

Intercultural Guidelines:

Examples of Good Practice

Name of activity: Self-assessment of Language Competence Using the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)

Year group
Senior cycle

Procedure

The MFL teacher asks students about their language skills: “Are you better at reading in Irish or in French?”, “Are you better at speaking Irish or reading Irish?”, “How well do you write in French?”, “How can you describe and compare your language skills? Would you say you are fluent? How is your writing?” or “When would you need to describe how good your skills are?” (In the case of the last one, it would be when applying for a job to a multinational/to study in another country/immigration/after spending time abroad/if you have no qualification but speak the language at home, etc.)

The teacher explains what the CEFR is and its purpose/usefulness in describing language skills.

Students look at the self-assessment grid from the Council of Europe website PDF and think about individually it in terms of their MFL while reading the descriptors. All students reflect on their competence in the languages they speak such as English, Irish, an MFL and/or home language(s).

Students who have the same home language are grouped, given the PDFs in both English and their L1 to discuss, then self-assess their skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening in their home language. For example:

“I speak Hungarian at home with my parents, but I have never been to class so maybe I am B1 in speaking but A1 in reading.”

“My parents sent me to Russian class in primary school on a Saturday morning, so I learned to write well. I am confident communicating via Facebook with family in Russia so maybe I am A2/B1 in writing.”

“In Irish, I am A2 in reading but B1 in speaking because I went to the Gaeltacht last Summer.”

- Students do the Dialang online self-assessment test to predict and then confirm their CEFR level in each skill (except speaking). The test takes 45 mins.

OR

- Students use the interactive European Centre for Modern Languages self-assessment test (link below) to get feedback. The CEFR descriptors are in 42 languages.

Students in senior cycle speculate about, then research the approximate level of MFLs/Irish at Junior Cert and at Ordinary/Higher Level for Leaving Cert.

Annual initiative/embedded in classroom practice

For European Day of Languages, languages/literacy week, as a project for TYs or as part of Think Languages/PPLI

An Intercultural Look at our Schools is an adaptation of the project “A roadmap for schools to support the language(s) of schooling” (2017-2019) of the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML). The ECML is a Council of Europe institution promoting excellence in language education in its member states. www.ecml.at/roadmapforschools

Key skills

Junior cycle

Working with others
Being literate
Communicating
Managing myself
Managing information and thinking

Senior cycle

Working with others
Communicating
Being personally effective
Information processing
Critical and creative thinking

Looking at Our Schools: A Quality Framework for Post-Primary Schools

- TEACHING and LEARNING
DOMAIN 1: LEARNER OUTCOMES
DOMAIN 2: LEARNER EXPERIENCES
DOMAIN 3: TEACHERS' INDIVIDUAL PRACTICE
DOMAIN 4: TEACHERS' COLLECTIVE/COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE
- LEADERSHIP and MANAGEMENT
DOMAIN 1: LEADING LEARNING AND TEACHING

UNESCO sustainable development goals

Goal 4: Quality education
Goal 10: Reduced inequalities

Value added (e.g., wellbeing, digital skills, presentation skills, building confidence or cross-curricular links)

Students become more aware of their language skills in terms of their strengths and areas for improvement. Students can discuss their skills in their home language with their parents/siblings using the Council of Europe Assessment grids (link below).

As a follow-on activity, students could research some of the following questions:

- The language levels required for study at third level: “What CEFR level of Polish is required to study in a Polish university?” “is B1 in Listening sufficient to follow a lecture at third level?”
- “What language level is required for residency/citizenship in some EU countries?” or “What CEFR level is required for emigration to Australia or for a work visa to Ireland?”
- “What CEFR level (in which skill[s]) do you need to teach Irish at primary/to teach an MFL at post-primary level/to work as an interpreter in the EU/to work for Google, Intel, Facebook or Ebay/to work as a Garda?”

Links and resources

<https://dialangweb.lancaster.ac.uk/>

<https://edl.ecml.at/Fun/Selvaluatetheyourlanguageskills/tabid/2194/language/Default.aspx>

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/portfolio/self-assessment-grid>

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