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*TEACHING AND LEARNING LANGUAGES*  
*AS AN INSTRUMENT OF COMMUNICATION AND KNOWLEDGE OF CUSTOMES, TRADITIONS AND*  
*VALUES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD*

An extract from European Union official documents in the field of education and some reflections on  
university language centres and the impact of new technology.

INTRODUCTION

The European Commission publishes documents containing proposals for Community actions in many different areas. Primarily they are documents addressed to interested parties – organizations and individuals, who are invited to participate in a process of consultation and debate.

In some areas, such as education, they provide an impetus for subsequent legislation. These documents, sometimes, follow discussion papers published to launch a consultation process at European level. While discussion papers set out a range of ideas presented for public discussion and debate, document papers contain an official set of proposal in specific areas and are used as vehicles for Community development.

The aim of this work is to identify through public official European documents some opportunities in the field of education, especially in combating social exclusion, and to assess how important the teacher's work is in giving students confidence in learning languages.

People often speak about "World Peace", but they often don't know how to start turning violence, war, terrorism in to peace actions. Promoting European ideas in the field of education is the first step to develop this aim. My opinion is that school and university must be closely associated in the operation of the EU supporting it with specific programmes.

At the beginning of this new century, we can see that the causes of change in society have been diverse and have affected education and training systems in different ways. Demographic trends have increased life expectancy radically changing at the same time the age structure of the population, thereby increasing the need for lifelong learning.

The substantial rise in the number of working women has altered the traditional place of the family in relation to school and the upbringing of children. Expansion of technical innovation in all areas has generated new knowledge requirements.

Consumption patterns and lifestyles have changed. In addition, people have been alerted to environmental problems and the use of natural resources and this has affected both education and training systems and industrial activities.

We live in a world where war, violence and terrorism still exist and a great number of people haven't the opportunity to get employment.

No single institution, school, university or company can claim to be able to develop the skills needed for achieving employability, but all together they must operate in order to develop them. As matter of fact one function of this study is to draw attention to the crucial matter of teaching to promote innovation.

There is still an excessive standardisation of knowledge . In fact today it tends to give the impression that everything has to be taught in a strictly logical order and that producing and identifying quality is a question of mastering a deductive reasoning system based on abstract concepts.

Observation, common sense, curiosity, interest in the physical and social world around us and the desire to experiment are qualities which are often neglected. Yet these are the qualities which enable us to train inventors rather than mere technology managers.

Developing these aptitudes means promoting an appreciation of how society has been enriched by invention and how such invention came about.

## Building a learning society

<sup>1</sup> Much of the effort made in recent years to stem the rise of unemployment in Europe has not had lasting effects. Long term unemployment continues to increase and the spread of social exclusion, particularly among young people, has become a major problem in our societies. The countries of Europe today have no other option. If they are to hold their own and continue to be a reference point in the world, they have to build on the progress brought about through closer economic ties by more substantial investment in knowledge and skills. The first step is to provide immediate solutions to current education and training needs, at present time the “ Riforma Moratti” has been presented by the Italian government; The second one is to prepare for the future and to outline an overall approach working together, each acting in its own field.

Since the 1960's Community action in education and training has had significant results in terms of cooperation, exchanges of experience, supporting innovation and the development of training products and materials. It has also boosted decisively European mobility of students and people in training. Additionally it has also contributed to the promotion of learning Community languages and the development of communication between European citizens.

The internationalisation of trade, the global context of technology and, above all, the arrival of the easier exchange of information , have boosted the possibilities of access to information and knowledge for people, but at the same time have as a consequence changed work organization and the skills learned. This trend has increased uncertainty for all and for some has led to intolerable situations of exclusion.

It is clear that the new opportunities offered to people require an effort from each one to adapt, particularly in assembling one's own qualifications on the basis of 'building blocks' of knowledge acquired at different times and in various situations.

The society of the future will therefore be “ a learning society”.

In the light of this, it is evident that education systems - which means primarily the teachers and all of those involved in training have a central role to play.

Education and training will increasingly become the main vehicles for self awareness, belonging, advancement and self-fulfilment.

Education and training whether acquired in the formal education system, on the job or in a more informal way, is the key for everyone to controlling their future and their personal development.

Education and training remain one of the determining factors in equal opportunities. Education systems have already played an essential role in the emancipation and the social and professional advancement of women. Education can and must contribute further to the crucial equality between men and women.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Official European documents, (September 1993) , “ Discussion paper on the European dimension of education”  
 Official European documents, (November 1995) , “Paper on education”  
 www: <http://europa.eu.int/documents/index>

The future of the EU and its development will depend largely on its ability to manage the progress towards this new society. The objective is to make it into a just and progressive society based on its cultural wealth and diversity.

Everyone must be able to seize their opportunities for improvement in society and for personal fulfilment, irrespective of their social origin and educational background.

This particularly applies to the most disadvantaged groups who lack the family and social environment to enable them to make the most of the general education provided by school. These groups should be given the chance not just to catch up, but to gain access to new knowledge which could help to bring out their abilities.

The diversity of the education systems of the EU notwithstanding, there is a European approach to education based on common historic roots, from which stems the success of cooperation between higher education establishments, for example, in the ERASMUS programme which has provided mobility for 500,000 young students.

<sup>1</sup> In the new context of the internationalisation of the economy, dissemination of new technologies and the risk of cultural uniformity, Europe more than ever before is an appropriate level for action. To examine education and training in the context of employment does not mean reducing them simply to a means of obtaining qualifications. The essential aim of education and training has always been personal development and the successful integration of Europeans into society through the sharing of common values, the passing on of cultural heritage and the teaching of self-reliance.

However, this essential function of social integration is today under threat unless it is accompanied by the prospect of employment. The devastating personal and social effects of unemployment are uppermost in the minds of every family, every young person in initial training and everyone on the labour market. The best way for education to continue to exercise this essential function is to seek to provide a convincing response to alleviate these concerns.

The very foundations of any European society purporting to teach its young students the principles of citizenship would be undermined if this teaching were to fail to provide job prospects.

In the face of unemployment and technological upheaval, training must go beyond the framework of initial education and develop an on-going capacity for the renewal of the technical and vocational skills of workers around a solid, broad knowledge base.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. [www: http://europa.eu.int/documents/index](http://europa.eu.int/documents/index)

The aim of this site is to provide readers with discussion papers and document papers as support in specific areas. It is divided in to three sections and contains many links.

Encouraging the acquisition of new knowledge and combating exclusion  
also through voluntary service

<sup>1</sup>The advent of the learning society encourages the acquisition of new knowledge. Knowledge - by which authors mean an individual's general level of knowledge - ought to be the top priority in our new society. The knowledge acquired by individuals throughout their life must be based on opening up new methods of recognising skills. As a matter of fact all European countries identify "key skills" through the best ways of acquiring, assessing and certifying them. Nowadays Europe has a system set up to compare and disseminate definitions, methods and practices. In complementing formal qualification systems, this approach provides individuals with greater independence in putting together their own qualifications. Setting up this knowledge accreditation system – on a voluntary basis - at European level, people will take a huge stride towards the learning society.

