

# **The CEFR Companion Volume: Enhancing engagement in language education. Reflection Day**

## **Report**

### **Introduction**

The event took place in a hybrid mode on June 15, 2023, with the seven members of the CEFR Expert Group physically present in Strasbourg and the 40 invited participants intervening online. Approximately one third of the participants were policy makers operating at a ministerial level, the others being mainly teacher educators and university professors.

The aims of the Day were outlined in the Concept Note and Programme (see Appendix), sent in advance to the participants. The main idea was to capitalize on the interest in the CEFR Companion Volume, clarify its key messages and the way these dovetail with developments and experience gained in language education over the past 20 years or so, discuss how to address common misunderstandings of the CEFR, gain a better picture of how innovation is occurring, and above all discuss what next steps might be taken to reinforce a shift towards genuinely action-oriented, plurilingual and intercultural language education.

The event lasted five hours in total 13.00 – 18.00 CEST and was organized around four themes. After an opening by Sarah Breslin, Head of Languages, Education Department, Enrica Piccardo introduced the event, presenting the scope and goals. This was followed by an outline of the programme and instructions for the breakout rooms, given by Danielle Hunter.

Subsequently, the work was organized in two parts with a short break in between. In Part One, discussion of Themes 1 and 2 were taken in parallel sessions, followed by a second set of parallel sessions on Themes 3 and 4. Participants, who had been asked to confirm in advance their preferences in terms of themes for the breakout rooms and the languages in which they could operate, joined the themes they had previously chosen. Most participants had indicated their preference for two themes (one for Part One and one for Part Two). On the basis of this information, subgroups of approximately 10 participants had been formed in advance, two groups for each of the parallel themes, one operating in English and French and the other operating in English only. The treatment of each theme in the parallel sessions followed three

phases: (a) a 10-minute presentation by the member of the CEFR Expert Group who was facilitating the session; (b) autonomous group discussion in the two breakout rooms on the theme (30 minutes); and (c) reports of the two subgroups and general discussion (20 minutes).

The themes were the following:

- Theme 1: **How can the CEFRCV facilitate curriculum design for action-oriented, plurilingual and intercultural language education?** (facilitated by Daniela Fasoglio)
- Theme 2: **How can we counter common misunderstandings and misrepresentations of the CEFR?** (facilitated by Brian North)
- Theme 3: **How do action-orientation, mediation and plurilingualism, interrelate and align with recent developments in language education** (facilitated by Enrica Piccardo)
- Theme 4: **How can the CEFRCV support the creation of (digitally-mediated) collaborative learning environments in the post-Covid context?** (facilitated by Bernd Rüschoff)

Part Two started with 10-minute summaries of each of the discussions on the four themes (Theme 1: Daniela Fasoglio and Rosanna Margonis-Pasinetti; Theme 2: Brian North; Theme 3: Enrica Piccardo; Theme 4: Bernd Rüschoff). This was then followed by a 60-minute general discussion in plenary, chaired by Brian North and Rosanna Margonis-Pasinetti. Finally, the event was closed by Marta Medlinska of the Secretariat.

The event went very well, there were no issues with the use of technology and the logistic support provided by Marta Medlinska and Danielle Hunter was very effective, the timing was exemplar, the discussions very rich with most of the participants directly intervening either directly or through the chat. The participants were also very proactive by creating google docs with shared notes, which allowed the organizers to better capture the core of the discussion in their syntheses. At the end of the final discussion, the participants suggested pooling email addresses to create some kind of forum to continue discussions and exchanges of experience, which would facilitate sustainability of the event.

The following synthesis of the work done during the event (exchanges and discussions in the groups, subgroups syntheses and reports, final discussion) is organized as follows:

- Preliminary considerations across themes;
- Synthesis of each thematic discussion;
- Synthesis of the final general discussion;
- Final considerations.

The Appendix contains the Concept note and Programme of the event as well as all the PowerPoint presentations used.

## **Preliminary considerations across themes.**

Although most of the time participants in the event were working in subgroups, it is noteworthy to highlight that some considerations regarding the CEFRCV emerged that were common across themes. These shared topics highlight the role and potential of the CEFRCV in innovating language education. This is particularly noteworthy as the participants had been carefully selected among professionals who were knowledgeable of the CEFRCV, were active in a wealth of geographical contexts, languages, and levels of education, and had different roles (e.g., teachers, teacher educators, curriculum developers, faculty members, and policy makers) and the potential to be multipliers.

These are the main transversal points:

- The CEFRCV is seen as a solid and coherent framework that can be used to leverage curriculum reform and to facilitate a shift towards a more agentic plurilingual action-oriented education.
- The CEFRCV greatly contributes to laying out core concepts (mediation, plurilingualism/pluriculturalism and action-orientation) in a comprehensive and accessible manner, even though examples, training and the possibility of localizing and exchanging resources remains key.
- The CEFRCV has anticipated the digital transformation that we are witnessing in classes (and increasingly so after COVID) while stressing the need for a social-agency-oriented language education. Providing digital communication descriptors has facilitated the shift to integrate digital learning and agency in the class.
- The CEFRCV has foregrounded several concepts that align with human rights and with the focus of studies on decolonialization. The overall philosophy of the CEFRCV is coherent with other frameworks developed by the Council of Europe, in particular the RFCDC, and the CEFRCV contributes to operationalizing concepts such as citizenship or democracy through plurilingual/pluricultural perspectives and approaches.

## **Synthesis of each thematic discussion**

There now follows a synthesis of the discussions that took place related to each of the themes.

### **THEME 1: How can the CEFRCV facilitate curriculum design for action-oriented, plurilingual and intercultural language education?**

The participants acknowledged the **added value of the CEFRCV for the various aspects of integrated curriculum design** and highlighted the potential of the CEFRCV to act as a coherent framework that can be used to establish (plurilingual) guidelines for a common understanding of language learning. Through the plurilingual and pluricultural approach the CEFRCV also contributes to operationalising essential concepts such as citizenship and democratic values. Specifically, mediation plays a fundamental role in this, not only as a tool for the language

learning classroom, but also as a cross-curriculum tool. The CEFRCV helps teachers and teacher educators to rethink the curriculum and to assign the learner an active role in it. It can also be used as a tool to establish standards.

The participants highlighted the need for the CEFRCV to be implemented in a way that takes into account the needs of each particular context. For successful implementation of the CEFRCV in the curriculum, there are several requirements that the participants considered indispensable:

- It would be helpful to develop core objectives in CEFRCV wording.
- There is a strong need for teaching materials: putting the key concepts of the CEFRCV into practice is a big challenge for teachers, especially understanding the action-oriented plurilingual/pluricultural approach. Teachers need examples of collaborative tasks that help them translate such an approach into their practice. Such examples are not there yet in textbooks. Teachers also need guidelines that help them adapt existing materials to their context and to develop their own materials, for example when it comes to mediation.
- Teacher training and re-training in the fundamental concepts of language teaching is crucial. Critical engagement with the rationale and the key concepts of the CEFRCV is crucial for effective and sustainable implementation, and to enhance cooperation and sense-making.
- The availability of CEFRCV-related digital tools, and the development of skills in using such tools in the language classroom is also considered crucial.
- Coordinated plurilingual assessment tools are needed. Some aspects of mediation and plurilingualism can and should be assessed, others should be included in the curriculum but should not be related to standards.

It was emphasized that the use of CEFRCV for curriculum design should help pursue goals of:

- *inclusive language education*, both plurilingual and pluricultural, stimulate learning of several languages and ensure all languages are considered an asset, including all the languages present in the classroom;
- *learner agency*, with students becoming aware of their own language learning process and their own language use inside and outside the classroom, and with language teachers as active facilitators collaborating with each other and with other subject teachers.

Curriculum design requires both top-down and bottom-up leadership across the different levels. Practitioners and policy makers need each other and influence each other. It is, therefore, important to raise policy makers' awareness of the CEFRCV approach.

Lastly, for inspiration: the CEFRCV has also stressed the importance of sign language. Sign language users are a good example of multimodal language use and can inspire all other languages.

## **THEME 2: How can we counter common misunderstandings and misrepresentations of the CEFR?**

The participants identified the following six main issues that hinder getting across the main CEFRCV principles and themes:

### **1. Lack of knowledge**

The CEFR is often seen and understood just as a standard for tests and assessment, which mainly appears as labels on textbooks. Even in contexts in which the CEFR has informed language policies and has become a “reality” (e.g., in Latvia) there is discrepancy in terms of how it is implemented. It may be easier for teachers to have clear guidelines on CEFRCV implementation at least as a transitional step. If we treat CEFR descriptors (e.g. for plurilingual and pluricultural competence) as just “illustrative descriptors” it may be too vague for some teachers and they may not know how to apply them.

The communicative approach has been around more than 40 years and tends to perpetuate traditional ways of thinking and teaching. Many misunderstandings come from teachers who still just do not understand how the CEFR approach is different from the communicative approach that informs their textbooks. In general, there is a lack of understanding of the action-oriented approach, which is confused with traditional task-based language teaching (TBLT). Not much is done in teacher education to overcome this lack of knowledge (for instance, in Italy, the introduction of questions on the CEFR in the national examination-competition to become a permanent teacher came as a surprise to many, leading to complaints; in Canada, where the CEFR informs the curricula of French as a second language and international languages, there has been a noticeable lack of progression in talking about CEFR – one rarely hears about mediation – with the CEFR being confused with DELF, the exam used as one way to introduce it).

Fundamentally, it doesn’t help that curriculum, exams, and training are not aligned with each other, despite the fact that this is one of the main aims of the CEFR, and that current approaches to assessment hinder understanding of the CEFR.

### **2. Teacher professional development & change**

There are very few pre-service teacher education courses that explore the CEFR<sup>1</sup>. In those that do, the fundamental problem is that it takes an enormous amount of work to bring trainee teachers to integrated, plurilingual pedagogic approaches, but these students, once in their school, conform to their colleagues and continue to perpetuate traditional approaches. Even when a CEFR-based approach has become policy (e.g., in Israel) and is presented to pre- and in-service teachers as such, things are not much easier because moving teachers beliefs and practices from what they are used to towards a new approach is challenging. Teachers find it difficult to change. Debunking the notion that teachers will accept change easily and openly addressing this challenge is crucial.

Fundamentally, policy statements and intermittent workshops do not work effectively. There is a need for continuous professional development.

### **3. Assessment**

The effect of certificates and assessment is perhaps the main factor impeding an understanding of the CEFR. To demystify the CEFR, one needs to counter the confusion that it is an assessment instrument, to counteract the fact that the CEFR is only referred to in terms of levels. The European Language Portfolio has done harm as well as good by

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<sup>1</sup> In the 2017 survey of member states on the CEFR and the new descriptors for mediation etc., only 50% of those that answered (27 out of 47) that answered stated that the CEFR was used in pre-service teacher education.

reinforcing the focus on levels and assessment – even if this assessment was meant to be formative. The dominance of testing instead of learner-oriented assessment is conditioning everything and we are constantly trapped by that. It is essential to work on this issue and reform testing to align it with curricula and pedagogy. It all goes back to the power of tests in today’s education systems. Training needs to change so people understand that the CEFR is about more than levels and tests.

