







A C Languages for social cohesion
B D Les langues pour la cohésion sociale

Training teachers to use the European Language Portfolio
 Former les enseignants à l'utilisation du Portfolio européen des langues

The common reference levels

European Centre for Modern Languages
 Centre européen pour les langues vivantes

A C Languages for social cohesion
B D Les langues pour la cohésion sociale

Training teachers to use the European Language Portfolio
 Former les enseignants à l'utilisation du Portfolio européen des langues

A "universal" scale

- The common reference levels of the CEFR aim to capture the whole range of second/foreign language proficiency
- The empirical project that developed the levels and scales worked with "almost 300 teachers and some 2,800 learners representing approximately 500 classes" (CEFR, Appendix B, p.217) – learners were drawn from lower secondary, upper secondary, vocational and adult education
- The common reference levels reflect "normal" educational progression, where most learners do not go beyond A2/B1

European Centre for Modern Languages
 Centre européen pour les langues vivantes

A C Languages for social cohesion
B D Les langues pour la cohésion sociale

Training teachers to use the European Language Portfolio
 Former les enseignants à l'utilisation du Portfolio européen des langues

Not just "can do" statements

- The action-oriented approach adopted by the CEFR defines communicative proficiency in behavioural terms – what learners can do in their target language(s)
- But this behavioural description is underpinned by
 - scales of linguistic competence/language quality
 - strategic scales

European Centre for Modern Languages
 Centre européen pour les langues vivantes

AC Languages for social cohesion
BD Les langues pour la cohésion sociale

Training teachers to use the European Language Portfolio
 Former les enseignants à l'utilisation du Portfolio européen des langues

Linguistic competence/language quality

Scales of

- general linguistic range
- vocabulary range
- grammatical accuracy
- phonological control
- orthographic control
- sociolinguistic appropriateness
- flexibility
- turntaking
- thematic development
- coherence and cohesion
- spoken fluency
- propositional precision

European Centre for Modern Languages
 Centre européen pour les langues vivantes



AC Languages for social cohesion
BD Les langues pour la cohésion sociale

Training teachers to use the European Language Portfolio
 Former les enseignants à l'utilisation du Portfolio européen des langues

Strategic scales

- Planning
- Compensating
- Monitoring/repair
- Identifying cues and inferring
- Turntaking
- Cooperating
- Asking for clarification

European Centre for Modern Languages
 Centre européen pour les langues vivantes



AC Languages for social cohesion
BD Les langues pour la cohésion sociale

Training teachers to use the European Language Portfolio
 Former les enseignants à l'utilisation du Portfolio européen des langues

Bringing the scales together

- We must interpret behavioural descriptors partly in terms of the other scales, thus:
- **A2 writing:** *I can write a very simple personal letter (e.g., accepting or offering an invitation, thanking someone for something, apologizing)*
- **A2 vocabulary control:** *Has a sufficient vocabulary for coping with simple survival needs and basic communicative needs*
- **A2 planning:** *Can recall and rehearse an appropriate set of phrases from his/her repertoire*

European Centre for Modern Languages
 Centre européen pour les langues vivantes



AC Languages for social cohesion
Formation des enseignants pour l'utilisation du Portfolio européen des langues

BD Les langues pour la cohésion sociale
Formation des enseignants pour l'utilisation du Portfolio européen des langues

Training teachers to use the European Language Portfolio
 Former les enseignants à l'utilisation du Portfolio européen des langues

Age-appropriate issues

European Centre for Modern Languages
 Centre européen pour les langues vivantes



AC Languages for social cohesion
Formation des enseignants pour l'utilisation du Portfolio européen des langues


BD Les langues pour la cohésion sociale
Formation des enseignants pour l'utilisation du Portfolio européen des langues

Training teachers to use the European Language Portfolio
 Former les enseignants à l'utilisation du Portfolio européen des langues

Basic considerations

- The CEFR's action-oriented approach rests on a distinction between communicative proficiency and linguistic competence
- In order to perform the tasks specified for B2, C1 and C2 one needs more than a high level of linguistic competence
- The relatively limited behavioural capacities of younger learners are sometimes underpinned by native or near-native levels of linguistic competence

