

**Developing plurilingual citizens in  
multilingual societies: strengthening  
the role of regional and minority  
languages**

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Ireland**

## **About myself**

- English by birth and education: not an Irish-speaker
- Studied modern languages (German and French) at Oxford
- Came to Trinity College Dublin in 1967 as a junior lecturer in the Department of German
- Became interested in problems of language teaching and learning
- Established the Centre for Language and Communication Studies in 1979 and became an applied linguist
- In 1985, with Helen Ó Murchú and David Singleton, developed two functional-notional inventories for Irish (adults; schools)

## **About myself**

- In 1986 contributed to a language education policy document issued by the Curriculum and Examinations Board (now the NCCA)
- In 2003 wrote a discussion document for the NCCA on the future of languages at post-primary level
- Have contributed since the 1980s to the language education work of the Council of Europe
- Have been centrally involved since the 1990s in the development and implementation of the European Language Portfolio
- Principal research interest: the theory and practice of learner autonomy in second language education

## What this talk is about

- The situation of Irish in our school system and the need for reform
- How the work of the Council of Europe can help us to shape reform
  - The concept of plurilingualism and the importance of diversity
  - *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe 2001)
  - The European Language Portfolio
- An example of how the Council of Europe tools can be used: English as a second language in Irish primary schools
- How to apply my argument to Irish in particular and regional and minority languages in general

# **The situation of Irish in our school system**

## **Some basics**

- Since the foundation of the state the school system has been responsible for restoring the Irish language
- Irish is thus an obligatory subject from the beginning to the end of English-medium schooling
- Irish Language Commissioner: 13 years → 1,500 hours  
– and young people are still leaving school without a basic command of the language
- Five grown-up children: 65 years → 7,500 hours
- Widespread sense of waste, futility and impatience
- Hence Fine Gael’s recent proposal: make Irish an optional subject in the school-leaving exam

## What happens if Irish becomes optional?

- The politicians say: The situation of the language will actually improve, because those who choose to learn it will be genuinely motivated to do so
- Language education experts say: All the evidence suggests that if languages are made optional, large numbers of students will not take them – languages are often unpopular and widely perceived to be difficult (cf. the case of foreign languages in England)
- What the Irish Language Commissioner says: “If it's a choice of abandoning [the teaching of Irish] or reforming it, the first choice has to be for reforming it” (*Education Today*, 22 March 2011)

## **What kind of reform do we need?**

- According to the Irish Language Commissioner, students should be offered two Irish courses:

“One would be a communications course, where the emphasis would be on writing, reading and speaking Irish – and only on that. A second course would be for people with a natural interest in the language – literature, poetry, drama and so on.

“The two courses would run the same way as we have maths and applied maths – as two separate courses.

“So we could have a similar system where everybody would leave school with a basic command of the language, enough where they could watch TG4 or read a newspaper or order a pizza in Irish”

*(Education Today, 22 March 2011)*



## Why the Commissioner is wrong

- His proposal makes a false distinction between “communication” (ordering a pizza in Irish) and “interest in the language” (literature etc.)
- It fails to recognize the different needs of native and non-native speakers, and of Irish-medium and English-medium schools
- It focuses on Irish as an isolated component of the curriculum rather than as an integral part of a language education that should embrace: English or Irish as L1; Irish or English as L2; foreign languages; Irish Sign Language; home languages of immigrants
- It ignores the need for a framework in which the needs of English-medium and Irish-medium schooling can be met in a mutually beneficial way
- Sensible reform that would have some chance of success requires specialist input using an internationally recognized tool → *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR)

# **How the work of the Council of Europe can help to shape reform**

## **General policy orientation**

- To create a common democratic and legal area throughout the continent, ensuring respect for its fundamental values:
  - Human rights
  - Democracy
  - Rule of law
- Enduring concern with social inclusion, social cohesion and respect for diversity
- “Languages in/for Education” project launched in 2006 as part of the follow-up to the Third Summit of Heads of State and Government (Warsaw, May 2005)
- Foundational concept: “plurilingual and intercultural education”

## Plurilingualism

- The Council of Europe distinguishes between ***plurilingual individuals***, who are capable of communicating in two or more languages, at whatever level of proficiency, and ***multilingual regions or societies***, where two or more language varieties are in use
- According to the CEFR, language education should aim to provide learners with plurilingual and intercultural competence, understood as

*“the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social agent has proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultures”*

## **Plurilingualism in education**

- Everyone has the potential to be plurilingual because plurilingual competence is a consequence of our inbuilt language capacity
- Education should seek to ensure the harmonious development of the individual's plurilingual competence in the same way as it seeks to promote the development of his or her other abilities
- The different languages in a plurilingual repertoire usually serve different purposes: communicating within the family, socializing with neighbours, working, studying, expressing membership of a group, and so on

## **Some key questions**

- How can we define the purposes served by the different languages in our pupils' and students' developing plurilingual repertoires?
  - In the case of Irish the answer may be different for Irish-medium and English-medium curricula, but it should be expressed in the same terms
- How can we define the proficiency levels to be achieved in the different languages at different stages of schooling?
- How can we ensure that our curriculum goals are expressed in terms that carry unmistakable pedagogical implications?