#### 4. **Institutions and sectors as isolated silos**

Schools and universities are so clustered within their walls and rarely look more widely to current developments. The shared theoretical background that the CEFR 2001 sought to help develop is still very much lacking. In several university contexts the CEFR is not used at all – 20 years on (e.g., Italy, France, etc.) and curricula, for example in faculties of languages, are still developed based on tests. In Higher Education in general, applied language studies are very differentiated, involving courses in language for specific purposes, courses for interpreters/translators, etc.. Furthermore, there is a lack of connection between the teaching of languages at university and the problems that primary and secondary schools have in language education (choice of languages beyond English, number of hours, etc.). In Higher Education, there is generally a reaction against change, anchored in tradition, with little professional development (this confirms point 2. For another context).

#### 5. **Understanding of new concepts (four modes, mediation, action-orientation & plurilingualism)**

The shift from the four skills to four modes which include mediation is a big step for some people to understand. Teachers have difficulty in understanding what mediation is – teachers need to know all the modes of communication; they need to understand mediation as construction of meaning (as opposed to exchange —reception and production— or negotiation of meaning —interaction) and this needs to be built into teacher training. Mediation is in fact often seen as being superfluous, as it involves the other modes of communication (reception, production, interaction). Mediation may “complicate” people’s work and is challenging. It is therefore often ‘misunderstood’ and interpreted as translation (at university as well as school level) when it should be about the construction of meaning. In addition, a top-down introduction of mediation (with an obligation of assessment) can lead to negative attitudes from the teachers and a reductive interpretation of the concept in practice (e.g., in the official language schools – EOIs – for adult education in Spain). Other concepts such as the action-oriented approach need to be made more concrete at the level of the class, and so does the integration of plurilingualism in the classroom, with teachers struggling to see how they can make it compatible with the curriculum.

#### 6. **Eurocentricity/colonialism**

Outside Europe, the CEFR is often seen as another colonizing tool from Europe. It is difficult to address this issue, which is very political, very ideological.

Having identified these key issues that hinder getting across the main CEFRCV principles and themes, the participants turned to measures that should be adopted at the different educational levels. The following measures were suggested:

**COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE:** Establishing a community of practice around the CEFR which would work as a reference hub. In a sense, a continuation of this group

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:** CEFR-training works well when it is part of the overall teacher education program. Teachers need steady access to training events on how to implement aspects of the CEFR with workshops on how to use it in their day-to-day work, sessions on the new descriptors, on designing tasks, asking teachers: How can we include mediation? How can we make it more action-oriented? This can encourage local communities of practice. Workshops should focus on benefits the CEFR brings to specific target groups. What's in it for the policy maker? What are the benefits for curriculum designers? What are the benefits for teachers? What are the benefits for students?

One must also accept the fact that people engage with the CEFR concepts gradually. It is important to align the competences prominent in the local curriculum with the CEFR and integrate CEFR concepts in it, with the message that using CEFR descriptors for teaching goals and assessment gives a practical orientation, with clear concrete aims rather than the vague ones often given in the curriculum.

Involving pre- and in-service teachers in projects can also be effective (as, e.g., in Israel and Canada). Having them prepare their own materials is one way to address the challenges. Projects that take teachers and students into the community with community-based action-oriented scenarios (as in Quebec) can be very effective.

It would be helpful to share training activities and examples of good practice between different institutions. The dissemination of case studies (e.g., the CoE book '[Enriching 21<sup>st</sup> century language education](#)' is crucial).<sup>2</sup> Here one must emphasize that the context is very important: workshops will not be the same depending on the context.

**INTEGRATE ASSESSMENT AND LEARNING:** One should use the CEFR to harmonise teaching and assessment – with feedback driving learning and action. Using the CEFR apparatus one can create an ecology of learning that integrates assessment and learning, with activities at different stages of learning, assessment for and as learning<sup>3</sup>.

**LANGUAGES ACROSS THE CURRICULUM:** Current developments towards CLIL in primary and secondary curriculum (e.g. in Spain, Czech Republic), often require teachers to develop action-oriented learning scenarios that interrelate with other subject matter and the world outside the classroom. One can ask subject teacher what the students need to do and develop a programme of language learning for a purpose that is relevant for their lives, for example presenting a subject-based project at the end of the school year.

**DECOLONIALIZATION:** The CEFR contains a lot of concepts that align with human rights and decolonialization. The CEFR can be seen through a decolonial lens and can be aligned with other local realities. Combining such CEFR principles with decolonizing principles in training and publishing is one possibility. We need to publish more on new ideas using the CEFR.

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<sup>2</sup> See also the promising practices from the CEFR Qualimatrix project available (a) on the [Qualimatrix](#) site and (b) in the three sections (Curriculum, Classroom teaching, Assessment) of the tab '[Ideas for Implementation](#)' on the CEFR website ([www.coe.int/lang-cefr](http://www.coe.int/lang-cefr))

<sup>3</sup> Cambridge have produced an excellent short (4.24 mins) animated video on CEFR-based Learning-oriented Assessment – the second video on the [main Assessment tab](#) under the Ideas for Implementation tab on the CEFR website.

### **THEME 3 – How do action-orientation, mediation and plurilingualism, interrelate and align with recent developments in language education**

Several participants highlighted the **innovation potential of the CEFRCV which is revolutionizing the class with its definition of the Action-oriented Approach, the importance of mediation, the value of descriptors and the development of plurilingual/pluricultural competence.**

Teacher education was at the centre of the discussions, as it is essential for a new generation of teachers. As initial teacher education is usually provided by universities, the link between research and practice is questioned. All participants have highlighted the importance of teacher education and training. Training should be offered in different forms and at different levels, considering that some practitioners have never heard about the CEFRCV while others have already some familiarity. Language teacher training is often in Linguistics departments – whereas it needs to be multidisciplinary and continuous. The training should also include practical hands-on activities for participants to be able to really see and experience the implications of the core points (AoA, plurilingualism, mediation). Expanding on this, the importance of localizing was also mentioned (including with materials/workshops in different languages) as well as the importance of sharing and collaboration (sharing experiences across contexts, creating communities of practice, linking schools with higher education, crossing disciplines, etc.). The importance of experimentation, project management by teachers was mentioned but there was attention to other aspects too: values, pedagogical competences, autonomy, critical thinking, respect of the other. It would be important to define a teacher profile, a professional identity which includes a plurilingual/pluricultural component. Teacher mobility and the implications for teachers of subjects other than languages were also highlighted. Finally, a point was made on the importance of offering targeted training to language centres in Higher Education. Participants mentioned that also an international forum would be important if linked to the more localized actions.

One important part of the discussion concerned the **role (and impact) of stakeholders like publishers, materials developers/designers, and textbook writers, which are often not targeted, but which have an enormous impact in language education.** The importance of reaching materials developers was emphasized. Publishers go for global markets, following demand, which prevents innovation. The problem of seeing materials published which are labeled AoA-oriented but in reality are not at all AoA-oriented was highlighted. The group stressed the importance to reach out to this audience with targeted actions, and to be aware of the political dimension linked to language education at all levels, especially considering that the CoE has a greater reach in terms of policy makers than researchers. In this respect the issue of not expanding to multiple languages that is now being observed in policy makers was also discussed and the CEFRCV is seen as having potential to address this problem and to foster a more inclusive education which makes space for the languages of origin of the students. A very important consideration made highlighted how the CEFRCV enables linking partial competences to learners' extracurricular competences with a view to dealing with tensions and conflicts in a positive and respectful way that values learners' personal linguistic and social profiles.



The discussion went into depth on the **importance of the Action-oriented Approach as the entry into all the core concepts of the CEFRCV**, with one participant saying that “when teachers see the value and effectiveness of the AoA, the interest in plurilingualism, mediation, descriptors, tasks increases greatly.” There was full consensus that the AoA enables integration of the teaching/learning of linguistic resources and real-life communicative situations, and that this is essential to foster awareness among students and to facilitate self-assessment. Participants saw the role of training on the AoA as having great potential: for material developers to overcome the traditional textbook formats and to see the possibility of combining more classic textbook materials with more innovative pedagogies; for new or trainee teachers to value the sociocultural conditions of language use and the sociolinguistic value of language varieties. For teachers and students the AoA can be a way to make space for the use of descriptors that take into consideration the reality of society with a focus on linguistic diversity and authenticity. In this respect, the role of assessment was also discussed with regard to its powerful washback effect.

Finally, the discussion included **consideration of multimodality, technologies, 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, and ChatGPT**. Participants saw the technological dimensions as clearly linked to the new developments in the CEFRCV and as great opportunities to expand the audience, and facilitate collaborative work across contexts, languages, and disciplines. They also stressed the link between the CEFRCV and 21<sup>st</sup> century competences (including linking the CEFRCV with other frameworks) and that mediation and plurilingualism are not just relevant to language education but have a big role to play in the new developments.

#### **THEME 4: How can the CEFRCV support the creation of (digitally-mediated) collaborative learning environments in the post-Covid context?**

Participants share the perception that COVID has accelerated digital transformation and led to sustainable changes in professional, social, and educational practices. These need to be addressed in a social-agency-oriented language classroom. It was acknowledged that **the CEFRCV and the inclusion of descriptors addressing digital interactional/transactional practices are important, as they give credibility to the need to integrate digital learning and agency into language education**. Having digital communication descriptors – as one group put it - has helped overcome resistance to online communication from teachers who prioritized handwritten communication and non-digittally enhanced classroom practices.

Participants also recognized that **the overall educational philosophy of the CEFRCV aligns with the enlightened use of digital resources in language teaching**. The principles of digital education - sociocultural and constructivist approaches, and action orientation - chime well with the CEFR approach. This also dovetails with the holistic construct of mediation in the CEFRCV. Digital communication offers new contexts to apply mediation as it enhances collaborative, problem-based learning with extended use of technology and digital spaces/practices.

**The overall philosophy of the CEFRCV reflects the needs of social agency and (digital) citizenship and is coherent with other frameworks developed by the Council of Europe such as RFCDC**. As participants suggested: if you are a good mediator, you can do it in any

medium. But there are new opportunities using digital practices that could be addressed further. This includes linking CEFRCV-related activities with a further focus on *Competences for Democratic Culture*.

As far as Digital Transformation is concerned, the value of the CEFRCV was acknowledged and **Case studies of the kind provided by the CEFRCV Case Study Volume “Enriching 21<sup>st</sup> Century Language Education” can provide “practice-oriented” examples of digitally mediated environments.** However, participants also highlighted the importance of addressing the issue of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in language education, particularly the new opportunities for collaborative learning tasks that integrate chatbots and generative AI, the dangers and pitfalls it may present, and the fact that many worthwhile interactional practices (and tasks) cannot be handled with AI.