The European project launched the "personal skills cards". This document allows individuals to have their knowledge and know-how recognised as and when they are acquired. It is important to discover through studies and pilot projects what type of data is relevant and to consider how individuals could use such a card. The aim is not to devise a uniform card and impose it on Europe, but to contribute to the development of such tools, so as to progressively arrive at joint standards, including standards that cut across a number of occupations. The European accreditation system covering technical and vocational skills is set up based on a cooperative venture involving higher education establishments, businesses, vocational sectors, local chambers of commerce and social partners.

Studying languages and support for mobility play a part in encouraging the enhancement of knowledge. Geographical mobility broadens the individual's horizon, stimulates intellectual agility and raises the general level of learning. It can only reinforce the ability to learn, which is so necessary to develop.

Today student mobility is easy to create.

As matter of fact any students can obtain a grant in their own country, if they wish, to use it in any higher education establishment in another Member State prepared to accept them.

New "masters" level courses are devised, in cooperation with several higher education institutions through pooling human and material resources; these lead to mutually recognized qualifications responding to the skill needs of the single market.

Mutual academic and vocational recognition has been developed by the generation of the system of "credit" transfers (European Credit Transfer System - ECTS) and the application of equivalent methods to vocational training.

The aim is to obtain mutual recognition of training modules, giving preference to agreements between education and training establishments and between economic sectors.

The obstacles (administrative, legal and those connected with social protection) acting as a brake on exchanges of students, trainees, teachers and researchers has been removed.

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Finally, education and training have drawn on the new communication technologies and have harness their full potential. In the long run every class will have the necessary equipment allowing young people access to the world of computers. This means, in particular, that Europe must adopt new high-quality teaching instruments ( in particular educational software and specific hardware) adapted to its educational and cultural traditions.

The development of our economies and the constraints of competitiveness have led to several categories of the population being left by the wayside (young people without qualifications, older workers, long term unemployed, women re-entering the job market). These groups are even more vulnerable since access to knowledge is crucial to fitting into society and finding employment.

In order to curb this process of marginalisation, Member States have launched a series of measures, based mainly on increasing the number of training or back-to-work schemes. and various measures aimed at reintegrating those facing the greatest difficulty.

It should be advisable to emphasize the need to promote two types of pilot scheme to point the way forward, of a type already underway in some Member States to combat exclusion and develop a sense of belonging and voluntary service for young people.

Pilot projects undertaken in Member States clearly show that this idea must not mean "ghettochoools".

The basic idea is simple: provide youngsters excluded from the education system, or about to be, with the best training and best support arrangements to give them self-confidence.

School and University give every individual the opportunity to integrate into society, unfortunately, this is no longer the case for the most disadvantaged, who quite often do not have a suitable family and social setting to enable them to benefit from the general education provided at school. Without qualifications, they have little hope of finding a job and thus of integrating into society.

The task of schools and universities is to improve access to knowledge through employing the best teachers, if necessary paying a higher than normal salary, through customising the pace of teaching, providing new incentives, arranging in-company training, using multimedia and running classes containing fewer pupils.

These opportunities are intended for the entire school population, included university, without differentiating between those able to attend a traditional type of school and those not able to do so, so as to avoid any form of segregation.

In a totally different context, but also to tackle a crisis situation, it is not surprising that local authorities in Europe, with the support of other groups, are reverting to the idea, initially started in Europe between the wars, of offering a chance through schools and universities.

In suburban areas, pilot projects are being undertaken, involving greater resources (in terms of teachers and infrastructure) and drawing inspiration from the earlier models as the first step towards reintegration.

<sup>1</sup> Voluntary service initiatives exist in a number of Member States. Without substituting for military service, it provides young people with a chance to engage in an activity serving the common good, either in their own country or in a developing one.

<sup>2</sup>The European Union has also made a modest contribution - on an experimental basis - through the "YOUTH FOR EUROPE" programme.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. [www.bdp.it](http://www.bdp.it) Biblioteca di documentazione pedagogica di Firenze – Indire, sito ufficiale.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. [www.indire.it/socrates/content/index](http://www.indire.it/socrates/content/index)

Parallel to this, the YOUTHSTART programme contains provision - under the heading of vocational training - for funding measures supporting initiatives to integrate youngsters lacking qualifications.

All these activities, although interesting, are limited in scope.

My experience as a social volunteer has given me more self-confidence, has reinforced the ideas of friendship, respect, love, tolerance, brotherhood and I understand that they are the base of any human relationship, even between people belonging to different cultures, there are common human values.

My opinion is that government must investigate many other possibilities for facilitating the relationship between school and university and voluntary service, not only through free movement between European countries, but also in single countries. Voluntary service in the field of education must be coordinated by national and Community projects, and it must be supported by a legal and financial framework on the basis of the European community treaty.

Voluntary service will be a very important resource in schools and universities, if we are able to eliminate all obstacles with regards to young volunteers and if we understand how to unite these worlds.

### 3.

#### European quality label

<sup>1</sup> Proficiency in several Community languages has become a precondition if citizens of the European Union are to benefit from the occupational and personal opportunities open to them in the border-free Single Market.

This language proficiency must be backed up by the ability to adapt to working and living environments characterised by different cultures.

Languages are also the key to knowing other people. Proficiency in languages helps to build the feeling of being European with all its cultural wealth and diversity and understanding between European citizens.

Learning languages also has another important effect: experience shows that when undertaken from a very early age, it is an important factor in doing well at school.

Contact with another language is not only compatible with becoming proficient in one's mother tongue, it also makes it easier. It opens the mind, stimulates intellectual agility and, of course, expands people's cultural horizon. Multilingualism is part and parcel of both European identity/citizenship and the learning society.

<sup>2</sup>The European Union, for its part, is contributing to the development of language learning as part of LINGUA, now integrated in the SOCRATES and LEONARDO programmes .

It is no longer possible to reserve proficiency in foreign languages for an elite or for those who acquire it on account of their geographical mobility.

In line with the resolution of the Council of Education Ministers it is becoming necessary for everyone, irrespective of training and education routes chosen, to be able to acquire and keep up their ability to communicate in at least two Community languages in addition to their mother tongue.

In order to make for proficiency in three Community languages, it is desirable for foreign language learning to start at pre-school level.

It seems essential for such teaching to be placed on a systematic footing in primary education, with the learning of a second Community foreign language starting in secondary school. It could even be argued that secondary school pupils and students at university should study certain subjects in the first foreign language learned, as is the case in the European schools and universities. Upon completing initial training everyone should be proficient in two Community foreign languages.

Vocational training - initial and continuing - must place great stress on language learning. This is of dual significance for working life because it constitutes a major element in a person's general cultural development and is an advantage when it comes to obtaining a job, either inside one's home country or when taking up the option of mobility available within the Union.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Official European documents, (September 1993) , “ Discussion paper on the European dimension of education”  
Official European documents, (November 1995) , “Paper on education”  
www: <http://europa.eu.int/documents/index>

<sup>2</sup> Cf. [www.indire.it/socrates/content/index](http://www.indire.it/socrates/content/index)

#### 4.

### Information and new technology

<sup>1</sup> The onset of the information society, the impact of the scientific and technological world and the internationalisation of the economy are contributing towards the development of the learning society. Like the rest of the world, Europe has to face up to the effects of the widespread dissemination of information technology, pressure on the world market and the relentless onward march of science and technology. These challenges represent a step forward by putting people in a closer relationship with one another.

