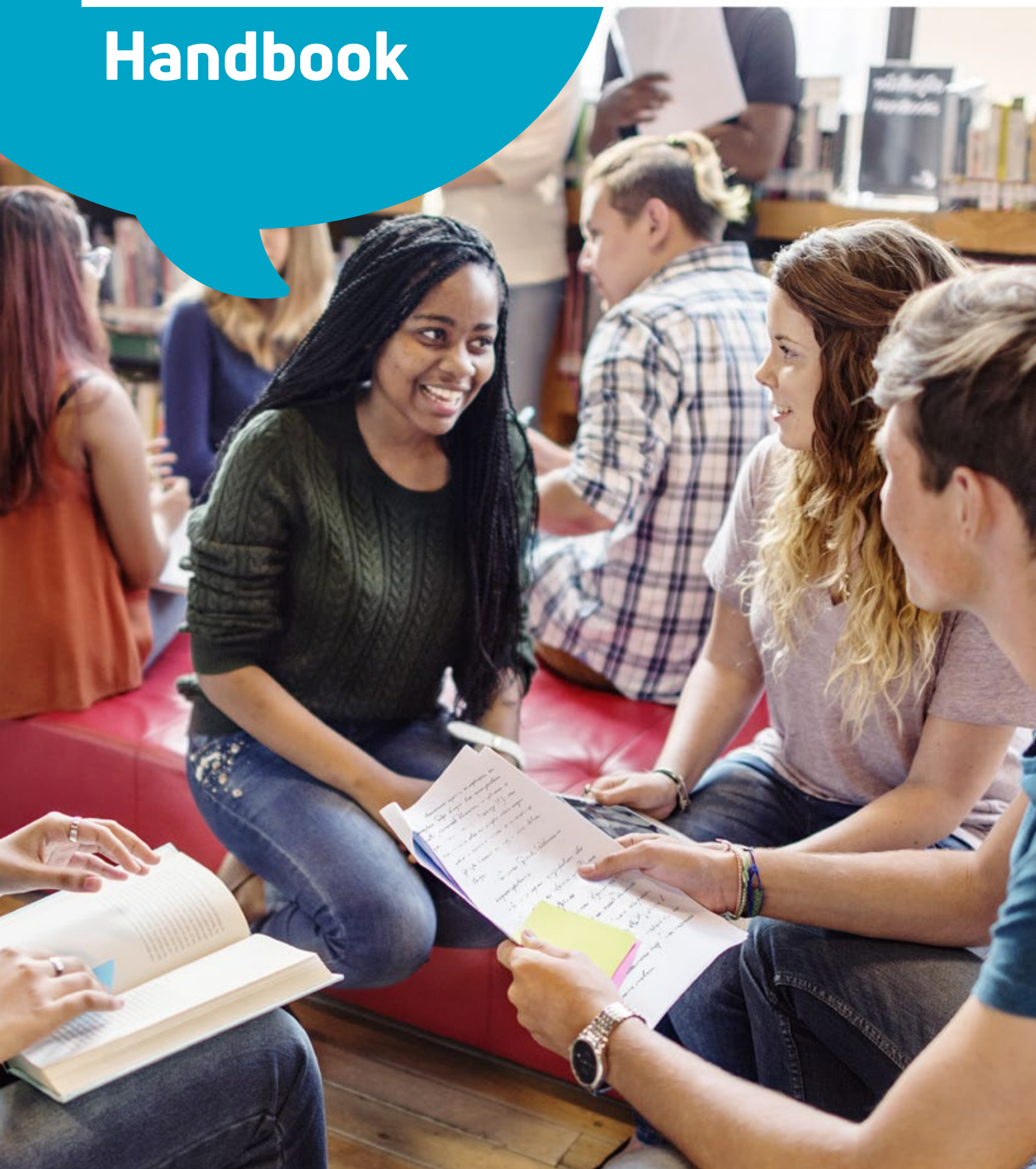


# Action-Oriented Approach Handbook



Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers  
Association canadienne des professeurs de langues secondes



## Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT)

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CASLT encourages excellence in second and additional language teaching and learning throughout Canada by creating opportunities for professional development, by encouraging research, and by facilitating the sharing of information and the exchange of ideas among second language educators.

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### Action-Oriented Approach Handbook

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Canada 

# Contents

Note to the Reader.....	2
<b>1</b> Preface .....	4
<b>2</b> Overview of the CEFR and the CEFR CV.....	6
<b>3</b> The CEFR in Canada.....	10
<b>4</b> Research on the Use of the CEFR in Canada .....	14
<b>5</b> Other Language Frameworks in Canada.....	18
<b>6</b> The Action-Oriented Approach.....	22
<b>7</b> Creating Action-Oriented Tasks .....	26
<b>8</b> Planning Action-Oriented Pathways.....	34
<b>9</b> Assessment .....	38
<b>10</b> Supporting Well-Being and Achievement.....	44
<b>11</b> Twenty-First Century Learning.....	48
<b>12</b> Communication Tools.....	52
<b>13</b> References.....	54
<b>14</b> Annexes.....	57
Annex 1: Blank Scenario Planning Chart.....	59
Annex 2: Annotated Scenario Planning Chart.....	63
Annex 3: Sample Completed Scenario Planning Chart.....	67
Annex 4: Talk of the Town: Exit Ticket.....	71
Annex 5: School Board Policy and Procedures .....	75
Annex 6: Points of View: Café Conversations.....	79
Annex 7: Peer Assessment: School Council Presentation.....	83
Annex 8: Self-Assessment: Scenario.....	87
Annex 9: Assessment: Performance of the Task .....	95
Annex 10: Task: Proposing a School Name Change .....	99
Annex 11: Talk of the Town: Inside/Outside Circle.....	103
Annex 12: AOA Poster for Classrooms .....	107
Annex 13: Letter to Parents.....	109

# Note to the Reader

This handbook contains web hyperlinks as well as bookmarks to other sections of the document.

You will encounter the following helpful icons in this handbook:



Identifies relevant resources for further reading.



Identifies reflective questions for the teacher.



Indicates information being presented in a more practical way.

Throughout this handbook, the term “second language” is used in a broader sense, referring to additional languages, foreign languages, etc. The term “parents” refers to parent(s), guardian(s), and caregiver(s).



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# Preface

# Preface

Languages are an important part of Canada's history, current reality, and future. Canada's two official languages (English and French), Indigenous languages, and non-official languages are all symbols of a diverse and inclusive society. According to the 2016 census, over 200 languages are spoken in Canada as a home language or mother tongue (Statistics Canada, 2017). With the increase in mobility and globalization, plurilingualism and linguistic diversity are on the rise in Canada. This increasingly diverse linguistic landscape brings opportunities for individuals and societies, such as strengthened identities, interconnection, intercultural enrichment, and the growing of a globally connected economy.

All teachers play a vital role in supporting language development and building stronger, inclusive communities where diversity is valued and promoted. The [Common European Framework of References for Languages](https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages) (CEFR; Council of Europe, 2001)<sup>1</sup> and the [Common European Framework of References for Languages: Companion Volume with New Descriptors](https://rm.coe.int/cefr-companion-volume-with-new-descriptors-2018/1680787989) (CEFRV; Council of Europe, 2018)<sup>2</sup> provide Canadian teachers with a common point of reference for the learning, teaching, and assessment of languages. The CEFR is a tool that articulates a complex vision of language education. It is designed to be context-free for broad use. This handbook seeks to “unpack” key elements of the CEFR and CEFRV for teachers — in particular the principles of the action-oriented approach — through a Canadian lens.

The content of this handbook is presented in a simplified and practical way, focusing on the development of scenarios based upon action-oriented tasks. It is a resource written by teachers, for teachers, designed to deepen understanding of the CEFR beyond a surface level. The resource promotes a holistic approach to language learning that considers individual needs, and supports the well-being and achievement of learners. It is important to stress that this handbook does not present a prescriptive approach. It encourages a reflective approach on the part of teachers, as well as an open and flexible outlook on language learning.

This resource recognizes that other frameworks are used in Canada in various contexts and encourages all teachers to look for the commonalities in approaches, such as the notion of tasks, and to share effective practices that enhance language learning, teaching, and assessment. This resource also recognizes that education is a provincial and territorial responsibility in Canada and that some language programs, such as those for adult newcomers, also involve the federal government. This handbook is written from a pan-Canadian perspective and, wherever possible, draws upon other pan-Canadian resources. The reader's experience will also be enhanced by making connections to the specific provincial/territorial/federal resources that apply to their specific context.

Today, more than ever, linguistic diversity matters. Whether learning one of Canada's official languages, Indigenous languages, or non-official languages, the truth remains that languages build connections to the past, the present, and the future. This handbook was written to better equip language teachers for the important work that they do in supporting language learners and, ultimately, fostering a united, diverse, and prosperous Canada.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages>

<sup>2</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/cefr-companion-volume-with-new-descriptors-2018/1680787989>

# 2

## Overview of the CEFR and the CEFRCV

# Overview of the CEFR and the CEFRCV

The *Common European Framework of References for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment*,<sup>3</sup> commonly known as the CEFR, is a transparent and coherent tool developed by the Council of Europe. Originally published in 2001 after years of development, followed by a *Companion Volume with New Descriptors*<sup>4</sup> (CEFRCV) released in 2018, the CEFR is currently used in over 160 countries around the world, and has been translated into 40 languages. The CEFR is language neutral, meaning that the framework can be applied to any language. The uses of the framework include learning, teaching, program planning, and assessment of languages. The CEFR provides common language and coherence in the field of education. The CEFR is rooted in principles of inclusion, that is to say, the right to a quality education for all.

The *CEFR Companion Volume with New Descriptors*<sup>5</sup> brings the CEFR up to date by including a pre-A1 level, better coverage of listening and reading, and a new, detailed, scale for phonological control. This companion volume complements the CEFR with a plain-language text that explains its main principles and its concepts for teaching and learning.

In addition, some 30 new scales of descriptors are provided for aspects that had not been developed in the CEFR 2001, in particular those related to mediation.

An important concept introduced in the CEFR 2001, mediation has assumed a greater importance with

the increasing linguistic and cultural diversity of our societies. Thus the companion volume includes descriptor scales for mediating a text, mediating concepts, mediating communication, the related mediation strategies, as well as plurilingual/pluricultural competence. In addition, scales are provided for online communication, literature appreciation, and American Sign Language (ASL) competence. What follows is an overview of the rationale behind each CEFR descriptor.

## Key Concepts of the CEFR

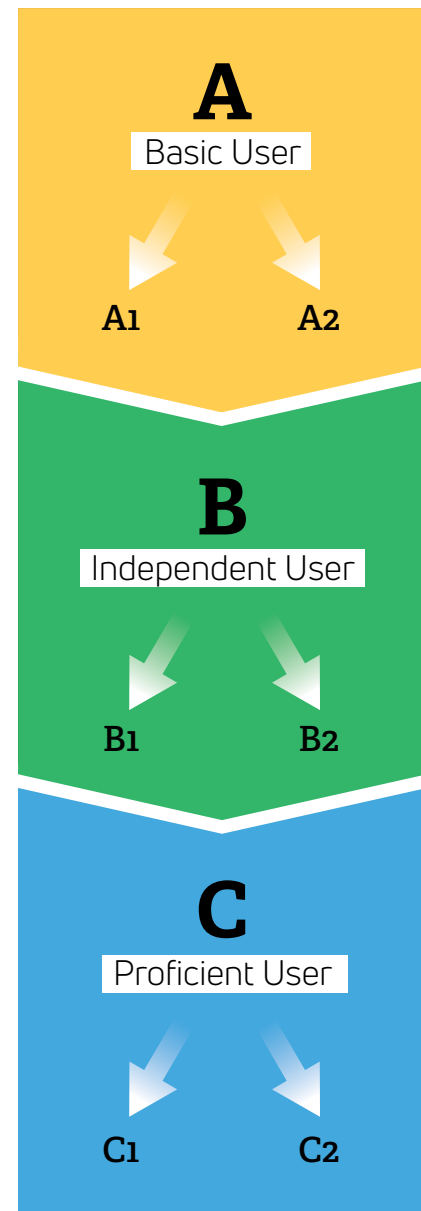
### Levels of Proficiency

The CEFR organizes language proficiency into a progressive scale composed of six broad levels: A1 and A2 (basic user); B1 and B2 (independent user); and C1 and C2 (proficient user). These levels are often subdivided using "criterion levels" (e.g., A2.1) or "plus levels" that indicate when a learner is between two levels. For example, a learner who excels at the A2 level but who has not yet begun the B1 level could be considered to be at an A2+ level. In 2018, pre-A1 was also introduced in the CEFRCV to describe learners working towards the A1 level.

A learner will most likely develop a differentiated profile and, as such, will be in different proficiency levels for different aspects of language.



To learn more about the CEFR visit...  
[The Council of Europe, CEFR<sup>6</sup>](https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages)



<sup>3</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages>

<sup>4</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/cefr-companion-volume-with-new-descriptors-2018/1680787989>

<sup>5</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/cefr-companion-volume-with-new-descriptors-2018/1680787989>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages>

## Overview of the CEFR and the CEFRCV

### “Can Do” Descriptors

Each level of proficiency (i.e., A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2) is defined using illustrative “can do” descriptors, presented in descriptor scales (e.g., conversation). Their purpose is to help illustrate what a learner can do in the language at a defined level, in a particular area. The “can do” descriptors reflect real world language use, and communicate learning aims in a clear and transparent way.

#### Illustrative “Can Do” Descriptors from the CEFRCV

CONVERSATION	
A1	Can understand everyday expressions aimed at the satisfaction of simple needs of a concrete type, delivered directly to them in clear, slow, repeated speech by a sympathetic speaker.
	Can take part in a simple conversation of a basic factual nature on a predictable topic, e.g., their home country, family, school.
	Can make an introduction and use basic greeting and leave-taking expressions.
	Can ask how people are and react to news.

### The Action-Oriented Approach

The “can do” descriptors provide the framework for an action-oriented approach to learning. An action-oriented approach, as described in the CEFR, views the learner as a

“social agent” who uses language to accomplish tasks within specific domains (i.e., educational, occupational, public, and personal). This approach focuses on the needs of the learner to survive and thrive in real-life situations. The action-oriented approach promotes learner engagement and autonomy, and recognizes the social element of language use (see [“The Action-Oriented Approach”](#) for more information).

### Tasks

As seen above, the action-oriented approach encompasses the notion of tasks as part of everyday life in all domains. To accomplish a task, be it simple or complex, learners draw upon the required strategies and competences to carry out actions in order to achieve a specific goal or result. As such, the primary purpose of a task is not language development. Within a learning environment, tasks are often simulated to prepare the learner for authentic experiences outside of the classroom. Tasks are communicative by nature, whereby learners engage in interaction, production, reception, and/or mediation (see [“Creating Action-Oriented Tasks”](#) for more information).

### Plurilingualism and Pluriculturalism

Plurilingualism and pluriculturalism signal a paradigm shift whereby different languages are no longer viewed as “compartmentalized” within the user. Instead, previously developed and newly developing languages are seen as building upon one another, influenced by context, to develop an interrelated, linguistic repertoire within

the learner. As such, language learners draw upon all of their resources, including the languages that they have already developed, to apply the most effective strategies to communicate. For example, if a learner was learning to describe possessions in simple terms (A1 — Sustained Monologue: Describing Experience) in French, the learner could draw upon their knowledge of adjectives and adjective placement in English and other languages to establish similarities and differences. This process also activates metacognition, which reinforces the notion that different languages interact and create a synergy that contributes to the building of competences in the target language.

This approach also supports the Canadian value of cultural and linguistic diversity.



To learn more about plurilingualism and pluriculturalism visit...

[Section 1.3 of the CEFR<sup>7</sup>](#)

[Chapter 6 of \*From Communicative to Action-Oriented: A Research Pathway\* \(Piccardo, 2014\)<sup>8</sup>](#)

[A Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures \(European Centre for Modern Languages, 2018\)<sup>9</sup>](#)

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages>

<sup>8</sup> <https://transformingfsl.ca/en/resources/from-communicative-to-action-oriented-illuminating-the-approaches>

<sup>9</sup> <https://carap.ecmlat/accueil/tabid/3577/language/en-GB/Default.aspx>

## Overview of the CEFR and the CEFR CV



How is the CEFR reflected in my teaching practice?

Why is it important to use a *proficiency* perspective, which focuses on what a learner can do, as opposed to a *deficiency* perspective, which focuses on what a learner has not yet developed?

How does the action-oriented approach promote learner engagement and autonomy?

How does my teaching practice promote plurilingualism and pluriculturalism?



### In Practical Terms — Skating

Skating, like many sports, involves a series of competences that one must acquire in order to achieve a certain level of proficiency. When a new skater takes to the ice, there is hesitation and the need for support. There are often falls, followed by the resolve to get back up and try again. Skating can be perceived as a risky activity. To be able to keep a sense of balance on two narrow blades, to move from point A to point B, and to maintain a good speed is not an easy feat, especially when performed on ice. As a skater progresses, confidence and skill level improve.

Some skaters may only skate for pleasure while others may be skating toward Olympic gold or the Stanley Cup. For many across the Canadian landscape, skating is a shared passion. One need only observe the Rideau Canal in Ottawa on a cold February day to see skaters with various experiences and backgrounds come together to interact and support each other, and to experience success and joy at their own level.

This Canadian experience has parallels to language learning.

As a country that welcomes and encourages linguistic and cultural diversity, we hope that the population will embrace and become passionate about language learning. Like learning to skate, language learning involves risk-taking, and the development of competences to become more and more proficient.

The classroom is similar to the Rideau Canal — an environment where language learning is open to all, where diversity is celebrated, and where supports are present to help learners reach their goals.

# 3

## The CEFR in Canada

# The CEFR in Canada

Although the CEFR was first published by the Council of Europe in 2001, it was almost a decade later that the CEFR was widely introduced in Canada. Many factors contributed to the growing interest in the CEFR in the Canadian context. In Canada, official linguistic duality pre-dates Confederation in 1867. As Canada grew as a nation, further legislation aimed at language promotion and language rights also developed. The equal status of both English and French in federal agencies, established by the *Official Languages Act*<sup>10</sup> of 1969 (and revised numerous times), was reinforced in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*<sup>11</sup> (Department of Justice, 1982). The latter also guaranteed minority language rights across Canada. With protections relating to official languages long entrenched in legislation, the Canadian government looked to revitalize its commitment to linguistic duality in the early 2000s.



To learn more about the *Official Languages Act* visit...

