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# **The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) in Language Education: Past, Present, and Future**

**Professor Enrica Piccardo**

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## WHAT ARE THE KEY ISSUES?

In this section, to give some of the necessary context, we will briefly consider some of the history of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment*, best known under its acronym, CEFR, including why, when, and how it was developed. The CEFR is a reference document developed in the mid-1990s (Council of Europe, 2001). It is made up of nine chapters, which flesh out what is known as its descriptive scheme, i.e., the organization of the entire communicative language proficiency around communicative activities, linguistic and general competences, and communication strategies. The chapters also discuss the role and nature of assessment in language education. The text articulates ample conceptual explanations with language policy questions, taxonomic lists, and an array of validated and calibrated descriptors. These descriptors are organized in scales for different target situations/genres (communicative language activities) and aspects of communicative language competence.

As a reference document, the CEFR aims to offer the different stakeholders involved in language education a transparent meta-language and common foundation to assist them in pursuing their respective goals. The CEFR is both exhaustive and modest (Spolsky, 2008) as a guide for curriculum and test development that can – and should – be made contextually relevant. At the same time, it aims to cover the ensemble of second/foreign language education goals and knowledge.

As the most prominent product of the Council of Europe's work in language education, which dates back to the 1960s, the CEFR has deep roots. As such, it has benefitted from advances of research in language teaching methodologies, language acquisition, and testing. It also built on the outcomes of earlier Council of Europe projects. These projects included the following points:

- conceptualization of needs analysis (Richterich & Chancerel, 1980);
- specification of a language level for functional living in a country – the so-called 'Threshold Level' (van Ek, 1975);
- definition of autonomy (Holec, 1981); and
- experimentation with positive 'can do' descriptors (Oscarson, 1979, 1984).

The CEFR was developed with the explicit aim of providing transparency and coherence to the learning, teaching, and assessment of languages across the Council of Europe and within each of its constituent countries. After being shared online as a first draft in 1996, the CEFR was piloted extensively before being made available in its final form in 2001. It has been translated into 40 languages since and is used worldwide to inform innovation in curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment in various contexts (Byram & Parmenter, 2012). One crucial characteristic of the CEFR is that it is designed to be language neutral, thus offering itself as a tool to be used by stakeholders operating in different languages across different contexts.

One of the main aims of the CEFR is bringing different languages and educational traditions into a dialogue so that cross-fertilization of research and practices can be facilitated and encouraged. At the time the CEFR was developed, this approach was original and innovative. Some decades later, we can say that it has worked well. Through this broad and diverse use, the CEFR has sparked reflection in language education and fostered transparency and exchange of practices. Therefore, a few years ago, a project was initiated to update and develop the CEFR by completing its conceptual apparatus and substantially extending its descriptors: This new and more accessible edition of the CEFR, called *CEFR Companion Volume* (CEFRCV), has been available online since 2018 in a provisional form (Council of Europe, 2018) and the definitive version is going to press at the time of writing.

In a sense, the CEFR has been the victim of its own success. As a "sophisticated and somewhat unwieldy" reference document (Piccardo & North, 2019, p. 14), which is both complex and rich, the CEFR has not only been used increasingly worldwide; it is also considered as a tool which can provide responses to a wide range of questions pertaining to language education (Beacco, 2005). Thus, the CEFR has acquired a sort of aura that has inevitably triggered the two opposite but equally dangerous reactions of acritical adoption or rejection.

## WHAT DO WE CURRENTLY KNOW?

The CEFR has been used in many countries around the world (Runnells & Runnells, 2019). In fact, there is no continent where it is totally absent. (See Normand-Maconnet & Lo Bianco, 2015 and Piccardo, Germain-Rutherford, & Clément, 2011 for an overview.) Use of the CEFR spans from a broad and institutional, often top-down, implementation all the way to an organic, bottom-up experimentation with aspects of – or concepts in – the CEFR that many educators have come to rely on in their everyday practice.

