

THE CEFR COMPANION VOLUME: A KEY RESOURCE FOR INCLUSIVE PLURILINGUAL EDUCATION

2023 Webinar Series

Webinar 3

Part A - April 6, 16.00 CET

Part B - May 10, 16.00 CET

Putting the action-oriented approach into practice / Mettre en pratique la perspective actionnelle

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(Session delivered in English and French)

Background reading

To be read before or after the webinar.

There are two short recommended readings in this document:

- The section of the CEFR Companion Volume on the action-oriented approach
- The section of the CEFR Companion Volume on the illustrative descriptors

Chapter 2

KEY ASPECTS OF THE CEFR FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR) presents a comprehensive descriptive scheme of language proficiency and a set of Common Reference Levels (A1 to C2) defined in illustrative descriptor scales, plus options for curriculum design promoting plurilingual and intercultural education, further elaborated in the *Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education* (Beacco et al. 2016a).

One of the main principles of the CEFR is the promotion of the positive formulation of educational aims and outcomes at all levels. Its “can do” definition of aspects of proficiency provides a clear, shared roadmap for learning, and a far more nuanced instrument to gauge progress than an exclusive focus on scores in tests and examinations. This principle is based on the CEFR view of language as a vehicle for opportunity and success in social, educational and professional domains. This key feature contributes to the Council of Europe’s goal of quality inclusive education as a right of all citizens. The Council of Europe’s Committee of Ministers recommends the “use of the CEFR as a tool for coherent, transparent and effective plurilingual education in such a way as to promote democratic citizenship, social cohesion and intercultural dialogue”²¹.

As well as being used as a reference tool by almost all member states of the Council of Europe and the European Union, the CEFR has also had – and continues to have – considerable influence beyond Europe. In fact, the CEFR is being used not only to provide transparency and clear reference points for assessment purposes but also, increasingly, to inform curriculum reform and pedagogy. This development reflects the forward-looking conceptual underpinning of the CEFR and has paved the way for a new phase of work around the CEFR, leading to the extension of the illustrative descriptors published in this edition. Before presenting the illustrative descriptors, however, a reminder of the purpose and nature of the CEFR is outlined. First, we consider the aims of the CEFR, its descriptive scheme and the action-oriented approach, then the Common Reference Levels and creation of profiles in relation to them, plus the illustrative descriptors themselves, and finally the concepts of plurilingualism/pluriculturalism and mediation that were introduced to language education by the CEFR.

Background to the CEFR

The CEFR was developed as a continuation of the Council of Europe’s work in language education during the 1970s and 1980s. The CEFR “action-oriented approach” builds on and goes beyond the communicative approach proposed in the mid-1970s in the publication “The Threshold Level”, the first functional/notional specification of language needs.

The CEFR and the related European Language Portfolio (ELP) that accompanied it were recommended by an intergovernmental symposium held in Switzerland in 1991. As its subtitle suggests, the CEFR is concerned principally with learning and teaching. It aims to facilitate transparency and coherence between the curriculum, teaching and assessment within an institution and transparency and coherence between institutions, educational sectors, regions and countries.

The CEFR was piloted in provisional versions in 1996 and 1998 before being published in English (Cambridge University Press).

21. Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)7 of the Committee of Ministers on the use of the Council of Europe’s Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the promotion of plurilingualism, available at https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016805d2fb1.

2.1. AIMS OF THE CEFR

The CEFR seeks to continue the impetus that Council of Europe projects have given to educational reform. The CEFR aims to help language professionals further improve the quality and effectiveness of language learning and teaching. The CEFR is not focused on assessment, as the word order in its subtitle – *Learning, teaching, assessment* – makes clear.

In addition to promoting the teaching and learning of languages as a means of communication, the CEFR brings a new, empowering vision of the learner. The CEFR presents the language user/learner as a “social agent”, acting in the social world and exerting agency in the learning process. This implies a real paradigm shift in both course planning and teaching by promoting learner engagement and autonomy.