[Understanding Your Language Rights](#) (Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, 2015)<sup>12</sup>

In 2003, the Canadian federal government released an action plan, entitled *The Next Act: New Momentum for Canada's Linguistic Duality. The Action Plan for Official Languages* (Privy Council Office, 2003).<sup>13</sup> The plan restated that linguistic duality is part of Canada's heritage and part of Canada's

future, and stressed the importance of both English and French being accessible to all Canadians. The plan described the economic benefits of duality, and highlighted its advantages in the face of globalization, such as linguistic pluralism and increased mobility. The plan outlined many key outcomes, one of which was to increase the percentage of high school graduates with a functional knowledge of both official languages from 24 percent to 50 percent within ten years.

To operationalize this ten-year goal, the Department of Canadian Heritage (2004) commissioned Professor Sally Rehorick to conduct a study and make recommendations, which resulted in the publication of *Plan Twenty Thirteen (2013): Strategies for a National Approach in Second Language Education*.<sup>14</sup> Among its many recommendations were improving core and immersion programs, increasing the number of qualified teachers, and encouraging second language education research. Rehorick was instrumental in disseminating information about the CEFR across Canada. The Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT) also played a pivotal role in the initial stages of promoting the CEFR in Canada by disseminating information and facilitating conversation across the country.

In 2006, Dr. Laurens Vandergrift was commissioned by the federal government to write a discussion paper exploring how best to achieve the goal of doubling the number of Canadian graduates with a functional knowledge of their second official language within ten years, as committed to in the 2003 Action

Plan. Within the Canadian context, this task is especially challenging, as education is a provincial and territorial responsibility, and it was unclear what constituted "functional" proficiency. In his report, Vandergrift explored various language frameworks to identify the one most suitable for use in Canada. Vandergrift concluded that the CEFR best addressed the needs of the Canadian context, stating that the CEFR could provide:

the provinces and territories with a transparent and coherent system for describing language proficiency. In addition to providing a measure for calibrating language proficiency for educational systems across Canada, a common framework of reference for languages could foster a common understanding of what functional proficiency means. It could facilitate cooperation among ministries of education, provide a basis for mutual recognition of language qualifications, and track learner progress over time and in different jurisdictions. Such a framework could be used by each province and territory as a point of reference for language teaching and assessment, without imposing a particular curriculum, teaching methodology or standard for achievement. A common framework could provide a bridge between formal education systems, employers and cultural institutions across Canada and beyond into the international arena. (Vandergrift, 2006, p. 7)

<sup>10</sup> <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/O-3.01/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/Const/page-15.html>

<sup>12</sup> [https://www.clo-ocol.gc.ca/en/language\\_rights/act](https://www.clo-ocol.gc.ca/en/language_rights/act)

<sup>13</sup> <http://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.686463/publication.html>

<sup>14</sup> <http://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.688589/publication.html>

## The CEFR in Canada



To learn more about Dr. Vandergrift's report visit...

*New Canadian Perspectives: Proposal for a Common Framework of Reference for Languages for Canada* (Vandergrift, 2006; English and French)<sup>15</sup>

In 2006, the Advisory Committee of Deputy Ministers of Education (ACDME) struck a committee to outline the steps needed for a framework of reference for languages to succeed in Canada. In 2008, the steering committee recommended to the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) that the CEFR be used in Canada.

In 2010, CMEC published *Working with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in the Canadian Context*,<sup>16</sup> mainly for policy-makers and curriculum developers looking to infuse the CEFR into the Canadian context. In this guide, CMEC provided an overview of the CEFR and considerations for its use in Canada. CMEC (2010) also proposed "that the CEFR occupy a central place in the Canadian context and be used as a reference tool to promote the establishment of local and regional initiatives to support language learning and encourage a growing number of students to learn another language."

Since 2010, the CEFR has played a significant role in K–12 second language education across Canada, with many provinces/territories supporting and actively promoting

the implementation of the CEFR. The CEFR also continues to influence other areas of language learning in Canada. For example, the research project Linguistic and Cultural Diversity Reinvented (LINCDIRE)<sup>17</sup> uses the CEFR and CEFRCV as the framework to strengthen French and English language learning, as well as Indigenous and heritage languages. The focus is on linguistic and cultural awareness to promote plurilingualism in North America (see "[Overview of the CEFR and the CEFRCV](#)" for more on plurilingualism). Through a partnership among institutions across Canada, this project has developed both a conceptual framework, which brings together a plurilingual, action-oriented approach with Indigenous worldviews, and an online learning environment with resources to promote a plurilingual and holistic approach to language learning.



To learn more about the LINCDIRE research project visit...

*Linguistic and Cultural Diversity Reinvented*<sup>18</sup>



### In Practical Terms

The Government of Canada (2018) reaffirmed its commitment to official languages in *Action Plan for Official Languages — 2018–2023: Investing in Our Future*.<sup>19</sup> This Plan looks to strengthen communities, strengthen access to services, and promote a bilingual Canada.



How have *The Official Languages Act* and *The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* influenced language rights in your community?

What benefits come from speaking both of Canada's official languages?

How is bilingualism encouraged within your community?

How has the Vandergrift report influenced language learning in Canada?

Outside the K–12 context, where else have you seen the CEFR's influence on language learning in Canada?

What role could the CEFR play in promoting linguistic and cultural diversity in Canada?

<sup>15</sup> <http://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.571255/publication.html>

<sup>16</sup> [https://www.cmec.ca/136/Common\\_European\\_Framework\\_of\\_Reference\\_for\\_Languages\\_\(CEFR\).html](https://www.cmec.ca/136/Common_European_Framework_of_Reference_for_Languages_(CEFR).html)

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.lincdireproject.org/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.lincdireproject.org/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/official-languages-bilingualism/official-languages-action-plan/2018-2023.html>



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# Research on the Use of the CEFR in Canada

# Research on the Use of the CEFR in Canada

The CEFR was informed by decades of research on second language learning and has undergone rigorous validation. Since its publication in 2001 by the Council of Europe, the CEFR has been adopted throughout Europe and many other countries around the world. A significant amount of research on the use of the CEFR has emanated from across the globe; however, there is limited research on its use in the Canadian context. The information that follows outlines research that led to the CEFR being adopted in Canada, as well as highlights of subsequent research relating to its use in Canada.

## The CEFR and the Vandergrift Report

In 2006, Dr. Laurens Vandergrift wrote a research report for the Canadian government recommending that the CEFR be adopted in Canada as a way to address the objectives outlined in the 2003 national [Action Plan for Official Languages](#).<sup>20</sup> In his report, Vandergrift expressed that “the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) emerged as the framework that meets the criteria for validity and is best suited to meet the needs of the Canadian context.” In 2010, the Council of Ministers of Education,

Canada (CMEC) published the report [Working with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages \(CEFR\) in the Canadian Context](#),<sup>21</sup> recommending the use of the CEFR in Canada (see “[The CEFR in Canada](#)” for further information).

In Vandergrift’s report, he also recommended that the other frameworks being used in Canada be calibrated to determine CEFR equivalencies. The report provided a preliminary alignment with other frameworks, including the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB). The [Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks](#) (CCLB)<sup>22</sup> continued this work, first commissioning in 2011 a three-stage validation process of the CLB. This led to the development of [Theoretical Framework for Canadian Language Benchmarks and Niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens](#) (CCLB, 2015),<sup>23</sup> which was found to have strong concurrent validity with the CEFR. The CCLB is currently in the process of validating equivalencies between the CLB and the CEFR ([Aligning CLB and CEFR](#)<sup>24</sup>).

Vandergrift’s report was foundational for the adoption of the CEFR in Canada, and set the stage for future research in Canada in this area.



To learn more about the validation of the CEFR, and Dr. Vandergrift’s report visit...

[The Council of Europe, CEFR](#)<sup>25</sup>

[The CEFR Common Reference Levels: Validated Reference Points and Local Strategies](#) (North, 2007)<sup>26</sup>

[New Canadian Perspectives: Proposal for a Common Framework of Reference for Languages for Canada](#) (English and French)<sup>27</sup>

## Canadian Empirical Research

In 2013, Dr. Stephanie Arnott prepared an annotated bibliography to “gather and review the existing empirical research focusing on [the CEFR] in the Canadian context; [and] to identify common themes, foci, and/or notable gaps in the body of empirical studies conducted to date.” Arnott summarized fourteen studies from across Canada that met the predetermined criteria. For those studies, she outlined the study focus, methodology, relevant findings, limitations, implications, and suggestions for future research. Generally, the studies referenced found that CEFR-inspired teaching

20 <http://publications.gc.ca/collections/Collection/CP22-68-2003E.pdf>

21 <http://www.cmec.ca/docs/assessment/CEFR-canadian-context.pdf>

22 See their website at <http://www.language.ca>

23 <https://www.language.ca/product/theoretical-framework-for-the-canadian-language-benchmarks-and-niveaux-de-competece-linguistique-canadiens-pdf-e>

24 <https://www.language.ca/aligning-clb-and-cefr/>

25 <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages>

26 <https://rm.coe.int/09000016805c3896>

27 <http://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.571255/publication.html>

## Research on the Use of the CEFR in Canada

practices had led to a number of benefits in second language learning, such as enhancing learner autonomy, increasing student motivation, and building student confidence.



To learn more about Dr. Arnott's annotated bibliography visit...

[\*Canadian Empirical Research on the CEFR: Laying the Groundwork for Future Research\* \(Arnott, 2013\)<sup>28</sup>](#)

### The CEFR and Professional Development

Also in 2013, Dr. Enrica Piccardo led a study examining how CEFR-specific professional development in the Canadian context could help second language teachers reflect on and advance their teaching practice, particularly in the field of assessment. Piccardo grounded the study in existing research that found teachers' own opinions and pedagogical beliefs are fundamental to instigating change, and that a "top down" approach to implementation rarely produces the desired results. Existing research also showed that the potential of the CEFR risks being limited if key elements of this complex framework are misinterpreted or only partially understood. With this in mind, this qualitative study first explored the issues and challenges related to assessment faced by participating teachers, and then evaluated the effectiveness of targeted professional development on participating teachers' perceptions and application of the CEFR in the Canadian context.

As part of the study, teachers participated in professional development led by CEFR experts, followed by a period in which teachers could reflect on their practice using the resources provided. Next, the teachers participated in a focus group. The findings of the study showed that effective professional development that includes teacher reflection could lead to a more thorough understanding of the complexities of the CEFR as well as an appreciation for the interdependence of the elements of the CEFR. The article concluded by recommending a four-stage matrix be used for future professional development related to the CEFR.



To learn more about Dr. Piccardo's study visit...

[\*\(Re\)conceptualiser l'enseignement d'une langue seconde à l'aide d'outils d'évaluations : comment les enseignants canadiens perçoivent le CEFR\* \(Piccardo, 2013\)<sup>29</sup>](#)

In 2017, Dr. Katherine Rehner produced a report on how the FSL proficiency exam associated with the CEFR — the *Diplôme d'études en langue française* (DELFL) — has influenced classroom practice in Ontario. The report focuses on the impact of CEFR/DELFL-related teacher training on wide-ranging aspects of classroom practice. The findings outline the progress teachers are making in the transition towards creating a CEFR-inspired classroom that is grounded in the action-oriented

approach, and summarize the best practices that reflect this transformation. (Refer to the section "[Assessment](#)" for further information on the DELFL).

In 2018, Dr. Rehner published a report exploring how French teachers across Canada feel that "their teaching practice has been influenced by their professional learning connected to the CEFR and the *Diplôme d'études en langue française* (DELFL)." The report highlights three major findings: a reorientation of how language is presented; an increase in strategies and materials that reflect the action-oriented approach; and reported overall benefits of participating in CEFR/DELFL-related training.



To learn more about Dr. Rehner's reports visit...

[\*The CEFR in Ontario: Transforming Classroom Practice\* \(Rehner, 2017\)<sup>30</sup>](#)

[\*The Classroom Practices of DELFL Teacher-Correcteurs: A Pan-Canadian Perspective\* \(Rehner, 2018\)<sup>31</sup>](#)

### Existing and Future Research

In 2017, eight researchers from across Canada collaborated on an article published in *The Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics* (CJAL). The article explores empirical studies and projects relating to the CEFR in Canada, as well as presenting data collected from a research forum hosted by the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT). The

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.caslt.org/files/pd/resources/research/2013-panorama-empirical-research-cefr-en.pdf>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.utpjournals.press/doi/abs/10.3138/cmlr.1737.386>

<sup>30</sup> <https://transformingfsl.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/LGY769-DELFL-1.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> [http://www.acpi.ca/documents/documents/Rehner\\_Report\\_2018\\_final\\_mars\\_2018\\_EN\\_final.pdf](http://www.acpi.ca/documents/documents/Rehner_Report_2018_final_mars_2018_EN_final.pdf)

## Research on the Use of the CEFR in Canada

article looks specifically at CEFR use in three contexts: K–12 education, initial teacher education, and post-secondary language learning. In the article, the researchers proposed future research directions relating to the CEFR in Canada in the three contexts outlined. They also called for further conversations between stakeholders at various levels — including pan-Canadian conversations — to strengthen the teaching and learning of second languages using the CEFR in the Canadian context.



To learn more about this article, published by CJAL visit...

[The Common European Framework of Reference \(CEFR\) in Canada: A Research Agenda](#) (Arnett et al., 2017)<sup>32</sup>

## Action Research

Action research relating to the action-oriented approach has also been conducted. In 2016, under the supervision of Dr. Enrica Piccardo, the Durham District School Board and the Regional Municipality of Durham (Ontario) embarked on a small-scale research project to explore the impact of task-based learning on adult immigrant English language learners and their instructors, and the synergy between language learning, settlement, and

integration. Central to this study was the use of the [Durham Immigration Portal](#),<sup>33</sup> a municipal immigration website bringing together authentic resources to support the settlement and integration of newcomers within their new community.

Using the CLB (also aligned to the CEFR) as the main language standard, learners explored the task of eating out in the community. The study found that learners reported greater perceptions of their own English skills, greater comfort speaking English, a greater perceived ability to complete the real-life task, and a greater familiarity with the [Durham Immigration Portal](#)<sup>34</sup> at the end of the learning cycle. The study also gathered important information from ESL instructors on implementing task-based learning. This study led to the development of an in-depth guide entitled [Synergies: Settlement, Integration and Language Learning](#) (Hunter, Andrews, & Piccardo, 2016),<sup>35</sup> designed to assist other communities looking to replicate the study.



To learn more about the Durham region study visit...

[“Findings” in the interactive resource Synergies: Settlement, Integration and Language Learning](#) (Hunter, Andrews, & Piccardo, 2016)<sup>36</sup>



What have you learned from research into the language frameworks currently used in Canada?

How can professional development influence your implementation of the CEFR? Why is effective professional development necessary to ensure the full potential of the CEFR?

What specific areas of research do you feel should be prioritized going forward? Why?

How can *Synergies: Settlement, Integration and Language Learning* start conversations on action research in your community?

32 <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/CJAL/article/view/24472>

33 <https://www.durhamimmigration.ca/en/index.aspx>

34 <https://www.durhamimmigration.ca/en/index.aspx>

35 <https://www.durhamimmigration.ca/en/work-and-study/english-for-adults.aspx>

36 <https://www.durhamimmigration.ca/en/work-and-study/english-for-adults.aspx>

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# Other Language Frameworks in Canada

# Other Language Frameworks in Canada

In addition to the CEFR — widely used across the provinces and territories of Canada to inform language teaching, learning, and assessment in school age children and youth learning an additional language — other language frameworks are used in Canada with other learners in different contexts. These many language frameworks, two of which are highlighted below, share many common principles with the CEFR, and as such, users of those frameworks can also benefit from this handbook.

## Canadian Language Benchmarks/Niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens

The *Canadian Language Benchmarks*<sup>37</sup> (CLB) is the only language standard used across the country to describe the English language proficiency of adult immigrants and prospective immigrants to Canada. The CLB informs learning, teaching, program planning, and assessment. The *Niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens*<sup>38</sup> (NCLC) is the parallel French standard.



To learn more about the CLB and the NCLC visit...

[The Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks](http://www.language.ca)<sup>39</sup>

The CLB organizes language proficiency into 12 benchmarks, divided into three levels: basic (1–4), intermediate (5–8), and advanced (9–12). Descriptive competency statements help to define each benchmark within four skill areas (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing).

Basic	CLB 1–4
Intermediate	CLB 5–8
Advanced	CLB 9–12

A learner's profile may vary depending on the skill area; for example, CLB 3 in writing and CLB 5 in speaking.

The CLB identifies a model for "communicative language ability" that includes language knowledge and strategic competence. Language knowledge includes organizational knowledge (i.e., grammatical, textual) and pragmatic knowledge (i.e., functional, sociolinguistic).

The CLB (CCLB, 2012) guiding principles state:

- The CLB are Competency-Based
  - > Competency statements stress what a learner can do in English. Competencies may be understood as the demonstrable application of knowledge and skills by the individual learners

- The CLB are Learner-Centred
  - > Competencies should be embedded in tasks and contexts that are purposeful, relevant and meaningful to the learner, and tailored to an individual's abilities and learning style
- The CLB are Task-Based
  - > The notion of the language task — a communicative "real world" instance of language use to accomplish a specific purpose in a particular context — is central to the CLB
- The CLB Stress Community, Study and Work Related Tasks
  - > Language is used in specific social contexts with particular individuals

## English Language Learning/French Language Learning

English language learners (ELLs) and French language learners (FLLs) are school-age students (e.g., elementary and secondary school) whose primary language (or languages) is a language other than English/French, or is a variety of English/French that is significantly different than the language of instruction of the institution (e.g., publicly

37 <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/language-benchmarks.pdf>

38 <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/ircc/migration/ircc/francais/pdf/pub/competence-linguistique.pdf>

39 <http://www.language.ca>

## Other Language Frameworks in Canada

funded, English language and French language school boards). ELLs and FLLs can be Canadian-born or newcomers to Canada.

Ministries of Education all across Canada have developed policies and procedures relating to programming and services for ELLs and FLLs, some of which include specific frameworks, other than the CEFR, for English language learning and French language learning. With the exception of Saskatchewan (which has adopted the CEFR), the frameworks implemented by the rest of Canada share many of the key principles of the action-oriented approach. As such, this handbook can also be helpful for users of other frameworks pertaining to ELLs and FLLs.

Below is an example of a framework for English language learning.

### Steps to English Proficiency (Ontario)

Steps to English Proficiency (STEP) is a framework used in Ontario schools to support planning, programming, and assessment for English language learning across the Ontario curriculum. STEP consists of continua to support students in an

English as a second language (ESL) program and students in an English literacy development (ELD) program. ELD programs are for students with limited or no prior schooling; they build language proficiency and focus on literacy development.