### **Answer**

- By making use of the CEFR and the European Language Portfolio ELP

## **The CEFR: six levels of L2 proficiency**

**A1**

**A2**

**B1**

**B2**

**C1**

**C2**

# **The CEFR: six levels of L2 proficiency**

**A1 – Breakthrough**

**A2 – Waystage**

**B1 – Threshold**

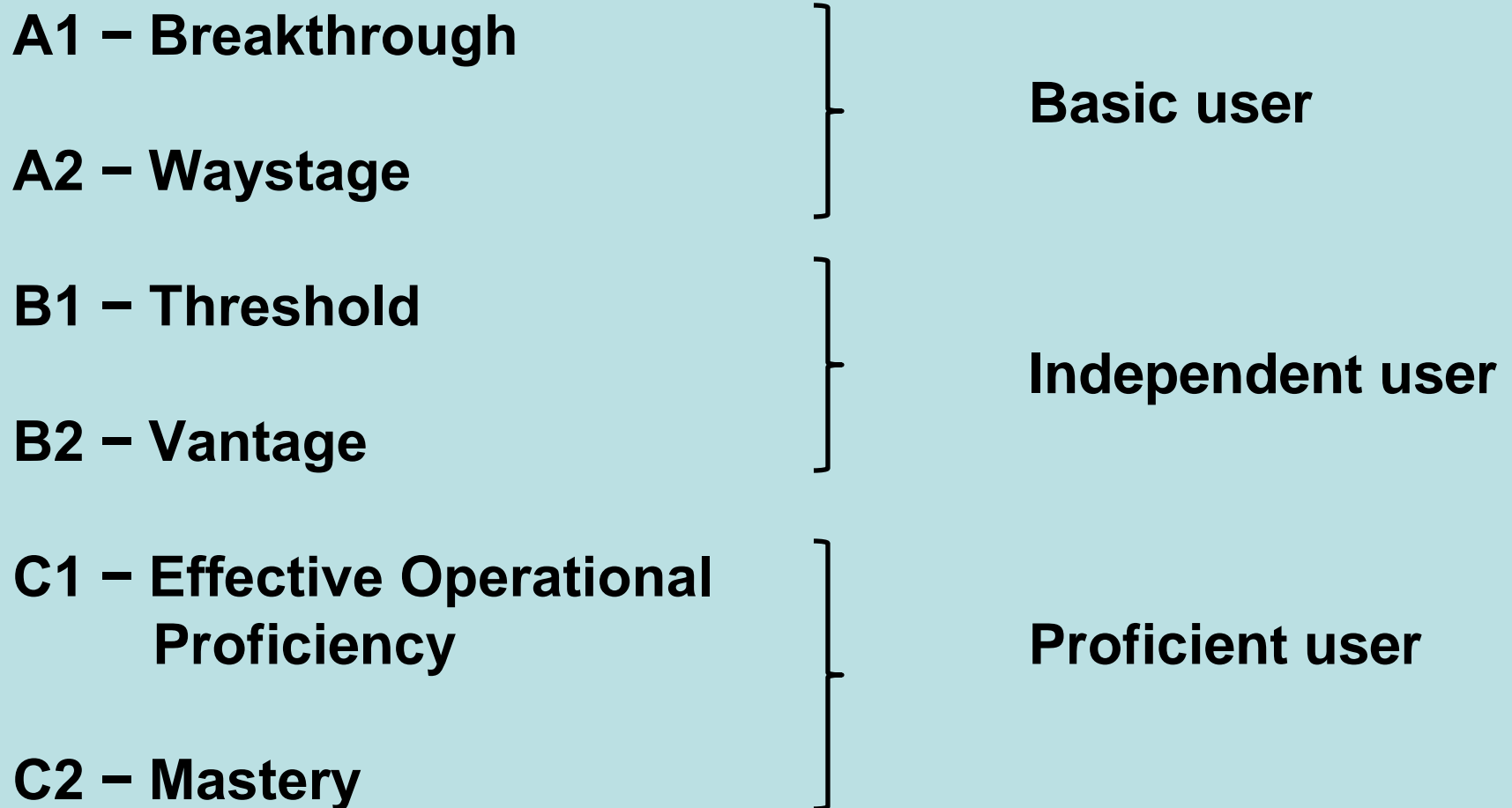
**B2 – Vantage**

**C1 – Effective Operational  
Proficiency**






**C2 – Mastery**



## **The CEFR: six levels of L2 proficiency**



# Self-assessment grid

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
<b>Understanding</b>  Listening	I can understand familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.	I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local area, employment). I can catch	I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or	I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the	I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly. I can understand television programmes and films without too much effort.	I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast native speed, provided I have some time to get familiar with the accent.
 Reading	I can understand familiar words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and catalogues.				I can read with ease virtually all forms of the written language, including abstract, structurally or linguistically complex texts such as manuals, specialised articles and literary works.	
<b>Speaking</b>  Spoken interaction	I can interact in a simple way with the other person is prepared to or rephrase things as I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer in areas of immediate familiar topics.				I can take part effortlessly in any conversation or discussion and have a good familiarity with idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. I can express myself fluently and convey finer shades of meaning precisely. If I do have a problem I can backtrack and restructure around the difficulty so smoothly that other people are hardly aware of it.	
 Spoken production	I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe what I know.				I can present a clear, smoothly-flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.	
<b>Writing</b>  Writing	I can write a short, simple text, for example sending holiday greetings. I can fill in forms with personal details, for example entering my name, nationality and address on a hotel registration form.	I can write a very simple personal letter, for example thanking someone for something.	I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions.	I can write a wide range of subjects related to my interests. I can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view. I can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences.	I can write clear, smoothly-flowing text in an appropriate style. I can write complex letters, reports or articles which present a case with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points. I can write summaries and reviews of professional or literary works.	

I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).

## **The scales behind the self-assessment grid**

- 34 illustrative scales for various dimensions of LISTENING, READING, SPOKEN INTERACTION, SPOKEN PRODUCTION, WRITING

### **But the behavioural scales are complemented by**

- 13 scales of linguistic competence and language quality, for example:
  - GENERAL LINGUISTIC RANGE
  - VOCABULARY RANGE
  - VOCABULARY CONTROL
  - GRAMMATICAL ACCURACY
- 7 strategic scales, for example:
  - PLANNING
  - COMPENSATING
  - MONITORING/REPAIR

**To do the CEFR justice, the three kinds of scale must be used in interaction with one another**

## Two points to bear in mind

- The CEFR’s action-oriented approach offers to bring curriculum, pedagogy and assessment into closer interrelation than has traditionally been the case. Each “can do” descriptor may serve as
  - A curriculum target
  - A criterion for selecting/developing learning activities and materials