Assessment was also discussed in terms of the “positive” impact ERT (Emergency Remote Teaching) during the COVID pandemic has had on rethinking the construct of assessment; the relevance of the CEFRCV in this context being underlined. New technology has become available for assessment, with, for example, digital assessment of speaking becoming normal practice in some contexts. We can now build on experiences during the pandemic and exploit its possibilities.

Finally, both groups highlighted the challenges for teacher professionalization at all levels and stages concerning digitally mediated language learning. **Teachers need to be empowered to empower learners.** This includes using effectively a wide range of options in their teaching, fostering the ability of learners to take advantage of these richer and more varied opportunities in their language learning and in learning how to learn. Teacher professionalization needs to empower teachers to foster more flexibility in language education, which includes choosing methods that fit given learning spaces, deciding on how to use and combine a variety of learning spaces, and appropriately exploiting a variety of tools and resources, while competently managing the resulting diversity of learning spaces and interactions. However, it was noted that language teacher identity has been shifting quite a lot due to COVID. **A lot of pressure is being put on teachers: they have to become professionals in new, different things. Acquiring new knowledge while keeping your passion and enthusiasm will be challenging. All participants acknowledged that the CEFRCV helps to align all relevant areas of concern.**

## **Synthesis of the final general discussion**

In the final phase of the event, the participants who came all together after the groupwork, were provided by each group facilitator with a synthesis of the discussions which had taken place in the breakout rooms. After this, a long collective discussion took place. Hereafter a synthesis of the most salient points.

Participants complained that in the field of language education stakeholders tend to be in different silos so one important point would be to make sure that dissemination of the CEFRCV and its core concepts reaches different target groups (policy makers, teacher trainers, ...). For

this they suggest both different formats (MOOC, modular professional development courses, etc.) and guidance on the website directing different target audiences to resources relevant to them. In fact, participants suggest a concept-map-type of organization of resources. There was in addition the comment that the field lacks a CEFR-themed platform for sharing experiences, opportunities and challenges, with the suggestion of a project to synthesize existing resources, provide concrete examples of good practice, identify the relevant gaps, fill these, and provide a clear roadmap for global and local dissemination.

As far as training is concerned, participants emphasize that it is important to provide continuous professional development at different levels: (a) introductory (b) implementing complex concepts. Finally, participants also highlight the crucial need to support newly trained teachers beyond the end of pre-service training to help them resist the pressure from colleagues and textbooks/curricula to revert to traditional approaches. There is a need for school-based training: staying in touch with teachers. There was a suggestion that such local training could take the form of projects (possibly including publishing with teachers) and the encouragement of communities of practice, with the ECML helping to provide coordination, both at a national level, supporting contact between local groups, and at a pan-European level.

Furthermore, participants suggest the need to revisit teacher competences (in particular, the excellent framework produced by Michael Kelly) to include plurilingual/pluricultural competence and how to promote it in the classroom, and in general to focus more on issues teachers who are in schools are facing now.

It was pointed out that publishers and examination boards – and sometimes even training consultants – tend to make teachers dependent and put across a distorted interpretation of the CEFR/CEFRCV in the process. It is important for teacher trainers to work together to create localized CEFR-based professional development programs that encourage communities of practice for teachers, who tend to feel isolated, to share experiences.

Participants stress the need for mentors: “champions of the CEFRCV” they call it. These mentors have a trailblazing role in trying out approaches that teachers might want to try but do not dare to, and in showing that these approaches work.

Participants then highlight the need to look at EU projects that are in the domain of multilingualism and are linked to social issues (e.g., immigration, diversity, democracy, inclusivity...). The goal of the Council of Europe should be on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), not just on providing content materials in multiple languages, as sometimes is the case with EU projects. Plurilingualism is an attitude, thus has a strong link with DEI. In this respect, participants highlighted the fact that parents and not only teachers should be a target audience for awareness-raising actions on plurilingualism.

One other point that was discussed in the plenary group was the need to start from where teachers are. The crucial role of the Action-oriented Approach was emphasized as a way of introducing core concepts of the CEFRCV, and the support that digital tools can provide in this. When introduced to the Action-oriented Approach, many teachers tend to continue with it, discovering the related concepts in the process.

Finally, the overlapping of the CEFRCV and RFCDC was highlighted several times, with need to explore links and the comment: “We have a great framework (CEFRCV) to bring our people together; the job now is to bring other people in.” As one participant put it at the end of the discussion, now we are finally talking about education: we are there with the CEFR where we wanted to be twenty years ago, instead of talking about A2 and B1.

## **Final considerations**

The *The CEFR Companion Volume: Enhancing engagement in language education*. Reflection Day proved to be a very successful event, and one which bears great potential for future developments and collaborations as several participants highlighted both during the final moments of the event itself and afterwards through emails and personal communications. One of the most relevant aspects was the awareness of the value of the CEFRCV as a tool able to infuse innovation in language education at different levels from curricula to pedagogy, from teaching to assessment, from teacher education to the integration of digital literacies. There was a consensus that the CEFRCV key concepts have considerable innovative potential for fostering inclusive language education and the development of learner agency. Participants in multiple groups identified the Action-oriented Approach as the entry door for mediation and plurilingual/pluricultural competence and as the way in which learner agency can be fleshed out and provided space for development in the classroom.

In the participants’ mind it was clear that the CEFRCV – and its approach – makes space for the language of origin/home languages of students, valuing individual linguistic and cultural profiles, opening to other school subjects and to extracurricular competences as a way to embrace diversity and provide means to prevent (and if necessary, deal with) tensions and conflicts in the classroom. In this respect, participants highlighted how the CEFRCV can be seen through a human rights and decolonial lens, and its principles can be combined with the those of the RFCDC as the overall philosophy of the CEFRCV is coherent with the RFCDC and reflects the needs of today’s teaching realities and of teacher education.

It was generally agreed that the CEFRCV has great value to develop learner agency, (digital) citizenship and the establishment of (plurilingual) guidelines for common understanding of language learning. Altogether, the CEFRCV definition of the Action-oriented Approach, the importance of mediation, the value of descriptors and the development of plurilingual/pluricultural competence are revolutionizing the language class, when they are applied. Several participants supported this with the testimony of experiences in their contexts.

The success of the event was also visible through the numerous mentions of communities of practice that participants identify as a venue for sustainable teacher development and dissemination of the CEFRCV. By foregrounding the value of sharing, but also of localizing, participants pointed to a move towards the building of a culture of mutualization and flexible adaptation of resources and practices. They saw both a community at the Council of Europe

level, which would include some form of continuous involvement of experts like the event they were participating in, and more localized communities which would experiment and contribute to create a corpus of good practices to inspire other teachers (reference to works like the CEFRCV Case Study Volume “Enriching 21<sup>st</sup> Century Language Education” was also made).

As participants reminded us all, people engage with concepts gradually. The depth and wealth of concepts that the CEFRCV foregrounds will require some time to be fully integrated by the field, at the different levels: practice, policy making and research. What is important to highlight as a conclusion is one of the main messages that one participant offered at the end of the event, that we are finally there where we hoped we would be some twenty years ago, at the time of the release of the CEFR 2001. With the CEFRCV we are now talking about core concepts that bear great promise for the development and innovation of language education and education in general.

## **Appendix:**

### **Concept Note and Programme**

### **PowerPoint presentations**

# The CEFR Companion Volume: Enhancing engagement in language education. Reflection Day

## Date and place

Online: 15<sup>th</sup> June 2023: 13.00 – 18.00 CET

## Format

CEFR group at Strasbourg, c40 participants online; English and French with no interpretation (breakout rooms with a choice of English only or English/French)

## Background

The CEFR, particularly the CEFR Companion Volume with its focus on collaborative learning, learner agency, mediation and plurilingualism:

- provides the backbone to many of the desired developments listed in the Council of Europe's 2022 Recommendation on Plurilingual and Intercultural Education for Democracy<sup>1</sup>;
- furthers both the integration of home languages in education and linguistic diversity beyond English in modern language teaching;
- is reflected in the results of the ECML 2022 post-Covid survey: more specifically, in the need for language learning activities centred on action-oriented approach and for the development of digital literacy through online and blended learning in the post-Covid era;
- is cited, together with the Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights, as the basis for the development of the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC);
- is a highly visible tool that has the potential to facilitate a broadening of the scope of language education and the development of interculturality and education for democracy.

## Aims of the meeting

- a) To capitalize on the enormous interest in the CEFR Companion Volume and to engage the experience of language professionals, benefitting from their experiences and experimentation.
- b) To gain a better picture of how innovation is occurring and what next steps might be taken to reinforce a shift from conventional 'communicative' language teaching to genuinely action-oriented, plurilingual and intercultural language education.
- c) To emphasise the relevance of the CEFR Companion Volume, and the entire CEFR project, in the current (post-Covid) language learning context, since teachers and students have become more receptive to the concept of action-oriented, collaborative, and digitally mediated tasks as a means to provide a dynamic learning environment and so bolster student engagement.
- d) To clarify the inter-related 'CEFR key aspects' highlighted in the CEFR Companion Volume (action-orientation, mediation, plurilingualism) and to show how developments and experience gained in language education over the years dovetail with these key messages.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/education/-/new-council-of-europe-recommendation-on-the-importance-of-plurilingual-and-intercultural-education-for-democratic-culture>

- e) To address urban legends (misunderstandings and misrepresentations and/or ideological attacks) regarding the CEFR Companion Volume, the CEFR project, plurilingualism etc. for example:
- that the CEFR is a reform proposal rather than just a language proficiency standard;
  - that plurilingualism is a vision whose main aim is to foster inclusivity and social justice rather than an elitist, neoliberal EU project for professional mobility;
  - that descriptors are meant to inform curricula and task design and levels are used to exemplify what might be realistic to expect from a class rather than descriptors being just for (self-) assessment and being associated with levels for that purpose;
  - that the provision of descriptors for mediation and plurilingual/pluricultural competence is mainly intended to encourage the integration of these aspects in classroom practice rather than for assessment;
  - that the CEFR is the product of sound research, rather than being non-scientific.
- f) To set up a network of policy makers and language professionals working on action-oriented, plurilingual and intercultural education.

