



Towards a broader view of language education: the CEFR Companion Volume with New Descriptors:

Brian North

The Common European Framework for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment

The Common European Framework for Languages: **Learning, teaching**, assessment

The CEFR provides

a **clear organization** of
second/foreign language
proficiency

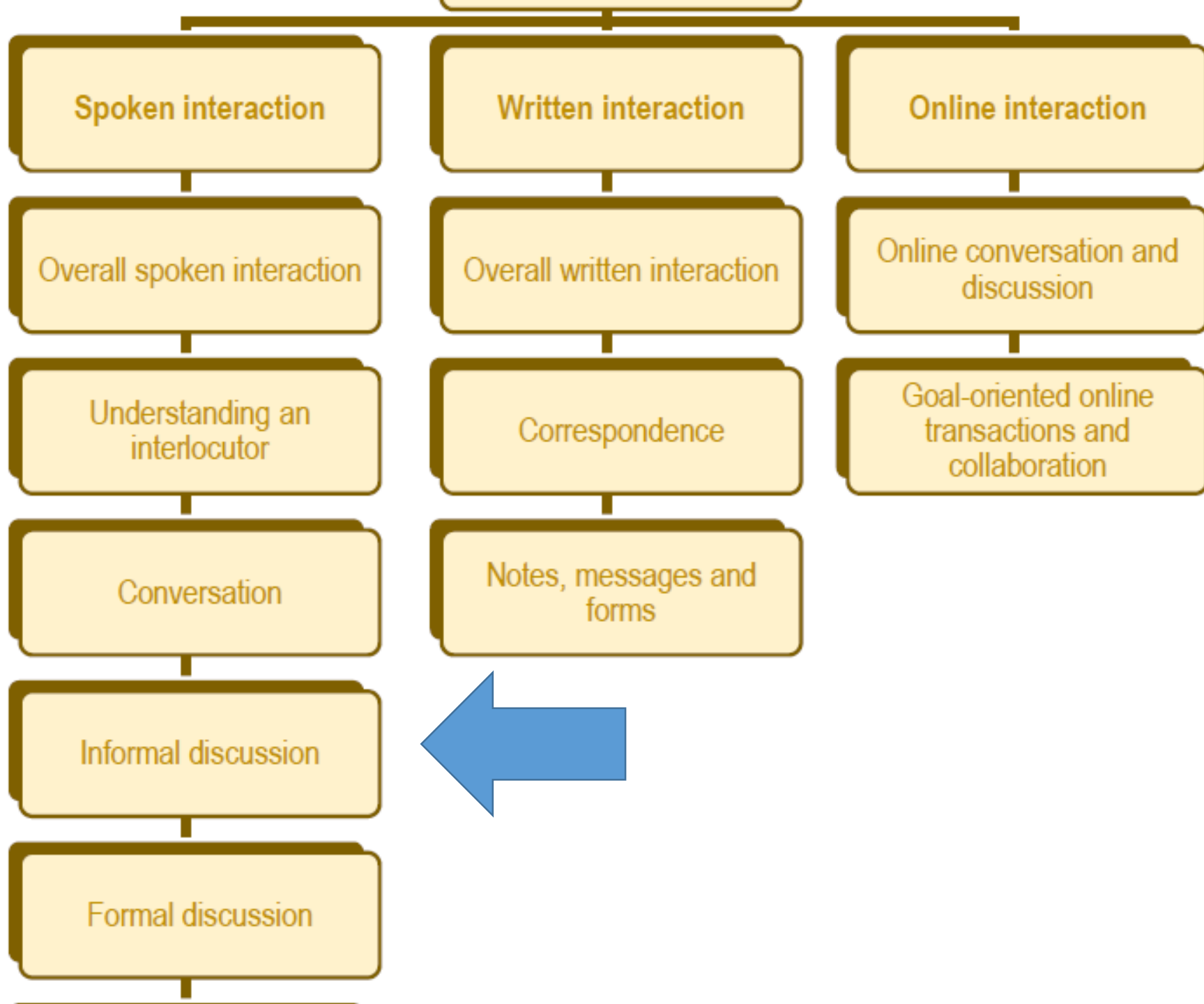
around **six levels**, A1, A2,
B1, B2, C1, C2