  - A starting point for the elaboration of assessment criteria
- The CEFR is language-independent: its use should always entail elaboration in terms of the particular language that is in focus; hence
  - The French *référentiels* for the different proficiency levels
  - *Profile deutsch*
  - *English Profile*

## What lies behind the CEFR?

- The Council of Europe’s work on language education has always aimed to
  - “make the process of language learning more **democratic** by providing the conceptual tools for the planning, construction and conduct of courses closely geared to the needs, motivations and characteristics of the learner and enabling him so far as possible to **steer and control his own progress**” (Trim 1978, p.1)
- It is thus no accident that
  - the Council of Europe first introduced the concept of learner autonomy to the world of foreign language learning (Holec 1979)
  - learning precedes teaching and assessment in the CEFR’s sub-title
  - the European Language Portfolio (ELP) was developed as a means of mediating the CEFR’s ethos to language learners

## The ELP: three obligatory components

- ***Language Passport***
  - Summarizes the owner's linguistic identity and language learning and intercultural experience
  - Records the owner's self-assessment
- ***Language Biography***
  - Provides a reflective accompaniment to the ongoing processes of learning and using second languages and engaging with the cultures associated with them
  - Includes “I can” checklists to support self-assessment
- ***Dossier***
  - Collects evidence of L2 proficiency and intercultural experience

## Key features of the ELP

- Designed to
  - make the language learning process more transparent to the learner and foster the development of learner autonomy
  - promote intercultural awareness and plurilingualism
- Values all language and intercultural learning, whether it takes place in formal educational contexts or outside them
- Learner self-assessment is carried out using checklists of “I can” descriptors organized by activity and CEFR level
- Focus on goal setting and self-assessment helps to make language learning more **democratic** and enable learners to **steer and control their own progress** (cf. Trim 1978)
- A reporting as well as a pedagogical function

# **Adapting the CEFR and the ELP to local needs: English as a second language in Irish primary schools**



## **The context**

- From the early 1990s unprecedented numbers of migrants came to Ireland: refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants
- Thus Irish primary and post-primary schools were required to accommodate large numbers of children and adolescents whose home language was neither English nor Irish
- Newcomer pupils/students are assigned to a mainstream class appropriate to their age and provided with two years of English language support delivered on a withdrawal basis
- Integrate Ireland Language and Training (IILT; 1999–2008) given the tasks of
  - developing an ESL curriculum and other teaching/learning supports
  - mediating them to teachers via a programme of in-service seminars

## **Basic requirements of a primary ESL curriculum**

It must

- reflect the purpose of ESL support: to give ESL pupils access to mainstream education
- describe progression in learning
- make sense to teachers
- be presented in a form that encourages and facilitates frequent use
- support a pedagogy oriented to the development of learner autonomy and communicative teaching methods

The CEFR as an obvious model and source

- English Language Proficiency Benchmarks

## Why we had to adapt the CEFR

- The CEFR's descriptors imply mostly adult communicative behaviour based on an adult range of experience
- The CEFR focuses mostly on language use *outside* educational contexts, whereas our ESL curriculum must focus on the communicative use of English as the medium of primary education