However, the use of the CEFR is not homogeneous. In some contexts, the CEFR has only contributed to organizing the certification of proficiency, often through alignment of tests and university-entry language requirements. In other contexts, the CEFR impact has gone much further by playing a major role in curriculum (re)organization and reform. Finally, in some cases – less numerous and more recent in time, but steadily increasing in number – the CEFR has sparked pedagogical reflection and is supporting innovation in the way languages are taught in class (for example, Dendrinos & Gotsoulia, 2015; Moonen, Stoutjesdijk, de Graaf, & Corda, 2013; O'Dwyer et al., 2016).

In terms of alignment and standardization, in higher education, the CEFR has mainly been used to define entry requirements for international students and proficiency levels for languages that are part of the curriculum. Such use is widespread in Europe (see Deygers, Zeidler, Vilcu, & Carlsen, 2018 for a survey), but is also increasingly common in other contexts. Universities normally recognize selected standardized tests not only for practical reasons, such as the availability of these tests worldwide, but also for their supposed comparability, including through their claimed alignment with the CEFR levels. However, a study (Green, 2017) investigated 24 higher education institutions in Australia, Canada, the UK, and the USA, covering altogether 40% of the enrolment of international students worldwide. It showed that the four tests recognized by either all or the vast majority of these institutions (the International English Language Testing System: Academic: IELTS; the *TOEFL*® *iBT*; the Pearson Test of English, Academic (PTE-A); and Cambridge English: Advanced (CAE)) are very different in nature and construct.

Furthermore, when it comes to their claimed alignment to the CEFR:

Relatively little attention is given to connections between the CEFR and the content or design of either IELTS or *TOEFL iBT*. The links made are largely limited to vertical score-level correspondences. The developers of PTE-A and CAE, in contrast, emphasize the integral part played by the CEFR framework in test development and operational test production systems. (Green, 2017, p.7)

And “neither the TOEFL iBT nor the IELTS study used the tools provided by the Council of Europe (2009) to profile test content” (Green, 2017, p. 7).

Claims of alignment with CEFR levels in tests that are solely a response to the increasingly widespread use of the CEFR itself without following a rigorous process are problematic (Harsch & Hartig, 2015). Not only may the question of alignment be an issue, but the way standardized tests usually report a global pass or fail score is problematic. The CEFR aims to promote the idea of differentiating proficiency levels across different aspects of language use to cater to the needs of different types of clientele.

Finally, the idea of seeing the CEFR as some sort of standard is a constructed problem, a misinterpretation, and a misuse of the CEFR itself, as it intentionally lacks exactness (Deygers et al., 2018). As North (2014) underlines, the CEFR is a heuristic for curriculum reform and as such it should not be simplistically transformed into a standard for tests. The outcome of viewing the CEFR as a standard brings us to the paradoxical situation in which the CEFR is blamed for the divergence in the results given by tests which have interpreted and operationalized the same CEFR level in different ways, and that consequently differ substantially in terms of both content and construct.

However, the CEFR levels are not – nor were they ever claimed to be – true and unequivocal standards for the simple reason that no true, unequivocal standards can exist when it comes to language testing (Harsch, 2019). As Harsch (2018) puts it, “We may have to concede that in the field of language testing and assessment there is no such thing as a gold standard and no easy and simple way to come to comparable results via different means” (p. 105). Furthermore, levels are not fixed ranges neatly separated by lines, but are more like the colors in the rainbow: Moving from one to the other is not like operating a switch.

## The CEFR and Assessment

Assessment, according to the CEFR, should be understood from a complex and dynamic perspective, in a constant interdependent relationship with teaching and learning (Little & Erikson, 2015). Chapter 9 of the CEFR lists the main continua of assessment formats and highlights the need for considering these in order to get a full picture of learners’ proficiency. Tests are only one way of capturing what learners can do in a certain moment of their learning process, under certain conditions and constraints. Tests do not say anything about development over time, and they do not consider any form of continuous assessment – or any form of self- or peer-assessment. Thus, although tests are certainly an important form of assessment, they are by nature incomplete; considering a more holistic perspective may be a more effective choice that teachers turn to instinctively (Fleckenstein, Leucht, & Köller, 2018). The obsession with using the CEFR levels as metric standards for tests, and tests as the ultimate form of measuring learners’ language proficiency, is unrealistic to say the least.

