REFERENCE FRAMEWORK OF COMPETENCES FOR DEMOCRATIC CULTURE (RFCDC)

Competences for democratic culture and the importance of language

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Council of Europe

Contents

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Who is this guidance document for?

This guidance document is intended for three main readerships:

- ▶ policy makers who are responsible for curriculum design and development so that they can ensure that the role of language is taken into consideration when introducing competences for democratic culture (CDC) into the curriculum;
- ▶ teacher educators who might include in their aims the development of teachers' understanding of the role of language, whatever they teach; and
- ▶ all teachers who introduce at least some aspects of CDC into their teaching, as well as those whose main focus is on CDC.

Purpose and overview

It is widely recognised that achievement in education depends to a large degree on developing competence in language. Learning CDC is no exception and the purpose of this document is, first, to explain the importance of language in the various ways in which CDC can be taught, for example using a "whole-school" approach, in which

activities both inside and outside the classroom are taken into account,[1] or through its integration into the teaching of subjects. The second purpose is to analyse in more detail how knowledge about language and language practice is important in teaching approaches and in specific aspects of CDC. Practical examples from the school and classroom are given more extended treatment in the second half of the document, but these should be read in relation to the discussions about language introduced in the first half.

Education systems have always recognised the importance of language and have sought to ensure that learners have a sufficient command of language in order to ensure success. However, the teaching of language has tended to be seen just as a subject on its own and not as an important element across all subjects. Even when language has been acknowledged as a factor in the learning of all subjects, it has usually been treated in a narrow way, focusing primarily on vocabulary acquisition, spelling, punctuation and grammar. Proficiency in these skills is not unimportant but represents only one small aspect of what developing language for CDC teaching and learning entails.

Teachers need to go further and recognise the different ways language is used in the classroom and, in particular, the vital role language plays in acquiring skills, attitudes and values as well as the more familiar notion of (critical) understanding. Focusing on the different uses of language in the classroom opens up a range of important questions related to practice. For example, teachers need to ensure that the language they use is demanding but accessible. They need to be sufficiently aware of the language difficulties that individuals experience in the CDC learning process. They need to provide enough language support when setting tasks connected with CDC.

There are different approaches to teaching CDC in the curriculum. It might be incorporated into the school's academic programme:

- ► in the form of a new subject or course;
- ► as a cross-curricular dimension incorporated into all or some curriculum subjects.

In both cases, existing knowledge of the relationship between language and academic learning of subject content is also applicable to CDC. At the same time, teaching methodologies which include, for example, group work or project work, introduce aspects of CDC such as co-operation skills or conflict resolution skills, which are related to skills of listening and observing and empathy, where the language competences involved are different. This is an example of how "clusters" of competences are present in many learning situations, as discussed in Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) Volume 1 (pp. 33-36).

There are also other spheres of institutional life where CDC competences can develop and help to create a culture which embodies such values as embracing diversity, encouraging independence of thought and respecting other points of view. This is sometimes captured in the phrase the "whole-school" approach, which means that all aspects of school life, both inside and outside the classroom, try to embody these values. This, too, requires appropriate language competences, as we shall see below,

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1. See Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC), Volume 3, Chapter 5.

and it is important to develop a language and learning policy for all aspects of institutional life, from curriculum to governance.

A further consideration is that the CDC model puts explicit emphasis on two dimensions of learning which go beyond the more traditional focus of education on knowledge of subject content – education for values and criticality. The presentation of descriptors for these competences makes evident that more than just knowledge is involved. For example, the competences of valuing human dignity and human rights include several indicators which use the word "argue", such as "[a]rgues that all public institutions should respect, protect and implement human rights" (intermediate level) (RFCDC Volume 2, p. 15). Arguing a point of view requires a specific language competence which is different from that needed in constructing knowledge. Arguing may take place in, for example, a history classroom, but also equally importantly in an encounter during a recreation period or in a governance meeting.

It is therefore important to analyse what we know about the language(s) of teaching and learning and how this knowledge can be used. The following sections therefore will consider: the language that is used in school (the "language of schooling"); the types of knowledge about language that extend beyond knowledge of grammar ("language as system" and "language as discourse"); the language that is important for learning (academic language); the importance of language in all learning (language and learning); language taught in its own right ("language as subject") and when language is addressed in other subjects (language and learning in other subjects). All of these different aspects of language education are important.

Language(s) of schooling/learning

Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2014)5 on the importance of competences in the language(s) of schooling for equity and quality in education and for educational success identifies the central importance of competences in language(s) of schooling for preventing underachievement and in ensuring equity and quality in education. The term "language" in the phrase language(s) of schooling has two aspects to its meaning. Firstly, it denotes the languages used for teaching the various school subjects and for the functioning of schools. In this context, it refers to the specific language(s) used for teaching – usually the official language(s) of the state or the region – but may also include officially recognised regional or minority languages, foreign or migrant languages. Depending on the national or regional context, several languages of schooling may be used. For many learners the language(s) of schooling will not be their first language and they may as a consequence be subject to some disadvantages, an issue to which we return later in the section on "Multilingual schools".

Secondly, the term "language" in language(s) of schooling also has a more generic meaning, often defined in dictionaries as "a system of communication", and refers to language as a phenomenon, a characteristic of being human, rather than a specific language or languages. In this general usage the additional phrase "of schooling" may seem redundant, since language is present in schools just as in all other spheres of life. However, the use of the term language(s) of schooling, rather than just the generic term "language" prompts questions about whether the type of language used in school has particular characteristics that distinguish it from other types of language use, and how "being educated" is related to language competence. This is indeed true, and in order to implement aspects of the CDC Framework it is important to identify what types of knowledge about language are helpful for teachers, teacher trainers and policy developers.

In the following sections, therefore, we shall show that it is helpful first to distinguish characteristics of the language(s) of schooling, and second to see language as a complex phenomenon whose function goes beyond mere communication. This means that a specific language (or languages) functions as more than just a means of communication, exchanging information and constructing knowledge. It means that the language(s) of schooling embraces two key components:

1. languages taught as subjects in their own right, for example literacy, second/foreign language learning, language as subject; and
2. languages used for teaching other subjects such as geography, history, or mathematics.