The impact of the technological world is transforming our society, it is a sort of a new revolution which has consequences for work and employment.

It has not been demonstrated that new technology reduce employment levels. Some technologically advanced countries have created around the new information related activities, a number of jobs comparable, indeed in some cases higher, than those lost in other areas.

It is however certain that information technology has radically changed the nature of work and the organisation of production. These changes are currently deeply affecting European society.

Mass production is declining and making room for a more customized type of production. The traditional pattern of growth in paid employment, i.e. full time and permanent, appears to be on the decline. Production relationships and conditions of employment are changing. Corporate organisation is increasingly turning towards flexibility and decentralisation. The search for flexibility, the development of networked-based cooperation, the increased use of subcontracting, the development of team work, are some of the consequences of information technology.

Information technology is contributing to the disappearance of routine and repetitive work which can be codified, programmed and automated. Work content will increasingly be made up of intelligent tasks requiring initiative and the ability to adapt. Although it makes the decentralisation of tasks easier, information technology coordinates these tasks in interactive on-line communication networks which function equally well across continents as from one office or floor to another. The result is simultaneously a higher level of individual autonomy for workers, but a less clear perception of the context of their actions. New technology has a twofold effect. On one hand, it considerably increases the role of the human factor in the production process, while on the other it makes workers more vulnerable to changes in work organisation because they are mere individuals within a complex network.

Information technology is making significant inroads into production related activities and into education and training, thus bringing the 'learning system' and the 'producing system' closer together. There is a marked convergence between the world of work and the world of learning/training as far as the capacities required are concerned.

Change connected with information technology has wide economic and social consequences for the development of: self-employment; service industries; new forms of work organisation known as the "learning organisation"; management decentralisation; and flexible working hours.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Official European documents, (September 1993) , " Discussion paper on the European dimension of education"  
Official European documents, (November 1995) , "Paper on education"  
www: <http://europa.eu.int/documents/index>



The focus up to now has been on the potential offered by information highways, through the revolutionary quasi instantaneousness that the INTERNET, for instance, brings to contacts between firms, researchers and academics.

The fear is the risk that the quality of multi-media products, particularly in educational software, could lead to knowledge of the "lowest common denominator" in which people lose their historical, geographical and cultural bearings.

This is why the Commission, particularly at the meeting on the information society in Brussels instressed the need to stimulate European production of educational software.

The information society is going to change teaching methods by replacing the excessively passive teacher/pupil relationship with a new - and seemingly promising interactive relationship. At the same time, however, changing teaching methods does not affect the content of the material taught.

The internationalisation of the economy is the second factor of upheaval, which has given rise to unprecedented freedom of movement for capital, goods and services.

Sooner than is generally believed, a global and distinctive labour market will emerge. Large and small companies, and even mobile professions, are already using "teleporting" to have work done online in low-wage countries.

The Commission opted clearly for a Europe open to the rest of the world but stressed that its future developments should have a distinct European dimension, placing particular emphasis on the preservation of the European social model.

Internationalisation thus simply strengthens Europe's position on the world stage.

In a changing and uncertain world, Europe is a natural level organisation. This has been shown through trade policy, technical harmonisation, environmental protection, solidarity between different regions and through real progress in the field of education and training, e.g. in the ERASMUS programme.

Yet, Europe still needs to demonstrate to ordinary people that it is not there just to make regulations, but that it is close to their everyday concerns.

This option, involves improving the competitiveness of our economies, and will increase the quality of life through more efficient distribution of resources in the world. It nevertheless implies major adjustments in every country.

The developments and dissemination of scientific and technical knowledge is accelerating. A new model of production of knowledge and know-how is emerging, combining extreme specialisation and cross-disciplinary creativeness. Industry relies increasingly on science to develop new products (e.g. special alloys for sports equipment, biological processes for environmental industries) and scientific research needs equipment with a high degree of technical sophistication (e.g. supercomputers, high-performance communications networks, human genomes). But instead of celebrating progress as was the case a century ago, public opinion often perceives scientific ventures and technological progress as a threat.

These growing anxieties have been a significant feature of the end of the last century. Paradoxically, whereas science is making significant progress (limiting, if not overcoming famine and many diseases, increasing life expectancy, providing faster communication etc.), this progress is for many people matched by a sense of fear which has some parallels in the transition from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance.

Media coverage also presents a violent picture, re-enforcing these anxieties.

To tackle this crisis better information is essential but insufficient on its own.

It is by disseminating knowledge that this irrational climate can be overcome. By demonstrating the link between science and the progress of mankind, while being fully aware of its limitations,

today's scientific and technological world will be accepted and in a better position to widely spread an innovative culture.

In many European countries, the response is pitched at two levels, cultural and ethical. The first level is cultural. As matter of fact the promotion of a scientific and technical culture is the subject of a sustained effort by the public authorities.

Activities at national level on this issue have been enhanced since 1993 and complemented by a timely European events. But it is at school that the issue is really determined. Scientific and technical information is all the more rewarding when built on a solid foundation of scientific education acquired at school.

The second level is ethical. The development of biotechnologies, man's relationship to intelligent machines, new approaches to procreation, a heightened sense of co-existence with other species, protection of the environment, are all new issues which Europe must prepare to face.

The same problem arises in relation to the information society. The 'information highways' to which young people and even children will have increasingly easier access, could well find themselves inundated with messages offending human dignity.

This clearly raises the matter of protecting our children. The ethics of responsibility must become an integral part of basic education and the training of researchers.

Throughout Europe, in all Member States, these facts have repercussions for industry and employment.

The two main responses focused upon in the Commission work are to give everyone access to a broad base of knowledge and to build up their abilities for employment and economic life.

## University Language Centres

<sup>1</sup>Over the past thirty years university language laboratories have gone through a variety of phases. From audio language laboratories and audio-visual studios to multimedia labs and sophisticated language resource. The introduction of new digital media, media server technology, multimedia networking and sever/client computing into language learning has led us to develop a new generation of language learning environments.

In the modern language centre the learners should be able to seek information from a variety of sources, access on line help and support facilities, request information, participate with other students in shared tasks and learning assignments, join in conversation with other students or an instructor(tutor), share screen containing text, sound and video and send messages(electronic, voice) to other users of the centre and the outside world.

<sup>2</sup> Today, thanks to digital technology, students have a choice of working individually or together with another student in “conference” mode or to be in contact with other universities through the distance learning system or e learning . They are able to contact other users on the web or in the same laboratory offering cooperation or requesting help.

Language centres often create their own resource banks of digital multimedia objects combining the major carriers of language, sound and text with pictures and full motion video. Students interact with these objects at their own place and in their own time.

<sup>3</sup> In order to study languages today there is a need to establish a system of certification with the same structure for all Italian language centres and, as far as possible, for all European centres. The Italian university language centres are presently promoting this vital operation, partly as a way of meeting the requirements of the university course structure outlined in the university legislation which has recently become operative. Their purpose is to create a common system for testing language proficiency, with the outside support of Council of Europe and they are working to provide a solution to the problem of language certification .