An exclusive focus on the CEFR as an assessment tool reveals a limited vision of what the CEFR is. The most reasonable position to take when it comes to acknowledging the role and potential of the CEFR in assessment is the one expressed by Harsch (2018) when she refers to “the great potential [that the CEFR has] to make admission standards and entry tests more transparent” (p. 10). Also, according to Harsch (2018), “It is important ... that the CEFR itself is perhaps not to blame for the non-comparability of outcomes measured by different tests, exams, or judgments that claim a certain relation or alignment to the CEFR,” and “it is perhaps time to acknowledge that the CEFR alone cannot guarantee that different institutions and stakeholders will use it in a comparable way and come to comparable interpretations when employing and interpreting its proficiency scales” (pp. 104-105).

## The CEFR Descriptors

A similar phenomenon to the one just described happens with reference to the CEFR descriptors. In this case, the CEFR is blamed for not offering descriptors that specifically target teaching areas such as academic writing in English. Complaints have been made about a presumed underrepresentation of the construct as far as English academic writing is concerned (McNamara, Morton, Storch, & Thompson, 2018) or about a mix of “mastery of linguistic form and ‘higher intellectual skills’” (Hul-

stijn, 2011, p. 240). In particular, McNamara et al. (2018) used data from a small-scale qualitative study of first-year international students' perceptions and experiences to discuss the construct of the relevant CEFR descriptor scales. The discussion has been used to reinforce "the argument about the poverty of the CEFR construct for the assessment of EAP readiness and progress" (McNamara et al., 2018, p. 17). This allegation seems odd when one considers that the same study stresses the situated nature of academic writing, claiming that it differs according to disciplines and individual teachers. While the writers state that exactly the same issues apply to specialized tests for EAP like IELTS and TOEFL, they prefer to criticize the CEFR.

A common framework, by its very nature, cannot refer to any specific language or context of use. It instead provides general guidelines and a set of descriptors that can promote the development of curricula and assessment instruments in different contexts for the relevant fields of study and domains of teaching (Alderson et al., 2006). A much more constructive position to take would be to develop relevant, contextualized, and even language-specific descriptors and to validate and calibrate them to the relevant level of the CEFR. Such a task is not only possible (Huang, Kubelec, Keng, & Hsu, 2018), but, when properly done, can produce solid instruments (Shackleton, 2018) and contribute to ongoing validation of the CEFR (Carlsen, 2018).

As the late John Trim (2012), the CEFR project leader, recalled, it was decided that "the Framework should be flexible, open, dynamic and non-dogmatic, since the aim was not to prescribe how languages should be learnt, taught and assessed, but to raise awareness, stimulate reflection and improve communication among practitioners" (pp. 29–30). The idea that the CEFR constitutes a prescriptive imposition of a harmonization scheme, which even countries outside Europe can no longer ignore, has been challenged by North (2014). He addresses each claim (at the level of national language policymakers, test providers/test developers, teachers, and learners) with a relevant counter-claim that articulates the way the CEFR can empower different stakeholders by providing the metalanguage and means to describe and reflect on their practices, develop them, and innovate (North, 2014).

Needless to say, even less substantiated are the accusations that the CEFR is the product of a negative globalization (Scarino, 2012), an instrument of linguistic imperialism (McBeath, 2011), or an instance of a market-oriented supranational mechanism of control (McNamara & Elder, 2010):

rather than being part of an ongoing (since 1964) fully non-binding promotion of inclusive quality education by one of the world's leading human rights organizations, particularly concerned with the protection of migrants and linguistic minorities: the Council of Europe (so often still confused with the European Union!). (Piccardo & North, 2019, p. 151)

## The CEFR at Other Levels

Let us move now from university and adult learning to other levels of education. In Europe, the vast majority of the countries use the CEFR throughout education starting from primary school. (A striking exception is the UK, which has developed its own language ladders [Lamb, 2011].) The use of the CEFR in primary and secondary education extends beyond Europe, to different Canadian provinces; in Asian contexts like Malaysia, Japan, Vietnam, and Thailand; and in South American contexts like Colombia and Argentina, with local or regional implementation areas in the USA, Mexico, Australia, and New Zealand.