The ESL Observable Language Behaviours continua is organized by strands (i.e., oral, reading, writing) and by grade clusters (i.e., grades 1–3, 4–6, 7–8, and 9–12). For each language concept or skill, there is a six-step proficiency scale (step 1 being beginner level) with descriptors that illustrate the language behaviours that can be observed. These descriptors express what a learner can do by the end of a given step.

The ELD Observable Language and Literacy Behaviours continua is also organized by the same strands as mentioned above, but only has one grade cluster (i.e., grades 3–12). In the continua, there are only four steps. Once a student has demonstrated the descriptors on Step 4, the student would transition to an ESL program or to the appropriate high school course. The Orientation to School Life in Ontario continuum also supports student learning in ELD programs.



To learn more about STEP visit...

[EduGAINS, ELL](#) (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2015)<sup>40</sup>



What elements of the action-oriented approach can you also observe in the CLB?

What similarities exist between the CEFR, the CLB, and the language framework used with school-aged children and youth identified as ELLs/FLLs in your community (e.g., STEP in Ontario)?

How can educators in your community collaborate to share best practices for the following groups? Why is this important?

1. School-age children and youth studying an additional language (CEFR)
2. School-age children and youth identified as ELLs /FLLs (STEP in Ontario for ELLs)
3. Adult immigrants (CLB/NCLC)

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.edugains.ca/newsite/ell/index.html>



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## The Action-Oriented Approach

# The Action-Oriented Approach

The action-oriented approach, as described in the *Common European Framework of References for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment*<sup>41</sup> (CEFR), represents an important shift in second language education, both in Canada and around the world. Evolving from the communicative approach, the action-oriented approach emphasizes the learning of a language in order to achieve real-life goals. The action-oriented approach goes beyond the communicative approach by adding a real purpose to learning a second language, and enables learners to see real and immediate benefits to their language learning. In this way, language is used not only as a means of communication, but also as a way of accomplishing real-life tasks. In the communicative approach, tasks or activities serve as a way of achieving the goal of communication. The action-oriented approach takes this a step further. Communication is no longer

the goal, but the means to accomplish an authentic task in a real-life context. As such, the accomplishment of a particular task becomes the goal, with communication being the means to that end (Hermans & Piccardo, 2012). Learners are not learning a language just for the sake of it, but are doing so in order to accomplish a clearly defined task, such as persuading a teacher to give them an extension on an assignment, organizing a surprise birthday party for a family member, or proposing an international movie festival in their school.

In presenting the action-oriented approach, the CEFR introduced a number of important terms that describe key components of the approach. To deepen understanding of the action-oriented approach, it is important to clarify the following terms: social agent, competences, language activities and strategies, domains, and tasks.

## Social Agent

Social agent, or “*acteur social*,” is a term that describes the language learner. It emphasizes the fact that a language is not learned or used in isolation, but exists in a social context, and serves a tangible purpose. According to the CEFR, the action-oriented approach “views users and learners of a language primarily as ‘social agents,’ i.e., members of society who have tasks (not exclusively language-related) to accomplish in a given set of circumstances, in a specific environment and within a particular field of vision” (CEFR, Section 2.1). In this way, the learner, or social agent, communicates with others in order to achieve a goal. Many variables come into play and have an impact on the language used. The nature of the task, the social setting, prior knowledge and experience, and a range of emotional, mental, cognitive, and cultural factors, all combine to make the language learner a true social agent rather than a robotic dispenser of memorized words and phrases.

## Competences

Competences are defined by the CEFR as “the sum of knowledge, skills, and characteristics that allow a person to perform actions” (CEFR, Section 2.1). The CEFR makes the distinction between *general competences*, which are not as closely related to language, and *communicative language competences*,



To learn more about the Action-Oriented Approach visit...

[Section 2.1 of the CEFR](#)<sup>42</sup>

[CEFR Companion Volume with New Descriptors](#) (Council of Europe, 2018)<sup>43</sup>

[Chapters 2, 3, and 4 of From Communicative to Action-Oriented: A Research Pathway](#) (Piccardo, 2014)<sup>44</sup>

[A Guide to Reflective Practice for Core French Teachers, Module 3, The Action-Oriented Approach](#)<sup>45</sup> (French Focus)

[Prologue, The Action-Oriented Approach](#)<sup>46</sup> (French Focus)

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages>

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages>

<sup>43</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/cefr-companion-volume-with-new-descriptors-2018/1680787989>

<sup>44</sup> <https://transformingfsl.ca/en/resources/from-communicative-to-action-oriented-illuminating-the-approaches>

<sup>45</sup> <https://transformingfsl.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/FSL-module-3.pdf>

<sup>46</sup> <https://transformingfsl.ca/en/resources/prologue-a-publication-for-professional-conversations/>

## The Action-Oriented Approach

which are more specifically related to language. *General competences* include declarative knowledge, skills and know-how, existential competence, and ability to learn. *Communicative language competences* can be linguistic, sociolinguistic, or pragmatic. The learner draws upon their competences to perform actions in order to achieve real-life goals.



To learn more about competences visit...

[Chapter 5 of the CEFR](#)<sup>47</sup>

[Chapter 4 of \*From Communicative to Action-Oriented: A Research Pathway\*](#)<sup>48</sup> (Piccardo, 2014)



### In Practical Terms

In the CEFR CV, Overall Language Proficiency — which includes general competences, communicative language competences, and communicative language activities and strategies — is presented in an [organizational chart](#)<sup>49</sup> to assist users.

Communicative Language Competences — which include linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic — are also presented in an [organizational chart](#).<sup>50</sup>

In addition, each descriptor scale is presented with a [short rationale](#).<sup>51</sup>

## Language Activities and Strategies

The CEFR explains that a learner's competences are activated strategically through language activities that involve reception, production, interaction, and mediation in oral and/or written form. Oral receptive activities may include listening to a song or a podcast, while written receptive activities could include reading a magazine, a travel guide, or a newsletter. Leaving a phone message or making an announcement are examples of oral productive activities, whereas writing anything from a shopping list to a formal letter would be examples of written productive activities. Examples of interactive activities include having a phone or a text conversation (the former oral, the latter written). Very often, communication involves the use of many language activities simultaneously.

As described in the 2001 CEFR, mediation involves making communication possible between two or more people who are unable to communicate directly with one another. This explanation was further developed in the 2018 CEFR companion volume to include mediating a text, mediating concepts, mediating communication, and mediation strategies. Examples of mediation could include paraphrasing what a politician said on the news last night, summarizing what a friend wrote in an email, or explaining a story in a language more familiar to the learner. Mediation could

also include managing interactions during collaboration and facilitating conversation in a disagreement. Piccardo and North (2019) describe four contexts of mediation: linguistic, cultural, social, and pedagogic. Mediation is a key concept in understanding the notion of “social agent” given the role mediation plays in the co-construction of meaning and in the relationship between the individual and social dimensions of communication.



To learn more about mediation visit...

[Developing Illustrative Descriptors of Aspects of Mediation for the CEFR](#)<sup>52</sup>

[CEFR Companion Volume with New Descriptors](#)<sup>53</sup>



### In Practical Terms

In the CEFR CV, communicative language activities and strategies for reception, production, interaction, and mediation are presented in overall [organizational charts](#).<sup>54</sup>

In addition, each descriptor scale is presented with a [short rationale](#).<sup>55</sup>

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages>

<sup>48</sup> <https://transformingfsl.ca/en/resources/from-communicative-to-action-oriented-illuminating-the-approaches>

<sup>49</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/cefr-companion-volume-with-new-descriptors-2018/1680787989.pdf#page=30>

<sup>50</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/cefr-companion-volume-with-new-descriptors-2018/1680787989.pdf#page=130>

<sup>51</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/cefr-companion-volume-with-new-descriptors-2018/1680787989.pdf#page=90>

<sup>52</sup> <http://rm.coe.int/common-european-framework-of-reference-for-languages-learning-teaching/168073ff31>

<sup>53</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/cefr-companion-volume-with-new-descriptors-2018/1680787989>

<sup>54</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/cefr-companion-volume-with-new-descriptors-2018/1680787989.pdf#page=82>

<sup>55</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/cefr-companion-volume-with-new-descriptors-2018/1680787989.pdf#page=90>

## The Action-Oriented Approach

### Functions and Speech Acts

The notions of functions and speech acts were important in informing the communicative approach and then later, the CEFR. Speech acts, which are examples of language activities, are things we do with words for a particular language function (e.g., persuade, disapprove, inform, question, greeting). For example, a language function might include leave-taking. Speech acts are how we do this function, such as saying, “it was a pleasure meeting you,” “hope to see you soon,” “catch ya later,” or “goodbye.” As seen in this example, there are many ways that a speech act can be expressed, depending on the context, the situation, and the message to be conveyed. Speech acts occur in a social context. The goal of speech acts is not language, but rather communication in order to complete tasks.



To learn more about functions and speech acts visit...

[Inventaire linguistique des contenus clés des niveaux du CECRL](#) (in French)<sup>56</sup>

[British Council — EAQUALS Core Inventory for General English](#) (North, Ortega, & Sheehan, 2010)<sup>57</sup>

[Chapter 4 of From Communicative to Action-Oriented: A Research Pathway](#)<sup>58</sup> (Piccardo, 2014)

### Domains

Domains are the areas of life that provide the context for language use. The CEFR identifies four domains: public, personal, educational, and occupational (CEFR, section 4.1.1). The domains, as described in the action-oriented approach, highlight that language is used and learned within a broad context and does not exist in isolation. To assist teachers in their planning of action-oriented tasks, the CEFR includes a useful chart explaining the characteristics of each domain.



To learn more about domains visit...

[Table 5 of the CEFR](#)<sup>59</sup>

[Appendix 6 in the CEFR Companion Volume with New Descriptors](#)<sup>60</sup>

### Tasks

Central to the action-oriented approach is the notion of language being used for a real purpose, namely to complete a specific task. The successful accomplishment of the task is the true goal. Tasks vary in nature but are always meaningful, and set in the context of everyday life. They can range from simple (e.g., finding out what the time is in order to set up an appointment) to more complex (e.g., planning a three-week family vacation in Europe on a limited budget). They often require an element of research or planning, as well as a number of

steps or sub-tasks, if they are to be successfully completed. Conditions or constraints render a task more complex and rich (e.g., ordering a pizza for four people, while taking into account variables such as food allergies, preferences, cost). Language is an essential tool for the learner both in the preparation of the task and in the execution of the final product (which demonstrates completion of the task), be it oral or written. With this understanding, the learner can identify the value of second language learning and the role language plays in accomplishing real life tasks.



What impact can the action-oriented approach have on student engagement and confidence? Why?

How has the action-oriented approach transcended the communicative approach? What are the key differences?

What is the relationship between “competences,” “language activities,” and “tasks?”

How does the term “social agent” or “acteur social” shed new light on what it means to be a second language learner? What implications does this have for your classroom practice?

56 <https://www.caslt.org/files/pedagogical-resources/resources/inventaire-linguistique-cont-cles-cecrl.pdf>

57 <https://www.eaquals.org/resources/the-core-inventory-for-general-english/>

58 <https://transformingfsl.ca/en/resources/from-communicative-to-action-oriented-illuminating-the-approaches>

59 <https://rm.coe.int/1680459f97#page=49>

60 <https://rm.coe.int/cefr-companion-volume-with-new-descriptors-2018/1680787989#page=185>

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# Creating Action-Oriented Tasks

# Creating Action-Oriented Tasks

In recent years, there has been a shift from learning “about” a language, to “living” a language. This shift in thinking is widely attributed to the action-oriented approach, which views learners as social agents who use language to communicate and accomplish meaningful tasks (see “[The Action-Oriented Approach](#)” for further information). This approach has influenced second language education, whereby more emphasis is placed on oral communication and the need to build competences so that the learner can successfully participate in authentic situations. This occurs through task-based learning.

## Task-Based Learning

Tasks play a key role in second language learning inspired by the CEFR. Tasks allow for learning to be meaningful, tangible, and concrete. Learning occurs in context, with the purpose of developing and activating strategies and competences needed to complete the specific task.

Through task-based learning, the “classroom” becomes the gateway to functioning effectively in the outside world in the target language. In some instances, this requires the learner to suspend disbelief (Council of Europe, 2001) and be open to recreating situations that simulate authentic situations from everyday life (e.g., role-playing a job interview). Through this practice, the learner develops

the necessary competences in a safe and supportive learning environment with the goal of transferring that learning to experiences in the world beyond the classroom.

Tasks provide direction to teaching and learning. Tasks inform how the teacher supports the learner in achieving the goal (e.g., scaffolding), and inform the teacher’s assessment practices. Tasks provide the learner with clear objectives. The learner must make judgements, determine the tools they already have and those that need to be acquired, and think about how to mobilize those tools in the most effective way to achieve the goal (Piccardo, 2014). Through this process, the learner becomes more autonomous.

Tasks oftentimes require steps, or sub-tasks, to develop the learner’s competences. Tasks also involve various communicative activities (i.e., reception, production, interaction, mediation).

## Elements of an Action-Oriented Task

Ideally, an action-oriented task includes the following elements (Collins & Hunter, 2013; 2014):

- Learners are “social agents” in an authentic social context
- Action is purposeful with real-world applications
- There is a clearly communicated goal to be accomplished that results in a product or outcome
- Learning is supported by authentic, real-life texts and experiences
- There are conditions and constraints that promote critical and creative thinking
- Learners draw upon their existing and newly developed competences
- Learners make choices and think and act strategically



To learn more about conditions and constraints visit...

[Sections 4.1.3 and 7.2.2 of the CEFR<sup>64</sup>](#)



To learn more about tasks visit...

[Chapter 7 of the CEFR<sup>61</sup>](#)

[CEFR Companion Volume with New Descriptors<sup>62</sup>](#)

[Chapter 4 of From Communicative to Action-Oriented: A Research Pathway<sup>63</sup>](#) (Piccardo, 2014)

<sup>61</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages>

<sup>62</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/cefr-companion-volume-with-new-descriptors-2018/1680787989>

<sup>63</sup> <https://transformingfsl.ca/en/resources/from-communicative-to-action-oriented-illuminating-the-approaches>

<sup>64</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages>

## Sample Tasks (CEFR)

Since the CEFR is task based in order to make language learning more obviously practical, here are some sample tasks:

### Scenario: Proposing a Local Hero (CEFR — A1)

A local newspaper is writing an article called "Local Heroes" and is looking for people to nominate a close friend or family member for this honour. The person featured must live in the community. To nominate your hero, submit an online form to the newspaper. Your submission is selected as a finalist. A reporter will call you to discuss your nomination.

To prepare:

- Gather information on your hero, such as:
  - > Name
  - > Age
  - > Phone number
  - > Relationship to you (e.g., grandfather, librarian, neighbour)
  - > Why they are a hero
- Be ready to share your personal information, such as:
  - > Name
  - > Age
  - > Phone number
  - > Address

To nominate:

- Submit the online form to the newspaper
- Speak to the reporter over the phone and share the details of your nomination

### Scenario: Proposing a Name for a New School (CEFR — A2)

Your school board is holding a competition to name a new school being built in your neighbourhood. They would like to choose a name that will honour an important person from the local community. You would like to nominate someone and decide to research possible choices. To enter the competition, you will first need to complete an application form to explain your choice. You will then be invited to make a formal two-minute slideshow presentation of your choice to the board, followed by a brief question period.

To prepare for the presentation:

- Research people who could potentially be honoured
- Decide on your nominee and gather information to support your proposal
- Complete the application form
- Anticipate possible questions that may be asked by the board

At the meeting:

- Present to the school board
- Answer questions from the school board representatives

### Scenario: Proposing a School Name Change (CEFR — B1)

For decades, the local school has been a source of pride and the heart of your community. Built in 1867, generations of families have attended the historic building, named after an important local politician. Recently, the past actions of that politician have been called into question. It is alleged that the local politician held discriminatory views and engaged in inappropriate behaviour. There has been a push to change the name of the school. Soon, you will have the chance to present your position at the school board meeting. You will only have eight minutes to present your argument using a slideshow. Representatives of the school board will ask you questions.

To prepare for your presentation:

- Research other communities that have experienced a similar situation
- Review the protocol for a school board meeting
- Speak to other community members to gather their perspectives
- Share your idea at a school-level meeting to convince more people to support your position (e.g., student council meeting, parent committee meeting)

At the meeting:

- Present your argument to convince the school board representatives (remember that it is a formal meeting)
- Answer questions

### Scenario: Proposing a Street Name Change (CEFR — B2)

A group of citizens is looking to propose a name change for a street in your neighbourhood. The name change is in response to new information that suggests the current name is rooted in discrimination. It is believed that the person the street name recognizes was involved in promoting ideas that violated human rights.

Some long-time residents of the street are emotionally attached to the name; others view the change as an unnecessary inconvenience and expense. Some business owners on the street are opposed, feeling that this change will cause significant expense and will negatively impact their businesses. The local council will make the final decision at a council meeting, approving or rejecting the proposal. As a citizen looking to drive this name change or to preserve the status quo, you will have the opportunity to present your position. You will only have ten minutes to present your argument using visual aids. Councillors will ask you questions.

To prepare for the presentation:

- Research other communities that have experienced a similar situation
- Review the protocol for a local council meeting in your community
- Familiarize yourself with the relevant legislation relating to human rights
- Speak to other community members to gather their perspectives and prepare your counter arguments
- Develop a petition to support your position

At the meeting:

- Present to councillors at the council meeting and submit the petition (remember that it is a formal meeting)
- Answer questions and defend your viewpoint
- Take part in a media interview

## Identifying Elements of a Task

To better illustrate the elements of a task, the B1 example task appears below with annotations showing how it meets the outlined criteria for an action-oriented task.

### Scenario: Proposing a School Name Change (CEFR — B1)

For decades, the local school has been a source of pride and the heart of your community. Built in 1867, generations of families have attended the historic building, named after an important local politician. Recently, the past actions of that politician have been called into question. It is alleged that the local politician held discriminatory views and engaged in inappropriate behaviour. There has been a push to change the name of the school. Soon, you will have the chance to present your position at the school board meeting. You will only have eight minutes to present your argument using a slideshow. Representatives of the school board will ask you questions.