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Gotti, Maurizio, 2002 b., 'Il contributo dei Centri Linguistici di Ateneo alle attività delle facoltà umanistiche', in Vergaro, C. (a c. di) *Verso quale CLA? La ridefinizione dei ruoli dei Centri Linguistici d'Ateneo nella prospettiva dei nuovi ordinamenti didattici*, Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 2002, 47-62.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Gotti, Maurizio c.d.s., 'Il ruolo dei Centri Linguistici nell'Europa delle lingue', *Atti del Convegno sul tema 'Crescere nell'Europa delle Lingue' (15-17/2/2001)*, Università 'La Sapienza', Roma

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Taylor Torsello, Carol e Ambroso, Serena c.d.s., "The CERCLU Project for Certifying Language Competence in Italian University Language Centres", *Proceedings of the 7th Cercles International Conference, University Language Centres: Forging the Learning Environments of the Future (19-21 settembre 2002)*, Paris IX Dauphine University

Cf Dotoli G., *I Centri linguistici di Ateneo, una risorsa per l'Europa del 2000*, Atti del Convegno Internazionale, Monopoli, 31 maggio – 2 giugno 1997

<sup>1</sup>The levels to be certified are those established by the Council of Europe as Level A1(Breakthrough) , A2 (Waystage) , B1 (Threshold) , Level B2 (Vantage), C1(Independent User) and C2 (Mastery). In structuring a specific syllabus teachers have to take in consideration the guide lines provided by the Council of Europe exactly from the section *Common European Framework of Reference* in the document "The Modern Language Projects of the Council of Europe, Strasbourg" : "...Contacts of all kinds exist between educational systems in different countries. Mobility is increasing and people are now continuing to learn through their lives. This makes it vital that everyone should be able to understand the various national systems and particularly national qualification.(...)

...The European Framework is planning instrument which provides a common basis and language for describing objectives , methods and assessment in language teaching, and is issued for planning language syllabuses, examinations , textbooks and teacher training programmes throughout Europe. It also defines level of proficiency, making it possible to measure each learner's progress throughout Europe, and to compare qualifications more easily, thus facilitating mobility in Europe."

The fact of basing the levels of testing and certification on European parameters makes it possible to insert the Italian university language centres tests into a system of reciprocal recognition with those of the other countries in which the same parameters are accepted and a suitable method is applied.

Since the languages tests are based on targets fixed at a European level (Threshold and Vantage.....), they can be administered in different environments and with different purposes: as entrance tests, placement tests, pass tests, evaluation at the end of a course for which the objectives set correspond to the same European level, external evaluation of the quality of language learning. A large database of validated testing items could be created which could be used by teachers and by students in other situations.

The items below are guide lines provided by the Council of Europe exactly from the section *Common European Framework of Reference* in the document "The Modern Language Projects of the Council of Europe, Strasbourg" ( the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment) :

- Level A1 (Breakthrough) – is considered the lowest level of generative language use – the point at which the learner can *interact in a simple way, ask and answer simple questions about themselves, where they live, people they know, and things they have, initiate and respond to simple statements in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics, rather than relying purely on a very finite rehearsed, lexically organised repertoire of situation-specific phrases.*
- Level A2 does appear to reflect the level referred to by the Waystage specification. It is at this level that the majority of descriptors stating social functions are to be found, like *use simple everyday polite forms of greeting and address; greet people, ask how they are and react to news; handle very short social exchanges; ask and answer questions about what they do at work and in free time; make and respond to invitations; discuss what to do, where to go and make arrangements to meet; make and accept offers.*
- The next band represents a strong Waystage (A2+) performance. What is noticeable here is more active participation in conversation given some assistance and certain limitations, for example: *initiate, maintain and close simple, restricted face-to-face conversation; understand enough to manage simple, routine exchanges without undue effort;*

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. [www. Council of Europe COE portal](http://www.coe.int)

from : A Common European Framework of References for Languages "The Modern Language Projects of the Council of Europe, Strasbourg"

*make him/herself understood and exchange ideas and information on familiar topics in predictable everyday situations, provided the other person helps if necessary;*

*communicate successfully on basic themes if he/she can ask for help to express what he wants to; deal with everyday situations with predictable content, though he/she will generally have to compromise the message and search for words;*

*interact with reasonable ease in structured situations, given some help, but participation in open discussion is fairly restricted;*

Plus significantly more ability to sustain monologues, for example: *express how he/she feels in simple terms; give an extended description of everyday aspects of his/her environment e.g. people, places, a job or study experience; describe past activities and personal experiences; describe habits and routines;*

*describe plans and arrangements;*

*explain what he/she likes or dislikes about something;*

*give short, basic descriptions of events and activities;*

*describe pets and possessions;*

*use simple descriptive language to make brief statements about and compare objects and possessions.*

- Level B1 reflects the Threshold Level specification for a visitor to a foreign country and is perhaps most categorised by two features. The first feature is the ability to maintain interaction and get across what you want to, in a range of contexts, for example: *generally follow the main points of extended discussion around him/her, provided speech is clearly articulated in standard dialect;*

*give or seek personal views and opinions in an informal discussion with friends; express the main point he/she wants to make comprehensibly;*

*exploit a wide range of simple language to express much of what he or she wants to;*

*maintain a conversation or discussion but may sometimes be difficult to follow when try in to say exactly what he/she would like to;*

*keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is very evident, especially in longer stretches of free production.*

The second feature is the ability to cope flexibly with problems in everyday life, for example *cope with less routine situations on public transport;*

*deal with most situations likely to arise when making travel arrangements through an agent or when actually travelling; enter unprepared into conversations on familiar topics; make a complaint;*

*take some initiatives in an interview/consultation (e.g. to bring up a new subject) but is very dependent on interviewer in the interaction;*

*ask someone to clarify or elaborate what they have just said.*

- The subsequent band seems to be a Strong Threshold (B1+). The same two main features continue to be present, with the addition of a number of descriptors which focus on the exchange of *quantities* of information, for example:

*take messages communicating enquiries, explaining problems; provide concrete information required in an interview/consultation (e.g. describe symptoms to a doctor) but does so with limited precision;*

*explain why something is a problem; summarise and give his or her opinion about a short story, article,*

*talk, discussion, interview, or documentary and answer further questions of detail;*

*carry out a prepared interview, checking and concerning information, though he/she may occasionally have*

*to ask for repetition if the other person's response is rapid or extended; describe how to do something, giving detailed instructions;*

*exchange accumulated factual information on familiar routine and non-routine matters within his/her field with some confidence.*

- Level B2 represents a new level as far above B1 (Threshold) as A2 (Waystage) is below it. It is intended to reflect the Vantage Level specification. The metaphor is that, having been progressing slowly but steadily across the intermediate plateau, the learner understands he has arrived somewhere, things look different, he/she acquires a new perspective, can look around him/her in a new way. This concept does seem to be borne out to a considerable extent by the descriptors calibrated at this level. They represent quite a break with the content so far. For example at the lower end of the band there is a focus on effective argument: *account for and sustain his opinions in discussion by providing relevant explanations, arguments and comments; explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options; construct a chain of reasoned argument; develop an argument giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view; explain a problem and make it clear that his/her counterpart in a negotiation must make a concession;*

