of the dog!
- 7) How would you describe the way it is moving?
- 8) How would you describe its expression?
- 9) Write down a few adverbs and adjectives which might be used to describe the way it moves and feels!

Bernd Rueschoff

This is an activity we have used with learners at various levels, as preparation for collaboratively writing a text (poem) as well as expectations concerning the output can be adapted.

Initially, the whole class responds to the picture of Giacometti's sculpture guided by the questions shown above. After brainstorming and collecting thoughts and words, learners read the poem and discuss, whether the poem reflects their original thoughts and responses.

Giacometti's dog²

Bent down
as if his bronze torso
is too heavy to bear,
but heavier still
is all his sorrow.
Aimlessly
and sad
wandering around
in the silent shadows
of my mind.
No thoughts.



Following this, groups (teams of either 2 or 4 students) are encouraged to write their own poem, similar in format and structure to the model, in reaction to another of Giacometti's sculptures, i.e.



The poems are then presented by the teams using a poster they create and discussed in class. Here are some sample products, written by students (teams of 2 - age 15/16) in a secondary school in Germany. From our perspective, the attention to detail and "content-reflection" in the design is indicative of the learners' motivation and sense of involvement in this activity.

DIRECTED AIM

poem-directed.jpg

**LARGE STEPS
AWAY FROM THE PLACE OF LONELINESS
LOOKING FOR AID
DESPERATELY SEARCHING FOR A SOULMATE
SKINNY, BONEY LEGS
WALKING RESTLESSLY**

**HEAD UP
HIS EYES DIRECTED AT HIS AIM
WANDERING AROUND
NEVER LOOKING AT THE GROUND
HOPEFUL**

FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE.

NEVER-ENDING

**Bent down as if his
burden is too heavy to bear,
but his spirit is stronger.**

**With his skinny long legs
he takes tiny small steps.**

**He tries to reach an aim
he will never see.**

Always walk in one direction.

LOST

*desperate walk
as if his depressed body
is too powerless to go on
through a forest.*

*exhausted
and hungry
wandering around
looking for protection
and searching for food.*

close to death.

Example 7 – Exploiting social media in the classroom

Here are three ideas as to how to make use of social media in the classroom presented on

<https://livetilesglobal.com/6-fun-social-media-projects-assign-classroom/>

1. Summaries in Tweet Form

Some teachers may scoff at the idea, but having students summarize important readings in 140 characters gets them to think critically about the reading's main idea. Too often in long-form essays, students stray from their thesis and lose track of the central point. The Twitter summary trains them to focus on the main idea, a skill that will come in handy throughout their education within the online classroom.

2. The Brick-by-Brick Discussion on Padlet or similar

The brick-by-brick discussion is bound to excite students. Here's how it works: After each class, students are required to post an idea, insight or question they have about the course content to Yammer. Then, another student responds with a meaningful comment. Every student in the class must post a meaningful comments at least once. This encourages classroom community and enables students to reflect on what they're learning each day.

3. The Hashtag Activism Challenge for the Online Classroom

To encourage students to learn about social justice, teachers can ask them to use social media to promote a particular cause. This project-based learning activity engages students in real world activism, while at the same time, strengthens their digital communication skills. Students with the most success on social media (followers, like, retweets) can receive some sort of prize at the end of the school year.


Consider these, and also look at the following short text on the British Council website, in which Tom Hayton, a freelance teacher and trainer, comments on various options for using social media in the language classroom:

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/using-social-media-classroom>

Reflect as to whether any of the suggestions above or made in the text quoted fit in with your understanding of how to integrate social agency into classroom practice.

Example 8 – Online interaction: Challenges and opportunities of online writing tools

(Activity 4, Webinar 6/21, Johann Fischer)

Title:	Challenges and opportunities of online writing tools	
Language:	English	
CEFR Level:	B2+ / C1	
Author:	Julia Zabala Delgado (Universitat Politècnica de València / VITbox Project)	

Introduction to task

Goals of the activity: practice collaborative writing of a proposal online, dealing with instructions to the participants, explanation of motives and justification of requirements. Use of online collaborative tools (google docs, Dropbox, etc) and writing on explicative notes and comments on the work carried out but other team members.