To prepare for your presentation:

- Research other communities that have experienced a similar situation
- Review the protocol for a school board meeting
- Speak to other community members to gather their perspectives
- Share your idea at a school-level meeting to convince more people to support your position (e.g., student council meeting, parent committee meeting)

At the meeting:

- Present your argument to convince the school board representatives (remember that it is a formal meeting)
- Answer questions

#### Learners are “social agents” in an authentic social context

“Speak to other community members”  
 “Share your idea at a school-level meeting”  
 “Present your argument to [...] representatives”  
 “Answer questions”

#### Action is purposeful with real-world applications

“The local school has been a source of pride and the heart of your community”  
 “Present your position at the school board meeting”

#### There is a clearly communicated goal to be accomplished that results in a product or outcome

“Present your argument to convince the school board representatives”

#### Learning is supported by authentic, real-life texts and experiences

“Research other communities that have experienced a similar situation”  
 “Review the protocol for a school board meeting”

#### There are conditions and constraints that promote critical and creative thinking

“You will only have eight minutes to present your argument using a slideshow”  
 “Review the protocol for a school board meeting”  
 “Remember that it is a formal meeting¼¼”

#### Learners draw upon their existing and newly developed competences

##### Some possible language activities and strategies associated with the task:

**PRODUCTIVE:** Sustained monologue, putting a case, addressing audiences, planning

**RECEPTIVE:** Reading for information and argument, watching TV, film, and video

**INTERACTIVE:** Formal discussion and meetings, co-operating

**MEDIATING:** Processing text in speech, facilitating collaborative interaction, encouraging conceptual talk, facilitating communication in delicate situations and disagreements

##### Possible competences needed:

Knowledge of the school system, social conventions in a formal setting, intercultural awareness, exploring values and beliefs, study skills, vocabulary related to the task, past tense to describe the past actions of the politician, present tense to describe current concerns, conditional tense to describe what should happen in the future, clear pronunciation, accurate spelling and punctuation, politeness conventions, formal register, flexibility, coherence and cohesion, spoken fluency

#### Learners make choices and think and act strategically

- |                 |                 |                |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| • “Research...” | • “Gather...”   | • “Present...” |
| • “Review...”   | • “Share...”    | • “Answer...”  |
| • “Speak...”    | • “Convince...” |                |

## Flexibility of Tasks

The flexibility of task-based learning allows the teacher to use their professional judgement to modulate the task to meet the needs of the learner by providing more or less support. For example, in the B1 sample task, a student who struggles with presentations in front of the class may make their case through a video submission as opposed to performing the presentation live as a way to support to the learner. Additional resources — such as teacher-chosen examples of communities experiencing similar situations instead of having the student research them — might

be another way for the teacher to be responsive to individual learners.

In a learning environment with a wide spread of ability levels (e.g., A1 and A2 learners in the same class), it may be appropriate to use more than one task. This flexibility allows the teacher to meet the needs of learners working at different levels of a language framework. The task examples above demonstrate how it is possible to have similar scenarios (e.g., proposing a local hero, proposing a name for a new school, proposing a school name change, proposing a street name change) amongst tasks that reflect different levels of difficulty. An A1 learner could be working

on the scenario “proposing a local hero” while an A2 learner could be working on the scenario “proposing a name for a new school” within the same class. The similar nature of the scenarios would allow the teacher to introduce similar sub-tasks, making the necessary adjustments to reflect the level of difficulty.

Additionally, the flexibility of task-based learning allows for the adaptation of a task to better suit the interests of the learner. For example, a learner working on the A1 level sample task presented above may prefer to nominate a sports hero rather than an admired friend or family member.



To see further examples of action-oriented tasks visit...

[Chapter 4 \(pp. 31–33\) of \*From Communicative to Action-Oriented: A Research Pathway\*<sup>65</sup> \(English and French; Piccardo, 2014\)](#)

[LINCDIRE](#)<sup>66</sup>

[“Action-Oriented Tasks in the ESL/FSL Classroom” in the interactive resource \*Synergies: Settlement, Integration and Language Learning\* \(English and French; Hunter, Andrews, & Piccardo, 2016\)<sup>67</sup>](#)

[Exploring the Region of Durham through Task-Based Learning](#) (Hunter & Collins, 2013)<sup>68</sup>

[A Guide to Reflective Practice for Core French Teachers, Module 3, The Action-Oriented Approach](#)<sup>69</sup>

[Améliorons ensemble les compétences des élèves de français langue seconde en s’inspirant du CECR : Trousse de ressources pour les enseignantes et enseignants de FLS](#)<sup>70</sup>

[Améliorons ensemble les compétences des élèves en français langue seconde en s’inspirant du CECR : Recueil de ressources pour les enseignantes et les enseignants de FLS \(Phase 2\)](#)<sup>71</sup>

<sup>65</sup> <https://transformingfsl.ca/en/resources/from-communicative-to-action-oriented-illuminating-the-approaches>

<sup>66</sup> <https://lite.lincdireproject.org/all-tasks/>

<sup>67</sup> <https://www.durhamimmigration.ca/en/work-and-study/english-for-adults.aspx>

<sup>68</sup> [https://www.durhamimmigration.ca/en/work-and-study/resources/Living-in-English\\_Discovering-Durham.pdf](https://www.durhamimmigration.ca/en/work-and-study/resources/Living-in-English_Discovering-Durham.pdf)

<sup>69</sup> <https://transformingfsl.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/FSL-module-3.pdf>

<sup>70</sup> [https://transformingfsl.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/FINAL\\_CSC635\\_Revised\\_Compendium\\_012.pdf](https://transformingfsl.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/FINAL_CSC635_Revised_Compendium_012.pdf)

<sup>71</sup> [https://transformingfsl.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/CSC697\\_Compendium\\_Phase\\_2\\_PA1.pdf](https://transformingfsl.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/CSC697_Compendium_Phase_2_PA1.pdf)

## Choosing a Scenario for a Task

In the B1 task shown above, the scenario was “proposing a school name change.” There are endless possibilities for scenarios to set the stage for an action-oriented task. This openness and flexibility allows tasks to be learner-centred and provides authentic opportunities to promote active participation within the community.

Here are examples of scenarios, organized by theme.

Theme	Scenario
<b>Integrated Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviewing a local historical site on a travel website</li> </ul>
<b>Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organizing a fundraising campaign to support a local charity</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental Stewardship</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementing a composting program</li> </ul>
<b>Arts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning a musical recital at a nursing home</li> </ul>
<b>Healthy Relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hosting a social event over lunch</li> </ul>
<b>Physical Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designing a personalized workout plan</li> <li>Planning a trip to the local farmer’s market</li> </ul>
<b>Mental Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning a wellness expo</li> <li>Speaking to your doctor about mental health supports in the community</li> </ul>
<b>Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inviting a knowledge keeper from a First Nations community to speak</li> <li>Ensuring community compliance with accessibility laws</li> </ul>
<b>Safe Communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Getting emergency assistance after an accident</li> <li>Proposing speed bumps to slow down traffic in front of a local daycare</li> </ul>
<b>Financial Literacy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating a monthly budget on a fixed income</li> </ul>
<b>Mathematical Literacy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ordering flooring and wallpaper for a room to be redecorated</li> </ul>
<b>Technology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Convincing a family member to purchase the latest smartphone</li> </ul>
<b>Entertainment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Critiquing a film online</li> </ul>
<b>Social Life</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organizing an evening out for friends visiting from out of town</li> </ul>
<b>Education and Career Life Planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sharing your education plan with a counsellor</li> <li>Attending a job interview</li> </ul>
<b>Workplace</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing a workplace health and safety display board and training</li> </ul>



## 8

# Planning Action-Oriented Pathways

# Planning Action-Oriented Pathways

Action-oriented pathways involve teaching, learning, and assessment. All three areas are interconnected and necessary components that lead to learner autonomy. For the purpose of clarity, this section will focus on teaching and learning, with the next section focusing on assessment.

As its name suggests, the CEFR provides a framework for second language education. It does not prescribe a teaching methodology, nor does it present a specific curriculum. The CEFR serves as a guide to inform language education. For a teacher, the CEFR is a flexible tool that allows for fluid programming decisions that are learner-centred. The CEFRCV further aids and facilitates this process. Determining how to plan using an action-oriented approach requires reflection on the part of the teacher.

## The Reflective Teacher

Planning action-oriented pathways requires the teacher to engage in reflective practice. “The reflective teacher stays open to learners’ needs and knows how to select topics that will be interesting and suited to students’ linguistic competence, their cognitive capacities, and their educational aims. These should be in accordance with the curriculum or programme” (Piccardo, Berchoud, Cignatta, Mentz, & Pamula, 2011). The reflective teacher considers the well-being of the learner (see “[Supporting Well-Being and Achievement](#)” for further information), as well as resources that each learner possesses,

and how those resources can be drawn upon to build proficiency. This, in turn, supports the development of plurilingual competence and intercultural awareness (see “[Overview of the CEFR and the CEFRCV](#)” for further information on plurilingualism). The teacher also considers the prospective needs of the learner, preparing the learner for the world of tomorrow (see “[Twenty-First Century Learning](#)” for further information).

The teacher also reflects on their own experiences and resources, considering what has worked well in the past, what didn’t work so well, and what unique elements they bring to the learning experience. The reflective teacher also takes calculated risks, trying innovative and creative approaches to learning. The reflective teacher is flexible and open to change.

Engaging in a reflective practice does not only involve the teacher. This collaborative process also occurs with the learner, other educators, and the broader community.

## Language Learning for All

As previously stated, the reflective teacher is open to learner needs, and as such, makes language learning accessible to all. This includes considering and supporting the specific requirements of learners with special education needs who are English language learners (ELL) or French language learners (FLL).



To learn more about language learning for all visit...

[Inclusion of Students with Special Education Needs in French as a Second Language Programs: A Review of Canadian Policy and Resource Documents](#)<sup>72</sup>

Ontario’s [Welcoming English Language Learners into French as a Second Language Programs](#)<sup>73</sup>

## Scenario Planning Chart

The “[Creating Action-Oriented Tasks](#)” section described the process to build tasks. An action-oriented task provides the context for the learner to demonstrate their learning and serves as the anchor for teaching and learning during the scenario. Although the task requires the learner to draw upon various strategies and competences to complete the task effectively, it does not describe how the learner will develop the needed strategies and competences to be successful. That process requires the planning of an action-oriented pathway.

The Scenario Planning Chart presented here is designed to assist the teacher in planning an action-oriented pathway using a reflective practice. This chart is but one example of how this process can occur and is by no means the only way to plan a scenario. Before moving ahead, it is important to define what is meant by the term “scenario,” as it can have many different meanings. In this resource, “scenario” is used to describe the entire learning process

<sup>72</sup> <https://journalhosting.ucalgary.ca/index.php/cjeap/article/view/16352/30761>

<sup>73</sup> <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/amenagement/welcoming.pdf>

related to a particular task, that is to say, the introduction of the task, the development of strategies and competences needed to perform the task through sub-tasks, and the performance of the task itself.

How a teacher goes about completing the chart is open to the teacher. A teacher may choose to start with an idea for a scenario and develop a task that is meaningful and relevant to the learners (see “[Creating Action-Oriented Tasks](#)” for more information). As the task is developed, the teacher seeks to align the task with the curriculum of the program being taught, and then completes the other areas of the chart. This approach makes the authenticity of the task paramount, and then establishes precise links to the curriculum expectations. Aligning curriculum expectations to the learning goals of a particular action-oriented task in this way can be an effective process. This is facilitated particularly well when the curriculum in question has been updated in light of the principles of the CEFR, but is possible for any kind of curriculum.

A teacher, however, may feel more comfortable taking the curriculum as a starting point and using it as a source of inspiration in the development of an action-oriented task, and then completing the other

areas of the chart. Linking the task to the curriculum in this way can also be an effective process. However, when beginning with the curriculum, take care to ensure that the task is natural, authentic, and relevant, rather than contrived in order to check certain curricular boxes. It is especially important that the task not be driven by the teaching/learning of a grammatical item. Whichever method is favoured, both the curriculum expectations and the elements of an action-oriented task must be respected and aligned in order to maintain the integrity and effectiveness of language learning.

In order to help the reader better understand the Scenario Planning Chart and the areas to consider when planning an action-oriented pathway, three versions of the chart are provided:

1. A [blank scenario planning chart](#) (annex 1)
2. A [scenario planning chart annotated](#) with explanations (annex 2)
3. A [sample completed scenario planning chart](#) (annex 3) based on the sample B1 task presented in the “[Creating Action-Oriented Tasks](#)” section and linked to supporting material that could be used during the scenario



Do you feel that it would be more beneficial to begin the task creation process by thinking of a relevant task or by referring to your curriculum document? Why?

How does the CEFR guide language education in your classroom?

How does a reflective teacher, informed by the action-oriented approach, meet the needs of all learners?

When a teacher takes calculated risks, what are the benefits to the learners?

How could a school administrator support a reflective teacher in successfully implementing the action-oriented approach in the classroom?



## 9

## Assessment

# Assessment



To learn more about assessment visit...

[Section 9 of the CEFR<sup>74</sup>](#)

[CEFR Companion Volume with New Descriptors<sup>75</sup>](#)

[Chapter 8 of \*From Communicative to Action-Oriented: A Research Pathway\*<sup>76</sup> \(Piccardo, 2014\)](#)

[Pathways through Assessment, Learning and Teaching in the CEFR \(European Centre for Modern Languages, 2011\)<sup>77</sup>](#)



## In Practical Terms

To create the assessment of learning tool ([Annex 9: Assessment: Performance of the Task](#)) for the B1 sample task (see [“Planning Action-Oriented Pathways”](#) for the task itself), the illustrative scales from the CEFR and CEFR CV that informed the task were once again consulted. The descriptors from those illustrative scales were then combined and reorganized to create five categories:

1. Interaction
2. Addressing an audience
3. Argument
4. Accuracy
5. Fluency

There are no “right” categories; rather, it is up to the teacher to use their professional judgement when determining the most appropriate categories for assessment.

The action-oriented approach has brought about significant changes to assessment. Where once assessment was seen as a final step in learning, determined by the teacher, assessment is now understood as a key element of the teaching and learning process, involving both the teacher and the learner. One cannot speak about assessment without also speaking about teaching and learning. This interdependence, whereby the learner is guided through the learning journey, leads to learner autonomy. Assessment is a key element on the path to learner autonomy.

In the action-oriented approach, assessment is based on what a learner can do in a real-life situation. Assessment involves analyzing the learner’s level of proficiency, based on their performance. In other words, assessment involves identifying what competences are used by the learner, and at what level, to complete the task. Emphasis is placed on the application of knowledge in authentic situations to achieve a goal rather than simply on the accumulation of knowledge (Piccardo, 2014).

## CEFR Descriptors and Assessment

The CEFR can be used to determine “what is assessed, and how performance is interpreted” (Council of Europe, 2001). As previously described, the CEFR and the CEFR CV can be used to inform the creation of an action-oriented task, as well as to determine whether the learning goals of the task were achieved (see [“The Action-Oriented Approach”](#) for more

information.) This is accomplished through descriptors, found in the illustrative scales, whose function is to “facilitate the provision of transparent and coherent alignment between curriculum, teaching and assessment” (Council of Europe, 2018). The CEFR and the CEFR CV provide a number of illustrative scales for communicative language activities (i.e., reception, production, interaction, mediation) and strategies, as well as for language competences. It is important that strategies not be overlooked given the role they play in the learner mobilizing their resources and activating competences.

A number of descriptors were referenced in the creation of the sample tasks presented in this resource to ensure that the tasks indeed reflect the levels indicated (see [“Creating Action-Oriented Tasks”](#) for more information.) Although a large number of descriptors informed the creation of each task, it would not be feasible for all descriptors to be addressed through teaching, learning, and assessment in a given scenario. The teacher must choose which descriptors will be the focus of the scenario and plan accordingly. The CEFR 2001 recommends that a practical assessment should include no more than four to five categories. The teacher determines the categories and what CEFR descriptors could be combined and adapted to become the criteria for the task.

<sup>74</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages>

<sup>75</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/cefr-companion-volume-with-new-descriptors-2018/1680787989>

<sup>76</sup> <https://transformingfsl.ca/en/resources/from-communicative-to-action-oriented-illuminating-the-approaches>

<sup>77</sup> <https://www.ecml.at/Resources/ECMLPublications/tabid/277/ID/28/language/en-GB/Default.aspx>

## Determining Assessment Criteria

Once the teacher has determined the categories, they must then determine the criteria for each category. The descriptors provided in the CEFR and the CEFR CV, organized in illustrative scales, can be either general in nature or quite specific. These selected descriptors act as a starting point for the teacher, who then adapts them to the particular context and learning objectives.

According to the Council of Europe (2001), criteria developed by the teacher should be:

- Expressed in a positive manner, focusing on what a learner can do
- Definite, avoiding vagueness
- Clear for the learner, expressed in a simple and logical manner
- Brief
- Independent and objective, allowing for concrete evidence to be gathered from the performance and then matched against the criteria

It is up to the teacher to determine how to weight the criteria based on the learning goals and on the task itself. For example, in the B1 sample task, the teacher may choose to weight the “argument” category more heavily than the “accuracy” category. This does not mean that there is a point value assigned to each category, but that the weighting is considered in a holistic manner when assigning a grade, when a grade is required.



### In Practical Terms

One of the CEFR/CEFR CV descriptors that informed the assessment of learning tool for the B1 sample task (see “[Planning Action-Oriented Pathways](#)” for the task) was the following:

Spoken Interaction — Information Exchange

- “Can summarize and give his or her opinion about a short story, article, talk, discussion interview, or documentary and answer further questions of detail” (Council of Europe, 2018)

In order to make the descriptor shown above more specific and more meaningful to the learner, the descriptor was modified by the teacher to create the following criteria for the “Interaction” category of the assessment of learning tool:

- Can understand questions asked about the related topic, asking for clarification when necessary
- Can respond to questions clearly enough to be understood most of the time
- Can provide brief reasons and explanations to support main arguments

These transparent and objective criteria, written in learner-friendly language, will be used to make judgements about the learner’s performance in assessment of learning.

## Means of Assessment

The sample assessment tool described above is only one example of assessment and is in no means presented as the only way to assess the performance task. Many means of assessment (e.g., rubrics, checklists) could be used for the performance task and throughout the rest of the teaching and learning process. It is up to the teacher to determine which means of assessment are most appropriate for the purpose. Using varied means of assessment allows more evidence gathering over time. The more differentiated that evidence, the more accurate the learning profile (Piccardo, 2014).



### In Practical Terms

For the B1 sample task, multiple means of assessment were presented (see “[Planning Action-Oriented Pathways](#)” to view the Scenario Planning Chart).