*speculate about causes, consequences, hypothetical situations;*

*take an active part in informal discussion in familiar contexts, commenting, putting point of view clearly, evaluating alternative proposals and making and responding to hypotheses.*

Secondly, running right through the level there are two new focuses. The first is being able to more than hold your own in social discourse: e.g. *converse naturally, fluently and effectively;*

*Understand in detail what is said to him/her in the standard spoken language even in a noisy environment; initiate discourse, take his/her turn when appropriate and end conversation when he/she needs to, though he/she may not always do this elegantly;*

*use stock phrases (e.g. 'That's a difficult question to answer') to gain time and keep the turn whilst formulating what to say;*

*interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without imposing strain on either party;*

*adjust to the changes of direction, style and emphasis normally found in conversation;*

*sustain relationships with native speakers without unintentionally amusing or irritating them or requiring them to behave other than they would with a native speaker.*

The second new focus is a new degree of language awareness: *correct mistakes if they have led to misunderstandings;*

*make a note of 'favourite mistakes' and consciously monitor speech for it/them; generally correct slips and errors if he/she becomes conscious of them; plan what is to be said and the means to say it, considering the effect on the recipient/s.*

In all, this does seem to be a new threshold for a language learner to cross.

- At the next band – representing a Strong Vantage (B2+) performance – the focus on argument, effective social discourse and on language awareness which appears at B2 (Vantage) continues. However, the focus on argument and social discourse can also be interpreted as a new focus on discourse skills. This new degree of discourse competence shows itself in conversational management (co-operating strategies):

*give feedback on and follow up statements and inferences by other speakers and so help the development of the discussion; relate own contribution skilfully to those of other speakers.*

It is also apparent in relation to coherence/cohesion: *use a limited number of cohesive devices to link sentences together smoothly into clear, connected discourse; use a variety of linking words efficiently to mark clearly the relationships between ideas;*

*develop an argument systematically with appropriate highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail.*

Finally, it is at this band that there is a concentration of items on negotiating: *outline a case for compensation, using persuasive language and simple arguments to demand satisfaction; state clearly the limits to a concession.*

• Level C1, the next band, was labelled *Effective Operational Proficiency*.

What seems to characterise this level is good access to a broad range of language, which allows fluent, spontaneous communication, as illustrated by the following examples:

*Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly.*

*Has a good command of a broad lexical repertoire allowing gaps to be readily overcome with circumlocutions.*

*There is little obvious searching for expressions or avoidance strategies; only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth of language.*

The discourse skills characterising the previous band continue to be evident at Level C1, with an emphasis on more fluency, for example: *select a suitable phrase from a fluent repertoire of discourse functions to preface his remarks in order to get the floor, or to gain time and keep it whilst thinking; produce clear,*

*smoothly flowing, well-structured speech, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.*

• Level C2, whilst it has been termed 'Mastery', is not intended to imply native-speaker or near native-speaker competence. What is intended is to characterise the degree of precision, appropriateness and ease with the language which the speech of those who have been highly successful learners. Descriptors calibrated here include:

*convey a range of shades of meaning precisely by using, with reasonable accuracy, a wide range of modification devices; has a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms with awareness of connotative level of meaning;*

*backtrack and restructure around a difficulty so smoothly the interlocutor is hardly aware of it.*

The Common Reference Levels can be presented and exploited in a number of different formats, in varying degrees of detail. Yet the existence of fixed points of common reference offers transparency and coherence, a tool for future planning and a basis for further development.

6.

The European Language Portfolio : A model for university

<sup>1</sup>The principles and guidelines approved by the Council of Europe define the three components of European Language Portfolio as follows: “...The language Passport section provides an overview of the individual’s proficiency in different languages at a given point in time;<sup>2</sup> the overview is defined in terms of skills and the common reference levels in the common European Framework; it records formal qualification and describes language competencies and significant language and intercultural learning experiences, it includes information on partial and specific competences, it allows for self assessment, teacher assessment and assessment by educational institution and examination boards; it requires that information entered in the Passport states on what basis, when and by whom the assessment was carried out. To facilitate pan- European recognition and mobility a standard presentation of a Passport Summary is promoted by the Council of Europe for the ELP.

*The Language Biography facilitates the learners involvement in planning, reflecting upon and assessing his or her learning process and progress; it encourages the learners to state what he/she can do in each language and to include information on linguistic and cultural experiences gained in and outside formal educational context; it is organised to promote plurilingualism, i.e. the development of competences n a number of languages.*

*The Dossier offers the learner the opportunity to select materials to documents and illustrate achievements or experiences recorded in Language Biography or Passport.”*

To sum up the European Language Portfolio consists of three parts:

1. LANGUAGE-PASSPORT
2. LANGUAGE-BIOGRAPHY
3. DOSSIER

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<sup>1</sup> [www. Council](http://www.CouncilofEurope.eu) of Europe COE portal

European Language Portfolio “The Principles and Guidelines steering committee for Education- European Validation Committee”

<sup>2</sup> The skills referred to in the Language Passport are: Understanding (listening and reading), Speaking (spoken interaction and spoken production) and Writing; while the levels derived from the Council of Europe “Common European Framework” are A1(Breakthrough) , A2 (Waystage) , B1 (Threshold) , Level B2 (Vantage), C1(Independent User) and C2 (Mastery) .



7.

A model for University

LANGUAGE PASSPORT

Name:

Surname:

Date of birth:

Age:

Nationality:

Address:

Town:

Telephone number:

Mobile number:

Mother tongue:

School/University:

Languages:

Certificates:

Other information:

(Take a new sheet for each language.)

Work through the checklist to identify what you can already do in languages you have studied. Write it down on the sheet to record your priorities.

(Take a new sheet for each language.)

## OVERALL ORAL PRODUCTION

Learners:

### C2

*Can produce clear, smoothly flowing well-structured speech with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.*

### C1

*Can give clear, detailed descriptions and presentations on complex subjects, integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.  
Can give clear, systematically developed descriptions and presentations, with appropriate highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail.*

### B2

*Can give clear, detailed descriptions and presentations on a wide range of subjects related to his/her field of interest, expanding and supporting ideas with subsidiary points and relevant examples.*

### B1

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

### A2

*Can give a simple description or presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines, likes /dislikes, etc. as a short series of simple phrases and sentences linked into a list.*

### A1

*Can produce simple mainly isolated phrases about people and places.*

## SUSTAINED MONOLOGUE: Describing experience

Learners:

### C2

*Can give clear, smoothly flowing, elaborate and often memorable descriptions.*

### C1

*Can give clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects.  
Can give elaborate descriptions and narratives, integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.*

**B2**

*Can give clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to his/her field of interest.  
Can give straightforward descriptions on a variety of familiar subjects within his/her field of interest.*

*Can reasonably fluently relate a straightforward narrative or description as a linear sequence of points.*

*Can give detailed accounts of experiences, describing feelings and reactions.*

**B1**

*Can relate details of unpredictable occurrences, e.g. an accident.*

*Can relate the plot of a book or film and describe his/her reactions.*

*Can describe dreams, hopes and ambitions.*

*Can describe events, real or imagined.*

*Can narrate a story.*

*Can tell a story or describe something in a simple list of points.*

*Can describe everyday aspects of his/her environment e.g. people, places, a job or study experience.*