### Note

- Because the purpose of our curriculum was to bring pupils to the threshold of full participation in the mainstream, we needed only the first three common reference levels (B1 = *Threshold*)

## **How we adapted the CEFR**

- We observed a number of Irish primary classrooms and drew up a checklist of typical modes of classroom communication
- We familiarized ourselves with the multi-volume primary curriculum and identified 13 recurrent themes
- We rewrote the first three levels of the CEFR's self-assessment grid to make them age-appropriate and domain-specific

## Global benchmarks of communicative proficiency

		A1 BREAKTHROUGH	A2 WAYSTAGE	B1 THRESHOLD
U N D E R S T A N D I N G	<b>Listening</b> 	<p>Can recognize and understand basic words and phrases concerning him/herself, family and school.</p> <p>Can understand simple questions and instructions when teachers and other pupils speak very slowly and clearly.</p>	<p>Can recognize and understand frequently used words relating to him/herself and family, classroom activities and routines, school instructions and procedures, friends and play.</p> <p>Can understand a routine instruction given outside school (e.g., by a traffic warden).</p> <p>Can understand what is said in a familiar context such as buying something in a shop (e.g., price).</p> <p>Can follow at a general level topics covered in the mainstream class provided key concepts and vocabulary have been studied in advance and there is appropriate visual support.</p> <p>Can follow and understand a story if it is read slowly and clearly with visual support such as facial expression, gesture and pictures.</p>	<p>Can understand the main points of topics that are presented clearly in the mainstream classroom.</p> <p>Can understand the main points of stories that are read aloud in the mainstream classroom</p> <p>Can understand a large part of a short film on a familiar topic provided that it is age-appropriate.</p> <p>Can understand detailed instructions given in all school contexts (classroom, gym, playground, etc.).</p> <p>Can follow classroom talk between two or more native speakers, only occasionally needing to request clarification.</p>
	<b>Reading</b> (if appropriate to the age of the pupil) 	<p>Can recognize the letters of the alphabet.</p> <p>Can recognize and understand basic signs and simple notices in the school and on the way to school.</p> <p>Can recognize and understand basic words on labels or posters in the classroom.</p> <p>Can identify basic words and phrases in a new piece of text.</p>	<p>Can read and understand very short and simple texts that contain a high proportion of previously learnt vocabulary on familiar subjects (e.g., class texts, familiar stories).</p> <p>Can use the alphabet to find particular items in lists (e.g., a name in a telephone book).</p>	<p>Can read and understand the main points in texts encountered in the mainstream class, provided the thematic area and key vocabulary are already familiar.</p> <p>Can read and understand descriptions of events, feelings and wishes.</p> <p>Can use comprehension questions to find specific answers in a piece of text.</p> <p>Can use key words, diagrams and illustrations to support reading comprehension.</p> <p>Can follow clearly written instructions (for carrying out a classroom task, assembling or using an object, following directions, etc.).</p>






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## UNIT 2: OUR SCHOOL

		A1 BREAKTHROUGH	A2 WAYSTAGE	B1 THRESHOLD
U N D E R S T A N D I N G	<b>Listening</b> 	<p>Can understand basic school and classroom rules when they are explained very simply and with appropriate gestures.</p> <p>Can recognize and understand the names of school equipment, resources, etc., when they occur in instructions.</p> <p>Can understand and follow basic instructions from peers for playing games in the playground.</p>	<p>Can understand instructions given in the classroom, gym, playground, etc.</p> <p>Can understand basic information about half days, school closures, doctor's visits, etc.</p> <p>Can understand at a general level topics dealt with in the mainstream class when they are introduced and explained clearly.</p>	<p>Can understand detailed instructions in the classroom, gym, etc.</p> <p>Can understand a presentation given by another pupil on a familiar topic (<i>My interests, My family, etc.</i>)</p>
	<b>Reading</b> (if appropriate to the age of the pupil) 	<p>Can recognize and understand labels on doors in different parts of the school (<i>Hall, Secretary, Staff Room, etc.</i>).</p> <p>Can recognize and understand signs in the school (<i>Fire, Exit, No running, etc.</i>).</p> <p>Can recognize and understand words and numbers on posters and drawings in the classroom (days of the week, months of the year, etc.)</p> <p>Can find his/her name on a list.</p>	<p>Can read and understand texts about school that use a high frequency of words already familiar or recently learnt.</p>	<p>Can read and understand texts on school subjects provided that difficult key words and/or concepts are introduced beforehand.</p>
S P E A K I N G	<b>Spoken Interaction</b> 	<p>Can ask permission to go to the toilet.</p> <p>Can respond non-verbally (e.g., with a nod or shake of the head) or with single-word or very brief answers to basic questions on classroom topics.</p> <p>Can use <i>please</i> and <i>thank you</i> appropriately.</p> <p>Can ask for familiar classroom objects and materials (book, crayons, paper, etc.)</p>	<p>Can ask for attention in class.</p> <p>Can pass on a simple message from one teacher to another.</p> <p>Can generally sustain a conversation with another pupil when working collaboratively in the classroom (painting a picture, making a model, playing with puppets, etc.).</p> <p>With appropriate support from the teacher, can explain a situation that has arisen (e.g. a dispute with another pupil).</p>	<p>Can interact spontaneously in the playground, engaging with other pupils in games and activities.</p> <p>Can give parents a detailed account of what happens at school.</p> <p>Can ask and answer questions about specific classroom topics or in general discussion.</p>
	<b>Spoken Production</b> 	<p>Can use key words and simple phrases/sentences and sentences to describe a playground game.</p>	<p>Can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe what he/she watches on television, how he/she likes to do homework after school, and what he/she does at home.</p>	<p>Can give a simple talk about the school.</p> <p>Can explain to other pupils about going to school in another country.</p>
W R I T I N G	<b>Writing</b> (if appropriate to the age of the pupil) 	<p>Can copy letters and key words from the board, including phrases or simple sentences related to a classroom topic.</p>	<p>Can write short texts describing the classroom or other pupils in the class.</p> <p>Can write short texts based on a topic recently studied in class</p>	<p>Can write an account of the daily routine in the school.</p> <p>Can write about his/her friends in school and what they like to do together.</p>