Self-assessment is an essential component of assessment. It supports the learner in playing an active role in their learning: “by sharing responsibility for his or her own assessment, the learner becomes aware of his or her strengths and weaknesses, the objectives he or she needs to give priority, and the progress he or she had made or still needs to make” (Piccardo, 2014).

## Purpose of Assessment

Key questions for a teacher to consider regarding assessment are these:

- Why are we assessing?
- What is this information going to be used for?
- How will this assessment help the learner to meet the learning objectives?

Reviewing the purpose of assessment — often expressed as *assessment for*, *as*, and *of* learning — may help the teacher with this reflection.



To learn more about assessment *for*, *as*, and *of* learning visit...

[\*Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario's Schools, K–12\*<sup>78</sup>](#)

[\*Effective Assessment Practices in FSL: Connecting Growing Success and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages\*<sup>79</sup>](#) (Adams et al., 2013)

## Assessment FOR Learning

Assessment *for* learning involves gathering information in order to determine where the learner is in their learning, where they need to go, and how to get there. With this information, the teacher is able to guide the learner by providing descriptive feedback, next steps, and redirection on the learning path. The teacher can use this information to adjust their instructional strategies and tools in order to provide the most effective programming for each learner.

In the second language classroom, assessment *for* learning might look like this:

- Providing descriptive feedback
- Coaching so that the learner can improve
- Informing teaching and learning in the short term (e.g., during or after sub-tasks) to help the learner work toward successfully completing the performance task

## Assessment AS Learning

Learner involvement in their own learning is imperative in the development of an independent lifelong learner. “Assessment as learning actively involves [the learner] in the assessment process and fosters the development of [learner] metacognition” (Adams et al., 2013). This process encourages the learner to set personal goals, plan how to achieve them, monitor progress throughout, and then evaluate their own learning and ability to achieve the desired goals.

In the second language classroom, assessment *as* learning might look like this:

- The learner uses the descriptors to set clear personal goals within a given time period
- The learner uses self- and peer assessment to set next steps and monitor progress
- The teacher and the learner co-construct success criteria, ensuring an in-depth understanding of the goals to be achieved and how to achieve them
- Checklists based on the descriptors to help the learner track their progress in developing the necessary competences

## Assessment OF Learning

Assessment *of* learning is the process of judging learner performance against established criteria to provide an indicator of what the learner has accomplished on the learning path to date. This indicator is often expressed as a quantitative value (e.g., mark, percent) and is used to communicate achievement to the learner as well as to others, such as parents and other teachers.

In the second language classroom, assessment *of* learning might look like this:

- Performance task evaluated based on a rubric, checklist, or other scoring tool
- Written product evaluated by a scoring guide supported by exemplars
- Mid-term or end-of-semester exams
- Standardized test, such as the DELF exam (see below)

## Descriptive Feedback

In order to take an active role in their learning and goal setting, the learner must be provided with feedback that is detailed, pertinent, and specific to their individual strengths, needs, and progress. Descriptive feedback can take the form of an informal or formal conversation between the learner and the teacher, or detailed notes upon which the student can reflect and act. The goal of descriptive feedback is to provide the learner with information about what they are doing well, what areas they should now focus on to further improve, and what specific steps they should take to begin working on those newly set goals.

<sup>78</sup> <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/success.html>

<sup>79</sup> <https://ocdsb.ss13.sharpschool.com/common/pages/DisplayFile.aspx?itemId=2594803>

A second language teacher should ensure that descriptive feedback achieves the following:

- Is based on clearly defined success criteria, developed with the CEFR and CEFRCV descriptors as a guide
- Focuses on the learner's proficiency, highlighting strengths and various skills
- Is provided in a timely manner so the learner can immediately begin applying the information and improving skills
- Occurs throughout the learning process
- Encourages the learner to become reflective about their own learning, activating metacognition skills and aiding in revising current learning goals or setting new goals

## Balanced Assessment

The communicative language activities in the CEFR include reception, interaction, production, and mediation, all of which are necessary to function in the real world and not just the classroom. These activities help to build a balanced learner profile. In order to provide a well-rounded approach to assessment, all of the communicative language activities should be reflected in teaching, learning, and assessment. Although the teacher may focus on certain communicative language activities for a given task, long-term planning should take into consideration what has already been taught and what still needs to be addressed.



### In Practical Terms

For the B1 sample task (see "Creating an Action-Oriented Task"), one of the main areas of focus was Spoken Production — Sustained Monologue (Council of Europe, 2018). Other illustrative scales become the focus of future tasks when the learner has developed the competences needed to achieve this goal. This variety will allow the learner to continue to develop their repertoire in various applications and build upon past learning.

## Provincial and Territorial Curriculum Expectations and the CEFR

Many jurisdictions have adopted criterion-referenced assessment (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010) where performance is measured against predetermined criteria. The CEFR is a resource document that can support the implementation of provincial and territorial curriculum, including helping a teacher with the development of criterion-referenced assessment. Using the CEFR in the Canadian context as a framework of reference was recommended by the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), in 2010 for "jurisdictional projects, programs, and initiatives related to second and additional languages, as appropriate" (CMEC, 2010). The CEFR is not intended to replace pre-established curriculum but rather serves as a "linking guide" (CMEC, 2010).



To learn more about the European Language Portfolio visit...

[A Portfolio for Languages in Canada](#) (CASLT, 2013)<sup>80</sup>

## Portfolios

The European Language Portfolio (ELP), based on the CEFR descriptors, is widely used in Europe and is emerging in Canada as a tool for self-assessing language skills and transforming teaching practice. The portfolio provides a way for language learners to become actively engaged in the learning process through such activities as documenting progress, recording developing competences, and setting language learning goals.

In addition to the various versions of European learner portfolios adapted for different uses, ages, and languages, CASLT has also developed a [Canadian Language Portfolio for Teachers](#) (Turnbull, 2011).<sup>81</sup> This tool, specifically aimed to support ongoing linguistic development for second language teachers, is divided into four sections:

1. **My passport:** containing a self-assessment of language skills
2. **My autobiography:** reflecting upon the importance of the language in your everyday and professional life and experiences in which you are immersed in the target language
3. **My self-assessment:** summarizing skills needed, strategies to try, and difficulties encountered
4. **My mementos:** holding documents indicating your language skills

<sup>80</sup> <https://www.caslt.org/files/pedagogical-resources/cefr/cefr-elp-portfolio-en-2013.pdf>

<sup>81</sup> <https://www.caslt.org/en/boutique-en/perfectionnement-professionnel/portfolio-for-teachers-en>



To learn more about language portfolios visit...

[LinguaFolio<sup>82</sup>](https://linguafolio.uoregon.edu/site/about)

The Second Language Research Institute of Canada (2010) developed a [School-Based Language Portfolio<sup>83</sup>](#) for students, containing similar sections but targeting a younger audience of learners in Core French, French Immersion, and Spanish classes.

## Standardized Exams

Across Canada, learners can participate in internationally recognized standardized exams for a variety of languages such as French, Spanish, and German. Additional information on standardized exams can be found by contacting the local subject associations, consulates/embassies, or learning institutions. Below is a description of available exams for French, Spanish, and German in Canada.

### French — DELF/DALF

The *Diplôme d'études en langue française* (DELF) is an internationally recognized diploma, issued by the [Centre International d'Études Pédagogiques<sup>84</sup>](#) (CIEP), an agency of the French Ministry of Education, to certify French language proficiency for second language learners. The DELF examination certifies the A1, A2, B1, B2 levels of the CEFR. Upon successful completion of the exam, learners are awarded a certificate that corresponds to the level for which they registered.

Successful candidates testing at the C1 and C2 levels receive a different certificate, the *Diplôme approfondi en langue française* (DALF). In Canada, the DELF is offered at 37 different testing centres across the country, some of which also offer testing for the DALF. To date, more than 35,000 Canadians have taken the DELF exam. These certifications are valid indefinitely.



To learn more about the DELF and DALF visit...

[CIEP's DELF/DALF au Canada<sup>85</sup>](#)

### Spanish — DELE

The Spanish Ministry of Education founded the [Diplomas de Español como Lengua Extranjera<sup>86</sup>](#) (DELE) in 1991 to promote the study of the Spanish language. The DELE exam allows language learners the opportunity to be certified at six different levels, ranging from A1–C2, corresponding with the levels of the CEFR. The DELE is offered at 18 different testing centres across Canada and successful candidates receive an internationally recognized diploma issued by the Instituto Cervantes on behalf of the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sport of Spain.



To learn more about the DELE visit...

[Instituto Cervantes — University of Calgary<sup>87</sup>](#)

### German — Goethe Zertifikat

The Goethe Institut, whose role is to promote the German language and culture worldwide, offers German proficiency certificates corresponding to all CEFR levels from A1–C2. The exam is created and tested in Munich and audited by the Association of Language Testers of Europe (ALTE) in order to ensure its validity. It is recognized by governmental and professional organizations, universities and institutes of higher education in Germany, as well as in many other countries throughout the world. Canadian examination centres are located in Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, British Columbia, and Alberta.



To learn more about the Goethe Zertifikat visit...

[Goethe Institut<sup>88</sup>](#)

<sup>82</sup> <https://linguafolio.uoregon.edu/site/about>

<sup>83</sup> [https://www.unb.ca/fredericton/second-language/\\_resources/pdf/elp/schoolbasedlanguageportfolio.pdf](https://www.unb.ca/fredericton/second-language/_resources/pdf/elp/schoolbasedlanguageportfolio.pdf)

<sup>84</sup> See their website at <http://www.ciep.fr/en>

<sup>85</sup> <http://delf-dalf.ambafrance-ca.org/presentation>

<sup>86</sup> See their website at <http://www.dele.org/>

<sup>87</sup> <https://slllc.ucalgary.ca/instituto-cervantes>

<sup>88</sup> <https://www.goethe.de/en/spr/kup.html>

# 10

## Supporting Well-Being and Achievement

# Supporting Well-Being and Achievement

Throughout the teaching and learning process, the teacher plays an important role in supporting learner well-being, including fostering a positive learning environment grounded in healthy relationships. The action-oriented approach, and with it the flexibility accorded the teacher regarding programming, sets the stage for developing tasks designed to promote well-being, considering the whole learner. The teaching and learning process emphasizes what the learner can do in the language. This strengths-based approach focuses on the assets that each learner possesses, which by its very nature promotes well-being.

## Well-Being and Student Achievement

Across Canada, more attention is being given to the importance of well-being and its connection to overall success. In Ontario, promoting well-being is one of four interconnected goals in the province's vision for education. *Ontario's Well-Being Strategy for Education*<sup>89</sup> defines well-being as "that positive sense of self, spirit and belonging that we feel when our cognitive, emotional, social and physical needs are being met. As our Indigenous partners have long affirmed, healthy development of the mind, body and spirit is contingent on balance and interconnectedness" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016). Positive mental health, safe and accepting schools, healthy schools, along with equity and inclusive education make up the four key components of *Ontario's Well-Being Strategy*. By considering the developmental needs of the learner, as well as these four components, when creating tasks, the teacher

can make well-being an important element of teaching and learning (see "[Creating Action-Oriented Tasks](#)" for examples). This is important not only for the learner's overall health, but also for overall achievement. Growing evidence has shown that "students cannot achieve academically if they don't feel safe or welcomed at school, if their mental health is at risk and if they don't have the tools or motivation to adopt a healthy, active lifestyle, both inside and outside of school" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016).

## A Positive Learning Environment

Classrooms are not just places where a learner develops academic skills. They are environments that help the learner develop resiliency, healthy relationships, a strong sense of self, and the skills needed to participate meaningfully in society. Research shows that the learning environment can "shape students' development and life satisfaction" (OECD, 2017) with varying beliefs as to what makes a positive learning environment. The National School Climate Council (2007) states that a positive school climate includes the following:

- Norms, values, and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally, and physically safe
- Members of the school community who are engaged and respected
- Students, families, and educators who work together to develop and contribute to a shared school vision
- Educators who model and nurture an attitude that emphasizes the benefits and satisfaction that can be gained from learning

- Members of the school community who contribute to the operations of the school and the care of its physical environment

As is evident from this list, the teacher plays an important role in fostering a positive learning environment.

## Healthy Relationships

A positive learning environment is heavily influenced by the quality of the relationships within it. According to Pepler, Craig, and Haner (2012), healthy relationships can provide many benefits, including the following:

- A sense of security and stability
- Basic needs
- A sense of being valued and belonging
- Support and guidance to learn essential skills and understanding
- Protection from excessive stress

Healthy relationships have a direct influence on healthy development and well-being.

The teacher has significant influence in fostering positive relationships within the learning environment, creating socialization opportunities for developing quality peer and school relationships, including connectedness with the school. Through these experiences, the learner develops self-regulation, social, and coping skills (Pepler, Craig, & Haner, 2012). The teacher-learner relationship also matters. Research by Ferguson et al. (2005) found that caring, supportive teachers and caring, flexible, proactive school climates were protective factors against early school leaving.

89 <http://www.ontla.on.ca/library/repository/mon/30005/334837.pdf>



To learn more about healthy relationships visit...

[Healthy Development Depends on Healthy Relationships<sup>90</sup>](#)

## Restorative Practice

Restorative Practice is a way of “being” that helps strengthen relationships to support student well-being and achievement. Restorative Practice is widely used as a proactive way to build a positive learning environment, and as a responsive way to help maintain, and even restore community when needed. The tiered approach to Restorative Practice includes less formal and more formal strategies, such as circles, restorative conversations, and conferences.

According to the [Restorative Practice Consortium<sup>91</sup>](#) (2017), Restorative Practice is based upon nine interconnected elements that provide the foundation to cultivate caring and healthy communities and help shape a positive climate at school:

1. Healthy relationships
2. Voice
3. Fair process
4. Structure and support
5. Safety
6. Empathy and perspective-taking
7. Ownership
8. Learning
9. Belonging and interdependence



Illustration source: [Restorative Practice Resource Project<sup>94</sup>](#)



To learn more about Restorative Practice visit...

[The International Institute for Restorative Practices<sup>92</sup>](#)

[Restorative Practice in the Durham DSB<sup>93</sup>](#)



What are examples of tasks that take into account the cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development of the learner?

How do you support well-being amongst learners?  
How you do foster your own sense of well-being?

How can a teacher influence the development of healthy relationships by learners?

How do you embed the nine interconnected elements of Restorative Practice into your approach?

How can Restorative Practice strategies, such as circles, help learners to develop language competences?

How can an environment that supports well-being and the action-oriented approach foster the development of a successful language learner?

<sup>90</sup> <https://www.preynet.ca/sites/preynet.ca/files/HealthyRelationshipsPaper.pdf>

<sup>91</sup> <https://www.restorative.ca/>

<sup>92</sup> <https://www.iirp.edu>

<sup>93</sup> <https://www.ddsb.ca/en/family-and-community-support/restorative-practice.aspx>

<sup>94</sup> <https://www.restorative.ca/communication-resources>



# 11

## Twenty-First Century Learning

# Twenty-First Century Learning

In a rapidly changing, diverse, technologically rich society, learners need to adapt and think outside the box more than ever before. Traditional education systems in which teachers lead and learners follow, prescribing curriculum and resources and favouring direct instruction, simply cannot meet the needs of learners today. Studies show the need for more than just a shift in practice. They suggest that in order to prepare learners for future jobs, many of which do not even exist yet, a more drastic, complete change at the core of educational practice needs to take place. The new system proposed allows for learners, teachers, and subject experts to work in partnership, supported by constantly evolving technology. This system sees teachers no longer providing learners with information but instead teaching them how to question to find information, examine it with a critical eye, and then communicate their learning to others. Language learning using the action-oriented approach shares many commonalities with this learner-centred focus and allows learners to develop valuable life skills.

## A New Vision for Education in Canada

Canadians for 21st Century Learning and Innovation identifies the purpose of education as “equipping all young people with the essential knowledge, skills, and personal qualities to thrive in a constantly changing world” (C21 Canada, 2015). In order to achieve this goal, they suggest creating a learner-centred education system

that allows learners to personalize their learning to their own interests and strengths, communicate with subject experts worldwide, and establish a classroom environment where all feel valued and respected.

Members of C21 Canada see the urgent need for drastic change in order to create an education system that can effectively support learners and allow them to thrive in a rapidly changing world. It suggests the need for new structures where leaders at the top empower leaders at all levels, and where collaboration and idea sharing creates a network of strong and adaptive schools that can evolve and thrive on their own. C21 Canada offers a vision in its report *Shifting Minds: A 21st Century Vision of Public Education in Canada*<sup>95</sup> (2012). They also propose a whole-system reform aimed at supporting educators “in examining and reshaping the foundations on which their practice is built.” It also recognizes the need for schools to have some autonomy in order to evolve and innovate, while balancing the importance of systemic change.

## Global Competencies

At the instructional level, this C21 Canada report identified seven key competencies learners will need in order to succeed in the 21st century. In their revised report entitled *Shifting Minds 3.0: Redefining the Learning Landscape in Canada* (C21 Canada, 2015),<sup>96</sup> they argue that these competencies will provide learners with the resilience and knowledge to navigate today’s

complex world. C21 Canada feels that these seven competencies are priorities in the redesign of the education system in Canada:

- 1. Creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship:** applying creative thought processes and new knowledge to develop valuable products and solve problems
- 2. Critical thinking:** analyzing information and making an informed decision in a timely manner
- 3. Collaboration:** working in teams in diverse ways and interacting positively in order to produce greater results
- 4. Communication:** leveraging media and sharing ideas with effectiveness
- 5. Character:** developing life skills such as adaptability, tolerance, and responsibility
- 6. Culture and ethical citizenship:** appreciating and understanding diversity, social and political systems, and economic and environmental issues
- 7. Computer and digital technology:** developing the capacity to use digital systems and social media effectively and productively

The critical importance of global competencies is a concept supported and studied by more than just C21 Canada. A report by the McKinsey Centre for Government entitled *Education to Employment: Designing a System that Works* (2012)<sup>97</sup> found that employers are joining educators and policy makers in their support of global competencies. Specifically, the

<sup>95</sup> <http://c21canada.org/c21-research>

<sup>96</sup> <http://c21canada.org/c21-research>

<sup>97</sup> <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/social-sector/our-insights/education-to-employment-designing-a-system-that-works>

report found that employers highly value soft skills, which are linked to both social and cognitive skills, as well as personality traits such as confidence and temperament.

The Council of Ministers of Education of Canada (CMEC) presented its own initiative entitled [Global Competencies](https://www.cmec.ca/682/Global_Competencies.html).<sup>98</sup> This resource stresses the importance of global competencies in allowing learners to become active and engaged citizens, to meet the demands of life and work, to leverage new technologies, to adapt to changes and opportunities, and to engage in meaningful relationships with diverse people from around the globe.