Both of these components have implications for the role of language in relation to the CDC Framework.[2]

Language as system and language as discourse

When considering the importance of language for developing competences in democratic culture and the type of knowledge about language that is relevant, it is helpful to distinguish between "language as system" and "language as discourse". These descriptions are best understood as broad ways of thinking about different types of knowledge about language rather than as totally discrete (or distinct) categories. Language as system refers to the way language is organised; it seeks to identify its component parts and the general rules that govern the way the parts are assembled. This may refer to the way words are composed (morphology) and are ordered in sentences (syntax), the rules that govern the sounds (phonology) and writing (orthography), or the meanings of words (semantics). Anyone who has been taught language in a formal educational setting will be aware of language as system because identifying and understanding general rules and patterns is one aspect of language learning. However, given the prominence of this approach, language as system is often the more common form of knowledge about language that is addressed in educational contexts.

Language as discourse places emphasis on the use of language – it draws attention to the living, dynamic nature of language and the way it creates meaning in social contexts. Whereas language as system tends to focus on smaller units of language such as words and sentences, language as discourse operates on larger sections of (spoken or written) text. It is when language is considered as text (either spoken or written) that notions like context, meaning, purpose and deep understanding come into play. When teachers of subjects other than languages are asked to consider language in their teaching, they may assume that this requires them to acquire technical linguistic knowledge about language as system that is outside their specialism. However, language at text level requires less specialised knowledge about forms of language and more focus on function, that is, how language is used in particular contexts. From a teaching perspective the focus widens from concentration only on knowledge of the system to an awareness of the importance of developing the skills and strategies that are needed to use language for varied purposes.[3]

The distinction between "system" (words and sentences) and "discourse" (text) does not mean that identifying patterns and classifications in a system is irrelevant to language as discourse. It is possible to describe different functions of language (such as describing, narrating, arguing, informing) and different types of text (newspapers,

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2. The specific term "language as subject" is the designation used to refer to the teaching of the national/official language(s) (and associated literature). See www.coe.int/en/web/platform-plurilingual-intercultural-language-education/language-as-a-subject, accessed on 5 February 2020.

3. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001) makes a distinction between linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic communicative competence to highlight the dimensions that go beyond a narrow conception of linguistic competence, including function and use of language.

letters, reports) in ways that seek to identify common elements across different categories of functions and texts. However, the categories are broadly indicative and are then further refined and determined in a particular context rather than being based purely on the internal linguistic form. In other words, although, for example, reports in English of experiments learners carried out in science lessons might usually be written using the passive voice ("a test tube was heated"), this is not always required; sometimes it might suit the authors to write the report in the first person using the active voice ("we heated the test tube"). Despite differences of this kind, scientific report writing has a broadly similar tone and purpose whatever grammatical forms are used and identifying these similarities as patterns or conventions rather than strict rules can be useful for learners.

Categories are not discrete; they often overlap. It is not necessary to exclude aspects of knowledge of language as system from consideration of language as discourse for the latter may involve looking explicitly at aspects of grammar and meaning. The key distinction is that between narrow and broad perspectives. The mistake is to see language as system as the only way of considering knowledge about language, instead of recognising that it needs to be viewed within a broader language-as-discourse perspective.

The discourse of CDC needs to be made explicit and taken into account in order to support the implementation of the model. Whether in lessons or in other spheres of school life, (spoken or written) text has certain characteristics which are captured in the CDC descriptors. For example, many descriptors begin with "express" or such phrases as "expresses the view that" as in "expresses the view that, whenever a public official exercises power he or she should not misuse that power and cross the boundaries of their legal authority". Clearly this is a statement of value, but as befits a competence model, it is expressed here as a behaviour that requires a fairly sophisticated degree of competence in language. It may require a degree of audience awareness, judgment about appropriate tone, making choices about vocabulary, knowing how to avoid coming across as strident or aggressive and how to use qualifying statements and concrete illustrative examples. These are skills and strategies that can be taught; discourse can be taught, but this requires an awareness on the part of teachers of the specific nature of CDC discourse and of academic language.

Academic language

What is required for many of the descriptors in CDC is a level of competence that goes beyond the language used in informal conversational contexts. Cummins (1979) distinguished between Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). BICS refers to language used in social encounters (face-to-face conversations, talking on the phone, etc.). CALP refers to the language of formal academic learning in both oral and written language; it is more demanding cognitively and is more complex and specialised. In social conversational language, gestures and expressions and other aspects of the context such as objects can help understanding, but these are often missing in so-called "academic language". Teachers need to be aware of this distinction between "informal" and

"academic" language because it is easy to be deceived into overestimating a learner's language proficiency based on their informal use of language. For example, teachers may overestimate the competence of children with a migrant background in the language of schooling because they have a pronunciation very similar to that of their peers or have mastery of colloquial language. Yet such learners – and others such as those from disadvantaged groups in a society – may struggle to master academic language. All learners need to be taught to develop competence in academic language so that they can develop expertise in school subjects, and for some learners this is a particularly difficult task.

The term academic language then helps to convey the key elements of what is required in the classroom for learning subjects. It refers to the language characteristics of the school subjects and the aspects of language proficiency that are valued and required by the school. Students need to be able to use language not just for informal purposes but also for learning content, for expressing their understanding and for interacting with others about the meaning and implications of what they learn.

Academic language is more specialised and tends to have some of the following characteristics: a higher frequency of longer, complex sentences; impersonal statements and use of the passive voice; abstract terms and figurative expressions. Texts formulated in academic language tend to be more precise, explicit, detached from physical reality and structured according to expectations for a specific category.

The language used for teaching and learning purposes (the language of schooling) will in practice be a combination of informal language (for BICS is not excluded from schooling and is helpful in pedagogical practice), of content language (the more technical language of the subject) and of academic language (CALP). In practice these three categories (which, of course, apply to oral as well as written language) will not be entirely distinct. This can result in the mistaken assumption that the acquisition of academic language will occur naturally and without intervention by the teacher, that BICS will become CALP.