*Can give short, basic descriptions of events and activities.*

*Can describe plans and arrangements, habits and routines, past activities and personal experiences.*

**A2**

*Can use simple descriptive language to make brief statements about and compare objects and possessions.*

*Can explain what he/she likes or dislikes about something.*

*Can describe his/her family, living conditions, educational background, present or most recent job.*

*Can describe people, places and possessions in simple terms.*

**A1**

*Can describe him/herself, what he/she does and where he/she lives.*

**SUSTAINED MONOLOGUE: Putting a case (e.g. in a debate)**

Learners:

**C2** *No descriptor available*

**C1** *No descriptor available*

*Can develop an argument systematically with appropriate highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail.*

**B2**

*Can develop a clear argument, expanding and supporting his/her points of view at some length with subsidiary points and relevant examples.*

*Can construct a chain of reasoned argument*

*Can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.*

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

**B1**

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

**A2** *No descriptor available*

**A1** *No descriptor available*

## PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS

Learners:

*C2 No descriptor available*

**C1**

*Can deliver announcements .fluently, almost effortlessly, using stress and intonation to convey .finer shades of meaning precisely.*

**B2**

*Can deliver announcements on most general topics with a degree of clarity, .uency and spontaneity which causes no strain or inconvenience to the listener.*

**B1**

*Can deliver short, rehearsed announcements on a topic pertinent to everyday occurrences in his/her .field which, despite possibly very foreign stress and intonation, are nevertheless clearly intelligible.*

**A2**

*Can deliver very short, rehearsed announcements of predictable, learnt content which are intelligible to listeners who are prepared to concentrate.*

*A1 No descriptor available*

**Note:** The descriptors on this sub-scale have not been empirically calibrated.

## ADDRESSING AUDIENCES

Learners:

**C2**

*Can present a complex topic confidently and articulately to an audience unfamiliar with it, structuring and adapting the talk .flexibly to meet the audience's needs.  
Can handle difficult and even hostile questioning.*

**C1**

*Can give a clear, well-structured presentation of a complex subject, expanding and supporting points of view at some length with subsidiary points, reasons and relevant examples.  
Can handle interjections well, responding spontaneously and almost effortlessly.  
Can give a clear, systematically developed presentation, with highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail.  
Can depart spontaneously from a prepared text and follow up interesting points raised by members of the audience, often showing remarkable fluency and ease of expression.*

## B2

*Can give a clear, prepared presentation, giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view and giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.*

*Can take a series of follow up questions with a degree of fluency and spontaneity which poses no strain for either him/herself or the audience.*

## B1

*Can give a prepared straightforward presentation on a familiar topic within his/her 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.*

*Can give a short, rehearsed presentation on a topic pertinent to his/her everyday life, briefly give reasons*

*and explanations for opinions, plans and actions.*

*Can cope with a limited number of straightforward follow up questions.*

## A2

*Can give a short, rehearsed, basic presentation on a familiar subject.*

*Can answer straightforward follow up questions if he/she can ask for repetition and if some help with*

*the formulation of his/her reply is possible.*

## A1

*Can read a very short, rehearsed statement – e.g. to introduce a speaker, propose a toast.*

**Note:** The descriptors on this sub-scale have been created by recombining elements of descriptors from other scales.

## OVERALL WRITTEN PRODUCTION

Learners:

### C2

*Can write clear, smoothly flowing, complex texts in an appropriate and effective style and a logical*

*structure which helps the reader to understand significant points.*

### C1

*Can write clear, well-structured texts of complex subjects, underlining the relevant salient issues, expanding and supporting points of view at some length with subsidiary points, reasons and relevant*

*examples, and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.*

### B2

*Can write clear, detailed texts on a variety of subjects related to his/her field of interest, synthesising and*

*evaluating information and arguments from a number of sources.*

### B1

*Can write straightforward connected texts on a range of familiar subjects within his field of interest, by*

*linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence.*

**A2**

*Can write a series of simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like 'and', 'but' and 'because'.*

**A1**

*Can write simple isolated phrases and sentences.*

Note: The descriptors on this scale and on the two sub-scales which follow (Creative Writing; Reports and Essays) have not been empirically calibrated with the measurement model. The descriptors for these three scales have therefore been created by recombining elements of descriptors from other scales.

## **CREATIVE WRITING**

Learners:

**C2**

*Can write clear, smoothly flowing, and fully engrossing stories and descriptions of experience in a style appropriate to the genre adopted.*

**C1**

*Can write clear, detailed, well-structured and developed descriptions and imaginative texts in an assured, personal, natural style appropriate to the reader in mind.*

**B2**

*Can write clear, detailed descriptions of real or imaginary events and experiences, marking the relationship between ideas in clear connected text, and following established conventions of the genre concerned.*

*Can write clear, detailed descriptions on a variety of subjects related to his/her field of interest.*

*Can write a review of a film, book or play.*

*Can write straightforward, detailed descriptions on a range of familiar subjects within his/her field of interest.*

**B1**

*Can write accounts of experiences, describing feelings and reactions in simple connected text.*

*Can write a description of an event, a recent trip – real or imagined.*

*Can narrate a story.*

*Can write about everyday aspects of his/her environment, e.g. people, places, a job or study experience in linked sentences.*

*Can write very short, basic descriptions of events, past activities and personal experiences.*

**A2**

*Can write a series of simple phrases and sentences about their family, living conditions, educational background, present or most recent job.*

*Can write short, simple imaginary biographies and simple poems about people.*

**A1**

*Can write simple phrases and sentences about themselves and imaginary people, where they live and what they do.*

## **REPORTS AND ESSAYS**

Learners:

**C2**

*Can produce clear, smoothly flowing, complex reports, articles or essays which present a case, or give critical appreciation of proposals or literary works.*

*Can provide an appropriate and effective logical structure which helps the reader to understand significant points.*

*Can write clear, well-structured expositions of complex subjects, underlining the relevant salient issues.*

**C1**

*Can expand and support points of view at some length with subsidiary points, reasons and relevant examples. Can write an essay or report which develops an argument systematically with appropriate highlighting*

*of significant points and relevant supporting detail.*

*Can evaluate different ideas or solutions to a problem.*

**B2**

*Can write an essay or report which develops an argument, giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view and explaining the advantages and disadvantages of various options.*

*Can synthesise information and arguments from a number of sources.*

*Can write short, simple essays on topics of interest.*

*Can summarise, report and give his/her opinion about accumulated factual information on familiar routine and non-routine matters within his/her field with some confidence.*

**B1**

*Can write very brief reports to a standard conventionalised format, which pass on routine factual information and state reasons for actions.*

**A2** No descriptor available

**A1** No descriptor available

**OVERALL LISTENING COMPREHENSION**

Learners:

**C2**

*Has no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, delivered at fast native speed.*

*Can understand enough to follow extended speech on abstract and complex topics beyond his/her own field, though he/she may need to confirm occasional details, especially if the accent is unfamiliar.*

**C1**

*Can recognise a wide range of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms, appreciating register shifts.*

*Can follow extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly.*

*Can understand standard spoken language, live or broadcast, on both familiar and unfamiliar topics normally encountered in personal, social, academic or vocational life. Only extreme background noise, inadequate discourse structure and/or idiomatic usage influences the ability to understand.*