CMEC believes that the current workplace needs employees possessing both cognitive and interpersonal competencies and has created their own list of six global competencies, reflecting those two areas of need:

1. Critical thinking and problem solving
2. Innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship
3. Learning to learn/self-awareness and self-direction
4. Collaboration
5. Communication
6. Global citizenship and sustainability

As with C21 Canada's list, these competencies focus on the development of interpersonal and life skills. CMEC further stresses the importance of education systems across Canada actively working towards "fostering these global competencies in a context reflective of Indigenous knowledge, perspectives, languages, and histories."

## A Call for Adaptation of Canadian Education Systems

The ability of the current education system to adapt to the rapidly changing needs and challenges of 21st century society was the focus of a study entitled [Future Tense: Adapting Canadian Education Systems for the 21st Century](http://www.actioncanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/TF2-Report_Future-Tense_EN.pdf)<sup>99</sup> (Boudreault et al., 2013), which looked at policy documents and implementation of change in Alberta, British Columbia, New Brunswick, Ontario, and Quebec. The findings suggest a strong need for a national strategy for 21st century learning and that an organization such as CMEC must undertake this large task. They also suggest a need for teacher education and development surrounding 21st century pedagogical strategies.

Policy review and teacher surveys indicated significant inconsistencies related to 21st century strategies and their implementation province to province. However, they also indicated a consistent support and enthusiasm for the competencies related to 21st century learning and a correlation between teachers educated through professional development and increased indicators of 21st century learning in their classroom.

## The Action-Oriented Approach and 21st Century Learning

In their vision for change, C21 Canada suggests that teachers pursue creative and innovative teaching practices, offer project-based learning opportunities that reflect student interest, ensure learning

outcomes are relevant to today's learners, and promote resources and methodologies that reflect 21st century reality. The action-oriented approach focuses on authentic experiences, resources, and critical thinking. The very nature of the tasks performed by learners allows for the development of global competencies while learning the target language. Furthermore, the flexibility of the approach allows for learner choice, increasing the appeal and interest-level of tasks. The action-oriented approach encourages learners to become worldly, strategic, active, engaged citizens in the 21st century.



How do you ensure that learners are engaged in their learning?

How can you reinforce CMEC's core competencies using the action-oriented approach in teaching, learning, and assessment?

When creating a performance task, how can teachers place more emphasis on the development of the "soft skills" that are so valuable to employers?

<sup>98</sup> [https://www.cmec.ca/682/Global\\_Competencies.html](https://www.cmec.ca/682/Global_Competencies.html)

<sup>99</sup> [http://www.actioncanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/TF2-Report\\_Future-Tense\\_EN.pdf](http://www.actioncanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/TF2-Report_Future-Tense_EN.pdf)



# 12

## Communication Tools

# Communication Tools

The link between parent involvement and student success cannot be underestimated, as the Ontario Ministry of Education (2018) points out:

Study after study has shown us that student achievement improves when parents play an active role in their children's education, and that good schools become even better schools when parents are involved. Parent engagement is a key factor in the enhancement of student achievement and well-being. Students are more likely to be motivated, to earn higher grades, to have better behaviour and social skills, and to continue their education to a higher level when their parents are actively engaged in supporting their success at school.

Good communication with parents can be extremely beneficial to the success of the language learner. Parents are not only influential in fostering a positive attitude towards learning a new language, but can also be tremendously supportive in maintaining the interest, motivation, and engagement necessary for success. The following resources support the teacher in communicating with parents about the action-oriented approach adopted in the classroom.

## Classroom Poster

This poster is designed to present a clear picture of the key elements of the action-oriented approach to parents. It emphasizes the functional use of a language to achieve goals/accomplish tasks in the real world.



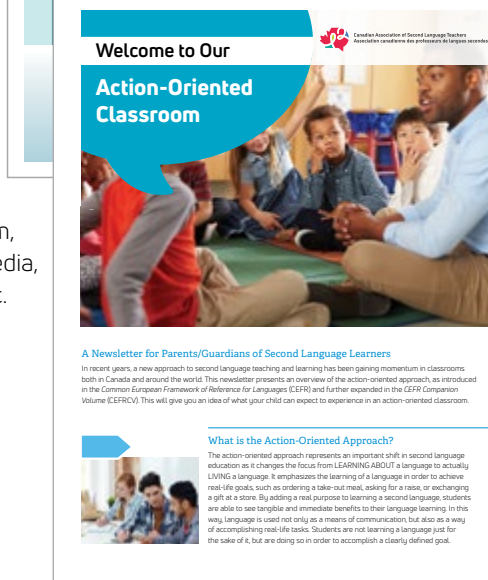
What other ways can you think of to involve parents in their child's second language learning?

How can you better use social media in communicating with parents?

How can you tell when parents are becoming more engaged in their children's second language learning?

## Letter to Parents

This letter is a way of introducing parents to a second language classroom that uses the action-oriented approach. It could be sent to parents in print form, through email, or via social media, a teacher's blog, a website, etc.



### What is an Action-Oriented Task?

Central to the action-oriented approach is the notion of language being used for a real purpose, namely to complete a specific task. The successful accomplishment of the task is, therefore, the goal of the language learner. The teacher guides students as they acquire the language necessary to complete the task. Action-oriented tasks vary in nature but are always meaningful and set in the context of everyday life. They can range from the simple (e.g., finding out what the time is in order to set up an appointment or inviting a friend over for dinner) to the more complex (e.g., planning a three-week family vacation in Europe on a limited budget). They often require an element of research or planning, as well as a number of steps or sub-tasks, if they are to be successfully completed. Conditions or constraints can also render a task more demanding and require a degree of critical and creative thinking on the part of the learner (e.g., ordering a pizza for four people while taking into account variables such as food allergies, preferences, and splitting the cost). Language is an essential tool for the learner, both in the preparation of the task and in the execution of the final product (which demonstrates completion of the task), be it oral or written. With this understanding, the learner can better appreciate the value of second language learning and the role language plays in accomplishing real-life tasks.



### What Does the Action-Oriented Classroom Look Like?



Perhaps the most striking characteristic of an action-oriented classroom is the amount of time that students are engaged in speaking the new language in spontaneous, purposeful, real-life situations created in the classroom by the teacher. Student talk time is maximized by giving the students many opportunities for oral interaction. Once a strong oral foundation has been established, reading and writing can be introduced much more effectively. Grammar and new vocabulary is presented in context rather than in isolation. Authentic texts such as newspapers, websites, video clips, podcasts, and so on, allow students to become comfortable with the language as it appears in the real world. In short, students in the action-oriented classroom spend their time interacting with the teacher and with each other in purposeful, everyday situations in order to acquire the language skills necessary to accomplish real-life tasks.

### How Will This Approach Affect My Child's Experience of Learning a Language?

Research has shown that both teachers and students have reported that their experience of the action-oriented approach has been very positive. Students have noted a greater ability to function in a second language, which in turn leads to increased proficiency, confidence, and motivation to learn. By using the language they are learning for a real purpose, to achieve certain clearly defined goals, they become more aware of the benefits of bilingualism and plurilingualism. Furthermore, by being encouraged to reflect on their progress and develop their metacognition skills, students are more inclined to take ownership of their learning and become independent, lifelong language learners.



# 13

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# 14

## Annexes



# Annex 1: Blank Scenario Planning Chart



## Blank Scenario Planning Chart

**Scenario:**

**Domain:**

**Level:**

**Authentic Resources Used:**

**Expected Learning Outcomes  
(e.g., Overall Expectations):**

**Assessment Opportunities:**

**For Learning:**

**As Learning:**

**Of Learning:**

**Action-Oriented Task**

**Description:**

**Checklist:**

- ☐ Learners are “social agents” in an authentic social context
- ☐ Action is purposeful with real-world applications
- ☐ There is a clearly communicated goal to be accomplished that results in a product or outcome
- ☐ Learning is supported by authentic, real-life texts and experiences
- ☐ There are conditions and constraints that promote critical and creative thinking
- ☐ Learners draw upon their existing and newly developed competences
- ☐ Learners make choices and think and act strategically

**Descriptors:**

*Expressed through can-do statements*

**Language Activities and Strategies Needed to Complete the Task:**

**Language Competences Needed to Complete the Task:**

Note: General Competences (i.e., declarative knowledge, skills and know-how, existential competence, and ability to learn) are always combined with language competences (i.e., linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic) to complete a task. Although there are not descriptor scales for general competences, they are an important component of language proficiency.

Sub-Tasks		
Description of Sub-Tasks to Build Identified Competences:	Language Activities Used:	Competences Stressed:



## Annex 2: Annotated Scenario Planning Chart



## Annotated Scenario Planning Chart

**Scenario:** The entire learning process related to a particular task, that is to say, the introduction of the task, the development of strategies and competences needed to perform the task through sub-tasks, and the performance of the task itself.

**Domain:**

The area of social life where the social agent functions (public, personal, educational, and occupational). The domain gives the context for language activities. In the CEFR CV, a dedicated [appendix<sup>100</sup>](#) provides examples of some descriptors used in different domains.

**Level:**

The level of proficiency as described by the framework being used. For example, B1 of the CEFR.

**Authentic Resources Used:**

Genuine texts used in real life such as menus, train schedules, TV shows, sports broadcasts, and newspaper articles.

Municipal immigration portals, such as the [Durham Immigration Portal<sup>101</sup>](#), provide a wealth of authentic resources, organized by geographic area. See [Synergies: Settlement, Integration and Language Learning<sup>102</sup>](#) for more information.

**Expected Learning Outcomes (e.g., Overall Expectations):**

Describe the main goal to be achieved.

For some, this information would come from curriculum documents.

**Assessment Opportunities:**

**For Learning:**

Allow the gathering of information about learning in order to determine where the learner is at, where they need to go, and how to get there.

**As Learning:**

Encourage the learner to set personal goals, plan how to achieve them, monitor progress throughout, and then evaluate their own learning and ability to achieve the desired goals.

**Of Learning:**

Process of judging learner performance against established criteria to provide an indicator of what the learner has accomplished on the learning path to date.

<sup>100</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/cefr-companion-volume-with-new-descriptors-2018/1680787989.pdf#page=168>

<sup>101</sup> <https://www.durhamimmigration.ca/en/index.aspx>

<sup>102</sup> <https://www.durhamimmigration.ca/en/work-and-study/english-for-adults.aspx>

## Action-Oriented Task

### Description:

Tasks are part of everyday life in all domains. To accomplish a task, learners draw upon the required strategies and competences to carry out actions in order to achieve a specific goal or result. As such, the primary purpose of a task is not language development. Within a learning environment, tasks are often simulated, yet they are realistic. This helps to prepare the learner for authentic experiences outside of the classroom. Tasks are communicative by nature, whereby learners engage in interaction, production, reception, and/or mediation.

### Checklist:

- ☐ Learners are “social agents” in an authentic social context
- ☐ Action is purposeful with real-world applications
- ☐ There is a clearly communicated goal to be accomplished that results in a product or outcome
- ☐ Learning is supported by authentic, real-life texts and experiences
- ☐ There are conditions and constraints that promote critical and creative thinking
- ☐ Learners draw upon their existing and newly developed competences
- ☐ Learners make choices and think and act strategically

### Descriptors:

Each level of proficiency in a language framework (e.g., B1 of the CEFR) is defined using illustrative “can do” descriptors (presented in descriptor scales in the CEFR, such as “Conversation”). Their purpose is to help illustrate what a learner can do in the language at a defined level, in a particular area (e.g., language activities, strategies, and competences). The “can do” descriptors reflect real world language use, and communicate learning aims in a clear and transparent way.

### Language Activities and Strategies Needed to Complete the Task:

Language activities include reception, production, interaction, and mediation. [Illustrative descriptor scales<sup>103</sup>](#) are presented in the CEFRCV for language activities as well as the strategies attached to each of the language activities.

### Language Competences Needed to Complete the Task:

Language competences include linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic. [Illustrative descriptor scales<sup>104</sup>](#) are presented in the CEFRCV for language competences.

Note: General Competences (i.e., declarative knowledge, skills and know-how, existential competence, and ability to learn) are always combined with language competences (i.e., linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic) to complete a task. Although there are not descriptor scales for general competences, they are an important component of language proficiency.

<sup>103</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/cefr-companion-volume-with-new-descriptors-2018/1680787989.pdf#page=54>

<sup>104</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/cefr-companion-volume-with-new-descriptors-2018/1680787989.pdf#page=54>

## Sub-Tasks

Description of Sub-Tasks to Build Identified Competences:	Language Activities Used:	Competences Stressed:
The steps involved to build the learner's competences to complete the task successfully. Sub-tasks describe the different phases of the scenario.	How a learner exercises their communicative language competence. In the CEFR, for example, language activities are reception, production, interaction, and mediation, in oral and/or written form.	The learner draws upon their competences to perform the task. In the CEFR, there are general competences and language competences.

## Annex 3: Sample Completed Scenario Planning Chart



## Sample Completed Scenario Planning Chart

### Scenario: Proposing a School Name Change

**Domain:** Public

**Level:** B1 (CEFR)

**Authentic Resources Used:**

School board policy and procedures, such as [Policy and Procedure: HRSB Naming or Renaming Schools](#)<sup>105</sup>

Various newspaper articles, such as [Public school board prepares to deal with requests to rename schools](#)<sup>106</sup>

Various video news clips, such as [Should schools bearing Sir John A. Macdonald's name be changed?](#)<sup>107</sup>

School board website, such as [DDSB public participation at board meetings](#)<sup>108</sup>

Monthly school board meeting

**Expected Learning Outcomes (e.g., Overall Expectations):**

Please refer to the curriculum expectations for your location

**Assessment Opportunities:**

**For Learning:**

[Talk of the Town: Exit Ticket](#) (annex 4)

[School Board Policy and Procedures Reading Activity](#) (annex 5)

[Points of View: Café](#)

[Conversations](#) (annex 6)

[Peer Assessment: School](#)

[Council](#) (annex 7)

Teacher/Learner Conferences

**As Learning:**

[Self-Assessment: Scenario](#) (annex 8)

**Of Learning:**

[Performance of the Task](#) (annex 9)

### Action-Oriented Task

**Description:**

For decades, the local school has been a source of pride and the heart of your community. Built in 1867, generations of families have attended the historic building, named after an important local politician. Recently, the past actions of that politician have been called into question. It is alleged that the local politician held discriminatory views and engaged in inappropriate behaviour. There has been a push to change the name of the school. Soon, you will have the chance to present your position at the school board meeting. You will only have eight minutes to present your argument using a slideshow. Representatives of the school board will ask you questions.

**To prepare for your presentation:**

- Research other communities that have experienced a similar situation
- Speak to other community members to gather their perspectives
- Share your idea at a school-level meeting to convince more people to support your position (e.g., student council meeting, parent committee meeting)

**At the meeting:**

- Present your argument to convince the school board representatives. Remember that it is a formal meeting
- Answer questions

**Checklist:**

- ☐ Learners are “social agents” in an authentic social context
- ☐ Action is purposeful with real-world applications
- ☐ There is a clearly communicated goal to be accomplished that results in a product or outcome
- ☐ Learning is supported by authentic, real-life texts and experiences
- ☐ There are conditions and constraints that promote critical and creative thinking
- ☐ Learners draw upon their existing and newly developed competences
- ☐ Learners make choices and think and act strategically

<sup>105</sup> <https://www.hrsb.ca/sites/default/files/hrsb/a.001-naming-school-facilities.pdf>

<sup>106</sup> <http://edmontonjournal.com/news/local-news/public-school-board-prepares-to-deal-with-requests-to-rename-schools>

<sup>107</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KksnCE365tI>

<sup>108</sup> <https://www.ddsb.ca/en/about-ddsb/board-meetings.aspx>

**Descriptors:****Language Activities and Strategies Needed to Complete the Task:****SPOKEN PRODUCTION***Overall Spoken Production:*

Can reasonably fluently sustain a straightforward description of one of a variety of subjects within their field of interest, presenting it as a linear sequence of points.

*Sustained Monologue:*

Can develop an argument well enough to be followed without difficulty most of the time.

Can explain the main points in an idea or problem with reasonable precision.

Can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions, plans, and actions.

*Addressing Audiences:*

Can give a prepared, straightforward presentation on a familiar topic within their field, which is clear enough to be followed without difficulty most of the time, and in which the main points are explained with reasonable precision.

Can take follow-up questions, but may have to ask for repetition if the speech was rapid.

**ORAL INTERACTION***Information Exchange:*

Can summarize and give their opinion about a short story, article, talk, discussion, interview, or documentary and answer further questions of detail. Can find out and pass on straightforward factual information.

**MEDIATION***Facilitating Communication in Delicate Situations and Disagreements:*

Can ask parties in a disagreement to explain their point of view, and can respond briefly to their explanations, provided that the topic is familiar to them and that the parties speak clearly.

Can demonstrate their understanding of the key issues in a disagreement on a topic familiar to them and make simple requests for confirmation and/or clarification.

**STRATEGIES**

Can work out how to communicate the main point(s) they want to get across, exploiting any resources available and limiting the message to what they can recall or find the means to express (Production — Planning)

Can define the features of something concrete for which they can't remember the word (Production — Compensating)

Can start again using a different tactic when communication breaks down (Production — Monitoring and Repair)

Can ask someone to clarify or elaborate what they have just said (Interaction — Asking for Clarification)

## Annex 3: Sample Completed Scenario Planning Chart

**Language Competences (i.e., Linguistic, Sociolinguistic, Pragmatic) Needed to Complete the Task:**

- Can convey their message in an intelligible way in spite of a strong influence on stress, intonation, and/or rhythm from other language(s) they speak (Linguistic — Phonological Control)
- Can demonstrate awareness of the salient politeness conventions and act appropriately (Sociolinguistic — Sociolinguistic Appropriateness)
- Can develop an argument well enough to be followed without difficulty most of the time (Pragmatic — Thematic Development)
- Can keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is very evident, especially in longer stretches of free production (Pragmatic — Spoken Fluency)

Note: General Competences (i.e., declarative knowledge, skills and know-how, existential competence, and ability to learn) are always combined with language competences (i.e., linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic) to complete a task. Although there are not descriptor scales for general competences, they are an important component of language proficiency.

**Sub-Tasks****Description of Sub-Tasks to Build Identified Competences:****Language Activities Used:****Competences Stressed:****Sir John A. Macdonald: Class Discussion**

After watching the video clip "[Should schools bearing Sir John A. Macdonald's name be changed?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KksnCE365tl)"<sup>109</sup> the class discusses the controversy taking place across the country around schools bearing his name.