Language and learning

The CDC Framework includes competences related to knowledge and critical understanding as well as those related to values, attitudes and skills. It is important therefore to consider the role of language specifically in relation to learning and understanding content. Thinking about learning in all subjects has developed considerably in the last 50 or more years. The view that saw learning as a process of transmitting information to fairly passive recipients – "filling empty heads" or "writing on blank slates" – has given way to an approach that recognises the need for learners to be active participants in the learning process. Different terms like constructivism, dialogism and pupil-centred learning have been used to describe approaches that go beyond transmission teaching to acknowledge the active role of the learner in creating meaning and constructing knowledge. The stimulus for these developments in subject teaching has in many cases been cognitive psychology and theories of learning rather than thinking about language. However, an understanding of the relationship between language and learning leads to similar conclusions about

practice. If the role of language is not just to transmit content but also an essential means of creating meaning and developing understanding, then the relationship between language and learning, and the importance of learners actively using language, becomes clear.

It has long been established practice to include some element of discussion by learners, even in the most traditional classrooms. However, this is often interpreted simply as an opportunity to consolidate previous learning or express an opinion about knowledge that has already been acquired and understood. A different perspective sees the use of language as itself a process of learning. In this view language is more than a process of communicating knowledge; it is, rather, a means of constructing knowledge. Exploratory talk about a topic allows the learner to link new concepts to existing knowledge, to try out ideas, to express half-formed thoughts. Language and cognition are thus intimately connected. Such talk may be hesitant and inconclusive. It is therefore different from the kind of talk that is part of a presentation, which, because it is more crafted and complete, represents another stage in the learning process.

An understanding of the relationship between language and learning will clearly influence the teacher's approach to question and answering sessions and will lead to using these to try to extend understanding, not just to invite narrow, closed responses. However, even open-ended questions that require more than yes/no answers often do not give students enough opportunity to take initiatives with language. Exploratory forms of talk involve more than simply filling in the gaps left by the teacher. Exploratory talk will be most effective when students are able to contribute freely to the topic in hand as ideas occur to them and when others in the group listen closely to what they say. It is not only the teacher who should determine and evaluate the relevance and quality of the contributions; this can be a shared responsibility within the group. This change from a traditional evaluative to a more dialogic approach will be more collaborative and purposeful.[4]

In the CDC model, one of the basic descriptors in the "knowledge and critical understanding" section refers to the requirement that learners "can explain the meaning of basic political concepts including democracy, freedom, citizenship, rights and responsibilities" (RFCDC Volume 2, p. 23). In order to help learners to develop understanding of the concepts identified here, it is clearly not enough simply to ask them to "discuss" in some vague and uninformed way. On the other hand, it is equally clear that teacher input in the form of an extended lecture is unlikely to achieve the intended goal. What is more likely to succeed is an interaction between task and input, so that learners have an opportunity to assimilate new knowledge over time and develop the necessary understanding. Some group tasks that require the learners to use language in purposeful ways (for example, prioritising a list of statements, sorting or matching cards with different statements written on them) might come before the input in order to create engagement, attention and curiosity. When asked to participate in such tasks, learners are being directed specifically to the

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4. See Wells G. and Ball T. (2008), "Exploratory Talk and Dialogic Enquiry" in Mercer N. and Hodgkinson S. (eds) *Exploring Talk in Schools. Inspired by the work of Douglas Barnes*, Sage Publications.

cognitive-linguistic operations that promote understanding, such as the need to "compare", "distinguish between", "define" and "explain". More ambitious approaches to teaching the concepts might involve forms of role play and simulation. What they all have in common is the intention to engage learners in uses of language in highly purposeful ways. One term which can be used to encapsulate the importance of the language dimension in all subjects is "literacy in (subject x)" although "literacy" is more usually thought of in the teaching of language as subject.

Language as subject

The term language as subject is used to refer to the teaching of French in France, German in Germany, etc. Of course, teaching a second or foreign language is also, strictly speaking, an example of teaching language as subject, but the term language as subject is more often used in Council of Europe documents to refer to the teaching of (a) national/official language(s) (and associated literature). Before the arrival of ideas about the importance of literacy in other subjects, language as subject was seen as having the main responsibility for developing proficiency in the language of schooling and for ensuring that learners had the necessary language skills to function in society. In this view language as subject was seen as a "service" subject, in other words, it was seen as providing a service by teaching the necessary language skills, which were then put to use elsewhere in other subjects. This perspective means that its aims have sometimes been conceived in narrow ways, with a focus on functional skills divorced from wider educational goals and contexts. It is now widely recognised that the development of competence in language should take place in all subjects and this raises questions about the specific role of language as subject.

Although language as subject should not be seen as a "service" subject, it does have a special role to play in relation to language education. Teachers of language as subject have a responsibility for the monitoring and teaching of basic elements of speaking and listening, reading and writing. This is likely to be more evident in the early years of primary education but may extend for some students, including children with a migrant background, into the later years. Teachers of other subjects need to be able to support that endeavour, but it is important that responsibility for specialist teaching of basic literacy is clearly designated.

Language as subject thus still retains a central role in the development of language. This does not, however, mean that certain aspects are taught in language as subject and then just practised in other subjects, for this view does not take sufficient account of the embedded and contextual nature of language and meaning in each other subject. Nevertheless, it is important to recognise that in language as subject it is language itself that is at its centre, whereas in other subjects understanding and working with content is the central goal. Language as subject provides tools for analysis of texts that can also be used in other subjects and provides students with opportunities to practise diverse strategies of oral and written communication. Depending on how the curriculum is organised, it also has a key role in the teaching of literature, which has particular relevance to the CDC Framework.