## Draft Programme

<b>13.00-16.05</b>	<b>Part 1: The CEFR project, myths and reality</b>	
13.00-13.10	Opening and welcomes: Sarah Breslin, Head of Languages, Education Department	
13.10-13.25	Introduction: Aims of the meeting: Enrica Piccardo Instructions: Danielle Hunter	
<b>13.30-14.50</b>	<b>Session 1: Parallel thematic sessions</b>	
	<b>Theme 1: How can the CEFR CV facilitate curriculum design for action-oriented, plurilingual and intercultural language education?</b>	<b>Theme 2: How can we counter common misunderstandings and misrepresentations of the CEFR?</b>
13.30-13.40	Room A: Presentation: Daniela Fasoglio	Room B: Presentation: Brian North
13.45-14.15	Breakout rooms: Room A1 Room A2	Breakout rooms: Room B1 Room B2
14.20-14.40	Room A: Reports and discussion	Room B: Reports and discussion
14.40-14.50	<i>Coffee break</i>	

<b>14.50-16.05</b>	<b>Session 2: Parallel thematic sessions</b>	
	Theme 3: <b>How do action-orientation, mediation and plurilingualism, interrelate and align with recent developments in language education</b>	Theme 4: <b>How can the CEFR CV support the creation of (digitally-mediated) collaborative learning environments in the post-Covid context?</b>
14.55-15.05	Room A: Presentation: Enrica Piccardo	Room B: Presentation: Bernd Rüschoff
15.10-15.40	Breakout rooms: Room A1 Room A2	Breakout rooms: Room B1 Room B2
15.45-16.05	Room A: Reports and discussion	Room B: Reports and discussion
16.05-16.20	<i>Coffee break</i>	
<b>16.20-18.00</b>	<b>Part 2: Achieving a shift towards action-oriented, agentive, plurilingual and intercultural language education</b>	
<b>16.20-17.00</b>	<b>Reports back on the four themes, with discussion</b>	
16.20-16.30	Theme 1: The CEFR CV as a means to facilitate curriculum design for action-oriented, plurilingual and intercultural language education: Daniela Fasoglio	
16.30-16.40	Theme 2: Countering misunderstandings and misrepresentations of the CEFR: Brian North	
16.40-16.50	Theme 3: Action-orientation, mediation, and plurilingualism and the way they align with developments in language education: Enrica Piccardo	
16.50-17.00	Theme 4: The CEFR CV as a support in providing dynamic, (digitally-mediated) collaborative learning environments in the post-Covid context: Bernd Rüschoff	
<b>17.00-18.00</b>	<b>Plenary discussion:</b> Chairs: Rosanna Margonis-Pasinetti and Brian North	
<b>18.00</b>	<b>Closure</b>	

### Biographical Notes for the CEFR Expert Group

**Evelyne Bérard** is currently a consultant and associate expert with France Education International, and was previously a lecturer and the director of the Centre de Linguistique Appliquée de Besançon.



She has a PhD in Linguistics and Didactics. She has carried out numerous expert and training missions abroad in the context of linguistic and educational cooperation projects in Africa, Latin America, Asia, Australia and Europe and was attaché for educational cooperation at the French Embassy in Athens. She is the co-author of several French teaching courses based on the CEFR and the author of books and articles on the teaching of French as a foreign language.

**Daniela Fasoglio** is modern language expert at the Dutch Institute for Curriculum Development (SLO) and is responsible for a comprehensive national language curriculum reform currently taking place for Dutch upper secondary education. She has coordinated the development of the Dutch CEFR online portal for primary and secondary education, that provides teachers with information, videos and interactive tools to implement the CEFR in the language curriculum. She has authored several publications on the implementation of the CEFR in Dutch education. Her expertise includes curriculum analysis, design and evaluation at the national and school level, as well as development and implementation processes. She is engaged in the integration of such issues as culture, mediation and plurilingualism in language education. In the past she worked as teacher trainer, language teacher, lexicographer and translator.

**Danielle Hunter** has taught French as a Second Language (FSL) in the elementary and secondary panels for over 20 years. Before pursuing her PhD in Language and Literacies on a full-time basis at the University of Toronto/OISE in 2022, Danielle was the FSL, Classical and International Languages Consultant at the Durham District School Board (DDSB) in Ontario, Canada. Danielle has authored multiple pedagogical resources on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the Action-oriented Approach, and regularly presents and offers coaching in these areas. In 2021, Danielle was appointed as one of seven international CEFR Consultants for the Council of Europe. In addition, Danielle was part of the provincial writing team for the revised FSL Ontario Curriculum, and is an accredited *Diplôme d'études en langue française* (DELF) examiner/scorer. Danielle holds an M.Ed. from the University of Toronto/OISE in Curriculum and Teacher Development.

**Rosanna Margonis-Pasinetti** is a graduate of the University of Geneva and the *Séminaire pédagogique du canton de Vaud*. She has taught languages to adults and adolescents for many years, and has been involved in teacher training for over 20 years. She is currently a member of the Teaching and Research Unit Didactics of Languages and Cultures at the HEP Vaud and a teacher trainer in the didactics of Italian as a foreign language. Her research and development interests focus on the action-oriented, plurilingual and intercultural dimensions of language teaching and on language policy instruments. In Switzerland, she has been involved in the implementation of language education policy, both at the regional French-speaking level and at the national trilingual level. She has been a member of the CEFR Expert Group since 2018.

**Brian North** has been a researcher and consultant to the Council of Europe since 1991 and is a former chair of Eaquals ([www.eaquals.org](http://www.eaquals.org)). After developing the CEFR levels and descriptors in his PhD in a Swiss National Research Programme project, he co-authored the CEFR itself, the prototype European Language Portfolio, the manual for relating assessments to the CEFR, Eaquals' CEFR core inventories (English and French) and the CEFR Companion Volume. Other CEFR-related projects include investigation of CEFR use in Canada and Switzerland, alignment of the Canadian Language Benchmarks to the CEFR and the ECML's CEFR QualiMatrix. Publications include: *Development of a Common Framework Scale of Language Proficiency* (2000: Peter Lang); *The CEFR in Practice* (2014: Cambridge); *Language*

*Course Planning* (with M. Angelova, E. Jarosz & R. Rossner: 2018: Oxford), and *The Action-oriented Approach* (with E. Piccardo, 2019: Multilingual Matters).

**Enrica Piccardo** PhD is a Professor of Applied Linguistics and Language Education at OISE, University of Toronto. A co-author of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) Companion Volume* (Council of Europe, 2020), she has coordinated international projects on language teaching innovation in Canada and Europe. Her research spans language teaching approaches, multi/plurilingualism, creativity and complexity in language education. Among her publications: Piccardo, E. & North, B. (2019). *The Action-oriented Approach. A Dynamic Vision of Language Education* Bristol: Multilingual Matters; Piccardo, E., Germain Rutherford A. & Lawrence, G. (2021). *The Routledge Handbook of Plurilingual language Education*. London: Routledge.

**Bernd Rüschoff** PhD was till December senior professor in the Applied Linguistics & EFL section of the Department of Anglophone Studies at the University of Duisburg-Essen. His research focus is on the use of digital resources in language education. Other research addresses a wide range of issues in the field of applied linguistics, such as language & culture, plurilingual education, corpus linguistics, and intercultural education. He has been involved in numerous Council of Europe projects, and is a former president of EUROCALL and of GAL e.V. – the German Association of Applied Linguistics. He is also a former president of AILA, the International Association for Applied Linguistics, and served on AILA's Executive Board from 2005-2017 in various capacities.

30.05.23

## **The CEFR Companion Volume: Enhancing engagement in language education.**

***Le volume complémentaire du CECR :  
Renforcer l'engagement dans l'enseignement des langues.***

***Reflection Day, Journée de réflexion, 15.06.2023***

Enrica Piccardo

OISE-University of Toronto

enrica.piccardo@utoronto.ca

## A reminder: The CEFRCV is a replacement not a guide

**With this new, user-friendly version**, the Council of Europe responds to the many comments that the 2001 edition was a very complex document that many language professionals found difficult to access. [...]

**The updated and extended** version of the CEFR **illustrative descriptors** contained in this publication **replaces the 2001 version of them**. (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 21)

***Avec cette nouvelle version plus accessible**, le Conseil de l'Europe répond aux nombreux commentaires selon lesquels la publication de 2001 était un document très complexe que de nombreux professionnels des langues trouvaient difficile d'accès. [...]*

*Cette publication contient également une **version mise à jour et amplifiée des descripteurs** du CECR, **qui remplace la version de 2001**. (Conseil de l'Europe, 2020, p. 21)*

**CEFR 2001:** 40 language versions. **CEFR 2020:** 13 versions so far: Arabic; Basque, Dutch, English, Estonian, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Maltese, Norwegian, Spanish, Turkish (Chinese, Czech & Mongolian coming)

# The CEFRVC: multiple implications

## *Le CEFRVC: des implications multiples*

- **Fostering linguistic diversity** both by integrating home languages in the class and by expanding the number of languages taught beyond English;

*Favoriser la diversité linguistique en intégrant les langues parlées à la maison dans les cours et en augmentant le nombre de langues enseignées au-delà de l'anglais ;*

- **Supporting and enhancing language learning** through the Action-oriented Approach and the development of digital literacy through in person, blended and online teaching (responds to the needs identified through the ECML 2022 post-Covid survey);

*Soutenir et renforcer l'apprentissage des langues grâce à l'approche orientée vers l'action et au développement de la culture numérique par le biais d'un enseignement en présentiel, hybride et en ligne (répond aux besoins identifiés par l'enquête post-Covid 2022 du CELV) ;*

- **Aligning with the Charter** on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights **and the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC)**;

*Être cohérent avec Charte sur l'éducation à la citoyenneté démocratique et l'éducation aux droits de l'homme le Cadre de référence des compétences pour une culture de la démocratie (RFCDC) ;*

- Enabling the pursuit of the Council of Europe's goals in the field of language policies and education (Recommendation on Plurilingual and Intercultural Education for Democracy, 2022);

*Permettre la poursuite des objectifs du Conseil de l'Europe dans le domaine des politiques linguistiques et de l'éducation (Recommandation sur l'éducation plurilingue et interculturelle pour la démocratie, 2022) ;*

- Broadening of the scope of language education through the development of an inclusive, intercultural and plurilingual education for democracy.