The CEFR’s action-oriented approach represents a shift away from syllabuses based on a linear progression through language structures, or a pre-determined set of notions and functions, towards syllabuses based on needs analysis, oriented towards real-life tasks and constructed around purposefully selected notions and functions. This promotes a “proficiency” perspective guided by “can do” descriptors rather than a “deficiency” perspective focusing on what the learners have not yet acquired. The idea is to design curricula and courses based on real-world communicative needs, organised around real-life tasks and accompanied by “can do” descriptors that communicate aims to learners. Fundamentally, the CEFR is a tool to assist the planning of curricula, courses and examinations by working backwards from what the users/learners need to be able to do in the language. The provision of a comprehensive descriptive scheme containing illustrative “can do” descriptor scales for as many aspects of the scheme as proves feasible (CEFR 2001 Chapters 4 and 5), plus associated content specifications published separately for different languages ([Reference Level Descriptions – RLDs](#))²² is intended to provide a basis for such planning.

These aims were expressed in the CEFR 2001 as follows:

The stated aims of the CEFR are to:

- ▶ promote and facilitate co-operation among educational institutions in different countries;
- ▶ provide a sound basis for the mutual recognition of language qualifications;
- ▶ assist learners, teachers, course designers, examining bodies and educational administrators to situate and co-ordinate their efforts.

(CEFR 2001 Section 1.4)

To further promote and facilitate co-operation, the CEFR also provides Common Reference Levels A1 to C2, defined by the illustrative descriptors. The Common Reference Levels were introduced in CEFR 2001 Chapter 3 and used for the descriptor scales distributed throughout CEFR 2001 Chapters 4 and 5. The provision of a common descriptive scheme, Common Reference Levels, and illustrative descriptors defining aspects of the scheme at

Priorities of the CEFR

The provision of common reference points is subsidiary to the CEFR’s main aim of facilitating quality in language education and promoting a Europe of open-minded plurilingual citizens. This was clearly confirmed at the Intergovernmental Language Policy Forum that reviewed progress with the CEFR in 2007, as well as in several recommendations from the Committee of Ministers. This main focus is emphasised yet again in the [Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education](#) (Beacco et al. 2016a). However, the Language Policy Forum also underlined the need for responsible use of the CEFR levels and exploitation of the methodologies and resources provided for developing examinations, and then relating them to the CEFR.

As the subtitle “learning, teaching, assessment” makes clear, the CEFR is not just an assessment project. CEFR 2001 Chapter 9 outlines many different approaches to assessment, most of which are alternatives to standardised tests. It explains ways in which the CEFR in general, and its illustrative descriptors in particular, can be helpful to the teacher in the assessment process, but there is no focus on language testing and no mention at all of test items.

In general, the Language Policy Forum emphasised the need for international networking and exchange of expertise in relation to the CEFR through bodies such as the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) (www.alte.org), the European Association for Language Testing and Assessment (EALTA) (www.ealta.eu.org) and Evaluation and Accreditation of Quality in Language Services (Eaquals) (www.eaquals.org).

22. www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/reference-level-descriptions.

the different levels, is intended to provide a common metalanguage for the language education profession in order to facilitate communication, networking, mobility and the recognition of courses taken and examinations passed. In relation to examinations, the Council of Europe's Language Policy Division has published a [manual for relating language examinations to the CEFR](#),²³ now accompanied by a toolkit of accompanying material and a volume of case studies published by Cambridge University Press, together with a [manual for language test development and examining](#).²⁴ The Council of Europe's ECML has also produced *Relating language examinations to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR) – Highlights from the Manual*²⁵ and provides capacity building to member states through its RELANG initiative.²⁶

However, it is important to underline once again that the CEFR is a tool to facilitate educational reform projects, not a standardisation tool. Equally, there is no body monitoring or even co-ordinating its use. The CEFR itself states right at the very beginning:

One thing should be made clear right away. We have NOT set out to tell practitioners what to do, or how to do it. We are raising questions, not answering them. It is not the function of the Common European Framework to lay down the objectives that users should pursue or the methods they should employ. (CEFR 2001, Notes to the User)

2.2. IMPLEMENTING THE ACTION-ORIENTED APPROACH

The CEFR sets out to be comprehensive, in the sense that it is possible to find the main approaches to language education in it, and neutral, in the sense that it raises questions rather than answering them and does not prescribe any particular pedagogic approach. There is, for example, no suggestion that one should stop teaching grammar or literature. There is no "right answer" given to the question of how best to assess a learner's progress. Nevertheless, the CEFR takes an innovative stance in seeing learners as language users and social agents, and thus seeing language as a vehicle for communication rather than as a subject to study. In so doing, it proposes an analysis of learners' needs and the use of "can do" descriptors and communicative tasks, on which there is a whole chapter: CEFR 2001 Chapter 7.