As discussed in Volume 3 of the CDC Framework, teachers may opt to select literary texts that deal with themes that are relevant to the descriptors that are identified in the framework. There are numerous works of literature, both classic and contemporary and in a variety of languages, that address issues such as the rights and duties of citizens, the exercise of power, the dangers of excessive nationalism, or the value and fragility of democracy. While literature may provide rich opportunities for exploring such themes, a word of caution is necessary. There is a danger that using literature in the service of a particular narrow curriculum goal related to the CDC Framework may run the risk of circumscribing the meaning of the text, distorting its aesthetic impact and distracting from its broad resonance. It may be helpful here to distinguish the use of literature simply to "moralise" from the use of literature to sharpen moral discernment and sensibility. In the former case the narrow goals may distort the meaning in ways that are less likely to happen when a broader moral intent is adopted.

From a general perspective, it is arguably literature that encapsulates language in its most subtle and intricate forms where nuances of meaning and ambiguity are more often found. Language has meaning not simply by reference to something outside itself, in a purely representational way, but through its occurrence in cultural contexts of human communities, which includes its potential to (re)-create in imagination new or existing communities. It is therefore unhelpful to see language narrowly as a disembodied, transparent tool that is bound by predetermined rules and structures. In this view, literature has a role in relation to the CDC Framework that goes beyond the teaching of specific themes and issues and addresses such descriptors as those related to attitudes (such as tolerance of ambiguity and openness to cultural otherness) and skills (related to empathy, and flexibility and adaptability).

Language and learning in other subjects

CDC might be incorporated into the school's academic programme either by embedding elements into different curriculum subjects or in the form of a new subject or course. In both cases it is important to include in CDC teaching the recognition of the importance of language and learning in all subjects as an essential component of the language of schooling. There are two complementary arguments that have been advanced in favour of this view. One argument is that the development of competence in language is too important for it to be the responsibility of only one or two subjects but should be shared by all. Some of the early "language and literacy across the curriculum" initiatives took this view and met some resistance from teachers of subjects other than language as it seemed they were being asked to take on extra responsibilities that were not central to their concerns. The second argument is that language competence is an integral part of subject competence, that learning a subject is inextricably tied to language learning within that subject, to learning the discourse of the subject. Taking this view, subject teachers are not being asked to do something that is additional or separate from teaching their subject effectively.

In other words, whether consciously or not, teachers of all subjects deal with language all the time but that is precisely why language is often taken for granted. When teachers and pupils become more consciously aware of aspects of language in the classroom, teaching and learning will improve, and education provision is likely to

become more equitable. It can seem as if some learners are less capable or not good at the subject, but it may be more a matter of being disadvantaged by language as a cognitive and conceptual tool. This has practical implications for the classroom in that learners should be supported in all subjects in the use of language and the expectations related to language use need to be made explicit.

In order to incorporate awareness of language into all subjects, an "embodied" rather than "separatist" view is required. A separatist view of language makes the assumption that the linguistic elements can be isolated, generalised and taught in such a way that they can easily be transposed to other contexts. In that view, a skill such as writing a report can be taught in a systematic way through rules, conventions and practice. The separatist view is in danger of leading to a mechanical form of teaching that is closed and formulaic, that does not lead learners to have a rich appreciation of different language uses. In this approach the literacy elements in the subject classroom are seen as "extras" that are not sufficiently related to the specific requirements of the subject. On the other hand, an embodied view of language is more focused on the unique and dynamic nature of particular uses of language, recognising the importance of context. In this approach it may be possible to identify some general features of reports, but each report (the term itself might not be used) is unique, with its complex, overlapping dimensions that need to be examined in context.

What does this mean with respect to teaching methods? A subject teacher is not expected to adopt specific teaching approaches related to language in a mechanical way. For example, the simple act of correcting the informal oral language used by learners may be successful in one classroom but not in another. In one case, because there is a general culture of trust and understanding of the importance of language, the learners appreciate the intention of the teacher to develop their academic language and respond accordingly. In another classroom, however, the same action may produce a negative response because the learners interpret the correction as an affront to their identity and feel even more alienated from the school and classroom. The specific context, and what can be called the "culture of the classroom", will determine the success or otherwise of particular teaching approaches.

One of the CDC descriptors asks learners to "defend the view that when people are imprisoned, although they are subject to restrictions, this does not mean that they are less deserving of respect and dignity than anyone else". There are various ways of addressing this topic in the classroom but let us imagine that the teacher has asked the class to write an imaginary letter to the press in response to a recent report about overcrowding, limited exercise facilities and poor sanitation in many prisons. Some advance preparation with regard to the content of the letter will be needed but the "language-sensitive" teacher will recognise that support may be needed with the "category" of writing. Through the analysis of examples of effective letters on other topics, attention can be drawn to some of the language considerations, for example thinking about the possible audience and its expectations; whether colloquial language is appropriate; ways of structuring the letter; how to use connecting phrases to consider other viewpoints such as "it may be argued that"; the appropriateness of use of first or third person pronouns; how to avoid redundant phrases; adopting the right tone that is firm but not abusive; choosing the right salutation and ending; and how to orientate the reader at the start of the letter.

Language in CDC as subject

Where CDC is taught as subject – perhaps as education for citizenship or *éducation civique* or some similar title – the subject content may focus on some competences more than others. Some elements of the section on "Knowledge and critical understanding of the world" will be one element of content, for example politics, law, human rights, media, economies, the environment, or sustainability. In "Attitudes" the teacher might focus especially on civic-mindedness and on the section on "Values", as these are strongly related to students' enactment of themselves in society.

As part of their planning, teachers can use the descriptors of "Knowledge and critical understanding of the world" (RFCDC Volume 2, p. 23) and of "Values" (RFCDC Volume 2, pp. 15-16). These are formulated as levels of competence, and are elements of "democratic competence" and "intercultural competence", which are defined as follows:

> the ability to mobilise and deploy relevant psychological resources (namely values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and/or understanding) in order to respond appropriately and effectively to the demands, challenges and opportunities presented by democratic situations … [and] by intercultural situations. (RFCDC Volume 1, p. 32)

When specific competences are described, then the general competences defined above are implied. For example, with respect to knowledge and critical understanding of human rights, a student at "intermediate" level:

- ► can explain the universal, inalienable and indivisible nature of human rights; and
- ► can reflect critically on the relationship between human rights, democracy, peace and security in a globalised world;

and, with respect to values and human rights, the student:

- ► defends the view that no one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; and
- ► argues that all public institutions should respect, protect and implement human rights.