## **How we adapted the CEFR**

- We observed a number of Irish primary classrooms and drew up a checklist of typical modes of classroom communication
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- We wrote 13 “units of work” in the form of “can do” statements at three levels
- We added scales of underlying linguistic competence: grammar, vocabulary, phonology, orthography

## Global scales of underlying linguistic competence

	A1 BREAKTHROUGH	A2 WAYSTAGE	B1 THRESHOLD
<b>Vocabulary control</b>	Can recognize, understand and use a limited range of basic vocabulary which has been used repeatedly in class or has been specifically taught.	Can recognize, understand and use a range of vocabulary associated with concrete everyday needs or learning experiences (e.g., topics or routines that have been introduced and practised in class).	Can recognize, understand and use a range of vocabulary related to familiar classroom themes, school routines and activities. Errors still occur when the pupil attempts to express more complex ideas or handle unfamiliar topics.
<b>Grammatical accuracy</b>	Can use a very limited number of grammatical structures and simple sentence patterns that he/she has learnt by repeated use (e.g., <i>My name is ...</i> )	Can use simple grammatical structures that have been learnt and practised in class. Makes frequent basic mistakes with tenses, prepositions and personal pronouns, though when he/she is speaking or writing about a familiar topic the meaning is generally clear.	Can communicate with reasonable accuracy on familiar topics (those being studied or occurring frequently during the school day). Meaning is clear despite errors. Unfamiliar situations or topics present a challenge, however, particularly when the connection to familiar patterns is not obvious.
<b>Phonological control</b>	Can pronounce a very limited repertoire of learnt and familiar words and phrases. Native speakers who are aware of what the pupil has been learning and familiar with the pronunciation patterns of pupils from different language backgrounds can understand his/her pronunciation, but sometimes with difficulty.	Can pronounce familiar words (those being learnt in class or used in the school generally) in a reasonably clear manner, though with a noticeable foreign accent. It is sometimes necessary to ask the pupil to repeat what he/she has said.	Can pronounce words with confidence in a clearly intelligible way. Some mispronunciations still occur, but in general he/she is closely familiar with the sounds of English.
<b>Orthographic control</b> (if appropriate to the age of the pupil)	Can copy keywords from the board, flashcards or posters. Can copy or write his/her name, address and the name of the school.	Can copy or write short sentences or phrases related to what is being studied in class. Sentence breaks are generally accurate. Words that he/she uses orally may be written with phonetic accuracy but inaccurate spelling.	Can produce short pieces of continuous writing that are generally intelligible throughout. Spelling, punctuation and layout are accurate enough to be followed most of the time.

## **Basic pedagogical considerations**

- In any immersion context language learning is driven above all by language use, so supports for teaching and learning must focus above all on the development of the pupils' communicative repertoire
- Given the limited nature of ESL support, it is essential to develop pupils' metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness and skills
- It is important to capture each pupil's ESL development in such a way that it can easily be reported and demonstrated to class teacher, school principal, parents, school inspectors
- ELP as key tool for learning and teaching

## **Primary ELP – language passport**

- Focuses on the pupil's identity, with particular reference to language
  - Who she/he is
  - What language(s) other than English she/he speaks, and with whom
- Designed to accommodate the translation of headings into the individual learner's home language

# My Language Passport

Stick your photo  
or draw your  
picture here

My name is:

I live at:

My birthday is:

My school is:

My hair is:

My eyes are:

# Languages I know

These are the languages I know:

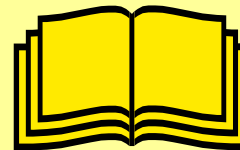
I speak

with my family

I speak

in school

I also know



I can read in .....

I can write in .....