## **B2**

*Can understand the main ideas of propositionally and linguistically complex speech on both concrete and abstract topics delivered in a standard dialect, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation.*

*Can follow extended speech and complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar, and the direction of the talk is sign-posted by explicit markers.*

## **B1**

*Can understand straightforward factual information about common everyday or job related topics, identifying both general messages and specific details, provided speech is clearly articulated in a generally familiar accent.*

*Can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure etc., including short narratives.*

*Can understand enough to be able to meet needs of a concrete type provided speech is clearly and slowly articulated.*

## **A2**

*Can understand phrases and expressions related to areas of most immediate priority (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment) provided speech is clearly and slowly articulated.*

## **A1**

*Can follow speech which is very slow and carefully articulated, with long pauses for him/her to assimilate meaning.*

## **UNDERSTANDING CONVERSATION BETWEEN NATIVE SPEAKERS**

Learners:

### **C2 As C1**

#### **C1**

*Can easily follow complex interactions between third parties in group discussion and debate, even on abstract, complex unfamiliar topics.*

*Can keep up with an animated conversation between native speakers.*

#### **B2**

*Can with some effort catch much of what is said around him/her, but may understand it difficult to participate effectively in discussion with several native speakers who do not modify their language in any way.*

#### **B1**

*Can generally follow the main points of extended discussion around him/her, provided speech is clearly articulated in standard dialect.*

#### **A2**

*Can generally identify the topic of discussion around him/her, when it is conducted slowly and clearly.*

*A1 No descriptor available*

## **LISTENING AS A MEMBER OF A LIVE AUDIENCE**



Learners:

**C2**

*Can follow specialised lectures and presentations employing a high degree of colloquialism, regional usage or unfamiliar terminology.*

**C1**

*Can follow most lectures, discussions and debates with relative ease.*

**B2**

*Can follow the essentials of lectures, talks and reports and other forms of academic/professional presentation which are propositionally and linguistically complex.*

*Can follow a lecture or talk within his/her own field, provided the subject matter is familiar and the presentation straightforward and clearly structured.*

**B1**

*Can follow in outline straightforward short talks on familiar topics provided these are delivered in clearly articulated standard speech.*

**A2** No descriptor available

**A1** No descriptor available

## LISTENING TO ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INSTRUCTIONS

Learners:

**C2 As C1**

*Can extract specific information from poor quality, audibly distorted public announcements, e.g. in a station, sports stadium etc.*

**C1**

*Can understand complex technical information, such as operating instructions, specifications for familiar products and services.*

**B2**

*Can understand announcements and messages on concrete and abstract topics spoken in standard dialect at normal speed.*

**B1**

*Can understand simple technical information, such as operating instructions for everyday equipment.*

*Can follow detailed directions.*

**A2**

*Can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.*

*Can understand simple directions relating to how to get from X to Y, by foot or public transport.*

**A1**

*Can understand instructions addressed carefully and slowly to him/her and follow short, simple directions.*

## LISTENING TO AUDIO MEDIA AND RECORDINGS

Learners:

C2 As C1

C1

*Can understand a wide range of recorded and broadcast audio material, including some non-standard usage, and identify finer points of detail including implicit attitudes and relationships between speakers.*

B2

*Can understand recordings in standard dialect likely to be encountered in social, professional or academic life and identify speaker viewpoints and attitudes as well as the information content.*

*Can understand most radio documentaries and most other recorded or broadcast audio material delivered in standard dialect and can identify the speaker's mood, tone etc.*

*Can understand the information content of the majority of recorded or broadcast audio material on topics of personal interest delivered in clear standard speech.*

B1

*Can understand the main points of radio news bulletins and simpler recorded material about familiar subjects delivered relatively slowly and clearly.*

A2

*Can understand and extract the essential information from short, recorded passages dealing with predictable everyday matters which are delivered slowly and clearly.*

A1 No descriptor available

## OVERALL READING COMPREHENSION

Learners:

*Can understand and interpret critically virtually all forms of the written language including abstract, structurally complex, or highly colloquial literary and non-literary writings.*

C2

*Can understand a wide range of long and complex texts, appreciating subtle distinctions of style and implicit as well as explicit meaning.*

C1

*Can understand in detail lengthy, complex texts, whether or not they relate to his/her own area of speciality, provided he/she can reread difficult sections.*

B2

*Can read with a large degree of independence, adapting style and speed of reading to different texts and purposes, and using appropriate reference sources selectively. Has a broad active reading vocabulary, but may experience some difficulty with low frequency idioms.*

B1

*Can read straightforward factual texts on subjects related to his/her field and interest with a satisfactory level of comprehension.*

*Can understand short, simple texts on familiar matters of a concrete type which consist of high frequency everyday or job-related language.*

A2

*Can understand short, simple texts containing the highest frequency vocabulary, including a proportion of shared international vocabulary items.*

**A1**

*Can understand very short, simple texts a single phrase at a time, picking up familiar names, words and basic phrases and rereading as required.*

## **READING CORRESPONDENCE**

Learners:

**C2 As C1**

**C1**

*Can understand any correspondence given the occasional use of a dictionary.*

**B2**

*Can read correspondence relating to his/her field of interest and readily grasp the essential meaning.*

**B1**

*Can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters well enough to correspond regularly with a pen friend.*

**A2**

*Can understand basic types of standard routine letters and faxes (enquiries, orders, letters of confirmation etc.) on familiar topics.*

*Can understand short simple personal letters.*

**A1**

*Can understand short, simple messages on postcards.*

## **READING FOR ORIENTATION**

Learners:

**C2 As B2**

**C1 As B2**

*Can scan quickly through long and complex texts, locating relevant details.*

**B2**

*Can quickly identify the content and relevance of news items, articles and reports on a wide range of professional topics, deciding whether closer study is worthwhile.*

*Can scan longer texts in order to locate desired information, and gather information from different parts of a text, or from different texts in order to field a specific task.*

**B1**

*Can understand relevant information in everyday material, such as letters, brochures and short official documents.*

*Can understand specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus, reference lists and timetables.*

**A2**

*Can locate specific information in lists and isolate the information required (e.g. use the 'Yellow Pages' to understand a service or tradesman).*

*Can understand everyday signs and notices: in public places, such as streets, restaurants, railway stations; in workplaces, such as directions, instructions, hazard warnings.*

**A1**

*Can recognise familiar names, words and very basic phrases on simple notices in the most common everyday situations.*

## READING FOR INFORMATION AND ARGUMENT

Learners:

**C2 As C1**

**C1**

*Can understand in detail a wide range of lengthy, complex texts likely to be encountered in social, professional or academic life, identifying finer points of detail including attitudes and implied as well as stated opinions.*

*Can obtain information, ideas and opinions from highly specialised sources within his/her field.*

**B2**

*Can understand specialised articles outside his/her field, provided he/she can use a dictionary occasionally to confirm his/her interpretation of terminology.*

*Can understand articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular stances or viewpoints.*

**B1**

*Can identify the main conclusions in clearly signalled argumentative texts.*

*Can recognise the line of argument in the treatment of the issue presented, though not necessarily in detail.*