*Élargir le champ de l'éducation aux langues par le développement d'une éducation inclusive, interculturelle et plurilingue pour la démocratie.*

## CEFRCV-inspired innovation: some examples

### *Innovation inspirée par le CEFRCV: quelques exemples*

- **Netherlands:** integration of the descriptors from the Companion Volume into new national attainment targets
- **Spain:** integration of mediation into attainment targets for both the national network of adult education (EOIs) and the national association of university language centres
- **Austria:** Certificate of Plurilingualism (upper secondary, professional)
- **Finland:** new version of the European Language Portfolio for Higher Education, based on the Companion Volume
- **Italy:** network of primary and secondary schools in Lombardy (Milan), Lazio (Rome), and Campania (Naples), with teachers implementing plurilingual action-oriented scenarios
- **Israel:** integration of mediation into the national curriculum
- **Pays-Bas :** *intégration des descripteurs du Companion Volume dans de nouveaux objectifs de résultats nationaux*
- **Espagne :** *intégration de la médiation dans les objectifs de réussite du réseau national d'éducation des adultes (EOI) et de l'association nationale des centres universitaires de langues*
- **Autriche :** *Certificat de plurilinguisme (secondaire supérieur, professionnel)*
- **Finlande :** *nouvelle version du Portfolio européen des langues pour l'enseignement supérieur, basée sur le Companion Volume.*
- **Italie :** *réseau d'écoles primaires et secondaires en Lombardie (Milan), dans le Latium (Rome) et en Campanie (Naples), avec des enseignants mettant en œuvre des scénarios plurilingues orientés vers l'action.*
- **Israël :** *intégration de la médiation dans le programme d'études national*

## Aims of the meeting (4 main aims) *Buts de la journée (4 buts principaux)*

- Exchanging on implications of the CEFRCV at the macrolevel (language policies), meso level (curriculum reform) micro level (teaching practices)

*Échanger sur les implications du CECRVC au niveau macro (politiques linguistiques), au niveau méso (réforme des programmes) et au niveau micro (pratiques d'enseignement).*

- Planning ways to debunk misunderstandings and misrepresentations of the CEFR project (from the CEFR 2001 to the CEFRCV)

*Planifier des moyens de contrer les malentendus et les représentations erronées du projet du CECR (du CECR 2001 au CECRVC)*



- Reflecting on the core concepts of the CEFRCV (mediation, plurilingualism and action-orientation) in relation to each other and to the broader academic developments in language education

*Réfléchir aux concepts clés du CEFRCV (médiation, plurilinguisme et orientation vers l'action) en relation les uns avec les autres et avec les développements académiques plus larges dans le domaine de l'éducation aux langues.*

- Discussing the potential of the CEFRCV in relation to digitally-mediated language education

*Discuter du potentiel du CEFRCV en ce qui concerne l'éducation aux langues à l'aide de supports numériques.*

## Criteria used to put together this group

- High interest in and/or contribution to the work of the CEFR expert group
- Solid and diverse experience related to the CEFR and CEFRCV at various levels
- Contribution to CEFR constructs-related research policy and practice
- Knowledge of diverse contexts and actions
- Ability to act as multipliers

## *Critères suivis dans la formation de ce groupe*

- *Grand intérêt pour les travaux du groupe d'experts du CECR et/ou contribution à ces travaux*
- *Expérience solide et diversifiée liée au CECR et au CEFRCV à différents niveaux*
- *Contribution à la recherche, à la politique et à la pratique liées aux concepts du CECR*
- *Connaissance de divers contextes et actions*
- *Capacité à agir en tant que multiplicateurs*

**Looking for feedback and feedforward  
“picking your brains” and creating an extended network**

***Nous aimerions recevoir du feedback mais aussi du ‘feedforward’  
“picking your brains” et créer un réseau***

***Have a good reflection day!  
Je vous souhaite une bonne journée de réflexion!***

**Some practical information on the unfolding of the reflection day**

***Des informations pratiques pour le déroulement de la journée de réflexion***

**How can the CEFR Companion Volume facilitate curriculum design for action-oriented, plurilingual and intercultural language education?**

**Comment le CECRV peut-il faciliter la conception de curriculums pour une éducation aux langues orientée vers l'action, plurilingue et interculturelle ?**

***CEFR Reflection Day, Journée de réflexion, 15.06.2023***

Daniela Fasoglio, [d.fasoglio@slo.nl](mailto:d.fasoglio@slo.nl)

Dutch Institute for Curriculum Development

Institut néerlandais pour le développement des curriculums

## Curriculum design: at what level?

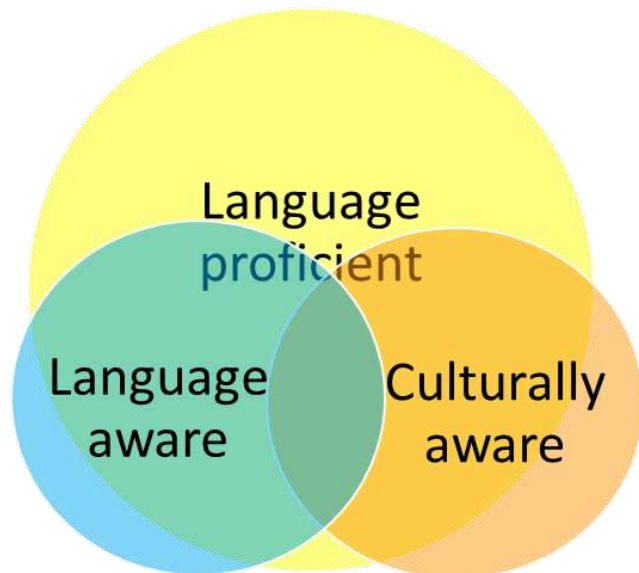
Level	Examples of activities	Examples of actors	Examples of documents
National/ Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage national dialogue on needs and ambitions of education</li> <li>• Define national attainment targets</li> <li>• Measure students' performance</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education National curriculum/ assessment institute Teachers, teacher trainers, scholars, unions, parents & guardians, students	National core objectives National attainment targets Examination programmes Frameworks of reference
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop rationale, make choices</li> <li>• Design learning paths</li> <li>• Monitor students' achievements</li> </ul>	Teachers, school curriculum experts, principals, parents & guardians, students	Syllabi School plans Annual reports
Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tailor curriculum for the group</li> <li>• Develop learning programme</li> </ul>	Teachers, students	Teaching materials, lesson plans
Learner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish individual learning pathways</li> </ul>	Students, teachers, parents & guardians	Individual profile and lesson plan

## Curriculum design: at what level?

Level	Examples of activities	Examples of actors	Examples of documents
National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage national dialogue on <b>needs and ambitions</b> of education</li> <li>Define national <b>core objectives</b> and <b>attainment targets</b></li> <li><b>Measure</b> students' performance</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education National curriculum/ assessment institute Teachers, teacher trainers, scholars, unions, parents & guardians, students	<b>Rationale document on            education</b> Examination programmes <b>Frameworks of reference</b>
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop <b>rationale</b>, make <b>choices</b></li> <li>Design <b>learning paths</b></li> <li><b>Monitor</b> students' achievements</li> </ul>	Teachers, school curriculum experts, principals, parents & guardians, students	Syllabi School plans Annual reports
Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Tailor</b> curriculum for the group</li> <li>Develop <b>learning programme</b></li> </ul>	Teachers, students	<b>Teaching materials, lesson            plans</b>
Learner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish <b>individual learning pathways</b></li> </ul>	Students, teachers, parents & guardians	<b>Individual profile and lesson            plan</b>

## AN EXAMPLE

Level	Examples of activities	Examples of actors	Examples of documents
National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage national dialogue on <b>needs and ambitions</b> of education</li> <li>Define national <b>core objectives</b> and <b>attainment targets</b></li> <li><b>Measure</b> students' performance</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education National curriculum/ assessment institute Teachers, teacher trainers, scholars, unions, parents & guardians, students	<b>Rationale document on education</b> Examination programmes <b>Frameworks of reference</b>



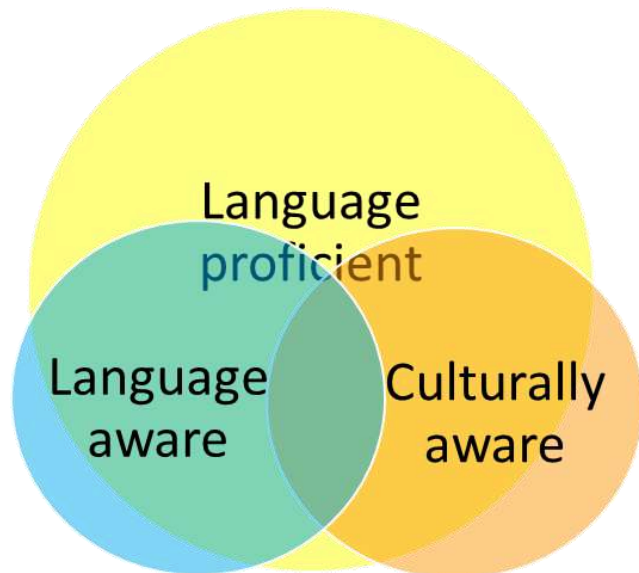
“Language education promotes the development into **language-savvy, culture-aware and language-aware** citizens who are self-reliant, reflective, creative and confident **participants** in (digital) communication in multilingual and pluricultural contexts. Language skills, cultural awareness and language awareness, coherent and mutually functional, form the core of all language subjects.”

*(concept proposal for new language curricula in Dutch secondary education, 2022)*



## AN EXAMPLE

Level	Examples of activities	Examples of actors	Examples of documents
National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage national dialogue on <b>needs and ambitions</b> of education</li> <li>Define national <b>core objectives</b> and <b>attainment targets</b></li> <li><b>Measure</b> students' performance</li> </ul>	Ministry of Education National curriculum/ assessment institute Teachers, teacher trainers, scholars, unions, parents & guardians, students	<b>Rationale document on education</b> Examination programmes <b>Frameworks of reference</b>



“L'éducation aux langues favorise le développement de citoyens compétents sur le plan **linguistique, sensibilisé à les cultures et aux langues**, qui **participent** d'une façon autonome, réfléchi, créative et confiante à la communication (digitale) dans des contextes plurilingues et pluriculturels. Les compétences linguistiques, la conscience culturelle et la sensibilisation linguistique, cohérentes et mutuellement fonctionnelles, constituent le cœur de toutes les matières linguistiques..”

*(Nouveaux programmes de langues dans l'enseignement secondaire néerlandais, concept*

“Seeing learners as social agents implies [...] recognizing the **social nature** of language learning and language use, namely the **interaction** between the social and the individual in the process of learning. [...] Above all, the action-oriented approach implies **purposeful, collaborative tasks** in the classroom, the primary focus of which is not the language.”

(Council of Europe, 2020: 30)

## Communicative modes: perspectives to look at the language user

Reception

Interaction

Mediation

Production

Listener / Speaker

Participant

Social agent

Success factors:

Complexity,  
accuracy, fluency

+ 'Social' use of language

+ Co-construction of meaning  
= make meaning together

Activate plurilingual / pluricultural competence

Level	Examples of activities	Examples of actors	Examples of documents
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop <b>rationale</b>, make <b>choices</b></li> <li>Design <b>learning paths</b></li> <li><b>Monitor</b> students' achievements</li> </ul>	Teachers, school curriculum experts, principals, parents & guardians, students	Syllabi School plans Annual reports
Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Tailor</b> curriculum for the group</li> <li>Develop <b>learning programme</b></li> </ul>	Teachers, students	<b>Teaching materials, lesson plans</b>

### **Conditional: Critical engagement with the rationale**

*Vision on language learning and teaching: learner as social agent, as autonomous and responsible language user. 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.*

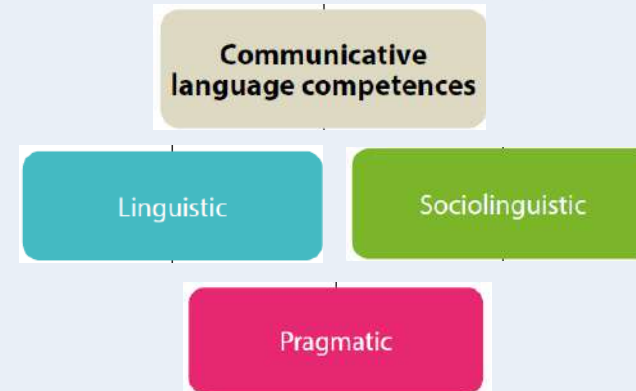
#### **Establish goals**

Use the CEFR scales to define intended outcomes:

- **WHAT** should learners be able to do?