European Centre for Modern Languages
 Centre européen pour les langues vivantes



AC Languages for social cohesion
Formation des enseignants pour l'utilisation du Portfolio européen des langues


BD Les langues pour la cohésion sociale
Formation des enseignants pour l'utilisation du Portfolio européen des langues

Training teachers to use the European Language Portfolio
 Former les enseignants à l'utilisation du Portfolio européen des langues

Two examples

- **A1 spoken production:** *I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know*
 - This task can be mastered by learners of any age, but in an age-appropriate way
- **C2 spoken production:** *I can present a clear, smoothly flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points*
 - This complex activity lies far beyond the cognitive range of learners at primary or lower secondary level, and some way beyond the experiential range of most learners at upper secondary level

European Centre for Modern Languages
 Centre européen pour les langues vivantes




AC Languages for social cohesion
Forming an identity and a common language and multilingualism
BD Les langues pour la cohésion sociale
Le rôle des langues dans une Europe multilingue et multiculturelle

Training teachers to use the European Language Portfolio
 Former les enseignants à l'utilisation du Portfolio européen des langues

Age-appropriate adaptation has its limits

- Any attempt to adapt B2, C1 and C2 to reflect the capacities of younger learners will inevitably undermine the "universal" nature of the common reference levels.
- It will also encourage the assumption that the common reference levels are an alternative system of grading
- We can make it easier for younger learners to recognize and demonstrate the progress of their learning by subdividing the relevant levels and/or by ensuring that checklists contain enough descriptors to allow them to report that they have achieved (say) half of a level

European Centre for Modern Languages
 Centre européen pour les langues vivantes



AC Languages for social cohesion
Forming an identity and a common language and multilingualism
BD Les langues pour la cohésion sociale
Le rôle des langues dans une Europe multilingue et multiculturelle

Training teachers to use the European Language Portfolio
 Former les enseignants à l'utilisation du Portfolio européen des langues

Developing descriptors

European Centre for Modern Languages
 Centre européen pour les langues vivantes




AC Languages for social cohesion
Forming an identity and a common language and multilingualism
BD Les langues pour la cohésion sociale
Le rôle des langues dans une Europe multilingue et multiculturelle


Training teachers to use the European Language Portfolio
 Former les enseignants à l'utilisation du Portfolio européen des langues

Characteristics of good descriptors (1)

- Positiveness:** descriptors should be formulated using positive descriptions of what learners are able to do; negatively worded descriptions tend to be demotivating
 - Note that it is more difficult to formulate positive descriptors for the lower levels because what the learner can do is still very limited

European Centre for Modern Languages
 Centre européen pour les langues vivantes








Training teachers to use the European Language Portfolio
Former les enseignants à l'utilisation du Portfolio européen des langues

Characteristics of good descriptors (2)

- **Definiteness:** descriptors should describe concrete tasks and/or concrete degrees of skill in performing tasks
 - Descriptors should avoid vagueness and aim at as much precision as possible
 - Distinctions between levels should not depend on replacing “some” or “a few” with “many” or “most”









Training teachers to use the European Language Portfolio
Former les enseignants à l'utilisation du Portfolio européen des langues

Characteristics of good descriptors (3)

- **Clarity:** descriptors should be transparent and non-technical – written in simple syntax, comprehensible without explanation, usable without training
- **Brevity:** descriptors should be short
- **Independence:** descriptors should stand on their own, their interpretation should not depend on other descriptors, and they should allow for straightforward yes/no decisions








Training teachers to use the European Language Portfolio
Former les enseignants à l'utilisation du Portfolio européen des langues

Supports for the development of descriptors

- The guide for ELP developers by Günther Schneider and Peter Lenz
- The revised version of Chapter 6 of the guide
- The bank of descriptors compiled by Günther Schneider and Peter Lenz
- All these supports can be downloaded from the Council of Europe’s ELP website (www.coe.int/portfolio)

Workshop task

- Divide into pairs
- Each pair selects a different skill and (if possible) a different level
- Look closely at the descriptor for your skill/level in the self-assessment grid and consider its implications for the communicative behaviour of your target group
- Expand the general descriptor into ten "I can ..." descriptors
- Put your descriptors on a poster