Outside the tertiary education context, we can observe a less rigid focus on the CEFR levels as standards. As confirmed by Diez-Bedmar and Byram (2017), Moonen et al. (2013), and Normand-Marconnet and Lo Bianco (2015), contrary to some academics, school teachers do not seem to see the CEFR as a weed suffocating local practices, traditions, and cultures in the name of an Orwellian global control. On the contrary, in general, the levels are considered as reference points to inform curriculum development and also as a way of bringing more transparency to setting learning goals and measuring achievement.

There is also the idea that aligning curricula to CEFR levels will facilitate comparability across school settings in different geographical contexts. However, such comparability certainly remains a delicate issue. As Jones and Saville (2009) remind us when referring to the surveys that the European Commission makes to compare language proficiency across Europe:

languages are introduced at very different ages, taught with differing duration and intensity, and as compulsory or optional subjects. Exposure to languages outside school varies, as does the impact of the culture that the language represents. The range of achievement within a grade-based cohort will be very wide. (p. 59)

Thus, they continue, "Reporting a 'league table' of outcomes by country... is to be discouraged" (p. 59).

Nonetheless, the common metalanguage that the CEFR offers to practitioners has increased reflection and exchange, as well as curricular innovation (North, 2010). Most importantly, the CEFR supports both instrumental policy needs and broader educational aims. As Byram and Parmenter (2012) comment, the international success of the CEFR is probably due to the fact that it answers the need of educators to work towards both functional-pragmatic goals and broader educational purposes.

## WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS?

As shown by a survey done by the Council of Europe in 2006 (summarized by Martyniuk & Noijons, 2007), the CEFR was the object of considerable interest already in the years immediately after its publication. A great number of institutions within the Council of Europe and outside it endorsed the CEFR as highly useful for the development of not just exams, tests, and certifications, but also for curriculum reform and teacher education. Interestingly, this order of priorities now seems to be reversed. A more recent survey of CEFR-related projects in 23 member states (Piccardo, Czusa, Erickson, North, 2019) showed that 50% of projects mentioned concern curriculum and/or objectives, whereas only 30% now concern assessment and testing. This finding suggests that the CEFR is increasingly having an impact on curriculum, rather than just on levels and examinations, which were member states' initial focus.

In fact, the use of the CEFR often appears to follow an identifiable pattern over time, in terms of the order of adoption of its various concepts. People usually start from the levels and descriptors, and continue to curriculum reform, and finally to pedagogical innovation (Figuera, 2012). While comparative studies (e.g., Piccardo, North, & Maldina, 2017, 2019) suggest that multiple entry points, with the potential for cross-fertilization of expertise, give the most effective form of CEFR implementation, oftentimes stakeholders concentrate on just one aspect. The result of such a narrow focus recalls the Indian tale “the six blind men and the elephant,” in which each man comes into contact with only one part of the elephant and generalizes from that single part, coming to a much distorted conclusion about the nature of what they are encountering. In this same way, the CEFR, as a complex document which targets several goals, has been often viewed in a reductive manner and considered as if it were just another proficiency scale, like ACTFL or IELTS, or a policy document to be applied in a top-down manner.

The CEFR is not meant to be hammered like a nail into very different contexts and traditions, imposing standards and procedure, but rather to be a catalyst for educational and pedagogical action. Far from being a straightjacket of top-down ‘uniformization,’ an international document such as the CEFR should provide, if adopted, an opportunity for reflection and change. The fact that the main aim of the CEFR is to foster curriculum innovation is emphasized in a recommendation providing additional clarification and setting clear guidelines (Council of Europe, 2008). The dynamic reflection on contextualized uses of a policy document – and their consequences – is potentially fertile ground for exchange of promising practices, which can inform further implementation practices and potentially future revisions and updates of the document itself.

Not only do we observe a process of adaptation alongside one of adoption (Piccardo, Germain-Rutherford, & Clément, 2011) but also in several cases, the creation of support materials, local guides, and contextualized descriptors. The most striking example is the creation of the CEFR-J in Japan to respond to the needs for more detailed specification at the lowest levels of proficiency (Negishi, Takada, & Tono, 2013). Needless to say, in addition to contextualization, implementation of the CEFR should entail reflecting on what it really means to use and learn languages (e.g., Little & Erickson, 2015; Moonen et al., 2013; Piccardo, 2011; Savski, 2019). As Fleming (2006) puts it, “Competence frameworks have the potential to focus on the importance of use and purpose, implying a more dynamic rather than static concept of language” (p. 54).