Being elements of democratic and intercultural competence, it is to be expected that students will "mobilise and deploy" them in real situations in the classroom or beyond the classroom walls. In real-life situations, as explained in RFCDC Volume 1, p. 33 ff, competences are likely to be found in "clusters" in actual "democratic and intercultural situations", but for teaching purposes, in the classroom, it is possible to focus on particular competences within a cluster. In other words, teachers can plan to have specific competences as their teaching objectives, and on the discourse students need to use them.

Imagine, for example, that a teacher wants to focus on the ability to explain human rights and the valuing of human rights in the context of public institutions respecting, protecting and implementing human rights. The element of "valuing" would involve the ability to "argue". A teacher can use the descriptors quoted above as teaching objectives or expected learning outcomes. The teacher would then analyse what the descriptors imply learners need to know about human rights and then

what the discourse of explanation and argument involves and what learners need to be able to do with language.

To do this, a teacher can first follow the principles of the example given at the end of the previous section and analyse, with learners, examples of (spoken or written) texts where human rights are explained to different audiences; an online search for "explain human rights" offers multiple types of text, including using visual support. Some are clearly for younger children and some are for older people and are more formal with respect to terminology and sentence structure. Students can analyse texts through comparison. They can then prepare their own documents and, in so doing, demonstrate their valuing of "democracy, justice, fairness, equality and the rule of law" at "intermediate" level (RFCDC Volume 2, p. 16) through:

► arguing that democratic elections should always be conducted freely and fairly, according to international standards and national legislation, and without any fraud;

► expressing the view that, whenever a public official exercises power, he or she should not misuse that power and cross the boundaries of their legal authority;

► expressing support for the view that courts of law should be accessible to everyone so that people are not denied the opportunity to take a case to court because it is too expensive, troublesome or complicated to do so.

Consideration of the issue of fraud in democratic elections might involve the analysis of newspaper articles in terms of cause, intention, methods of detection and consequences. Students can be supported in this process through specific terms and concepts such as "evidence", "implication", "trustworthiness", "insinuation" and in the examination of journalistic techniques, such as use of headlines, direct quotations and qualifying statements. The issue of access to courts of law, might be addressed by examining concrete individual case studies. Here, the language is more likely to be more narrative-based and descriptive. Students may need support with the process of summarising complex texts to use as examples when expressing a view.

Language in CDC across the curriculum

The guidance on "CDC and Curriculum" in RFCDC Volume 3 lists important principles to consider in designing curricula, and the section on "Cross-curricular topics and competences" needs to be borne in mind here.

> Cross-curricular topics can be conceived in terms of phenomena or issues, such as "education for democracy", "environmental or ecological education", and "peace education". Phenomena-based learning or issues-based learning are approaches that conceive teaching and learning in a holistic way based on real-world phenomena and issues. … The curriculum is then structured from these phenomena or issues, such as "migration", or "water or food supply", and different subjects are integrated around them. (RFCDC Volume 3, p. 15)

Such interdisciplinary curricula require collaboration among teachers or, perhaps more often in primary school, the planning, by one teacher, of a project with different perspectives. A second approach described in the same section refers to cross-curricular

design, where key competences are included in the planning for each subject, but each subject is taught independently. Democratic and intercultural competences are key competences. In this case, the collaboration focuses on ensuring "coherence and transparency" and "avoiding curriculum overload". The RFCDC can be used in designing interdisciplinary curricula at national and also at institutional level and, in this case, it is important to give learners a voice in the process (RFCDC Volume 3, p. 22).

Whichever approach is taken, learners will need to acquire several disciplinary/subject discourses. Collaborating teachers can include this in planning, for example, their contribution to a project on "water or food supply". They may choose to focus on the "basic" level competence "Can reflect critically on the need for responsible consumption" (RFCDC Volume 2, p. 50) or the "advanced" level competence "Can reflect critically on the ethical issues associated with globalisation" (RFCDC Volume 2, p. 51) – the latter applied to transportation of food around the world. In either case, students need competences in discourses from geography, history, mathematics and other subjects.

Let us take two examples, history and mathematics. The teacher of history can draw attention to changes and "improvements" over time in food supplies and diets. Here the terminology – for example, "epoch", "colonisation", "reform" or "revolution" – is complemented by the discourse, for example, of "recount", "justify" or "define". "Define", for example, is a matter of "recognising", "producing" and "improvising/creating/ proposing" and a teacher needs to help students to find appropriate formulations.[5]

The mathematics teacher can introduce the discourse that helps students analyse data or quantitative information on transportation of food in a globalised market. Students learn to use terminology (such as "centre", "variation", and "spread", or "variables", "dependency" and "correlations") to communicate the results of applying mathematical and statistical techniques in their analysis of, for example, a text presenting the globalisation of food supply as a means of enriching diets and improving health, complemented by the discourse of "interpret/infer/assume", "model/ predict", "correlate/contrast/match", "compare", "judge/evaluate/assess", etc. and the appropriate formulations in the language of schooling.[6]

These considerations are relevant whether the mathematics and history teachers are working in an interdisciplinary project or independently in their own subject. At the same time, (some of) the competences of "Attitudes, Values and Skills" can be considered in planning. Here, the history teacher might focus particularly on "tolerance of ambiguity", which includes "[a]cceptance of complexity, contradictions and lack of clarity" (RFCDC Volume 1, p. 45).

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5. More detail can be found in: Beacco J.-C. (2010), "Items for a description of linguistic competence in the language of schooling necessary for teaching/learning history (end of compulsory education) – An approach with reference points", available at www.coe.int/en/web/platform-plurilingual-intercultural-language-education/language-s-in-other-subjects#{%2228070427%22:[2]}, p. 21, accessed 25 September 2020.