- **HOW WELL?** At what proficiency level?



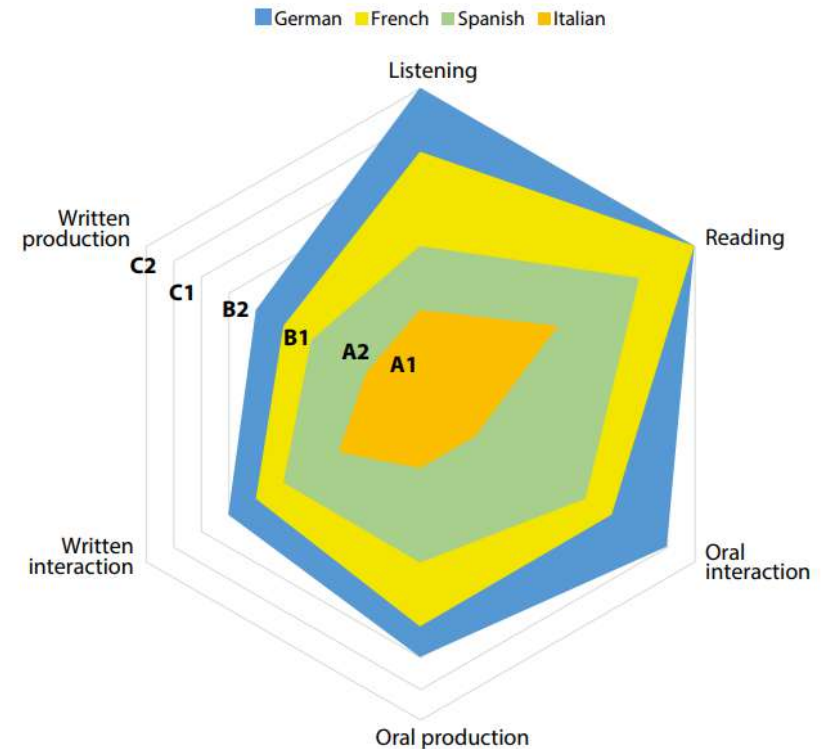
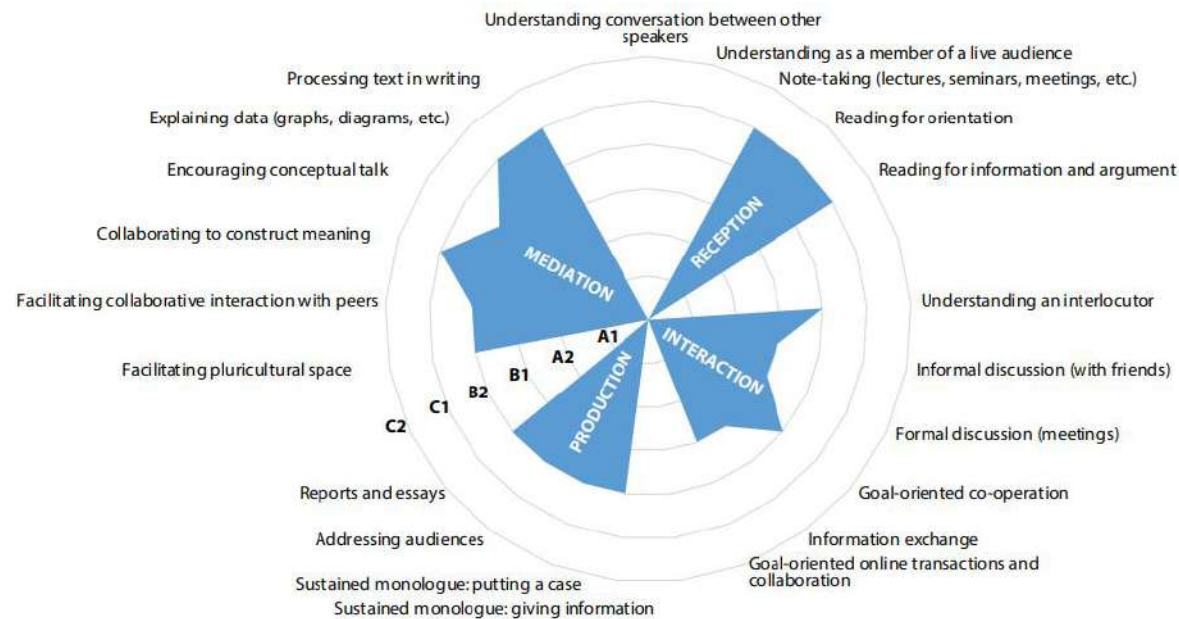
#### **Design language tasks**

Select appropriate CEFR scales to figure out situations, actions, communicative goals to be achieved

#### **Define assessment criteria**

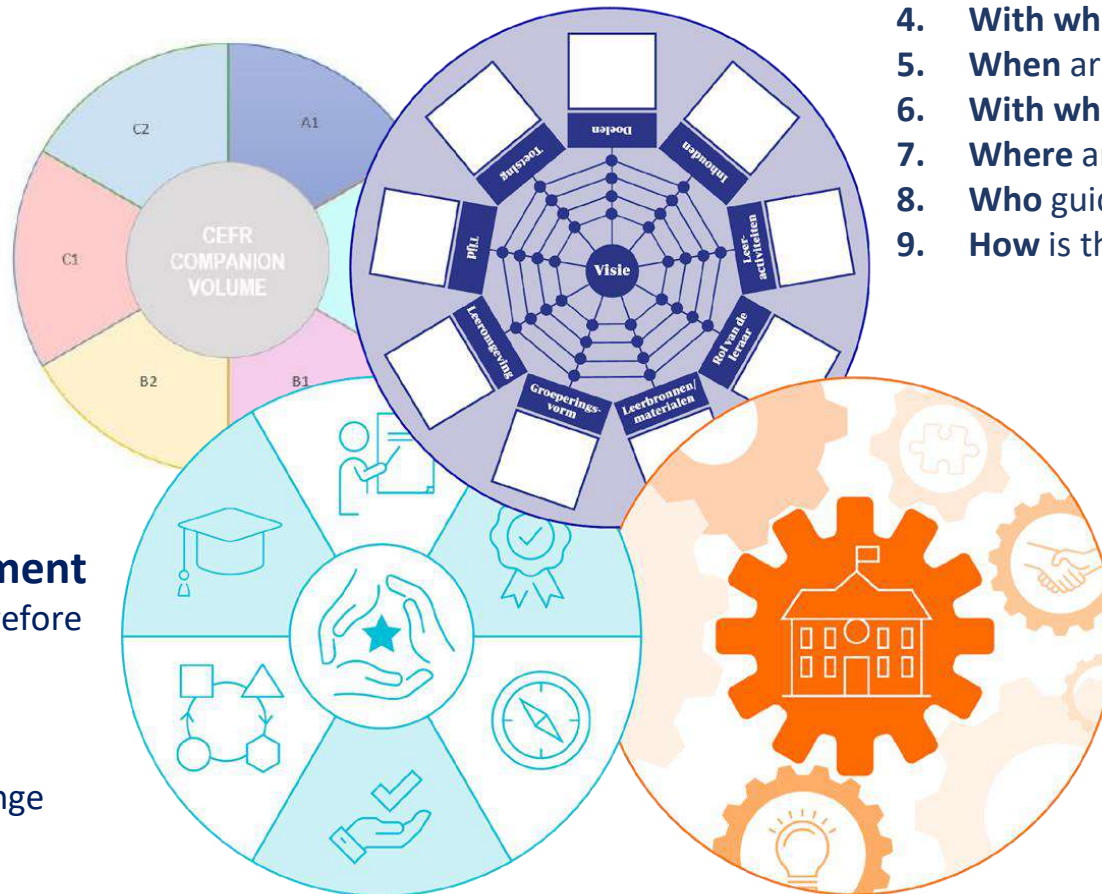
Select and work out appropriate CEFR scales to define criteria allowing to draw conclusions on learning outcomes

Level	Examples of activities	Examples of actors	Examples of documents
Learner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish individual learning pathways</li> </ul>	Students, teachers, parents & guardians	Individual profile and lesson plan



(Council of Europe, 2020, pp. 39-40)

# Integrated school curriculum design using the CEFRCV



## Relevance and consistency

1. **Why** are they learning?
2. **What** are they learning?
3. **How** are they learning?
4. **With what** are they learning?
5. **When** are they learning?
6. **With whom** are they learning?
7. **Where** are they learning?
8. **Who** guides them?
9. **How** is their learning assessed?