For the individual educational authority or institution, CEFR implementation should generally start with a consideration of which aspects of the CEFR educational philosophy are appropriate and feasible to adopt or adapt in the context, and which of the descriptor scales should be used as sources in developing concrete curriculum aims within the programs for different languages. The cross-fertilization of ideas between different language departments and the adoption of a common approach are key issues.

The CEFR descriptors can be used to set aims, design scenarios and tasks (Piccardo, 2014; Piccardo & North, 2019), and to monitor progress through teacher, peer, and self-assessment, with positive effects on motivation (Frost & O'Donnell, 2015). There may well still be a role for formal tests at high-stakes reporting points, and decisions will need to be made whether to develop these tests or to adopt available examinations that implement a CEFR-based approach. Teachers becoming involved as examiners for such an exam, linked to other initiatives, can have positive washback on teaching (Piccardo, North, & Maldina, 2017, 2019; Rehner, 2017a, 2017b). In any case, teachers will need careful training in the CEFR levels. One way of proceeding is through workshops with calibrated video samples, which are available for different languages (see section below on additional resources).

The CEFR has sparked dialogue and reflection between different contexts of use, about challenges and opportunities of the document itself, its interpretations, and the introduction of CEFR-related exams. Examples include discussion of the need for some additions (such as descriptors at the lowest and highest levels of some scales, or in terms of the use of new media for communication) or improvements to be made based on the advances in research (such as regarding the scale for phonological control). This reflection contributed to the development of the *CEFR Companion Volume* (Council of Europe, 2018), which has extended and updated the CEFR 2001.

## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

As noted above, in some ways, the CEFR has been a victim of its own success. First of all, it has become increasingly difficult to ignore it. A sign of this is that important language proficiency frameworks have taken steps to align their levels with those of the CEFR through rigorous scientific processes (ACTFL Guidelines [Tschirner, 2012]; Canadian Language Benchmarks [North & Piccardo, 2018]). Secondly, the changes initiated by the CEFR are now snowballing into different educational and geographical contexts and domains, triggering research, pedagogical action, policy initiatives, and teacher education. As Hargreaves and Fink (2006) remind us “Change in education is easy to propose, hard to implement and extraordinarily difficult to sustain” (p. 1). It is not surprising, therefore, that it took some two decades for educators and other stakeholders to (re)discover the triadic relationship that is highlighted in the subtitle of the CEFR: learning, teaching, and assessment.

In the countries that have introduced the CEFR institutionally (for example, France, the Netherlands, Italy, and Spain), one of the positive effects has been an increasing dialogue between teachers of different languages and their pedagogical traditions. The process itself of translating the CEFR into some 40 languages has generated a rich terminological debate (e.g., Rong, 2010; Silva, 2011). The result has been cross-fertilization of educational expertise and practices. Above all, the perspective has changed. In the same way that the can-do descriptors of the CEFR have enabled a shift from a deficiency to a proficiency perspective, having a tool that aims to be ‘language independent’ obliges us to discuss key concepts common across languages and pedagogical traditions, and to do so through the lens of the different languages into which the CEFR is being translated and used. One needs to focus on communication and action through languages rather than considering the idiosyncratic features of each language in isolation. And once concepts start to be discussed, there is a possibility that the status quo will be challenged, in the reflection process that the CEFR explicitly promotes.

CEFR concepts (such as learners as social agents, plurilingualism, tasks and scenarios as pillars of the action-oriented approach, the use of descriptors to set learning goals, sign-post the learning process, and assess achievement) are increasingly emerging in the contexts in which the CEFR has been introduced, and each of these concepts informs curriculum innovation (Moser, 2015). Needless to say, teacher education is also foregrounded in this process, as a necessary condition for innovation to take place. In turn, this innovation has the potential to generate more knowledge and expertise that can inform more effective use of the CEFR.

It is understandable that such turmoil sometimes triggers resistance and the development of alternative “CEFRs” (e.g., de Jong, Mayor, & Hayes, 2016; Jin, Wu, Alderson, & Song, 2017; Jang, Cummins, Wagner, Stille, & Dunlop, 2015) claiming to better meet the needs of English language learners in specific contexts.