The methodological message of the CEFR is that language learning should be directed towards enabling learners to act in real-life situations, expressing themselves and accomplishing tasks of different natures. Thus, the criterion suggested for assessment is communicative ability in real life, in relation to a continuum of ability (Levels A1-C2). This is the original and fundamental meaning of "criterion" in the expression "criterion-referenced assessment". Descriptors from CEFR 2001 Chapters 4 and 5 provide a basis for the transparent definition of curriculum aims and of standards and criteria for assessment, with Chapter 4 focusing on activities ("the what") and Chapter 5 focusing on competences ("the how"). This is not educationally neutral. It implies that the teaching and learning process is driven by action, that it is action-oriented. It also clearly suggests planning backwards from learners' real-life communicative needs, with consequent alignment between curriculum, teaching and assessment.

A reminder of CEFR 2001 chapters

Chapter 1: The Common European Framework in its political and educational context

Chapter 2: Approach adopted

Chapter 3: Common Reference Levels

Chapter 4: Language use and the language user/learner

Chapter 5: The user/learner's competences

Chapter 6: Language learning and teaching

Chapter 7: Tasks and their role in language teaching

Chapter 8: Linguistic diversification and the curriculum

Chapter 9: Assessment

23. Council of Europe (2009), "Relating Language Examinations to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR) – A Manual", Language Policy Division, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, available at <https://rm.coe.int/1680667a2d>.

24. ALTE (2011), "Manual for language test development and examining – For use with the CEFR", Language Policy Division, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, available at <https://rm.coe.int/1680667a2b>.

25. Noijons J., Bérešová J., Breton G. et al. (2011), *Relating language examinations to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR) – Highlights from the Manual*, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, available at: www.ecml.at/tabid/277/PublicationID/67/Default.aspx.

26. Relating language curricula, tests and examinations to the Common European Framework of Reference (RELANG): <https://relang.ecml.at/>.

At the classroom level, there are several implications of implementing the action-oriented approach. Seeing learners as social agents implies involving them in the learning process, possibly with descriptors as a means of communication. It also implies recognising the social nature of language learning and language use, namely the interaction between the social and the individual in the process of learning. Seeing learners as language users implies extensive use of the target language in the classroom – learning to use the language rather than just learning about the language (as a subject). Seeing learners as plurilingual, pluricultural beings means allowing them to use all their linguistic resources when necessary, encouraging them to see similarities and regularities as well as differences between languages and cultures. Above all, the action-oriented approach implies purposeful, collaborative tasks in the classroom, the primary focus of which is not language. If the primary focus of a task is not language, then there must be some other product or outcome (such as planning an outing, making a poster, creating a blog, designing a festival or choosing a candidate). Descriptors can be used to help design such tasks and also to observe and, if desired, to (self-)assess the language use of learners during the task.

Both the CEFR descriptive scheme and the action-oriented approach put the co-construction of meaning (through interaction) at the centre of the learning and teaching process. This has clear implications for the classroom. At times, this interaction will be between teacher and learner(s), but at times, it will be of a collaborative nature, between learners themselves. The precise balance between teacher-centred instruction and such collaborative interaction between learners in small groups is likely to reflect the context, the pedagogic tradition in that context and the proficiency level of the learners concerned. In the reality of today's increasingly diverse societies, the construction of meaning may take place across languages and draw upon user/learners' plurilingual and pluricultural repertoires.

2.8. THE CEFR ILLUSTRATIVE DESCRIPTORS

The illustrative descriptors are presented within descriptor scales. Each descriptor scale provides examples of typical language use in a particular area that have been calibrated at different levels. Each individual descriptor has been developed and calibrated separately from the other descriptors on the scale, so that each individual descriptor provides an independent criterion statement that can be used on its own, without the context of the scale. In fact, the descriptors are mainly used in that way: independently of the scale that presents them. The aim of the descriptors is to provide input for curriculum development.