*Can recognise significant points in straightforward newspaper articles on familiar subjects.*

**A2**

*Can identify specific information in simpler written material he/she encounters such as letters, brochures and short newspaper articles describing events.*

**A1**

*Can get an idea of the content of simpler informational material and short simple descriptions, especially if there is visual support.*

## READING INSTRUCTION

Learners:

**C2 As C1**

**C1**

*Can understand in detail lengthy, complex instructions on a new machine or procedure, whether or not the instructions relate to his/her own area of speciality, provided he/she can reread difficult sections.*

**B2**

*Can understand lengthy, complex instructions in his field, including details on conditions and warnings, provided he/she can reread difficult sections.*

**B1**

*Can understand clearly written, straightforward instructions for a piece of equipment.  
Can understand regulations, for example safety, when expressed in simple language.*

**A2**

*Can understand simple instructions on equipment encountered in everyday life – such as a public telephone.*

**A1**

*Can follow short, simple written directions (e.g. to go from X to Y).*

## **WATCHING TV AND FILM**

Learners:

**C2 As C1**

**C1** *Can follow films employing a considerable degree of slang and idiomatic usage.*

**B2**

*Can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes.*

*Can understand documentaries, live interviews, talk shows, plays and the majority of films in standard dialect.*

*Can understand a large part of many TV programmes on topics of personal interest such as interviews, short lectures, and news reports when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.*

**B1**

*Can follow many films in which visuals and action carry much of the storyline, and which are delivered clearly in straightforward language.*

*Can catch the main points in TV programmes on familiar topics when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.*

*Can identify the main point of TV news items reporting events, accidents etc. where the visual supports the commentary.*

**A2**

*Can follow changes of topic of factual TV news items, and form an idea of the main content.*

**A1** *No descriptor available*

## LANGUAGE BIOGRAPHY

The Language Biography comprises four sections:

1. My language learning aims
2. My language learning history
3. My most significant linguistic and intercultural experiences
4. My current language learning priorities

<<<>>>

### 1. MY LANGUAGE LEARNING AIMS

LANGUAGE: \_\_\_\_\_

Write about your aims, why, what and how you want to learn.

Do you need to reach a particular level?

Take a new sheet for each language.

---

Write below.

Take a fresh sheet if you fill up this one.



### 3. MY MOST SIGNIFICANT LINGUISTIC AND INTERCULTURAL EXPERIENCES

Take a new sheet for each language.

Write about intercultural experiences which have been formative for you.

What did you enjoy most about them?

What kind of experiences did you have?

*For example:*      Visits to countries where the languages you are learning are spoken  
                            Contact with the culture and speakers of the language  
                            Jobs or learning holidays in foreign countries  
                            Specific projects or other work you have carried out on a foreign  
                            language or culture.

---

Write below

Take a fresh sheet if you fill up this one.



#### 4. MY CURRENT LANGUAGE LEARNING PRIORITIES

LANGUAGE: \_\_\_\_\_

See the Language Passport section.

Work through the checklist to identify what you want to be able to do by the end of the course.

Write it down on the sheet to record your priorities

## THE DOSSIER

The contents of your Dossier could be any of the following:

- *particular examinations*
- *articles you've written*
- *letters and postcards*
- *description of your eating habits*
- *particular research*
- *description of a party or festival or celebration*
- *examples of good written language work*
- *audio/video recordings*
- *descriptions and results of project work*
- *documents, diplomas, certificates*
- *course descriptions*
- *reflections on language learning progress*
- *reports from tutors*
- *statements from others about your language skills*
- *things you'd like to keep and show others*

You can update it as often as you like and replace older work with more recent work.

Use a separate page for each language.

Write on the sheet the type of material you are presenting in your dossier (e. g : composition, cassette recording, letter, poem etc.)

Write whether this is all your own work, or work done with other language learners.

## 8.

### Building bridges between school, university, business sector and voluntary service.

School, university, businesses and voluntary service mutually complement one another as places of learning and they should be brought closer together.

With respect to the world of learning in the widest sense, from primary to higher education and university, training courses must be better matched to employment opportunities.

Bringing school, university, business sector and voluntary service closer together is a priority and which involves some conditions.

Firstly, education must be opened up to the world of work. Without reducing the point of education solely to the purpose of employment, an understanding of the world of work, a knowledge of enterprises and an insight into the changes which mark production processes are some of the basics which schooling must take into account.

Secondly, companies must be involved in the training drive, not only as regards workers but also young people and adults. Training cannot be seen purely as a way of supplying skilled labour to firms; enterprises bear a responsibility, i.e. that of giving a chance - often in the form of a job - to those who were failed by the traditional education systems. In these cases, enterprises must interact with voluntary services organizations in order to overall any possible gap between the two worlds. Some have made substantial efforts to reskill their staff, thus enabling them to cope with technological innovation, while others have not, throwing onto the streets workers who clearly could be retrained. This must not happen again, but it should be very important to face the crucial matter of social exclusion and to ask governments to study possible projects which could be used to reduce the problem.

Thirdly, cooperation must be developed between schools, universities and firms.

Reinforcing the links between school, university, the business sector and voluntary service must be based primarily on apprenticeship/trainee schemes.

By providing students with their first contact with the world of work, it places them at a considerable advantage for entering the job market. Promotion of apprenticeship/trainee schemes at European level will provide added value for both young people and companies.

school and university must not only allow for critical faculties to be developed at all levels, among both students and teachers, they must also encourage it.

Their open environment, cooperation requirements and duty to prepare young people for employment must not be allowed to prevent it from accomplishing its main function, however, which is to guide students in its care in their personal and social development. In today's world, knowledge in the broad sense can be defined as an acquired body of fundamental and technical knowledge, allied to social skills.

It is the balance of this knowledge acquired through the formal education system, in the family, on the job, in voluntary experiences and through various information networks, which create the broad and transferable body of knowledge which is most favourable to employment.

Basic knowledge is the foundation on which individual employability is built.

Language learning and technical knowledge also needs to be encouraged. It is acquired partly within the vocational education and training system and partly on the job.

The employability of a person and their capacity to adapt are linked to the way they are able to combine these different types of knowledge and build on them.

In this context, individuals become the principal constructor of their own abilities and can combine the skills acquired through the traditional institutional routes, with those acquired through their occupational experience and those acquired by virtue of their personal training effort.

By diversifying education provision, building bridges between various channels, increasing experience and by opening up the potential for mobility as widely as possible, people can build up and build on their level of employability and better control their career.

## CONCLUSION

Europe must invest in education to raise the general skill level of employees and the working population, through basic education and by fostering the acquisition of new knowledge and new technology throughout life.

All this is accompanied on the social front by an urgent need to avert a rift in society. Social exclusion has become widespread in Europe in recent years and there is no need to dwell on the consequences of this situation.

Clearly, a special effort has to be made for the most vulnerable sections of young people, particularly in the urban areas hardest hit by unemployment.

This effort depends on initial and continuing training, as well as measures to give young people leaving school with no qualifications a second chance especially to be involved in the voluntary service projects.

Naturally, everything starts at school, which is where the learning society has its roots. It is important to highlight the role of school in this process. School and university have to adapt, but nevertheless they remain the irreplaceable instruments of everyone's personal development and social integration.

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