

## Action-oriented approach

[Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec \(2022\)1 on the importance of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture](#)

### Measures

- b. iii. ensure that curriculum guidelines and curriculums provide pupils and students with the opportunity to develop [...] the competences needed to engage in authentic and progressively complex oral and written communication, [...].
- b. xi. create conditions that are favourable to the organisation of complex learning environments [...].
- b. xiii. encourage pedagogical approaches that empower learners by developing their autonomy and their critical thinking skills, make space for the learner's voice, create a democratic classroom and school culture and prepare learners for lifelong learning.
- c. vi. helping teachers to develop the pedagogical competences needed to support a democratic classroom culture that fosters autonomous learning and critical thinking and makes space for the inclusion of the learner's voice.

### What is it about?

The action-oriented approach focuses on what learners *can do* in the language(s) concerned, on *acting* in the language in the pursuit of a personally meaningful goal, rather than learning about the language with decontextualized exercises. It promotes syllabuses based on tasks, ideally a succession of collaborative tasks contextualised with a scenario, rather than linear syllabuses based on grammatical progression. The concrete situated nature of the collaborative learning activities develops learner agency and responsibility and facilitates the inclusion of all learners. The action-oriented approach has been pioneered by the CEFR and CEFR Companion Volume.

### Why is this important and what can be done?

Education prepares the individual to be an active participant in democratic society by promoting their personal development, while combining social responsibility with growing self-awareness, self-confidence, independence of thought, and critical cultural and language awareness. Rec.

2022 EM - 4.i. (p.25). An action-oriented approach, in which students learn to *do things* in the language, collaborate and contribute to the conceptualization and preparation of a concrete artefact or performance directly helps the development of these competences.

See also Toolbox Entries on [Learner autonomy, agency and critical thinking](#) and [Complex learning environments](#).

## Council of Europe resources for policy/decision makers

Resource 1: [Common European Framework of Reference for Languages - Companion volume](#)

The CEFR Companion volume (CEFR-CV) updates and extends the 2001 CEFR, which provided a common basis for developing language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, and textbooks, supporting the alignment of curriculum, teaching, and assessment. It includes the complete set of updated and extended CEFR descriptors, replacing those from 2001. These now also cover areas such as mediation, online interaction, plurilingual and pluricultural competence, and sign language competences. The CEFR-CV offers a vision of language learning and use in which learners are viewed as active, responsible participants in society, using language to achieve real-life goals and engage meaningfully with others.

[Chapter 2](#) explains the CEFR vision of language education, focusing on key concepts; [Section 2.1](#) (pp.29-30) discusses implementing the action-oriented approach.

Resource 2: [The action-oriented approach](#) (video)

This ECML resource is an 8-minute video explaining the concept of action-orientation. It begins with a brief introduction of the CEFR and then, in the main part of the video (7 minutes) three secondary school teachers (from Canada, the Netherlands and Germany) explain what the action-oriented approach means for them and the way they implement it in their classes.

This video gives policymakers an overview of ways in which the action-oriented approach can be implemented in different ways in real world-oriented tasks at different levels in different contexts. This may be of assistance when developing guidelines that highlight the importance of making space in the curriculum and/or teacher education for the development of learner agency, autonomy and responsibility.

Resource 3: [CEFR Companion volume implementation toolbox](#)

This ECML resource and specifically [the action-oriented approach and the learner as a social agent](#) offers a short (3-minute) and a more in depth (13-min) video explainers on the action-oriented approach

It focuses on explaining the action-oriented approach and providing exemplar tasks for vocational and tertiary education. This video gives a very good, quick overview of what the action-oriented approach entails.

## Council of Europe resources for teacher educators/ pedagogical advisors

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Resource 1: [Common European Framework of Reference for Languages - Companion volume](#)

See above.

[Chapter 2](#) explains the CEFR vision of language education, focusing on key concepts. This is particularly useful for giving (future) teachers a good understanding of the CEFR in general and the action-oriented approach in particular. While [Section 2.1](#) (pp.29-30) is explicitly concerned with implementing the action-oriented approach, the whole chapter is relevant to it.

Resource 2: [CEFR website – Action-oriented approach page](#)

This ECML resource is extremely useful for teacher educators. It provides info-sheets, videos, workshop materials and articles on mediation, supplemented by a corresponding page on ideas for implementation of the action-oriented approach.

The Action-oriented approach page includes the 8-minute video [The action-oriented approach](#), which explains the concept of action-orientation (See description of Resource 2 in Section 2 above).

Resource 3: [A Guide to Action-oriented, Plurilingual and Intercultural Education](#)

This resource outlines the educational vision of the CEFR Companion Volume, explaining crucial aspects of plurilingual and intercultural education, including an eight-page [Section 4.2](#) on the action-oriented approach. The Guide also summarises work of the Council of Europe in language learning, summarises theoretical inputs to the action-oriented approach ([Section 3](#)), and gives a good overview of Council of Europe resources (with links) on different aspects of plurilingual and intercultural education as well as providing orientation for teacher educators and curriculum developers on how to implement it.