The descriptors are presented in levels for ease of use. Descriptors for the same level from several scales tend to be exploited in adapted form in checklists of descriptors for curriculum or module aims and for self-assessment (as in the ELPs). However, the association of a descriptor with a specific level should not be seen as exclusive or mandatory. The descriptors appear at the first level at which a user/learner is most likely to be able to perform the task described. This is the level at which the descriptor is most likely to be relevant as a curriculum aim: it is the level at which it is reasonable to develop the ability to do what is described. That descriptor would be a challenging, but by no means impossible, aim for user/learners at the level below. Indeed, for some types of learners, with a particular talent, experience or motivation in the area described, it could well be a fully appropriate goal. This emphasises the importance of thinking in terms of profiles (see Figures 6 to 10) as well as levels. Users may find it useful to read [CEFR 2001 Section 3.7](#), “How to read the scales of illustrative descriptors” (p. 36), and [Section 3.8](#) (p. 37), “How to use the scales of descriptors of language proficiency”.

The scales of illustrative descriptors consist of independent, stand-alone descriptors and are not primarily intended for assessment. They are not assessment scales in the sense in which the term is generally used in language assessment. They do not attempt to cover each relevant aspect at every level in the way that scales for assessing a performance conventionally do. They are illustrative, not just in the sense that they are presented as non-mandatory examples, but also in the sense that they provide only illustrations of competence in the area concerned at different levels. They focus on aspects that are new and salient; they do not attempt to describe everything relevant in a comprehensive manner. They are open-ended and incomplete.

CEFR descriptor research project

The illustrative descriptors published in the CEFR 2001 were based on results from a Swiss National Science Foundation research project set up to develop and validate descriptors for the CEFR and the ELP and to give a picture of the development of language proficiency reached at the end of different school years in the Swiss educational system. The project described in this document, to develop an extended set of illustrative descriptors, replicated the approach taken in this Swiss project, which took place from 1993 to 1997. The methodology used in that original project, and described briefly in CEFR 2001 Appendix B, comprised three phases:

Intuitive phase: Detailed analysis of existing descriptor scales and authoring of new descriptors.

Qualitative phase: 32 face-to-face workshops with groups of 4 to 12 teachers, focusing on (a) sorting descriptors into the categories they purported to describe; (b) evaluating the clarity, accuracy and relevance of the descriptors; and (c) sorting descriptors into bands of proficiency.

Quantitative phase: Rasch scaling analysis of the way 250 teachers interpreted the difficulty of the descriptors when each teacher assessed 10 learners, forming a structured sample of two of their classes at the end of the school year. These evaluations with descriptors took place when the (approximately 80% secondary school) teachers were awarding grades for the school year.

The illustrative descriptors are one source for the development of standards appropriate to the context concerned; they are not in themselves offered as standards. They are a basis for reflection, discussion and further action. The aim is to open new possibilities, not to pre-empt decisions. The CEFR itself makes this point very clearly, stating that the descriptors are presented as recommendations and are not in any way mandatory.

As a user, you are invited to use the scaling system and associated descriptors critically. The Modern Languages Section of the Council of Europe will be glad to receive a report of your experience in putting them into use. Please note also that scales are provided not only for a global proficiency, but for many of the parameters of language proficiency detailed in Chapters 4 and 5. This makes it possible to specify differentiated profiles for particular learners or groups of learners (CEFR 2001, Notes for the user: xiii-xiv).

The descriptor scales are thus reference tools. They are not intended to be used as assessment instruments, though they can be a source for the development of such instruments. These might take the form of a checklist at one level, or a grid defining several categories at different levels. Users may find it helpful to refer to [CEFR 2001 Section 9.2.2](#), “The criteria for the attainment of a learning objective”.

Each descriptor scale is now accompanied by a short rationale, which highlights key concepts represented in the descriptors as one progresses up the scale. The scales do not always provide a descriptor for every level. The absence of a descriptor does not imply the impossibility of writing one. For example, at C2 the entry is sometimes: “No descriptors available: see C1”. In such cases, the user is invited to consider whether they can formulate for the context concerned a descriptor representing a more demanding version of the definition given for C1.