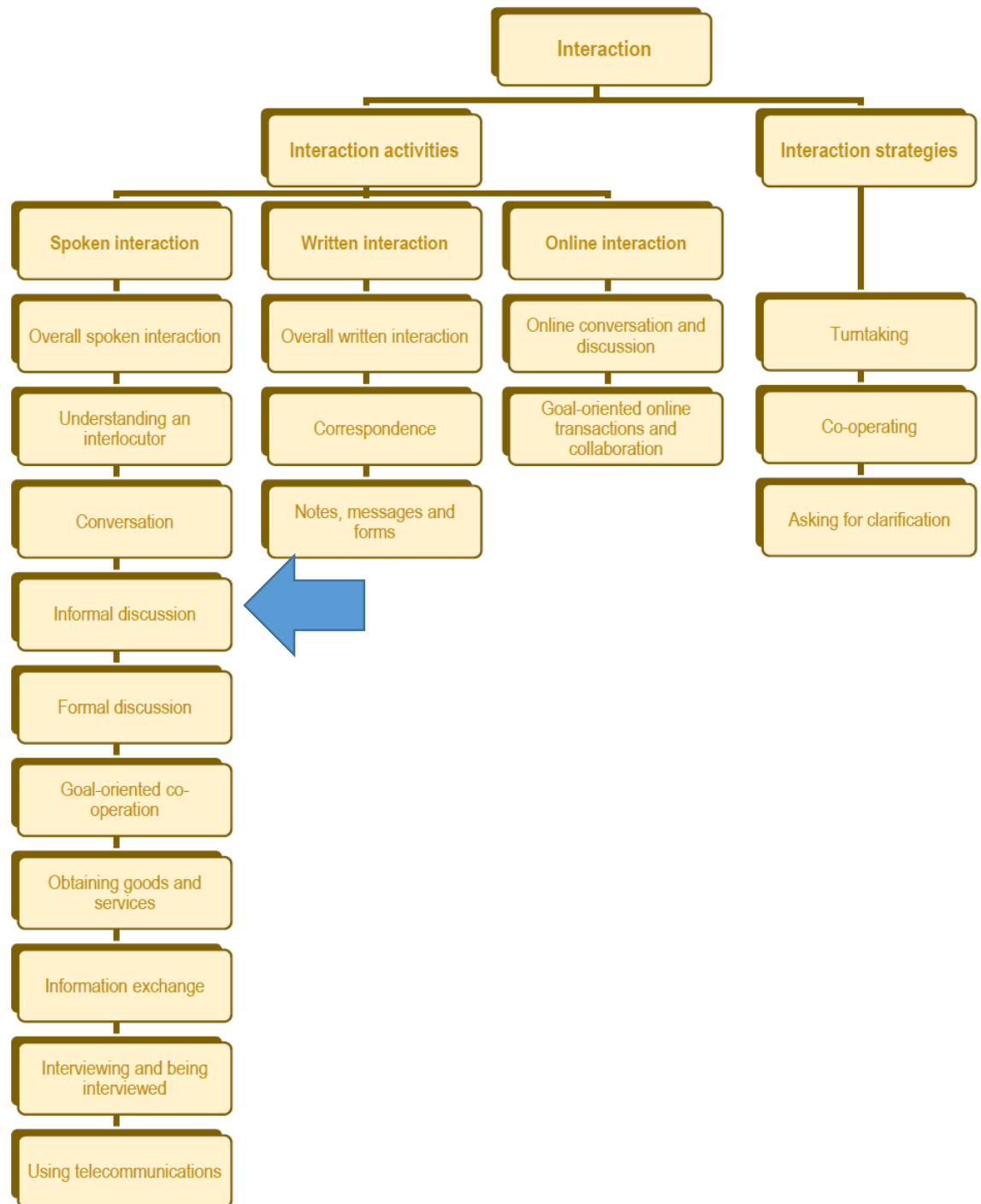
expressed through **“can do”**
descriptors



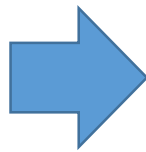
B1: “Informal discussion (with friends)”

- Can generally follow the main points in an informal discussion with friends provided speech/sign is clearly articulated in standard language or a familiar variety.
- Can give or seek personal views and opinions in discussing topics of interest.
- Can compare and contrast alternatives, discussing what to do, where to go, who or which to choose, etc.
- Can make his/her opinions and reactions understood as regards solutions to problems or practical questions of where to go, what to do, or how to organise an event (e.g. an outing).
- Can express beliefs, opinions and agreement and disagreement politely.