Reception  
Interaction

Linguistic  
Pragmatic

**Talk of the Town: Inside/Outside Circle (annex 11)**

Learners interact with others, discussing the school name, in a social setting.

Interaction  
Mediation

Sociolinguistic  
Linguistic

**School Board Policy and Procedures (annex 5)**

Learners review the renaming policy and procedures for the school board to better understand the process and to inform their arguments.

Reception

Pragmatic

**Points of View: Café Conversations (annex 6)**

Learners interact with others to hear the points of view of various stakeholders regarding the school name.

Interaction

Pragmatic

**Planning My Arguments**

Learners gather information and build their arguments for the final task performance.

Reception  
Production

Linguistic  
Pragmatic

**How to Apply to Speak at a Board Meeting**

Learners review the procedures for speaking at a board meeting and submit a written request.

Reception  
Production

Linguistic  
Sociolinguistic

**A Board Meeting in Action**

Learners attend or watch a video clip of a board meeting in action.

Reception

Pragmatic  
Sociolinguistic

**Creating a Slideshow Presentation**

Learners gather skills to build an effective slideshow presentation.

Reception  
Production

Pragmatic

**Building My Presentation**

Learners build their presentation for the final task.

Production

Linguistic  
Sociolinguistic  
Pragmatic

**Gathering Support from the School Council**

Learners deliver their presentation at the school council to gather local support.

Production  
Mediation  
Interaction

Linguistic  
Sociolinguistic  
Pragmatic

<sup>109</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KksnCE365tl>

## Annex 4: Talk of the Town: Exit Ticket




Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Talk of the Town: Exit Ticket — Learner Sheet


Scenario: Proposing a School Name Change — B1

Before leaving the class today, respond to the questions below in Google Classroom. Remember to use the information that you have gathered from your research and from the “Talk of the Town” conversation, as well as newly acquired language on the subject in your answers. Be sure to justify your opinion.

Your questions will look like this:



### What is one reason why you think the name should stay the same or change?

 Elise Catudal 5:16 PM

---


Your answer

Type your answer

Turn In


Assigned

Private comments

 Add private comment...



### What is one reason why it is important for our community to vote on this issue?

 Elise Catudal 6:54 p.m.

---

Your answer

Type your answer

Hand In

Assigned

Private comments

 Add private comment...

## Talk of the Town: Exit Ticket — Teacher Sheet

### Scenario: Proposing a School Name Change — B1

### Objectives

The objectives of the student sheet "[Talk of the Town: Exit Ticket](#)" (annex 4) are as follows:

- Assessment *for* learning: To gauge learner progress and address any gaps in learning
- To develop the competences needed to successfully complete the task

### Considerations for the Teacher

After students have completed the "[Talk of the Town: Inside/Outside Circle](#)" (annex 11) activity, this exit ticket can be used to verify their acquired competences. There are multiple ways that the teacher can administer the exit ticket:

**Option #1:** Learners can simply line up at the door to exit the class and answer the question directly to their teacher on their way out.

**Option #2:** Teachers may wish to have learners all share their answer aloud in a circle or from their desks so that everyone can hear various answers and build new vocabulary and strategies that could be useful for the final task.

**Option #3:** Answers from the learners can be recorded using a computer or other recording device.

**Option #4:** Answers from the learners can be gathered through the "Create a Question" feature in Google Classroom, as shown through the screenshot provided on the corresponding learner sheet. The question can be set to pop up at a specific time (for example, when there are ten minutes remaining in the class) and can remain open for a few days in case students who are absent that day wish to participate as well. Ideally, the learner sheet would not be needed, but could be described orally or projected.

### Steps to Support Learners

Below are steps for the teacher to take to help support learners:

1. Have learners complete the "[Talk of the Town: Inside/Outside Circle](#)" (annex 11) activity
2. Provide learners with the exit ticket questions, using one of the options listed above
3. Review answers provided by the learners
4. Address gaps in learning



## Annex 5: School Board Policy and Procedures



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## School Board Policy and Procedures — Learner Sheet

### Scenario: Proposing a School Name Change — B1

There has been a lot of buzz in your town about the name of the local school. Shortly, you will have the chance to present your position on the name of the school at the school board meeting. You are hearing from others that the school board has procedures on renaming a school. Read the [Policy and Procedures for the Halifax Regional School Board<sup>110</sup>](#) or the policy and procedures for the school board in your district to become better informed on the process and to recommend to the school board what next steps they should take. Next, answer the questions below.

1. What criteria should be considered when renaming a school?

2. What reasons could lead to a school being renamed?

3. What is the process for renaming a school?

4. Who are the stakeholder groups in the renaming of a school? How will they be involved in the renaming process?

5. What arguments can you draw from the policy and procedures to help with your final task performance?

6. What new vocabulary did you learn from the text that can help with your final task performance?

<sup>110</sup> <https://www.hrsb.ca/sites/default/files/hrsb/a.001-naming-school-facilities.pdf>

Name: Halifax Regional School Board – Answer Key

## School Board Policy and Procedures — Teacher Sheet

### Scenario: Proposing a School Name Change — B1

There has been a lot of buzz in your town about the name of the local school. Shortly, you will have the chance to present your position on the name of the school at the school board meeting. You are hearing from others that the school board has procedures on renaming a school. Read the [Policy and Procedures for the Halifax Regional School Board<sup>111</sup>](#) or the policy and procedures for the school board in your district to become better informed on the process and to recommend to the school board what next steps they should take. Next, answer the questions below.

Note: Answers below are based on the Policy and Procedures for the Halifax Regional School Board.

- What criteria should be considered when renaming a school?  
Schools may be given a name:
  - That reflects the geographic location or the local community in which the school is located
  - Are symbolic of the unique program focus of the school
  - After a person
  - That reflect the cultural and racial diversity of the school board
  - Where abbreviations and nicknames are considered
- What reasons could lead to a school being renamed?
  - Amalgamation of schools
  - School replacement
  - Development of new identity for the school
- What is the process for renaming a school?
  - Request sent to the Governing Board, through the office of the Superintendent
  - The Governing Board determines whether the process will be initiated
  - If initiated, the principal will lead the process
  - The principal will establish a committee to make recommendations to the Governing Board
  - The process will include a communication plan, opportunities for students to be involved, a public consultation process, clarification of strategies used for decision-making by the committee
  - The principal sends the report to the Governing Board, through the office of the Superintendent
  - Board approval at a board meeting
  - The superintendent communicates the named school to the government and the school community
- Who are the stakeholder groups in the renaming of a school? How will they be involved in the renaming process?
  - The community wishing to rename the school — Renaming Committee member
  - School Steering Team — Renaming Committee member
  - School Advisory Council — Renaming Committee member
  - Other members of the community as deemed necessary by the principal — Renaming Committee member
- What arguments can you draw from the policies and procedures to help with your final task performance?
  - Answers will vary
- What new vocabulary did you learn from the text that can help with your final task performance?
  - Answers will vary

<sup>111</sup> <https://www.hrsb.ca/sites/default/files/hrsb/a.001-naming-school-facilities.pdf>

## Objectives

The objectives of the student sheet “[School Board Policy and Procedures](#)” (annex 5) are as follows:

- Assessment *for* learning: To gauge learner progress and address any gaps in learning
- To develop competences related to the task (see the Learner Sheet and Teacher Sheet in “[Assessment: Performance of the Task](#)” [annex 9]) using descriptors, such as:
  - > Can present ideas and opinions in a professional manner, respecting the formal nature of the meeting (Addressing an Audience)
  - > Can provide brief reasons and explanations to support main arguments (Argument)
  - > Can use new language structures effectively in order to present arguments with elementary vocabulary (Accuracy)

## Considerations for the Teacher

Whenever possible, it is advisable to use authentic texts from the learners’ community, in this case, the local school board.

The Halifax Regional School Board’s policy and procedures could be explored as a class and could then be used to contrast the process of the local school board.

It is up to the teacher to determine whether the activity will be a guided reading activity or an independent reading activity.

## Steps to Support Learners

Below are steps for the teacher to take to help support learners:

1. Distribute the handout “[School Board Policy and Procedures](#)” (annex 5); ensure that the learners understand the activity
2. Have learners read the school board’s policy and procedures (guided reading, independent reading, etc.)
3. Assess learners’ work and provide feedback

## Annex 6: Points of View: Café Conversations



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Points of View: Café Conversations — Learner Sheet

### Scenario: Proposing a School Name Change — B1

Imagine that you are enjoying a drink in the local café. At your table, there is a student, a parent, a teacher, and a community member from the town. You realize that this is a great opportunity to gather information to inform and strengthen your position regarding the name of the school. Strike up a conversation about the controversy. In the conversation, share your point of view, explaining why you feel that way, and listen to the point of view of the others.

Take notes to keep track of the points of view shared.

Role	Point of View
Student	
Parent	
Teacher	
Community Member	

### Assessment:

1: Emerging 2: Developing 3: Demonstrating

Can ask in a simple manner for others to clarify their position if faced with a disagreement and can respond briefly (Interaction)	1	2	3
Can provide brief reasons and explanations to support main arguments (Argument)	1	2	3
Can demonstrate an understanding of the issue being discussed (Argument)	1	2	3
Can speak with relative fluency, pausing to reform or repair arguments when necessary (Fluency)	1	2	3

Comments:

## Points of View: Café Conversations — Teacher Sheet

### Scenario: Proposing a School Name Change — B1

### Objectives

The objectives of the student sheet “[Points of View: Café Conversations](#)” (annex 6) are as follows:

- Demonstrate the following communicative language activities: Interaction
- Develop competences related to the task (see the Learner Sheet and Teacher Sheet in “[Assessment: Performance of the Task](#)” [annex 9]) using descriptors, such as:
  - > Can ask in a simple manner for others to clarify their position if faced with a disagreement and can respond briefly (Interaction)
  - > Can provide brief reasons and explanations to support main arguments (Argument)
  - > Can demonstrate an understanding of the issue being discussed (Argument)
  - > Can speak with relative fluency, pausing to reform or repair arguments when necessary (Fluency)

### Considerations for the Teacher

In order for this sub-task to be effective, the learners must be provided with specific information related to the name of the school. For instance, a teacher from Alberta might want to use the current debates about renaming schools (see “[Public School Board Prepares to Deal with Requests to Rename Schools](#)”<sup>112</sup>) as the context for the name change. By providing the context, the learners will be able to engage in meaningful conversations.

The assessment *for* learning opportunity can be carried out in a number of ways. The teacher could listen to each group individually, pass from group to group while they have their conversations simultaneously, or invite them to make an audio or video recording of their conversations, which could be assessed later.

### Steps to Support Learners

Below are steps for the teacher to take to help support learners:

1. Arrange the class into groups of four
2. Assign each learner a role (you could also assign whether the role is for or against the renaming)
3. Provide learners with time to prepare for their role
4. Begin the role play
5. Allow learners the chance to “de-role,” explaining how they are similar to or different from the role played
6. Complete the assessment for learning opportunity

<sup>112</sup> <http://edmontonjournal.com/news/local-news/public-school-board-prepares-to-deal-with-requests-to-rename-schools>



## Annex 7: Peer Assessment: School Council Presentation



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Peer Assessment: School Council Presentation — Learner Sheet

### Scenario: Proposing a School Name Change — B1

Peer Assessor:

1: Emerging 2: Developing 3: Demonstrating

Category	Descriptor	Achievement			Comments/ Evidence
Interaction	Can ask in a simple manner for others to clarify their position if faced with a disagreement and can respond briefly	1	2	3	
	Can understand questions asked about the related topic, asking for clarification when necessary	1	2	3	
	Can respond to questions clearly enough to be understood most of the time	1	2	3	
Addressing an Audience	Can communicate using the appropriate register for the audience	1	2	3	
	Can present ideas and opinions in a professional manner, respecting the formal nature of the meeting	1	2	3	
	Can give a prepared, linear presentation that is clear enough to be followed without difficulty most of the time	1	2	3	
Argument	Can clarify and support arguments with facts obtained through research and information gathering	1	2	3	
	Can demonstrate an understanding of the issue being discussed	1	2	3	
	Can provide brief reasons and explanations to support main arguments	1	2	3	
Accuracy	Can use language conventions in order to present a clear message to the audience, showing generally good grammatical control	1	2	3	
	Can use new language structures effectively in order to present arguments with elementary vocabulary	1	2	3	
	Can communicate main points of the ideas and arguments with reasonable precision	1	2	3	
Fluency	Can use pronunciation and intonation effectively in order to be understood by the audience most of the time	1	2	3	
	Can speak with relative fluency, pausing to reform or repair arguments when necessary	1	2	3	

## Peer Assessment: School Council Presentation — Teacher Sheet

### Scenario: Proposing a School Name Change — B1

### Objectives

The objectives of the learner sheet “[Peer Assessment: School Council Presentation](#)” (annex 7) are as follows:

- Provide a transparent assessment *for* learning tool for the learner through peer assessment that closely replicates the task
- Ensure that the learner understands the criteria for successfully completing the task

### Considerations for the Teacher

The teacher should arrange groups in a way that will support learning.

The teacher can determine whether the audience of the school council is students, parents, or other groups.

### Steps to Support Learners

Below are steps for the teacher to take to help support learners:

1. Provide each learner with two copies (for two peer assessments) of the learner sheet “[Peer Assessment: School Council Presentation](#)” (annex 7)
2. Divide the class into groups of three
3. Each group member will take turns delivering their presentation while the other group members act as the audience and complete the peer assessments
4. Explain in detail how learners will be assessed by peers
5. Begin presentations
6. Allow time for the peers to give feedback to the learner
7. Review the peer assessments
8. Address any identified gaps in learning



## Annex 8: Self-Assessment: Scenario



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Self-Assessment: Scenario — Learner Sheet

**Scenario: Proposing a School Name Change — B1**

**Category: Interaction**

1: Emerging 2: Developing 3: Demonstrating

Descriptor	Helpful Language/Strategies	Monitoring Learning		
Can ask in a simple manner for others to clarify their position if faced with a disagreement and can respond briefly	<i>e.g., "Can you please explain your point of view further?"</i>	Self-Assessment A		
		1	2	3
		Self-Assessment B		
		1	2	3
		Self-Assessment C		
Can understand questions asked about the related topic, asking for clarification when necessary		Self-Assessment A		
		1	2	3
		Self-Assessment B		
		1	2	3
		Self-Assessment C		
Can respond to questions clearly enough to be understood most of the time		Self-Assessment A		
		1	2	3
		Self-Assessment B		
		1	2	3
		Self-Assessment C		
		1	2	3

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Self-Assessment: Scenario — Learner Sheet

**Scenario: Proposing a School Name Change — B1**

**Category: Addressing an Audience**

1: Emerging 2: Developing 3: Demonstrating

Descriptor	Helpful Language/Strategies	Monitoring Learning		
Can communicate using the appropriate register for the audience	<i>e.g., "Thank you, Chairperson, for the opportunity to speak."</i>	Self-Assessment A		
		1	2	3
		Self-Assessment B		
		1	2	3
		Self-Assessment C		
Can present ideas and opinions in a professional manner, respecting the formal nature of the meeting		1	2	3
		Self-Assessment A		
		1	2	3
		Self-Assessment B		
		1	2	3
Can give a prepared, linear presentation that is clear enough to be followed without difficulty most of the time		1	2	3
		Self-Assessment A		
		1	2	3
		Self-Assessment B		
		1	2	3
		1	2	3
		Self-Assessment A		
		1	2	3
		Self-Assessment B		
		1	2	3
		1	2	3
		Self-Assessment A		
		1	2	3
		Self-Assessment B		
		1	2	3

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Self-Assessment: Scenario — Learner Sheet

**Scenario: Proposing a School Name Change — B1**

### Category: Argument

1: Emerging 2: Developing 3: Demonstrating

Descriptor	Helpful Language/Strategies	Monitoring Learning		
Can clarify and support arguments with facts obtained through research and information gathering	<i>e.g., "We know from history that..."</i>	Self-Assessment A		
		1	2	3
		Self-Assessment B		
		1	2	3
		Self-Assessment C		
Can demonstrate an understanding of the issue being discussed		1	2	3
		Self-Assessment A		
		1	2	3
		Self-Assessment B		
		1	2	3
Can provide brief reasons and explanations to support main arguments		Self-Assessment C		
		1	2	3
		Self-Assessment A		
		1	2	3
		Self-Assessment B		
		1	2	3
		Self-Assessment C		
		1	2	3
		Self-Assessment A		
		1	2	3

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Self-Assessment: Scenario — Learner Sheet

**Scenario: Proposing a School Name Change — B1**

**Category: Accuracy**

1: Emerging 2: Developing 3: Demonstrating

Descriptor	Helpful Language/Strategies	Monitoring Learning		
Can use language conventions in order to present a clear message to the audience, showing generally good grammatical control	<i>e.g., "This school is named after a person who..."</i>	Self-Assessment A		
		1	2	3
		Self-Assessment B		
		1	2	3
		Self-Assessment C		
		1	2	3
Can use new language structures effectively in order to present arguments with elementary vocabulary		Self-Assessment A		
		1	2	3
		Self-Assessment B		
		1	2	3
		Self-Assessment C		
		1	2	3
Can communicate main points of the ideas and arguments with reasonable precision		Self-Assessment A		
		1	2	3
		Self-Assessment B		
		1	2	3
		Self-Assessment C		
		1	2	3

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Self-Assessment: Scenario — Learner Sheet

**Scenario: Proposing a School Name Change — B1**

### Category: Fluency

1: Emerging 2: Developing 3: Demonstrating

Descriptor	Helpful Language/Strategies	Monitoring Learning		
Can use pronunciation and intonation effectively in order to be understood by the audience most of the time	<i>e.g., "School" is pronounced "s-cool"</i>	Self-Assessment A		
		1	2	3
		Self-Assessment B		
		1	2	3
		Self-Assessment C		
Can speak with relative fluency, pausing to reform or repair arguments when necessary		1	2	3
		Self-Assessment A		
		1	2	3
		Self-Assessment B		
		1	2	3
		Self-Assessment C		
		1	2	3
		Self-Assessment A		
		1	2	3
		Self-Assessment B		
		1	2	3
		Self-Assessment C		
		1	2	3

## Self-Assessment: Scenario — Teacher Sheet

### Scenario: Proposing a School Name Change — B1

#### Objectives

The objectives of the learner sheet “[Self-Assessment: Scenario](#)” (annex 8) are as follows:

- Provide an assessment as learning tool for the learner to identify key language and strategies throughout the scenario that can be helpful in the task performance
- Allow the learner to monitor their learning on three different occasions (A, B, C)

#### Considerations for the Teacher

The learner sheet “[Self-Assessment: Scenario](#)” (annex 8) should be available to learners throughout the duration of the scenario. As learning takes place, the learner records key language and strategies to help them when completing the task. The teacher should build time into class for the learner to reflect on their learning using this sheet.