In CEFR 2001 Section 3.4, the claim made for the validity of the illustrative descriptors is that they:

- ▶ draw, in their formulation, on the experience of many institutions active in the field of defining levels of proficiency;
- ▶ have been developed in tandem with the descriptive scheme presented in CEFR 2001 Chapters 4 and 5 through an interaction between (a) the theoretical work of the Authoring Group; (b) the analysis of existing scales of proficiency; and (c) the practical workshops with teachers;
- ▶ have been matched to the set of Common Reference Levels A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2;
- ▶ meet the criteria outlined in CEFR 2001 Appendix A for effective descriptors in that each is brief (up to 25 words), clear and transparent, positively formulated, describes something definite, and has independent, stand-alone integrity, not relying on the formulation of other descriptors for its interpretation;
- ▶ have been found transparent, useful and relevant by groups of non-native and native-speaker teachers from a variety of educational sectors with very different profiles in terms of linguistic training and teaching experience;
- ▶ are relevant to the description of actual learner achievement in lower and upper secondary, vocational and adult education, and could thus represent realistic objectives;
- ▶ have been “objectively calibrated” to a common scale. This means that the position of the vast majority of the descriptors on the scale is the product of how they have been interpreted to assess the achievement of learners, rather than just the opinion of the authors;
- ▶ provide a bank of criterion statements about the continuum of foreign language proficiency that can be exploited flexibly for the development of criterion-referenced assessment. They can be matched to existing local systems, elaborated by local experience and/or used to develop new sets of objectives.

As a result, the set of illustrative descriptors published in 2001 met with wide acceptance and they have been translated into 40 languages. However, the illustrative descriptors were referred to in the CEFR 2001 as a “descriptor bank” because the idea was that, as with a test item bank, they might later be extended once users developed and validated more descriptors – as has now happened with this update.

The descriptors are intended to provide a common metalanguage to facilitate networking and the development of communities of practice by groups of teachers. Users of the CEFR are invited to select the CEFR levels and illustrative descriptors that they consider to be appropriate for their learners’ needs, to adapt the formulation of the latter, in order to better suit the specific context concerned, and to supplement them with their own descriptors where they deem it necessary. This is the way that descriptors have been adapted for ELPs.

2.9. USING THE CEFR ILLUSTRATIVE DESCRIPTORS

The main function of descriptors is to help align curriculum, teaching and assessment. Educators can select CEFR descriptors according to their relevance to the particular context, adapting them in the process if necessary. In this way descriptors can provide a detailed, flexible resource for:

- ▶ relating learning aims to real-world language use, thus providing a framework for action-oriented learning;
- ▶ providing transparent “signposting” to learners, parents or sponsors;
- ▶ offering a “menu” to negotiate priorities with adult learners in a process of ongoing needs analysis;
- ▶ suggesting classroom tasks to teachers that will involve activities described in several descriptors;
- ▶ introducing criterion-referenced assessment with criteria relating to an external framework (here the CEFR).

Defining curriculum aims from a needs profile

Step 1: Select the descriptor scales that are relevant to the needs of the group of learners concerned (see Figures 6 and 7). Clearly this is best undertaken in consultation with stakeholders, including teachers and, in the case of adult learners, the learners themselves. Stakeholders can also be asked what other communicative activities are relevant.

Step 2: Determine with the stakeholders, for each relevant descriptor scale, the level that the learners should reach.

Step 3: Collate the descriptors for the target level(s) from all the relevant scales into a list. This provides the very first draft of a set of communicative aims.

Step 4: Refine the list, possibly in discussion with the stakeholders.

An alternative approach is to:

Step 1: Determine a global target level for the course.

Step 2: Collate all the descriptors for that level.

Step 3: Identify the descriptors that are relevant, in consultation with stakeholders, and delete the rest.

Very often, CEFR descriptors are referred to for inspiration in adapting or making explicit the aims of an existing course. In such a case, descriptors from particular scales are selected, adapted to the local context and added to an existing curricular document.