However, the main effect of this proliferation is to break the flow of cross-fertilization both vertically across educational levels and horizontally across languages and contexts. It also hinders the transparency and coherence in language education which was the philosophy informing the origin of the CEFR (Council of Europe, 1992). This outcome is unfortunate, since there is no contradiction between having a common central framework and setting local, contextually appropriate standards (North, 2008).

## WHAT IS ON THE HORIZON?

The world has changed considerably since the nineties, when the CEFR was developed. Societies have become increasingly fluid (Bauman, 2000), with an escalating movement of people and goods. There is an increasing number of migrants whose displacement is not a choice but a necessity, sometimes even to escape war and famine. In this changing socio-political landscape, languages play a key role not only for transactional communication but also for (inter)cultural awareness and mutual understanding.

In these two decades, the CEFR has contributed to fostering reflection about language use, policies, and education. The framework has encouraged and enabled exchanges between contexts and languages, circulating discourse across different types of barriers more than it has contributed to the standardization of tests. In this tendency towards rebalancing the alignment of learning, teaching, and assessment, the CEFR has opened the way to a potential paradigm shift in language education that, now, some 20 years later, would call for the new developments that informed the CEFRCV. Thus, besides adding descriptors to existing scales, the CEFRCV has completed the CEFR descriptive scheme by defining and further expanding the construct of mediation. The CEFRCV definition of *mediation* deserves to be cited at length:

In mediation, the user/learner acts as a social agent who creates bridges and helps to construct or convey meaning, sometimes within the same language, sometimes from one language to another (cross-linguistic mediation). The focus is on the role of language in processes like creating the space and conditions for communicating and/or learning, collaborating to construct new meaning, encouraging others to construct or understand new meaning, and passing on new information in an appropriate form. The context can be social, pedagogic, cultural, linguistic or professional. (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 103)

Advances in our understanding of the challenges linked to our living together in increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse societies have foregrounded the need for mediating across and within languages. Mediation is in fact ubiquitous in our everyday lives (Piccardo, 2012). Awareness of the key role of mediation in decoding texts, co-constructing meaning, and facilitating communication within and across languages opened the

door to the creation of a rich set of descriptors for mediation and mediation strategies, and for areas that also require considerable mediation, such as online communication and plurilingual/pluricultural competence.

With the CEFRCV, the triadic relationship between learning, teaching, and assessment can establish a new balance. A major step has been made towards a reconceptualization of these three elements. This reconceptualization will boost the ongoing process in which the influence of the CEFR is moving increasingly towards curriculum development and pedagogical innovation rather than focusing exclusively on assessment. It will also contribute to overcoming the still predominant linear view of languages acquired in isolation, with the so-called native speaker as the ultimate model, and a rigid assessment system rooted in standardized tests as the only way to measure progress in proficiency.

The CEFR continues to encourage and enable innovation in classroom practice at a global level, as can be seen by the many resources listed in the section below. This influence can be expected to increase with the added momentum provided by the CEFRCV, which is not yet reflected in terms of classroom resources, but that has started to be researched (e.g., Pavlovskaya & Lankina, 2019). Key CEFR aspects that have been developed in the CEFRCV, namely mediation and plurilingualism, are already informing national curricula, for instance in Greece, Austria, France, Germany, and Italy. This development seems to align to the broadening reflection on how to overcome the monolingual disposition that still informs language education, and of how to embrace the diversity and complexity of individuals' linguistic repertoires. As a sign of the increasing attention that is being given to expanding potential uses of the CEFR, following an open call during the official launch of the CEFRCV, the Council of Europe is preparing a volume of case studies based on classroom use of the new descriptors, forseen for the end of 2020.