Introducing the activity in the classroom

- ask participants to share which online writing tools they use and if they have ever worked collaboratively online in a second language. If they have, which sort of project did they work on?
- ask participants about the misunderstandings that were generated. Were those misunderstandings a result of the language used? or of the medium used?
- ask participants to provide ideas that could help facilitate the work and prevent misunderstandings, simplifying the syntax for example.

Scenario

The EU Cohesion Policy contributes to eco-tourism by conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage. It is taking action to improve the urban environment, to revitalise cities, regenerate and decontaminate brownfield sites, reduce air pollution and promote noise-reduction measures. It supports the industrial transition towards a resource-efficient economy, promoting green growth, eco-innovation and environmental performance management in the public and private sectors.

Proposals for funds can be sent to CohesionPolicy@commission.eu

Write up your draft proposal together, choose a team leader and distribute the work. Remember the goal is to write collaboratively and not individually.

Proposal:

1. Abstract/Summary. Explain your needs and goals in 80 words. Be effective
2. Statement of Need. What is your goal? Why is it important? Be convincing.
3. Project Activity, Methodology and Outcomes. What steps will you undertake? What do you expect to achieve? Be clear.
4. Evaluation. How are the outcomes going to be measured? Be practical
5. Budget. What is your budget? Be concise.

Description of the main activity:

This activity can be carried out in blended learning courses as an online activity or in traditional courses as a classroom activity. In the second case, make sure your students have phones, tablets or computers where to be able to write collaboratively. Conversely, students can do the writing online as a homework activity and the reading of the final text and comments can be carried out as a final activity in the classroom.

1. Put students in groups of three to five and set up an online document (googles docs, dropbox, Microsoft teams, etc) starting with the text below on EU funds.
2. Ask each group to prepare a proposal to ask for funds for the rehabilitation of villages in a rural area. Remind them the goal is to rehabilitate the villages to protect the cultural heritage, attract

population to increase the number of inhabitants and encourage their economy by promoting agriculture, ecotourism, etc.

3.a. For an online activity:

Ask the members of the teams to go online and distribute the work, they should all work together on the text and use notes and comments on the platform to communicate their ideas. Remind participants that the notes and comments are particularly important to give instructions and suggestions to other writers. Ask students to present the final draft and a brief report (150 words) of the experience.

3.b. For a classroom activity:

Day 1 – Introduce the activity in the classroom and send the members of the teams the link to the online document. Ask them to divide the work and discuss the ideas they want to put forward. Ask them to work from home.

Day 2 – Ask the team members to present the document to the whole class and follow the ideas below under the heading “class discussion”.

4. Peer feedback – class discussion

Project the draft proposals for all students to see. Pay special attention to the comments and notes added to the document to comment the work of the different team members.

- How is the language used?
- Was the intention of the writer of the note or comment clear?
- How many responses to the comment or note were needed to clarify the point?
- Did it contribute to the writing of the draft?
- Did misunderstanding arise from communicating via comments and notes?
- Was the writing of the draft facilitated?

Descriptors CEFR level B2+:

Mode of communication / Activity, strategy or competence: Interaction	Scale: Goal-oriented online transactions and collaboration
Descriptors: Can engage in online collaborative or transactional exchanges within their area(s) of expertise that require negotiation of conditions and explanation of complicated details and special requirements. Can deal with misunderstandings and unexpected problems that arise in online collaborative or transactional exchanges by responding politely and appropriately in order to help resolve the issue.	

Descriptors CEFR level C1:

Mode of communication / Activity, strategy or competence: Interaction	Scale: Goal-oriented online transactions and collaboration
Descriptors: Can participate in complex projects requiring collaborative writing and redrafting as well as other forms of online collaboration, following and relaying instructions with precision in order to reach the goal. Can deal effectively with communication problems and cultural issues that arise in an online collaborative or transactional exchange by reformulating, clarifying and providing examples through media (visual, audio, graphic).	