However, CEFR descriptors can also be used to develop a set of learning aims from scratch. In doing so, one should ideally start by creating a needs profile, such as those shown graphically in Figures 6 and 7. In practice, a short cut is often taken by starting from the checklists of CEFR-adapted descriptors already available for different levels in the Language Biography section of the many versions of the ELP.

Whichever approach is taken, any resulting list of descriptors needs to be slimmed down to a reasonable length by removing repetition and aspects that appear less relevant in the particular context. It is usually at this point that descriptors are adapted, shortened, simplified, merged with existing communicative aims and supplemented by other educational aims. What is a “reasonable” length for a list depends on the precise purpose. A list can be long (for example 60 to 80 descriptors) in designing a curriculum for an entire level, but experience suggests that any list used as an instrument for teacher assessment or self-assessment is more effective if it is much shorter (for example, 10 to 20 descriptors) and focused on activities of relevance in a particular section or module of the course.

In using the descriptors to make a list of learning objectives, one should bear in mind that the descriptors from different scales complement one another. One may wish to broaden the scope of a particular descriptor by presenting it linked to descriptors from one or two complementary scales that are relevant to the intended scope of the learning activity. For example, at B1, one might wish to create a broader educational objective for engaging with a text by associating the following descriptors from three different scales:

- ▶ Can follow the plot of stories, simple novels and comics with a clear linear storyline and high frequency everyday language, given regular use of a dictionary (Reading as a leisure activity).
- ▶ Can explain briefly the feelings and opinions that a work provoked in them (Expressing a personal response to creative texts (including literature)).
- ▶ Can discuss in simple terms the way in which things that may look “strange” to them in another sociocultural context may well be “normal” for the other people concerned (Building on pluricultural repertoire).

Descriptors can also be useful as a starting point for providing transparent criteria for assessment. CEFR 2001 Chapter 9 outlines different forms of assessment and ways in which descriptors can be useful in relation to them. In discussing the exploitation of descriptors in assessment, the CEFR makes the following point:

In discussing the use of descriptors it is essential to make a distinction between:

1. Descriptors of communicative activities, which are located in Chapter 4.
2. Descriptors of aspects of proficiency related to particular competences, which are located in Chapter 5.

The former are very suitable for teacher- or self-assessment with regard to real-world tasks. Such teacher- or self-assessments are made on the basis of a detailed picture of the learner’s language ability built up during the course concerned. They are attractive because they can help to focus both learners and teachers on an action-oriented approach. (CEFR 2001 Section 9.2.2)

The latter, descriptors of aspects of competences (CEFR 2001 Chapter 5), can be a useful source for developing assessment criteria for how well user/learners are able to perform a particular task: to assess the quality of their production. This is opposed to “the what”: the communicative activities they “can do” (CEFR 2001 Chapter 4). The relationship between the two types of illustrative descriptors is shown in Table 5. Each type (what; how) can take two forms: simpler, for “outsiders”, and more elaborated, for “insiders” (usually teachers). Simple forms of descriptors about what the learner can do are often used to report results to the user/learners themselves and other stakeholders (user-oriented); more elaborated, “insider” forms help teachers or testers to construct a programme and specific tasks in it (constructor-oriented). Simpler versions of descriptors for how a learner performs in a language are used in assessment grids, which usually restrict themselves to four or five assessment criteria; in a spirit of transparency these can be shared with user/learners (assessor-oriented). More elaborated, “insider” forms, usually for a longer list of aspects of quality, can be used as a checklist to diagnose strengths and weaknesses (diagnostic-oriented). Users may wish to follow up on this point in [CEFR 2001 Sections 3.8 and 9.2.2](#), which explain these different orientations.

Table 5 – The different purposes of descriptors

| | WHAT the user/learner can do (CEFR 2001 Chapter 4) | HOW WELL the user/learner performs (CEFR 2001 Chapter 5) | Of relevance to |
|---------------------------------|--|---|-------------------------------------|
| More complex descriptors | Constructor-oriented curriculum descriptors | Diagnostic-oriented assessment descriptors | Curriculum designers Teachers |
| Simpler descriptors | User-oriented learning aims and “can do” learning outcomes | Self-assessment-oriented assessment descriptors | Learners Parents/employers, etc. |

As mentioned, the primary function of descriptors is to facilitate the provision of transparent and coherent alignment between curriculum, teaching and assessment, particularly teacher assessment, and above all between the “language classroom world” and the real world. Real-world needs will relate to the main domains of language use: the public domain, the private domain, the occupational domain and the educational domain (CEFR 2001 Section 4.1.1; CEFR 2001 Table 5). These domains are illustrated in Appendix 5 with examples for the new scales for online and mediation activities.