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

## Primary ELP – language passport

- Focuses on the pupil's identity, with particular reference to language
  - Who she/he is
  - What language(s) other than English she/he speaks, and with whom
- Designed to accommodate the translation of headings into the individual learner's home language
- Tracks progress against the activities and levels of the benchmarks (*Global benchmarks of language proficiency*)



## Global benchmarks of communicative proficiency – Speaking and Writing

(for details see Language Proficiency Benchmarks)

		A1 BREAKTHROUGH	A2 WAYSTAGE	B1 THRESHOLD
S P E A K I N G	<b>Spoken Interaction</b> 	I can say <i>hello</i> and <i>goodbye, please</i> and <i>thank you</i> , can ask for directions in the school, and can ask and answer simple questions.	I can answer questions about my family, friends, school work, hobbies and holidays. I can keep up a conversation with my classmates when we are working together, and can express my feelings.	I can talk fluently about school, my family, my daily routine and my likes and dislikes. I can take part in classroom discussions and can hold conversations with other pupils about things I am interested in. I can repeat what has been said and pass the information on to another person.
	<b>Spoken Production</b> 	I can give a simple description of where I live and people I know, especially members of my family.	I can describe my family, my daily routines and activities, and my plans for the immediate or more distant future.	I can retell a story that has been read in class or the plot of a film I have seen or a book I have read. I can describe a special family event (religious festival, birthday, new baby, etc.) and can explain my opinions and plans.
W R I T I N G	<b>Writing</b>  (if appropriate to the age of the pupil)	I can write my name and address and the name of the school. I can write labels on pictures and copy short sentences from the board.	I can write new words in my European Language Portfolio and can write short texts on familiar topics (e.g., what I like to do when I'm at home). I can write a short message (e.g., a postcard) to a friend.	I can write my daily news, a short letter, a summary of a book or film, an account of my feelings about an event or situation, and a short dialogue to be performed by puppets.

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## **Primary ELP – language biography**


- Focuses on
  - pupil’s daily exposure to language: hearing, speaking and reading
  - learning how to learn: development of metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness

## WHERE I use and learn languages

When I get up in the morning I speak  \_\_\_\_\_

On my way to school I hear  \_\_\_\_\_

With my friends I speak  \_\_\_\_\_

In my class I hear  \_\_\_\_\_

At home I see  these things written: \_\_\_\_\_ in these languages: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

On the street I see  these things written: \_\_\_\_\_ in these languages: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_





At home I hear  these things: \_\_\_\_\_ in these languages: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I speak  these languages: \_\_\_\_\_ in these places: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## HOW I learn

WORDS	 When I want to learn and remember new words I ...	
READING	 When I want to read something I ...	
LISTENING	 When I want to understand what I am hearing I ...	
SPEAKING	 When I want to speak I ...	
WRITING	 When I want to write something I ...	

Write  
the  
date!

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  - pupil’s daily exposure to language: hearing, speaking and reading
  - learning how to learn: development of metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness






## **Primary ELP – language biography**

- Focuses on
  - pupil’s daily exposure to language: hearing, speaking and reading
  - learning how to learn: development of metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness
- Provides “I can” checklists for the 13 “units of work”








## Our school










### A1

- I can understand some of the things that the teacher says in class and the names for things in the school 
- I can understand when my friends tell me how to play a game 
- I can read the names and notices on the doors in my school and on the board 
- I can ask permission to go to the toilet 
- I can ask for things in the classroom 

### A2

- I understand what the teacher says in P.E. 
- I can understand things that I must tell my parents 
- I can read words that I know in a book 
- I can give a message to the teacher or tell a teacher about a problem 
- I can tell the story of what I saw on television 
- I can write a little about my school and my friends 
- I can write a little about what we are doing in class 






### B1

- I can understand exactly what the teacher says to me 
- I can understand the other pupils in my class 
- I can read my textbooks in the class 
- I can ask the teacher questions in class 
- I can tell my class about things we are learning 
- I can write about my day at home or in school 
- I can write about my friends and what we do together 







## Seasons, holidays and festivals



### A1

- I can understand the words for the holidays and festivals during the school year 
- I can read the words for festivals and seasons 
- I can say the words for the seasons and for the weather in different seasons 
- I can say when the main festivals are in the year 
- I can copy sentences about seasons and festivals from the board 

### A2

- I can understand the main words about seasons and festivals when the teacher talks about them in class 
- I can read about a season or festival and use pictures to help me understand 
- I can answer some questions about the important celebrations in my home 
- I can talk to my friends about festivals and celebrations 
- I can describe special celebrations to my teacher or class 
- I can write news about a special event in school or in my home 

### B1

- I can understand lessons about seasons and festivals 
- I can read about seasons, holidays and festivals in my reader or textbook 
- I can answer questions about the celebrations in my home 
- I can describe an important event in my family 
- I can write about a festival or celebration 