6. More detail can be found in: Linneweber-Lammerskitten H. (2012), "Items for a description of linguistic competence in the language of schooling necessary for learning/teaching mathematics (end of compulsory education) – An approach with reference points", available at www.coe.int/en/web/platform-plurilingual-intercultural-language-education/language-s-in-other-subjects#{%2228070427%22:[2]}, p. 18, accessed 25 September 2020.

The mathematics teacher might think that "autonomous learning skills" can be the focus of work in statistical analysis, which includes "judging the reliability of the various sources of information, advice or guidance, assessing them for possible bias or distortion, and selecting the most suitable sources from the range available" (RFCDC Volume 1, p. 46).

Here, again, the approach described earlier is relevant. Competences appear in clusters and one or more may become the main focus of planning and learning outcomes, but it is useful to make a distinction between those democratic cultural competences which can be taught as knowledge and those which are taught as process.

Language in the teaching of CDC as knowledge and teaching CDC as process

As we have seen, teachers can introduce CDC as teaching objectives and learning outcomes whether they work independently in their own subject or collaborate with others. We have also seen that language is a crucial factor in using competences, whether they are competences in the subject, such as using the discourse of mathematics or history, or CDC competences and the language needed to, for example, argue for the value of human rights or critically analyse knowledge about the world. Finally, we have seen that there is much overlap between the discourse of subjects and the discourse of CDC. The notions of "explain", "argue", "define" and so on are common to both, and this means that subject teachers contribute to CDC "Knowledge and critical understanding" in their subject teaching.

There is also much overlap in other elements of the CDC Framework, notably in "Skills" and "Attitudes". The skills of "Autonomous learning", for example, are taught in many if not all subjects, as are "Responsibility" and "Self-efficacy". Other elements are specific to CDC, such as "Openness to cultural otherness" or "Civic-mindedness" and need to be given particular attention in appropriate subjects.

The competences of "Skills", "Attitudes" and "Values" are best taught and acquired through process, in contrast to content-based "Knowledge and critical understanding". The guidance given on "CDC and pedagogy" (RFCDC Volume 3, pp. 25-50) provides an analysis and suggestions on both process-oriented and content-based methods, and we now need to consider the language dimension of these.

We have already discussed how, when teaching CDC as content, learners' attention can be drawn to the discourse they need. When focusing on process, other approaches are needed. Let us take as an example the introduction of "democratic processes" into the classroom (RFCDC Volume 3, pp. 31-32). It is recommended that students are involved in decision making and that simulations can be used to introduce democratic processes and institutions. Such activities involve particular discourses. For example, levels of formality or register in language vary from one situation to another, from a simulated political campaign with discussions taking place in the street to a simulated parliament. The terminology of democratic institutions – "election", "vote", "majority", etc. – is set within the discourse of "argument" or "debate" (see the section on "CDC, skills development and language" below for further discussion).

Teachers can organise participation in classroom decision making or simulations of various kinds and, initially, encourage students to focus on the processes, using whatever language they wish to or can. A switch to a focus on language, on what is "appropriate" or "polite" in different situations, is a second stage during which critical analysis appears and "Knowledge and critical understanding of language and communication" is taught. Teachers and students can use the descriptors (RFCDC Volume 2, p.47) to help in this. At this point, teaching CDC as process and content merge.

The whole-school approach

In the guidance on "CDC and the whole-school approach" (RFCDC Volume 3, pp. 89-100), attention is drawn to the importance of "School governance and culture" and "Co-operation with the community", in addition to curricular and pedagogical matters. With respect to language issues, there are parallels between processes of governance or community co-operation and CDC and the processes approach to CDC in the classroom. There are also differences.

When, as is recommended, students are encouraged to participate in decision making in governance, they will encounter a discourse which other stakeholders such as teachers and others involved in governance have acquired and use without reflection. It is second nature to them because what was once new and strange has become familiar. If they use this discourse without an awareness of the power it gives them in communication with those who do not master it, they will unwittingly exclude the very people they wish to include.

There are two elements, then, to the need to pay attention to language. Those who know the discourse need to learn to become aware of it (again) and help students to acquire it in informal ways, such as by explaining the terminology of meetings and the conventions of interactions and the specific strategies of the discourse used. Students need to have opportunities to reflect on and analyse what they are hearing and how they can acquire the discourse in a deliberate way until it becomes second nature for them too. Teachers and others involved in governance can be expected to pay attention to these issues and it is possible to have time for students' reflection in sessions of "training for governance".

"Co-operation with the community" is likely to involve stakeholders who cannot be expected to make opportunities for learning in the way that those involved in school governance can. Some of what is needed and learned for governance can be transferred to community co-operation. Discourses which are present in the surrounding community – such as the discourse of letters to a newspaper or notices about upcoming events – need to be analysed and learned in school as part of the preparation for interaction with the community. The principles of using and then reflecting on usage developed in the learning of curriculum discourses, through process and content approaches, apply here too.[7]

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7. The experiences of governance and co-operation are particularly good opportunities for self-assessment in a portfolio. See www.coe.int/en/web/platform-plurilingual-intercultural-language-education/language-s-in-other-subjects#{%2228070427%22:[2]}, accessed 25 September 2020.

Multilingual schools

Many, perhaps most, schools in Europe today are multilingual. This means that there are numerous languages present in the school because they are present in the students, even though not always visible and not always recognised; this may be the case for teachers too. Students who speak languages other than the language used for teaching and learning do not leave their languages at the door when they enter their school. The other languages they speak usually originate in a minority group they belong to which has lived in the country in question for generations or has recently arrived. Whether "indigenous" languages or the "languages of migration", students may use them for learning without their teachers being aware of this.

Such students need to be helped to learn the language of schooling and in this respect need to benefit from the approaches described in earlier sections just as much as those who speak the language of schooling as their main language. In this case, extra attention is needed in teaching the discourse necessary for CDC as well as for other discourses of schooling. This has already been analysed[8] and pedagogical approaches exist to help overcome difficulties.[9]

Students who are plurilingual also have advantages. They have psychological advantages in general, but they also have a special position in society with respect to CDC. For example, when schools are multilingual, then the communities in which they are located and which they serve are multilingual, from the parents to local organisations and groups. When schools engage in projects with local communities, as suggested above in the section "The whole-school approach", such students may have a special role as mediators and ambassadors because of their linguistic repertoire. This means, however, that they need the appropriate discourse of CDC in their other language(s).