On three occasions during the scenario, the learner assesses where they are in developing the competence. The teacher can use the self-assessments to guide conferences with the learner to support developing the competences needed to complete the task.

The teacher may want to keep the learner sheets in the class for safekeeping.

#### Steps to Support Learners

Below are steps for the teacher to take to help support learners:

1. Provide each learner with the learner sheet “[Self-Assessment: Scenario](#)” (annex 8)
2. Explain the value of the self-assessment and ensure that the learners understand how to use the tool
3. Encourage the learners to use the tool regularly during the scenario
4. Set aside class time (three opportunities) for learners to reflect on their learning
5. Review the self-assessments
6. Conference with learners and address any gaps in learning



## Annex 9: Assessment: Performance of the Task



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Assessment: Performance of the Task — Learner Sheet

### Scenario: Proposing a School Name Change — B1

1: Emerging 2: Developing 3: Demonstrating

Category	Descriptor	Achievement			Comments/ Evidence
Interaction	Can ask in a simple manner for others to clarify their position if faced with a disagreement and can respond briefly	1	2	3	Possible look-fors:
	Can understand questions asked about the related topic, asking for clarification when necessary	1	2	3	
	Can respond to questions clearly enough to be understood most of the time	1	2	3	
Addressing an Audience	Can communicate using the appropriate register for the audience	1	2	3	Possible look-fors:
	Can present ideas and opinions in a professional manner, respecting the formal nature of the meeting	1	2	3	
	Can give a prepared, linear presentation that is clear enough to be followed without difficulty most of the time	1	2	3	
Argument	Can clarify and support arguments with facts obtained through research and information gathering	1	2	3	Possible look-fors:
	Can demonstrate an understanding of the issue being discussed	1	2	3	
	Can provide brief reasons and explanations to support main arguments	1	2	3	
Accuracy	Can use language conventions in order to present a clear message to the audience, showing generally good grammatical control	1	2	3	Possible look-fors:
	Can use new language structures effectively in order to present arguments with elementary vocabulary	1	2	3	
	Can communicate main points of the ideas and arguments with reasonable precision	1	2	3	
Fluency	Can use pronunciation and intonation effectively in order to be understood by the audience most of the time	1	2	3	Possible look-fors:
	Can speak with relative fluency, pausing to reform or repair arguments when necessary	1	2	3	
	Can ask in a simple manner for others to clarify their position if faced with a disagreement and can respond briefly	1	2	3	

## Assessment: Performance of the Task — Teacher Sheet

### Scenario: Proposing a School Name Change — B1

1: Emerging 2: Developing 3: Demonstrating

Category	Descriptor	Achievement			Comments/ Evidence
Interaction	Can ask in a simple manner for others to clarify their position if faced with a disagreement and can respond briefly	1	2	3	
	Can understand questions asked about the related topic, asking for clarification when necessary	1	2	3	
	Can respond to questions clearly enough to be understood most of the time	1	2	3	
Addressing an Audience	Can communicate using the appropriate register for the audience	1	2	3	
	Can present ideas and opinions in a professional manner, respecting the formal nature of the meeting	1	2	3	
	Can give a prepared, linear presentation that is clear enough to be followed without difficulty most of the time	1	2	3	
Argument	Can clarify and support arguments with facts obtained through research and information gathering	1	2	3	
	Can demonstrate an understanding of the issue being discussed	1	2	3	
	Can provide brief reasons and explanations to support main arguments	1	2	3	
Accuracy	Can use language conventions in order to present a clear message to the audience, showing generally good grammatical control	1	2	3	
	Can use new language structures effectively in order to present arguments with elementary vocabulary	1	2	3	
	Can communicate main points of the ideas and arguments with reasonable precision	1	2	3	
Fluency	Can use pronunciation and intonation effectively in order to be understood by the audience most of the time	1	2	3	
	Can speak with relative fluency, pausing to reform or repair arguments when necessary	1	2	3	
	Can ask in a simple manner for others to clarify their position if faced with a disagreement and can respond briefly	1	2	3	

## Objectives

The objectives of the learner sheet "[Assessment: Performance of the Task](#)" (annex 9) are as follows:

- Provide a transparent assessment of learning tool for the learner
- Ensure that the learner understands the criteria for successfully completing the task
- Provide possible "look-fors" that can demonstrate learning to the teacher

The objectives of the teacher sheet "[Assessment: Performance of the Task](#)" are as follows:

- Give feedback to the learner on their performance
- Gather information for numeric assessment reporting (e.g., report cards, progress reports)
- Inform assessment as learning and future assessment *for* learning opportunities
- Provide information to the teacher for future direction in teaching and learning

## Considerations for the Teacher

Learners should be provided with the handout "[Assessment: Performance of the Task](#)" (annex 9) at the beginning of the scenario. Throughout the scenario, continuous reference should be made to this handout.

The criteria provided on the assessment *of* learning tool will inform the development of learning goals and more specific success criteria to support assessment *for* learning opportunities throughout the scenario.

The handout "[Task: Proposing a School Name Change](#)" (annex 10) complements this handout.

The task can be carried out in many ways, such as each learner presenting in front of the class, or creating smaller groups and having the learner present to the smaller group while the other groups are engaged in learning centres.

## Steps to Support Learners

Below are steps for the teacher to take to help support learners:

1. Provide each learner with the learner sheet "[Assessment: Performance of the Task](#)" (annex 9)
2. Explain in detail how learners will be assessed
3. Brainstorm possible "look-fors" that can demonstrate learning to the teacher; have learners record the information in the space provided
4. Refer back to the criteria throughout the scenario to inform assessment *as* and assessment *for* learning opportunities

## Annex 10: Task: Proposing a School Name Change



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Task: Proposing a School Name Change — Learner Sheet

### Scenario: Proposing a School Name Change — B1

For decades, the local school has been a source of pride and the heart of your community. Built in 1867, generations of families have attended the historic building, named after an important local politician. Recently, the past actions of that politician have been called into question. It is alleged that the local politician held discriminatory views and engaged in inappropriate behaviour. There has been a push to change the name of the school. Soon, you will have the chance to present your position at the school board meeting. You will only have eight minutes to present your argument using a slideshow. Representatives of the school board will ask you questions.

To prepare for your presentation:

- Research other communities that have experienced a similar situation
- Review the protocol for a school board meeting
- Speak to other community members to gather their perspectives
- Share your idea at a school-level meeting to convince more people to support your position (e.g., student council meeting, parent committee meeting)

At the meeting:

- Present your argument to convince the school board representatives. Remember that it is a formal meeting
- Answer questions



## Task: Proposing a School Name Change — Teacher Sheet

### Scenario: Proposing a School Name Change — B1

### Objectives

The objectives of the student sheet “[Task: Proposing a School Name Change](#)” (annex 10) are as follows:

- Introduce learners to the task
- Describe for learners “where we are going”
- Encourage learners to think about “how we will get there”

### Considerations for the Teacher

The task should be shared with learners at the beginning of the scenario so that they have a clear understanding of “where they are going” and can begin to think about “how they will get there.”

The assessment tool for the performance of the task complements this handout.

The teacher must also set the context for the task, including whether all learners will be exploring the name change of one specific school, or if the learner can choose any school in Canada that is facing a controversy over its name.

### Steps to Support Learners

Below are steps for the teacher to take to help support learners:

1. Provide each learner with the learner sheet “[Task: Proposing a School Name Change](#)” (annex 10)
2. Explain that for this scenario, the class will be working toward completing this performance task; over time allotted, learners will develop the competences needed to complete the task
3. Read through the task with the students
4. Explicitly demonstrate reading comprehension strategies to help learners understand the task
5. Provide an assessment as learning opportunity, such as asking learners to put their thumbs up if they feel they understand the task and thumbs down if they do not; address any gaps in understanding with the learners who put their thumbs down
6. Visually display the task in the class for the duration of the scenario; refer back to the task sheet, as needed



## Annex 11: Talk of the Town: Inside/Outside Circle



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Talk of the Town: Inside/Outside Circle — Learner Sheet

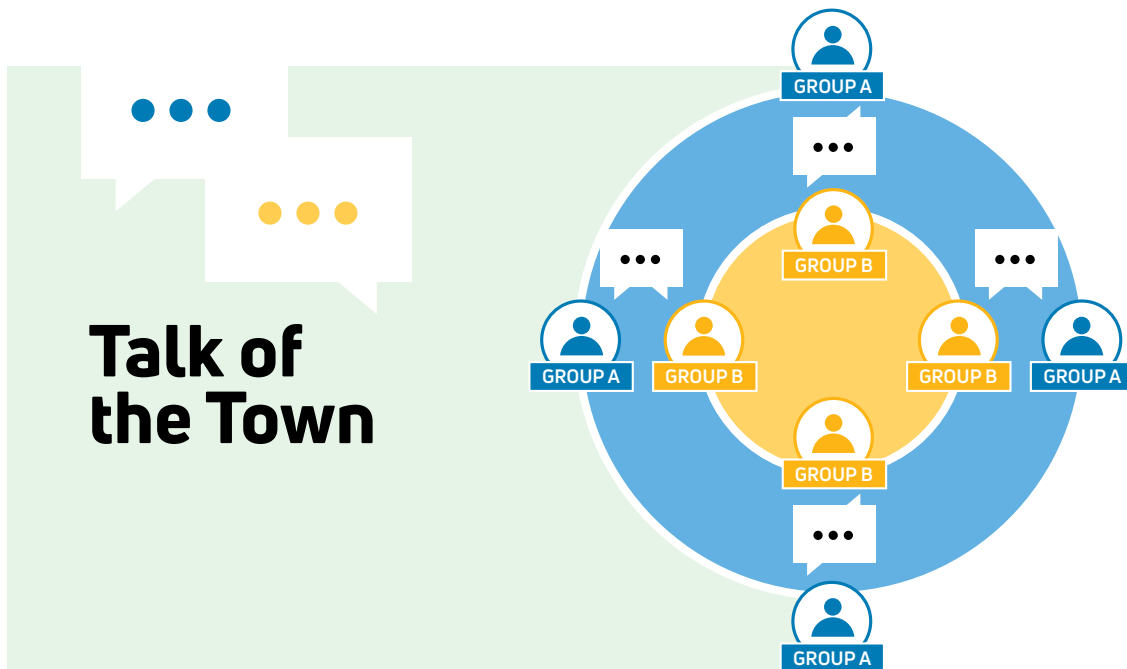
### Scenario: Proposing a School Name Change — B1

Imagine that you are in a social setting (e.g., hair salon, coffee break at work, store line up) discussing what is on everyone's mind in the town — changing the name of the school.

These “Talk of the Town” conversations will take place through an inside/outside circle activity.

Instructions for the inside/outside circle:

- You will be arranged in either group A (outside circle) or group B (inside circle); group A and group B will face each other, placed directly in front of a partner
- Group A will begin by asking questions to the person in front of them from group B
- Group B will answer the questions being asked
- Group A and group B will continue with a back and forth conversation until the teacher gives further instructions
- Be prepared to speak with multiple people and to switch roles



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Talk of the Town: Inside/Outside Circle — Learner Sheet

### Scenario: Proposing a School Name Change — B1

Below are some questions that might be asked by people in the town. Prepare possible answers.

Possible Questions	Possible Answers
What do you think about the name of the school? Do you like it or dislike it?	
Do you think that the name should change or stay the same?	
What other names have you heard suggested? Do you like those suggestions?	
What reasons have you heard people give for keeping the name the same?	
What reasons have you heard people give for changing the name?	
Do you think that the school board will change the name?	
Whom do you think will be most affected if the name change happens?	
What do you know about presenting at a school board meeting?	
Have you been to a school board meeting before? If yes, what brought you there?	

Outline possible strategies that you can use during the conversation.

If	Then
<i>e.g., the speaker is speaking too quickly</i>	<i>I can say, "can you please speak more slowly?"</i>

## Talk of the Town: Inside/Outside Circle — Teacher Sheet

### Scenario: Proposing a School Name Change — B1

### Objectives

The objectives of the student sheet “[Talk of the Town: Inside/Outside Circle](#)” (annex 11) are as follows:

- Demonstrate the following communicative language activities: Interaction and Mediation
- Develop competences related to the task (see the Learner Sheet and Teacher Sheet in “[Assessment: Performance of the Task](#)” [annex 9]) using descriptors, such as the following:
  - > Can understand questions asked about the related topic, asking for clarification when necessary (Interaction)
  - > Can respond to questions clearly enough to be understood most of the time (Interaction)
  - > Can demonstrate an understanding of the issue being discussed (Argument)
  - > Can use new language structures effectively in order to present arguments with elementary vocabulary (Accuracy)
  - > Can speak with relative fluency, pausing to reform or repair arguments when necessary (Fluency)

### Considerations for the Teacher

In order for this sub-task to be effective, learners must be provided with specific information related to the name of the school. For instance, a teacher from Nova Scotia might want to use the current debate about schools named after Sir John A. Macdonald (see “[N.S. Indigenous Community Supports Sir John A. MacDonald School Name Change](#)”<sup>113</sup>) as the context for the name change. By providing the context, learners will be able to engage in meaningful conversation.

The assessment for learning handout “[Talk of the Town: Exit Ticket](#)” (annex 4) complements this handout.

### Steps to Support Learners

Below are steps for the teacher to take to help support learners:

1. Provide learners with the opportunity to prepare for the activity by completing the “[Talk of the Town: Inside/Outside Circle](#)” (annex 11) handout
2. Divide the learners into two groups — group A (outside circle) and group B (inside circle); groups A and B will face each other, directly in front of a partner
3. Group A begins by asking questions while group B responds, followed by spontaneous conversation
4. When appropriate, signal group B to rotate to be in front of a new partner
5. Half-way through the activity, signal to group A and B to change roles — group B will now start by asking the questions and group A responds
6. Provide an assessment for learning opportunity, such as the one outlined in the handout “[Talk of the Town: Exit Ticket](#)” (annex 4)

<sup>113</sup> <https://globalnews.ca/news/3697051/n-s-indigenous-community-supports-sir-john-a-macdonald-school-name-change/>

## Annex 12: AOA Poster for Classrooms



# Welcome to Our Action-Oriented Classroom



Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers  
Association canadienne des professeurs de langues secondes



Real-Life Tasks

Learning

Spontaneous Communication

Authentic

Purposeful

Meaningful

Confidence

Reflection

Reception

Mediation

Production

Social Agent

Interaction

Proficiency

Language

Teaching

Plurilingualism

Success

Assessment

Achieving Goals



## Annex 13: Letter to Parents





Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers  
Association canadienne des professeurs de langues secondes

# Welcome to Our Action-Oriented Classroom



## A Newsletter for Parents/Guardians of Second Language Learners

In recent years, a new approach to second language teaching and learning has been gaining momentum in classrooms both in Canada and around the world. This newsletter presents an overview of the action-oriented approach, as introduced in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) and further expanded in the *CEFR Companion Volume* (CEFRCV). This will give you an idea of what your child can expect to experience in an action-oriented classroom.

### What is the Action-Oriented Approach?

The action-oriented approach represents an important shift in second language education as it changes the focus from **LEARNING ABOUT** a language to actually **LIVING** a language. It emphasizes the learning of a language in order to achieve real-life goals, such as ordering a take-out meal, asking for a raise, or exchanging a gift at a store. By adding a real purpose to learning a second language, students are able to see tangible and immediate benefits to their language learning. In this way, language is used not only as a means of communication, but also as a way of accomplishing real-life tasks. Students are not learning a language just for the sake of it, but are doing so in order to accomplish a clearly defined goal.



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## What is an Action-Oriented Task?

Central to the action-oriented approach is the notion of language being used for a real purpose, namely to complete a specific task. The successful accomplishment of the task is, therefore, the goal of the language learner. The teacher guides students as they acquire the language necessary to complete the task.

Action-oriented tasks vary in nature but are always meaningful and set in the context of everyday life. They can range from the simple (e.g., finding out what the time is in order to set up an appointment or inviting a friend over for dinner) to the more complex (e.g., planning a three-week family vacation in Europe on a limited budget). They often require an element of research or planning, as well as a number of steps or sub-tasks, if they are to be successfully completed. Conditions or constraints can also render a task more demanding and require a degree of critical and creative thinking on the part of the learner (e.g., ordering a pizza for four people while taking into account variables such as food allergies, preferences, and splitting the cost). Language is an essential tool for the learner, both in the preparation of the task and in the execution of the final product (which demonstrates completion of the task), be it oral or written. With this understanding, the learner can better appreciate the value of second language learning and the role language plays in accomplishing real-life tasks.



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## What Does the Action-Oriented Classroom Look Like?

Perhaps the most striking characteristic of an action-oriented classroom is the amount of time that students are engaged in speaking the new language in spontaneous, purposeful, real-life situations created in the classroom by the teacher. Student talk time is maximized by giving the students many opportunities for oral interaction. Once a strong oral foundation has been established, reading and writing can be introduced much more effectively. Grammar and new vocabulary is presented in context rather than in isolation. Authentic texts such as newspapers, websites, video clips, podcasts, and so on, allow students to become comfortable with the language as it appears in the real world. In short, students in the action-oriented classroom spend their time interacting with the teacher and with each other in purposeful, everyday situations in order to acquire the language skills necessary to accomplish real-life tasks.

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## How Will This Approach Affect My Child's Experience of Learning a Language?

Research has shown that both teachers and students have reported that their experience of the action-oriented approach has been very positive. Students have noted a greater ability to function in a second language, which in turn leads to increased proficiency, confidence, and motivation to learn. By using the language they are learning for a real purpose, to achieve certain clearly defined goals, they become more aware of the benefits of bilingualism and plurilingualism. Furthermore, by being encouraged to reflect on their progress and develop their metacognition skills, students are more inclined to take ownership of their learning and become independent, lifelong language learners.







Informed by the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) and the *Companion Volume with New Descriptors* (CEFRCV), the *Action-Oriented Approach (AOA) Handbook* is designed to assist second language educators in creating action-oriented scenarios to enhance students' spoken interaction. This handbook provides insights into the research that informs the approach, practical suggestions for implementing the AOA within any given curriculum, and classroom-ready examples that can be used as is or adapted to other contexts. The handbook also includes a repertoire of helpful links and communication tools to support educators.



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