## **Primary ELP – language biography**

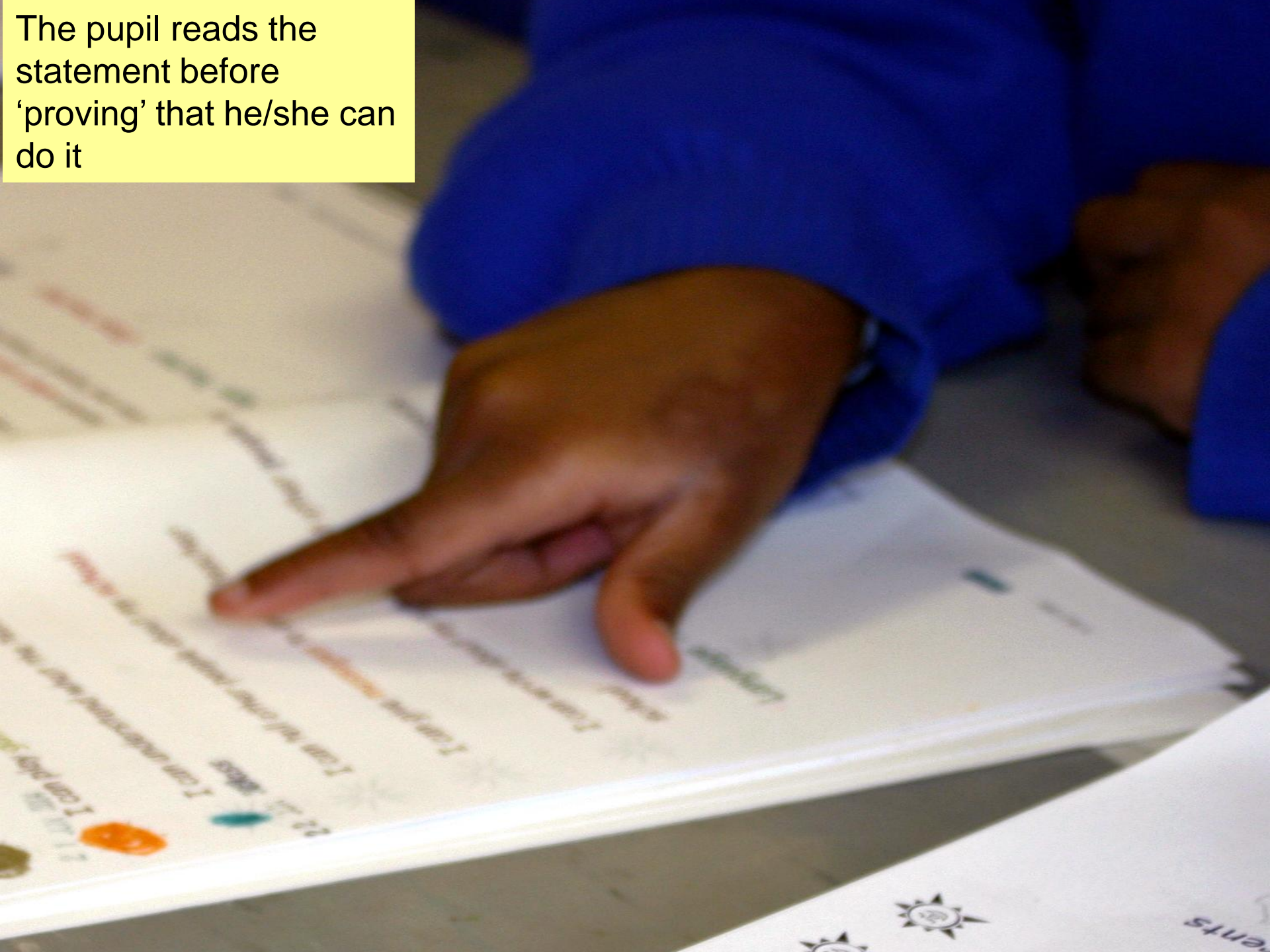
- Focuses on
  - pupil’s daily exposure to language: hearing, speaking and reading
  - learning how to learn: development of metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness
- Provides “I can” checklists for the 13 “units of work”

## Primary ELP – language biography

- Focuses on
  - pupil’s daily exposure to language: hearing, speaking and reading
  - learning how to learn: development of metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness
- Provides “I can” checklists for the 13 *Units of Work*
- The checklists are used to
  - plan learning
  - monitor progress (→ language passport)



The pupil reads the statement before 'proving' that he/she can do it





The teacher uses a date stamp each time pupil colours an icon



## **Primary ELP – dossier**

- A table-of-contents page

## Contents

In my dossier I have -

	Description
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	

## **Primary ELP – dossier**

- A table-of-contents page

## **Primary ELP – dossier**

- A table-of-contents page
- “Open” pages related to the “units of work”

# Myself and my family



Draw a picture of your family

Write about yourself

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## **Primary ELP – dossier**

- A table-of-contents page
- “Open” pages related to the “units of work”



## **Primary ELP – dossier**

- A table-of-contents page
- “Open” pages related to the “units of work”
- Additional work sheets

# Time



Days of the week

✓ the days you go  
to school

M \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

☐

Tu \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

☐

Wed \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

☐

Th \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

☐

Fr \_ \_ \_ \_

☐

Sat \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

☐

Sun \_ \_ \_

☐

My favourite day is \_\_\_\_\_

I like this day because

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## **Primary ELP – dossier**