The same approach can be taken as with the language of schooling described above, but there may not be teachers in a school who can take responsibility for this. The solution is to invite people from the community to take on this role. They may need informal training, for example through observation and partnership with teachers who are handling the issues in the language of schooling. They may also need help with appropriate pedagogical materials. These are matters for specific circumstances rather than speculation here. However, the importance of doing this is not in doubt.

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8. Little D. (2010), "The linguistic and educational integration of children and adolescents from migrant backgrounds – Concept Paper", Council of Europe, available at www.coe.int/en/web/platform-plurilingual-intercultural-language-education/languages-of-schooling#{%2228069842%22:[]}, accessed 25 September 2020.
9. See the Council of Europe *Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education*, https://rm.coe.int/guide-for-the-development-and-implementation-of-curricula-for-plurilin/1680702437, accessed 25 September 2020.

CDC, skills development and language

The purpose of this section is to look at the language demands underlying examples of some of the skills that are likely to be involved in the development of CDC. As discussed, language is so embedded in the learning process it can easily be taken for granted and it is sometimes difficult to separate the language issues from general pedagogical considerations. The competence in language needed to develop particular skills is often tacit and implicit; knowing when to make language an explicit part of the learning in CDC is a matter of judgment. As indicated above, the term "language-sensitive" teacher usefully conveys the approach that is required in the classroom. This means being able to take the relevance of the context into account and not adopting mechanistic approaches that might run the risk of distorting the learning. The learners should not feel that they are constantly being diverted from the CDC focus in order to look at language separately; the two elements should be integrated in practice.

The skills of discussion and debating are key elements in developing CDC. The term "discussion" is broad and can usually be defined more precisely, for example the learners may be asked to share opinions, come to a decision or solve a problem. The oral exchanges involved in discussion allow learners to (re)construct knowledge collectively, clarifying and reformulating what they understand. Through feedback, participants in discussion can be given advice on such skills as active listening, picking up on ideas and using them, disagreeing in a constructive way, using evidence to support opinions and bringing others into the discussion. Where appropriate, suitable and less suitable forms of language can be exemplified and analysed. The "fishbowl" technique, whereby a small group have a discussion while the rest observe, can be a useful basis for providing feedback, perhaps focusing specifically on the language used.

The formal structures associated with debates can be a more comfortable format for some learners because they may demand less spontaneity and allow for more preparation and planning. Formal debates are a valuable resource for citizenship and political education, not just because they allow exploration of key issues but also because they can simulate an important part of the democratic process. Engaging in formal debates can involve a variety of skills including researching and analysing information, planning and preparation, structuring ideas in arguments, and taking different viewpoints into account. More focused language skills might involve speaking clearly (thinking about style, speed, volume, tone), using the language of persuasion, explaining ideas or the use of devices such as repetition, analogy, rhetorical questions, allusion or antithesis. Students can also be helped to use non-verbal means of communication effectively. The critical analysis of existing speeches on other topics associated with the CDC Framework (through observation or reading) can be a valuable precursor to conducting a debate.

The use of presentations with learners can support several of the CDC descriptors related, for example, to human rights, religious differences and political differences. Helping students to develop presentations will allow the teacher to draw attention to the appropriateness of particular language registers in different contexts and for different purposes. The process of preparing an oral presentation can be treated much like the drafting process in writing, and provide opportunities for the teacher to help students, for example, to develop an argument, use illustrative material and make their language more varied (using alternatives to "and" and "but").

The skills of active, critical reading are relevant to the analysis of documents, particularly at more advanced levels (for example, human rights declarations, charters, covenants on political rights or conventions).[10] They help learners to be able to consider both aspects of form (the way language is ordered and constructed) and function (the purpose for which the language is used and the context). Such texts may present difficulties, but it is important to give students the experience of reading demanding texts and to approach these in a helpful way. Activities that are designed to introduce the text before reading it can help motivation, activate prior knowledge, open up key themes and invoke curiosity so that the process of reading is still challenging but less confusing. Such "ways in" to a text might include: examining the title to try to anticipate the content; asking a series of questions about the theme that engage with the learners' own experience; introducing key technical words; "interrogating" a picture that accompanies the text or presenting one key sentence from the text for initial discussion. Directed activities can help learners with understanding and can also develop reading strategies. One example is where the text is cut into sections and students are asked in groups to reassemble the text to draw attention to its structure; only the first section of the text is read and students try to predict what comes next; groups are asked to insert missing words that have been deleted; they have to invent a title and sub-headings; the text is annotated by students underlining two or three key sentences, key words or technical words; they create a diagram to go with the text; students write questions based on the text; they are invited to sort out cards with statements on them into those that are true or false based on the text; the text is transposed by the students into other formats, such as a newspaper article or poster. Such activities can be helpful in giving learners time to assimilate complex new language and to understand the genre they are faced with, its structure, intention, implied audience, strengths and weaknesses.

A key role for education in relation to the development of digital skills is the safety and protection of young people. The digital age has brought challenges but also huge opportunities for developing CDC as it provides access to documents, and opportunities to participate in society and engage in the democratic process via, for example, online forums, debates, and petitions. Language is central to the use of digital technology, but technology itself also has an effect on the use of language.

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10. The concept of "critical information literacy" as opposed to "information literacy" highlights the need to develop a critical consciousness and approach. Catts R. and Lau J. (2008), "Towards information literacy indicators, available at www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/resources/publications-and-communication-materials/publications/full-list/towards-information-literacy-indicators//, accessed 25 September 2020.

The use of e-communication has brought a form of informal writing that often does not observe conventional uses of spelling and punctuation and uses frequent acronyms and other shortcuts. The response from educators need not be negative; these developments can be seen as another form of language variation. It is important, however, to teach young people the concept of appropriateness, so that they understand that language changes according to the context. The use of digital technology to support the implementation of the CDC Framework will benefit from specific awareness of the implications for language education.