*learning goals*  
*learning contents*  
*learning activities*  
*resources & materials*  
*time*  
*grouping*  
*learning environment*  
*teacher role*  
*assessment forms*

## Professional development

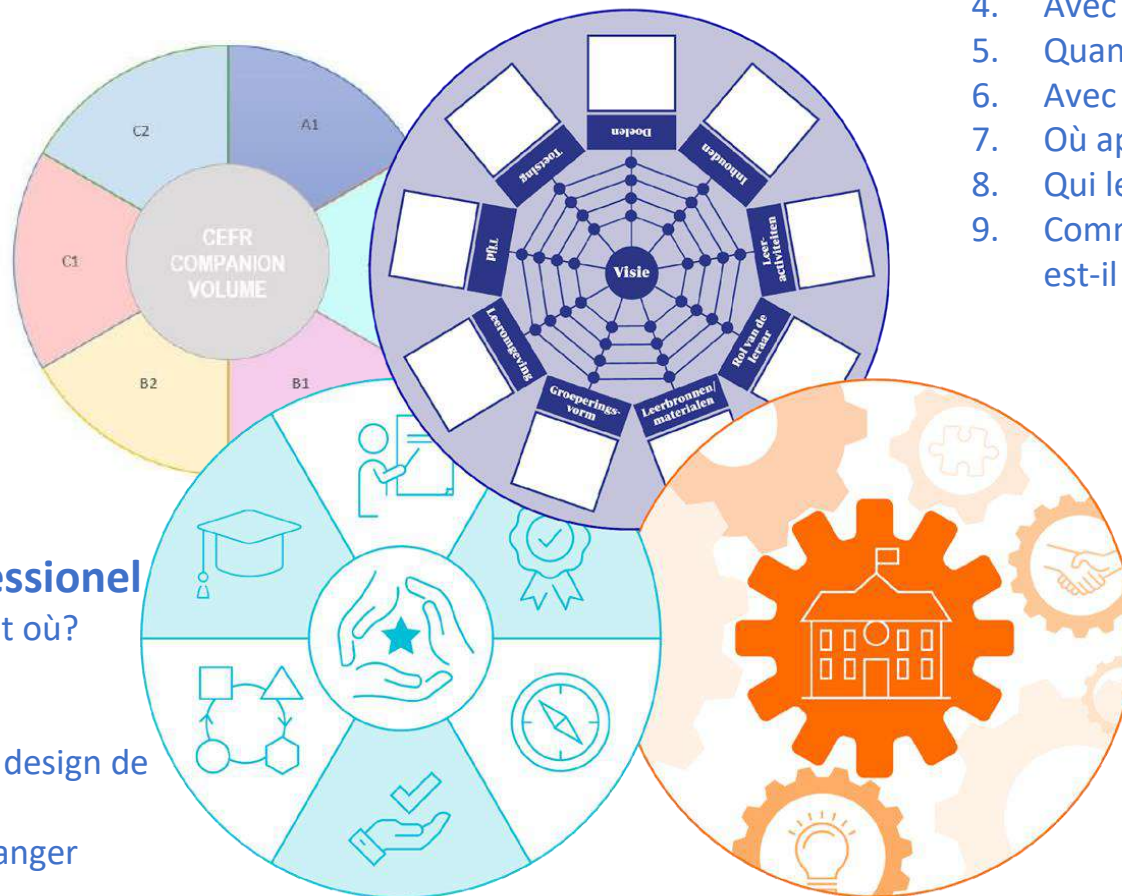
A clear vision: why and wherefore  
 New subject content  
 Pedagogy, methodology  
 Curriculum design skills  
 Readiness and ability to change

## Organisational development

Among others, school infrastructure:

- Lesson schedule
- Organisation of teacher tasks and roles
- Budget
- Teachers' sections
- School policy and priorities
- ...

# Le design integral d'un curriculum scolaire en utilisant le CECRVC



## Pertinence et cohérence

1. Pourquoi apprennent-ils?
2. Qu'apprennent-ils?
3. Comment apprennent-ils?
4. Avec quoi apprennent-ils?
5. Quand apprennent-ils?
6. Avec qui apprennent-ils?
7. Où apprennent-ils?
8. Qui les guide?
9. Comment leur apprentissage est-il évalué ?

*objectifs d'apprentissage*  
*contenus d'apprentissage*  
*activités d'apprentissage*  
*ressources et matériaux*  
*temps*  
*groupement*  
*environnement d'apprentissage*  
*rôle de l'enseignant*  
*formes d'évaluation*

## Développement professionnel

Une vision claire: pourquoi et où?  
 Nouveaux contenus  
 Pédagogie, méthodologie  
 Compétences en matière de design de curriculums  
 Préparation et capacité à changer

## Développement organisationnel

Entre autres, l'infrastructure scolaire:

- Programme des cours
- Organisation des tâches et rôles des enseignants
- Le budget
- Sections d'enseignants
- Politique et priorités de l'école
- ...



## Key questions

- To what extent do you see the added value of the CEFRCV for the various aspects of integrated school curriculum design, and why? Under what conditions?
- What are essential steps to be taken in your own context for successful and sustainable implementation of meaningful and inclusive language education?

It can be helpful to keep the model for integrated school curriculum design in mind during the discussion!

## Questions clés

- Dans quelle mesure voyez-vous la valeur ajoutée du CECR pour les différents aspects du design intégral d'un curriculum scolaire, et pourquoi ? Dans quelles conditions ?
- Quelles sont des mesures importantes à prendre dans votre propre contexte pour une mise en œuvre réussie et durable d'un enseignement des langues inclusif et approprié pour les besoins de la société actuelle ?

Il peut être utile de garder à l'esprit le modèle de design intégrale du curriculum au cours de la discussion !

# **How can we counter common misunderstandings/misrepresentations of the CEFR?**

## **Comment contrer les malentendus et les représentations fausses du CECR ?**

***CEFR Reflection Day, Journée de réflexion, 15.06.2023***

Brian North

- **The CEFR is the CoE's most successful document – after the Declaration of the Rights of Man**  
**Le CECR est le document le plus consulté du CdE – après la Déclaration des droits de l'homme**
- **CEFR 2001: 40 translations; CEFRCV 13 so far, others coming**  
**CECR 2001 : 40 traductions ; CEFRCV 13 jusqu'à présent, d'autres à venir**
- **2,000 people joined the project to update the CEFR**  
**2 000 personnes ont participé au projet de mise à jour du CECR**

- **Why are there so many misunderstandings and misrepresentations?**  
**Pourquoi y a-t-il tant de malentendus et de fausses déclarations ?**
- **What are the most serious ones?**  
**Quels sont les plus graves ?**
- **How can we counter them and get across the main CEFR principles and themes?**  
**Comment les contrer et faire passer les grands principes et thèmes du CECR ?**

# Why are there so many misunderstandings/misrepresentations? Pourquoi y a-t-il tant de malentendus et de représentations erronées ?

## Practical/pratique

- Perception: Levels → Assessment → Descriptors → Tasks  
Perception : Niveaux → évaluation → descripteurs → tâches
- Top-down instrument (Governmental, managerial / restrictive-prescriptive )  
Outil hiérarchique (gouvernemental, managérial / restrictif/prescriptive)
- Rarely read in full – even by academics (2001 difficult to read!)  
Rarement lu en entier - même par les universitaires (2001 difficile à lire !)

# Why are there so many misunderstandings/misrepresentations? Pourquoi y a-t-il tant de malentendus et de représentations erronées

## Ideological/idéologique

- European (Eurocentric, not from Anglosphere)  
Européen (eurocentrisme, pas de l'anglosphère)
- Confusion CoE and EU (→ economic, neo-liberal motivation)  
Confusion entre le CdE et l'UE (→ motivation économique et néolibérale)
- Hostility to plurilingualism (from multilingualism & translanguaging)  
Hostilité au plurilinguisme (du multilinguisme & translanguaging)

# What are the most serious ones? Quels sont les plus graves ?

## Practical/pratique

<p>“CEFR is just a set of standards – for CLT; nothing new”</p> <p>« Le CECR n'est qu'un ensemble de standards - pour l'approche communicative ; rien de nouveau »</p>	<p>CEFR actually proposes a change: from a linear to a complex vision</p> <p>En réalité le CECR propose un changement: d'une vision linéaire à une vision complexe</p>
<p>“Descriptors are for assessment”</p> <p>« Les descripteurs sont destinés à l'évaluation »</p>	<p>In fact, descriptors (especially mediation &amp; pluri-) inform curricula &amp; task design</p> <p>En réalité, les descripteurs (en particulier médiation et pluri-) informent les programmes et la conception des tâches</p>



# What are the most serious ones? Quels sont les plus graves ?

## Ideological/idéologique

<p>“Descriptors not ‘scientifically-based’ “          « les descripteurs ne sont pas ‘scientifiques’ »</p>	<p>They were validated in a 3-phase research informed by Latent Trait Theory          Ils ont été validés dans une recherche en 3 phases selon la Latent Trait Theory</p>
<p>“Mediation is difficult and unnecessary”          « La médiation est difficile et inutile »</p>	<p>Mediation is in fact at the core of learning and communication          La médiation est en fait au cœur de l'apprentissage et de la communication</p>
<p>“Plurilingualism sees languages separately, is applied to additional languages only – so it is elitist”          « Le plurilinguisme considère les langues séparément et ne s'applique qu'aux langues supplémentaires - il est donc élitiste »</p>	<p>Plurilingualism sees the holistic repertoire, values home languages &amp; encourages openness          Le plurilinguisme considère le répertoire holistique, valorise les langues familiales et encourage l'ouverture</p>

## Discussion

- 1. How can we debunk these issues and get across the main CEFRCV principles and themes?**

**Comment démystifier ces questions et faire passer les principes et thèmes fondamentaux du CECRVC ?**

- 2. What measures could we adopt at the academic and applied educational levels?**

**Quelles mesures pourrions-nous adopter au niveau de la recherche et au niveau de la pratique éducative ?**

**How do action-orientation, mediation and plurilingualism, interrelate and align with recent developments in language education?**

***Comment l'orientation vers l'action, la médiation et le plurilinguisme s'articulent-ils et s'alignent-ils sur les développements récents dans le domaine de l'éducation aux langues ?***

***CEFR Reflection Day, Journée de réflexion, 15.06.2023***

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## **The CEFRCV: *Le CECRVC :***

- Would not be possible without the research done over the last 20 years

*Ne pourrait pas exister sans la recherche menée au cours de ces dernières 20 années*

- Complexifications at various levels

*Complexification aux différents niveaux*

# Complexification of research and practice in language education

- **New vision of language**
    - Languaging/plurilanguaging/translanguaging
    - Assemblages of linguistic and semiotic resources
  - **New vision of the class**
    - The class as a complex adaptive system (CAS)
    - Concepts of emergence and affordances
  - **Expanded constructs**
    - Agency and mediation
    - Pluri- (plurilingual/pluricultural)
    - Phonological competence
  - **More interdisciplinary research**
    - Crossing disciplinary barriers (languages/cultures-arts-writing-STEM)
    - Crossing barriers in research approaches
    - Crossing borders (geographical, but also in terms of body/mind/cognition/emotions)
  - **Assessment + pedagogy**
    - Scenario-based assessment and learning-oriented assessment
- ***Nouvelles vision de la langue***
    - *Languaging/plurilanguaging/translanguaging*
    - *Assemblages de ressources langagières et sémiotiques*
  - ***Nouvelles vision de la classe***
    - *La classe est un système complexe adaptatif (en anglais CAS)*
    - *Concepts d'émergence et d'affordances*
  - ***Construits élargis***
    - *Agentivité/Agency et médiation*
    - *Pluri- (plurilingue/pluriculturel)*
    - *Compétence phonologique*
  - ***D'avantage de recherche interdisciplinaire***
    - *Franchir les barrières disciplinaires (langues/cultures-arts-écriture-STEM)*
    - *Franchir les barrières des approches de recherche*
    - *Franchir les frontières (géographiques, mais aussi en termes de corps/esprit/cognition/émotions)*
  - ***Évaluation + pédagogie***
    - *Évaluation basée sur des scénarios et évaluation axée sur l'apprentissage*

Holistic view of the **mind, body, and environment** (which includes culture) as embedded **complex dynamic systems**.

Learning thus needs to be rooted in **situated dynamic learning situations**

(Masciotra, Roth, & Morel, 2007).