The educational domain is clearly as much a real-world domain as the other three domains. Indeed, both needs profiles shown earlier concerned the educational domain (Figure 6 for CLIL; Figure 7 for university study). It is particularly evident in cases such as the language of schooling for children with an immigrant background and CLIL that teacher-learner(s) interaction and collaborative interaction between learners have mediating functions:

- ▶ that of organising collective work and the relationships between participants;
- ▶ that of facilitating access to, and the construction of, knowledge.

As diversity has increased at both the social and educational level since the CEFR was published, it has become increasingly important to make space for this diversity. This calls for a broader view of mediation, as taken in the 2014-17 project, together with a positive focus on user/learners’ diverse linguistic and cultural repertoires. Classrooms can become a place for raising awareness of and further developing learners’ plurilingual/pluricultural profiles. We very much hope that the provision of CEFR descriptors for mediating text, mediating concepts, mediating communication and for plurilingual/pluricultural competence will help to broaden the types of tasks carried out in language classrooms and to value all the developing language resources that user/learners bring.

2.10. SOME USEFUL RESOURCES FOR CEFR IMPLEMENTATION

The Council of Europe’s website contains links to many resources and articles relating to the CEFR, including a bank of supplementary descriptors, samples of performance (videos and scripts) and calibrated assessment tasks. In addition, materials from a number of CEFR-related projects are available through the [ECML website](#). The following list of web resources and books includes some of the most practical guidance in how to exploit the CEFR for language teaching and learning.

2.10.1. Web resources

“Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment – A Guide for Users”,³⁴ available in English and French.

“From communicative to action-oriented: a research pathway”,³⁵ available in English and French.

A quality assurance matrix for CEFR use³⁶ (CEFR QualiMatrix), available in English and French.

CEFRain (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages in Teacher Training).³⁷

34. Trim J. (ed.) (2001), “Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment – A Guide for Users”, Language Policy Division, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, available at <https://rm.coe.int/1680697848>.

35. Piccardo E. (2014), “From communicative to action-oriented: a research pathway”.

36. Available at www.ecml.at/CEFRqualitymatrix.

37. www.helsinki.fi/project/ceftrain/index.php.35.html.

Council of Europe tools for language teaching – Common European framework and portfolios,³⁸ available in English and French.

Equals “Practical resources for language teaching”.³⁹

Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education (Beacco et al. 2016a), available in English and French.

Pathways through assessing, learning and teaching in the CEFR (Piccardo et al. 2011), available in English and French.

PRO-Sign: Promoting Excellence in Sign Language Instruction.⁴⁰

2.10.2. Books

Bourguignon C. (2010), *Pour enseigner les langues avec les CERCL – Clés et conseils*, Delagrave, Paris.

Lions-Olivieri M-L. and Liria P. (eds) (2009), *L'approche actionnelle dans l'enseignement des langues. Douze articles pour mieux comprendre et faire le point*, Difusión-Maison des langues, Paris.

North B. (2014), *The CEFR in practice*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

North B., Angelova M. and Rossner R. (2018), *Language course planning*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Piccardo E. and North B. (2019), *The action-oriented approach: a dynamic vision of language education*, Multilingual Matters, Bristol.

Rosen É. and Reinhardt C. (eds) (2010), *Le point sur le Cadre européen commun de référence pour les langues*, Clé international, Paris.

38. Goullier F. (2007), *Council of Europe tools for language teaching – Common European framework and portfolios*, Les Editions Didier/ Council of Europe, Paris/Strasbourg, available at <https://rm.coe.int/168069ce6>.

39. Equals “Practical resources for language teaching”, available at www.eaquals.org/our-expertise/cefr/our-work-practical-resources-for-language-teaching/.

40. www.ecml.at/ECML-Programme/Programme2016-2019/SignLanguageInstruction/tabid/1856/Default.aspx.