Learners need to be taught to use critical discrimination and to be alert to propaganda and fabricated content when using the internet to source information. They need to be aware of the importance of checking authorship, understanding intention and verifying claims. This kind of critical reading is important in all contexts, but it is particularly relevant in developing digital literacy because the techniques used for obscuring the truth and the challenge of distinguishing fact from fiction or opinion are often more pronounced. It is important that learners are alert to the use of language to persuade and distort the truth. They can be taught to identify vague or deliberately ambiguous language by the critical analysis of examples and can be helped to understand how the use of cliché, euphemistic language, hyperbole and slang can be deliberately employed to frustrate rather than enable understanding. Examination of uses of language will help to develop a critical digital literacy so that learners become more aware of how thinking can be shaped and biases reinforced.

The importance of listening is highlighted in the CDC descriptors both explicitly (in the skills section under "skills of listening and observing" (RFCDC Volume 2, p. 19), but also implicitly in a number of other descriptors. For example, those related to "openness to cultural others" include attitudes which clearly require attentive listening ("seeks contact with other people in order to learn about their culture"; "seeks and welcomes opportunities for encountering people with different values, customs and behaviours"). Descriptors related to co-operation and conflict resolution skills clearly require the ability to listen attentively. As with other aspects of language education, listening can easily be taken for granted because it is such a natural activity. However, whether students are operating in their first or second language, listening skills can be addressed specifically. Listening is not just a matter of hearing and in order to engage deeply with a topic or other people, it needs a proactive attitude that seeks understanding. Taking such a proactive stance does not necessarily come easily to all students and they can be supported by a number of techniques in the classroom. Activating prior knowledge in advance of a presentation, film or other form of input on an aspect of CDC may help focus attention. This can be done very simply by having students write down what they know about a topic or issue and then formulating two or three questions that come to mind. Alternatively, students may be given, in advance of the input, a specific goal for listening, or they may be helped to develop active strategies such as forming questions, making summaries, clarifying the main focus or focusing on the structure of the presentation.

The use of drama activities, including forms of role play, have a great deal of potential for helping learners acquire aspects of CDC. Approaches of this kind can be challenging for less experienced teachers but there is potential for cross-curricular co-operation by engaging drama/theatre teachers in CDC-related projects. The device

of "questioning in role" invites learners to question a fictitious character about their experiences, motives, feelings, etc. For example, the teacher (or a class member) could adopt the role of a newly arrived young person from another country who is shy, bewildered and struggling with the new situation. This would be a concrete way of introducing descriptors related to developing attitudes of open-mindedness to cultural otherness and respect. The specific focus on language can be included from the start as the learners will need to work out the best approach to help the newcomer relax and open up.

Another technique of "mantle of the expert" casts the class in the role of a group of experts with a single identity who are trying to solve a particular problem. For example, they may be cast as town planners, lawyers, journalists or teachers who are considering such issues as a planning application to build a major new road, a submission to deport an immigrant who does not have legal status, a claim that the inmates of a local prison are not being treated fairly or a request that the decision-making procedures in a school should be made more democratic. The value of the "mantle of the expert" approach is that it can provide distance from some topics that might be too emotionally charged to simply "act out"; sensitivity is still required by the teacher in such cases. The activity can be employed as a simulation but can also be developed to employ more dramatic art, building belief and creating various forms of tension. The protection offered by the fictional roles and the dramatic context may encourage pupils to use language in ways that might otherwise not come naturally to them, attempting a more formal rather than conversational discourse.

The technique of "tableau" invites groups of participants to create a still image with their bodies to depict a moment in time or an idea. It is a useful approach when the issues being depicted are difficult for inexperienced students to enact in improvised drama. Possible scenarios associated with empathy (a companion needs help, bad things happen to other people, seeing things from a friend's perspective) can be more easily depicted in still images as a focus for analysis and discussion. Individual members of the tableau can be asked to voice (a) what they might be saying at a particular moment and (b) their thoughts, which may or may not be different from what they articulate. An exercise of this kind can introduce students to the notion of subtext in language or, for younger learners, may highlight that people's thoughts and feelings often remain hidden.

Forms of group play-making or devising can be used to address some of the knowledge and critical understanding descriptors (for example, an enactment of a delegation to a council or parliament can depict "ways citizens can influence policy"; an enactment of an encounter on a train might raise questions about human rights). Participation in drama activities requires skills of co-operation, flexibility and adaptability, and empathy. It encourages participants to think consciously about the way they use language and adapt it in the context of the fictitious contexts that are created.

Conclusion

This document has shown that language is present in all aspects of education and that, consequently, all educators are involved. They need to be aware of how language influences the learning of CDC, just as it influences the learning of subjects. They also need to be aware that all other aspects of life in any educational institution – from pre-school to higher education – are realised in language.

There are clear implications for educators themselves but also for teacher educators, who should include attention to language in their courses whatever subjects they deal with, for curriculum designers and producers of teaching materials, who should refer to the language dimension of teaching and learning in their documents and advice to teachers, and for policy makers, who should ensure that language matters are given high priority and explicitly stated in policy documents.

However, it is not necessary for every teacher to have specialist knowledge of language and linguistics. Paying attention to speech and writing, and helping learners to do the same, leads to a more conscious and careful use of language, and this benefits all involved.

Further reading

The Council of Europe's Platform of resources and references for plurilingual and intercultural education is one of the main sources for further reading on language in education, in particular the section dealing with "Language in other subjects".

The European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe has many resources on language in education.

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This publication demonstrates that language is present in all aspects of education, including the learning of competences for democratic culture.

Everyone involved in education needs to be aware of how language influences learning. There are clear implications for educators themselves, but also for others. Educators should include attention to language in their courses, regardless of the subject. Curriculum designers and materials producers should refer to the language dimension of teaching and learning in their texts and advice to teachers. Policy makers should ensure that language matters are a high priority and are explicitly stated in policy documents.

However, educators do not need to be language specialists, therefore the issues and consequences for practice found in this publication are clear and accessible to everyone.

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