Learning occurs through '**perception in action**' (van Lier, 2004: 97): user/ learner seen as a **social agent** who gives their attention to **affordances** in the environment, in order to carry out a task and/ or achieve a goal.

Learning builds on the capacity to **perceive affordances** (Käuffer & Chemero, 2015) as **invitations to action**.

To perceive affordances learners **need to develop agency**

'Cognitive agents experience the world perceptually through **the mediation of action**' (Ramstead, Veissière, & Kirmayer, 2016: 4).

## Main research thread:

- Different theoretical lenses to support research in language education
  - Complexity theory (Larsen-Freeman)
  - Sociocultural theory (Lantolf & Poehner)
  - Enactivism (beyond dualism cognition-emotion) (Masciotra; Varela & Thompson)
  - Phenomenology (Käufer & Chemero)
- Language as a process and/or as a complex adaptive system
- Agency and mediation in different fields (linguistics/language education, cultural studies, sociology, psychology)
- Advances in language teaching methodologies (with impact on practices)
  - Theorization of the Action-oriented Approach (Piccardo & North)
  - Advancements in the definition of tasks (van den Branden)
- Advancements in the vision of assessment (Purpura's scenario-based assessment, Saville's learning-oriented assessment)

## **Blocks identified in the field of language education:**

- Arbitrary labels and monolingual bias, mindset, practices
  - adopting a deficiency perspective
  - making people (and their languages/cultures) invisible
- Language seen as an object
- Separation (of languages, cultures, forms of knowledge not only in societies but also within individuals themselves)
- Lack of space for other languages even in multilingual contexts: pervasive English presence
- Assessment (still very monolingual) and its gatekeeping power (the native-speaker norm)



## Dismantling blocks and crossing barriers:

- Pragmatic/interactional competence

- Divergent thinking

- Linguistic

- Imp

- Naviga

- Lin

- Ph

- Translingual strategies

- Metalinguistic awareness

- Projects: inquiry-based, creative, plurilingual, interdisciplinary

- Positioning multilingualism as the norm

**New tools and frameworks  
(new CEFR 2020 descriptors to raise teachers' awareness  
of mediated/complex nature of language  
learning/teaching and spark their plurilingual agency)**

## The CEFRCV:

- Builds on these new threads in research
- Reconceptualizes language as a process > *linguaging* (with agency and mediation at the core)
- Expands the pluri- construct (going beyond the simplistic dualism person=pluri/society=multi)
- Makes space for ALL languages
- Emphasizes unequal dynamic profiles/partial competences
- Sustains innovation in pedagogy through a focus on social agency and action > Action-oriented Approach

## Key questions

### *Questions clés*

- What are essential steps to be taken to bring across these messages in the field of language education (teachers, teacher educators, multipliers?)  
*Quelles sont des étapes fondamentales à suivre pour faire passer ces messages dans le domaines de l'éducation aux langues (enseignants, formateurs, multiplicateurs?)*
- How can the CEFRCV best support a shift in the mindset of stakeholders?  
*Comment le CECRVC peut-il mieux favoriser un changement de mentalité des acteurs concernés?*

**Take a screenshot and save these questions**

**Rapporteur: please send me your notes by email [enrica.piccardo@utoronto.ca](mailto:enrica.piccardo@utoronto.ca) at the end of the discussion in the breakout rooms**

How can the CEFRCV support the creation of (digitally-mediated) collaborative learning environments in the post-Covid context?

Comment le CEFRCV peut-il soutenir la création d'environnements d'apprentissage collaboratif (à médiation numérique) dans le contexte post-Covid ?

## Overview:

- The CEFRCV & digitally-enhanced language education
  - Le CEFRCV & l'enseignement des langues assisté par le numérique
- What happened during the pandemic: the ECML-PNF COVID Survey
  - Que s'est-il passé pendant la pandémie : l'enquête COVID du CELV-PNF
- Reflection points
  - Points de réflexion

Digital  
Transformation

## Challenges

Globalization

Digitalization

Diversification of modes of

communication,  
interaction,  
social/professional  
networking  
...

Changing perception of native-speaker model

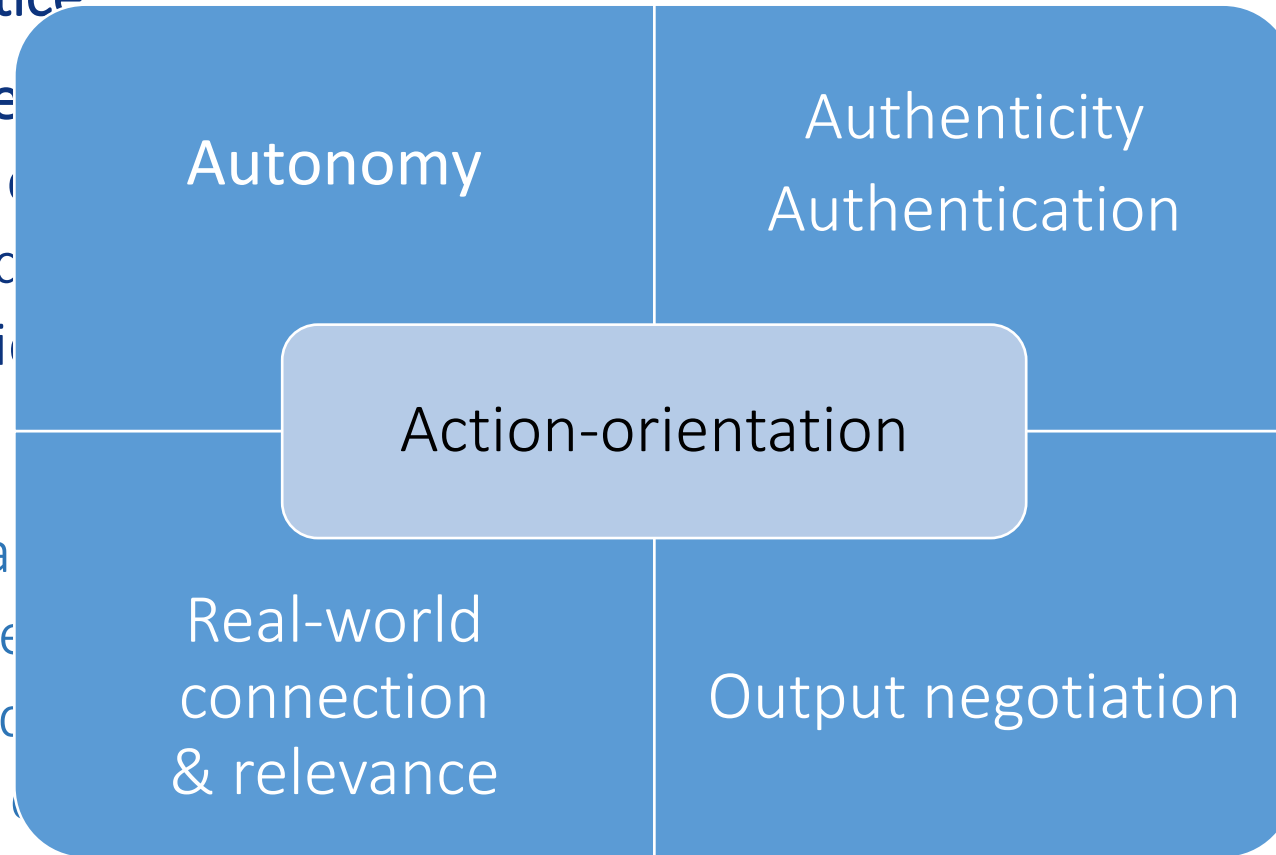
CEFRCV

online  
interaction,  
collaboration,  
transaction

## Classroom practice

Language learners  
knowledges, of  
their own, self-c  
to their linguistic

Les apprenants  
utiliser toute  
et pragmatique  
- habilités à  
pragmatique, cognitive et socioculturelle



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- Teachers and students have become **more receptive** to **action-oriented**, **collaborative**, and **digitally mediated tasks** as well as **hybrid/blended learning** as part of a **dynamic learning environment** that bolsters student engagement.
  - Les enseignants et les élèves sont devenus plus réceptifs aux tâches axées sur l'action, collaboratives et à médiation numérique, ainsi qu'à l'apprentissage hybride/mixte dans le cadre d'un environnement d'apprentissage dynamique qui renforce l'engagement des élèves.
- Teachers and students experienced “real-time, on the job” **cognitive growth**.
  - Les enseignants et les élèves ont connu une croissance cognitive « en temps réel, au travail ».



121047223 *“The way we learn is really important. We have learned to study in different environments. **At first**, when we unexpectedly had to start working online, both **teachers and students encountered many problems**. With time, everybody **got used to this new way of teaching and learning and discovered its advantages**”.*

*“We cannot say which way of learning is the best. Different people like different things.”*

## Teacher's observations:

*“Most of my students enjoyed the online classes, as new methodology and more interactive games and personalised interaction was used”.*

*“Education is still based on a model formed in the 19th century ... it is about time we joined the 21st century and adopted an approach more in keeping with the digital age and all the benefits and opportunities they afford going forward”.*

## Learner's observations:

*“The fact that we had more time to organize our notes and that we could be more flexible in when we decided to learn. ... interactive exercises in the e-classrooms were great”.*

*“We became convinced that school systems should be updated and made more interactive”.*

➤ **Educational Literacy/Agency/Adaptability/Versatility**

Reflecting a construct that in summary

- is geared at fostering more flexibility in language education
  - *vise à favoriser une plus grande flexibilité dans l'enseignement des langues*
- includes the ability to choose and benefit from methods and practices that fit given learning spaces
  - *inclut la capacité de choisir et de bénéficier de méthodes et de pratiques adaptées à des contextes d'apprentissage donnés*

➤ Educational Literacy/Agency/Adaptability/Versatility

empowers

- to decide on how to use and combine a variety of learning spaces,
- to appropriately exploit a variety of tools and resources,
- to competently manage the resulting diversity of learning spaces and interactions.

*permet*

- *de décider comment utiliser et combiner une variété d'espaces d'apprentissage,*
- *d'exploiter de manière appropriée une variété d'outils et de ressources,*
- *gérer avec compétence la diversité des espaces d'apprentissage et des interactions qui en résulte.*

Drawing upon your contexts & COVID experiences, in what way can the CEFRCV foster awareness of the need for more flexible, digitally-enhanced practices in language education?

*En s'appuyant sur vos contextes et vos expériences COVID, de quelle manière le CEFRCV peut-il favoriser la prise de conscience de la nécessité de pratiques plus souples et plus numériques dans l'enseignement des langues ?*

What CEFRCV-informed practices might support the creation and implementation of (digitally-mediated) collaborative learning environments? Examples?

*Quelles pratiques inspirées du CEFRCV pourraient soutenir la création et la mise en œuvre d'environnements d'apprentissage collaboratif (à médiation numérique) ? Des exemples ?*