- A table-of-contents page
- “Open” pages related to the “units of work”
- Additional work sheets

## **Primary ELP – dossier**

- A table-of-contents page
- “Open” pages related to the “units of work”
- Additional work sheets
- A place to keep finished work



One day a sheep and a horse went  
for a walk. They went into a field  
and ate some sweet green grass.  
Two flowers grew in the field.

by Kyla





Emma is a bully! She has one little sister called Ashley. Every day when she comes back from school, she bullies her. Here she is in her garden because her mother told her to sit there and think about why she is a bully!

by Rita

## **And then they asked for tests**

- To measure the English language proficiency (if any) of newly arrived pupils
- To provide a formal check on the record of learning captured by the ELP
- To enable teachers to report on pupils’ developing linguistic competence and to identify aspects that may need special attention
- To measure learning achievement at the end of the first and second years of language support
- If necessary, to support a case for granting some pupils more than two years of language support

## **And then they asked for tests**

- Assessment tasks and themes based on the benchmarks: closely integrated with the ELP and with day-to-day classroom activities
- Judgements made via the tests are closely related to judgements made by learners and their teachers on the basis of the self-assessment function of the ELP
- In this way testing should support self-assessment and pedagogy (for further details see Little 2005)
- Schools must use the tests if they wish to apply for additional support for individual pupils
- The tests encourage teachers to use the ELP and the Benchmarks



**How can all of this be used to strengthen  
the teaching and learning of less widely  
used languages?**

## **Develop a curriculum framework**

- Create a curriculum framework within which all languages (L1, L2, Ln) can be located, using the CEFR’s action-oriented (“can do”) approach
- Although the CEFR describes learning outcomes for foreign languages, the descriptors for B2 reading and writing correspond to what we require of students at Leaving Certificate level
  - Can understand articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular stances or viewpoints
  - Can write an essay [...] which develops an argument systematically with appropriate highlighting of significant points and relevant supporting detail
- Thus the curriculum framework can be based on levels A1–B2 of the CEFR and can take the same form as the self-assessment grid

## **Within the curriculum framework**

- Place the languages to be taught at the different levels of schooling within the framework and identify the proficiency levels to be achieved at each stage
- For each language at each level, develop a curriculum by restating the relevant part of the framework in language-specific terms, taking account of
  - the purposes that the language should serve in the individual pupil's/ student's developing plurilingual repertoire
  - the genres and registers that those purposes imply
  - the underlying linguistic competence required to perform communicative tasks at each level
- For each language at each level, create a simple version of the ELP (in each of the target languages), with “I can” checklists based on the “can do” descriptors of the curriculum

## **For each curriculum**

- Create communicative assessment instruments that clearly and explicitly reflect curriculum goals
- Develop rating grids and scoring procedures that draw on the linguistic competence/language quality dimension of the curriculum
- Publish the rating grids so that teachers can use them to inform learner self-assessment
- Create a reporting framework for assessment that accommodates
  - Self-assessment based on ELP checklists
  - School-based assessment
  - External examinations

## For all second languages

- Develop teaching approaches that respond to the challenge of the CEFR and exploit the potential of the ELP →
- Teach through the target language ***from the beginning***
  - Note that the CEFR defines language learning as a variety of language use (Council of Europe 2001: 9)
- Engage learners’ interests and identities ***from the beginning***
  - In the early stages let them learn the words they want to learn and use the target language for purposes that make sense to them
- Use writing to support speaking, and speaking to generate written text
- By doing these things, make each language classroom a community of increasingly literate language users who are also increasingly literate language learners

## **We should do these things because ...**

- If we develop
  - curricula that state intended learning outcomes in “can do” terms
  - ELPs that promote reflective learning and mediate curriculum goals to learners via their “I can” checklists
  - language tests and exams that are fully communicative and explicitly rooted in “can do” and “I can” descriptors
  - pedagogical approaches that treat language learning as a variety of language use
- we shall give ourselves the opportunity to
  - make language learning more democratic by helping learners to steer and control their own progress
  - do justice to **all** languages in the curriculum
  - develop citizens who are genuinely plurilingual
  - ensure that our particular education system helps to fulfil the Council of Europe’s overarching political goals

## Five websites

- **[www.coe.int/lang](http://www.coe.int/lang)**
  - For information on all the activities of the Language Policy Division, including those to do with the CEFR
- **[www.coe.int/portfolio](http://www.coe.int/portfolio)**
  - For comprehensive information on the ELP
- **[www.ecml.at](http://www.ecml.at)**
  - For information on the activities of the European Centre for Modern Languages (Graz, Austria), which include several projects designed to support the implementation of the ELP
- **[www.ncca.ie/ilt](http://www.ncca.ie/ilt)**
  - For English Language Proficiency Benchmarks, ELPs and assessment kits (primary and post-primary)
- **[www.elsp.ie](http://www.elsp.ie)**
  - For a wealth of English language learning materials based on a corpus analysis of Irish post-primary curriculum textbooks