In a time of change, globalization and rising cultural and linguistic diversity combined with the need for transparency and mutual recognition, the role of the CEFR seems set to become increasingly important. From the different studies, a clear tendency emerges. The CEFR has passed the stage of being considered just as a tool for aligning tests. Instead, the CEFR is being increasingly (re)discovered for what it was always meant to be, i.e., a framework for learning, teaching, and assessment. As Frost and O'Donnell (2015) aptly put it:

Most of the criticisms levelled at the framework are due to teachers' ignorance of how to use it as it was designed. It is a *framework*, not a set of stone tablets; it exists primarily to help language professionals and language learners achieve their goals more successfully, to help us to think about how and what we teach and learn. (p. 4)

## WHERE CAN YOU FIND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES?

The Council of Europe's CEFR website (Council of Europe, 2001, 2018) gives access to several useful materials. On top of a number of reports and background documents, including a guide for curriculum design (Beacco, et al., 2016), there is the full set of descriptors plus a bank of supplementary descriptors from various sources, including a collection for younger learners, samples of written performances, and links to spoken performances (for secondary school).

Particularly useful websites for teacher education concerning the principles of the CEFR, the levels, and the pedagogy include:

- The CEFR website itself (<https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/home>), which hosts the CEFR, CEFRCV, and links to resources;
- The Encouraging the Culture of Evaluation among Professionals (ECEP) project (<https://ecep.ecml.at/>) of the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) consisting of a user-friendly CEFR guide, plus 107 training worksheets for teacher education;
- The CEFR QualiMatrix (<https://www.ecml.at/CEFRquali-matrix>), a self-auditing tool with which users can profile or plan CEFR implementation by responding to a number of guiding questions as a manager, curriculum developer, or teacher (The website also contains over 30 promising practices from successful CEFR projects.);
- The website of the EAQUALS association (<https://www.equals.org>) – with CEFR core content inventories for English and French; and
- The website created by the Ministry of Education of Ontario, in relation to the teaching of French as a Second Language (<https://transformingfsl.ca>).

Useful print resources that give practical examples of curriculum and assessment instruments include North (2014); North, Angelova, Jarosz, and Rossner (2018); and Nagai, Birch, Bower, and Schmidt (in press).

Finally, in relation to the CEFR action-oriented approach (AoA), in addition to a publication on the conceptual background to the approach (Piccardo & North, 2019), the following resources provide guidance and give examples of action-oriented scenarios:

- The project From Communicative to Action-Oriented: Illuminating the Approaches (within the website <https://transformingfsl.ca> of the Ontario Ministry of Education), with teacher-friendly explanations of the move from communicative to action-oriented (Piccardo, 2014) and examples of implementation;

- The Linguistic and Cultural Diversity Reinvented (LINC DIRE) project (<https://www.lincdireproject.org>) with a repertoire of action-oriented tasks and related tools;
- The Canadian “Synergies Settlement, Integration and Language Learning Project” of Durham Continuing Education with guidance for teachers to implement the AoA (<https://www.dce.ca/en/student-services/resources/Synergies-Project/Synergies---English.pdf>); and
- The AoA handbook of the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT) with worked scenarios (Hunter, Cousineau, Collins, & Hook, 2019).

Finally, a new journal, *CEFR Journal: Research and Practice* (<https://cefrjapan.net/images/PDF/Newsletter/CEFR-1-1.pdf>), aims to provide a platform for learning, teaching, and research activities related to the CEFR, language frameworks (in general), and portfolios.



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### Enrica Piccardo

Enrica Piccardo is a Professor of Applied Linguistics and Language Education at OISE – University of Toronto and the Head of the Centre for Educational Research in Languages and Literacies. She has extensive experience in second/foreign language education research, teacher development, and language teaching. She has been collaborating with the Council of Europe (CoE) since 2008 on major international projects and is a co-author of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) Companion Volume* (2018, CoE). Her monograph, *From Communicative to Action-Oriented: A Research Pathway* (2014), is being used in teacher education in Canada and beyond. She has coordinated various international projects, funded by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada and by the CoE. Her research includes plurilingualism and creativity in language education, and assessment and its role in the curriculum. She has given professional presentations in many countries and published in different languages. Among her recent publications are *The Action-Oriented Approach: For a Dynamic Vision of Language Education* (2019, Multilingual Matters), co-authored with Brian North, and *Plurilingualism as a Catalyzer for Creativity in Superdiverse Societies: A Systemic Analysis* (2017, Frontiers in Psychology). She is presently co-editing *The Handbook of Plurilingualism* (Routledge).