Distinguish between:



Descriptors of communicative activities:

CEFR Chapter 4 scales

“attractive because they help to focus both learners and teachers on an action-oriented approach.” (CEFR p 180)

- Descriptors of aspects of proficiency :

CEFR Chapter 5 scales

Related to particular competences

B1: “Informal discussion (with friends)”

- Can generally follow the main points in an informal discussion with friends provided speech/sign is clearly articulated in standard language or a familiar variety.
- Can give or seek personal views and opinions in discussing topics of interest.
- Can compare and contrast alternatives, discussing what to do, where to go, who or which to choose, etc.
- Can make his/her opinions and reactions understood as regards solutions to problems or practical questions of where to go, what to do, or how to organise an event (e.g. an outing).
- Can express beliefs, opinions and agreement and disagreement politely.

Distinguish between:

- Descriptors of communicative activities:

CEFR Chapter 4 scales

“attractive because they help to focus both learners and teachers on an action-oriented approach.” (CEFR p 180)



Descriptors of aspects of proficiency :

CEFR Chapter 5 scales

Related to particular competences

SOCIOLINGUISTIC/PRAGMATIC

Can perform and respond to a wide range of language functions, using their most common exponents in a neutral register.

LINGUISTIC RANGE

Has a sufficient language to express him/herself with some circumlocutions on most topics pertinent to his everyday life such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel, and current events.

FLUENCY

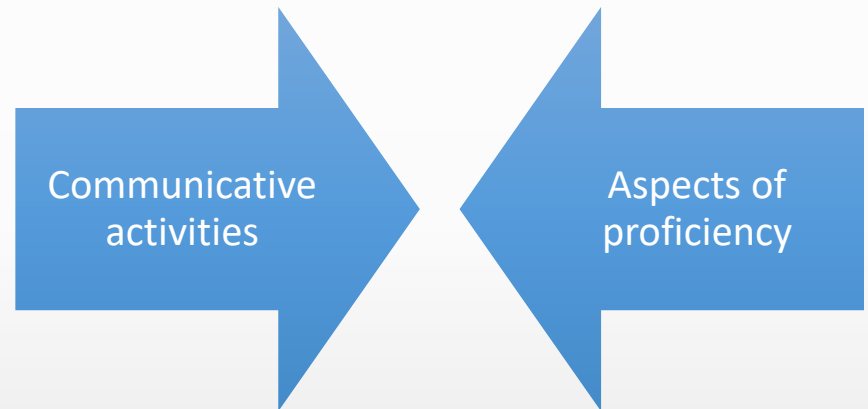
Can keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is very evident, especially in longer stretches of free production.

LINGUISTIC ACCURACY

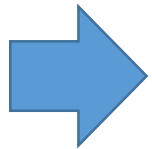
Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used "routines" and patterns associated with more predictable situations.

These scales are complementary

- **A2 speaking:** Can use simple descriptive language to make brief statements about and compare objects and possessions.
- **A2 grammatical accuracy:** Uses some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes – for example tends to mix up tenses and forget to mark agreement; nevertheless, it is usually clear what he/she is trying to say.



the what + the how



The CEFR linking planning, teaching, assessment

2. The CEFR Companion Volume
3. Completing the descriptive scheme
4. Operationalising the scheme with new scales for:
 - online interaction
 - mediation (including reactions to creative text)
 - plurilingual and pluricultural competence
 - signing competences
5. The new descriptor scales
6. Example tasks

A transparent, coherent curriculum

Planning:

Goal-setting & sign-posting with 'can do' descriptors

Teaching:

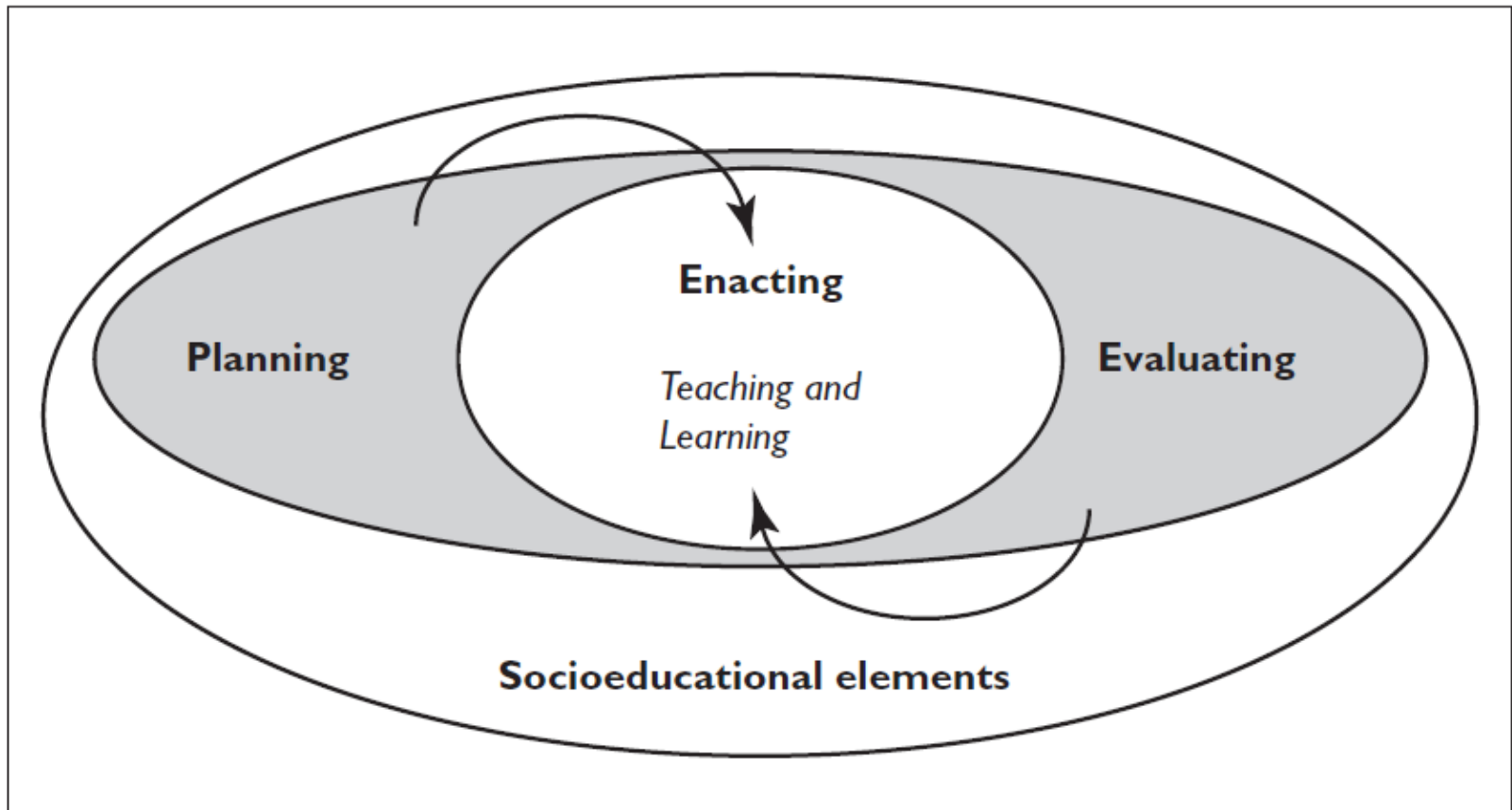
Action-oriented approach: language as activity

Assessment:

Tasks: descriptors to help design tasks Chap. 4

to help design criteria Chap. 5

Curriculum as a dynamic system (Graves 2008)



“Planning, implementation and evaluation decisions should be consistent and interdependent rather than undertaken in a lockstep or piecemeal approach.”
(Graves, 2008: 148)

- **Constructive alignment:** The process of ensuring coherence between curriculum, teaching and assessment, usually by planning both the curriculum and assessment in relation to desired outcomes through **backward design**
- **Backward design:** Identifying learning needs and necessary outcomes, usually in terms of 'real world' competences, and then planning the necessary enabling objectives, learning activities and other course content 'backwards' from those outcomes

“One of the **most important curriculum publications** in the last decade is the Council of Europe’s Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe 2001) that seeks to provide descriptions that apply to competence **in all languages across all levels.**” (Graves, 2008: 148)

“Perhaps the **most widespread example of backward design** using standards in current use is the Common European Framework for Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001)...” (Richards, 2013: 26)

A heuristic

not

an answer
to all problems

“We have NOT set out to tell practitioners what to do or how to do it. **We are raising questions not answering them.** It is not the function of the CEF to lay down the objectives that users should pursue or the methods they should employ.”

CEFR: iv

1. The CEFR linking planning, teaching, assessment
- ➔ The CEFR Companion Volume
3. Completing the descriptive scheme
4. Operationalising the scheme with new scales for:
 - online interaction
 - mediation (including reactions to creative text)
 - plurilingual and pluricultural competence
 - signing competences
5. The new descriptor scales
6. Example tasks

- Council of Europe (2018): *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment – Companion Volume with New Descriptors*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.
- [https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages.](https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages)

- A text on key aspects of the CEFR for teaching and learning languages
- The complete set of CEFR illustrative descriptors
 - rationale for each scale
 - ➔ updated 2001 scales
 - new scales for mediation and plurilingual/pluricultural
- Appendices:
 - overviews of the CEFR levels in Appendices 1-4
 - examples (new scales) for the personal, public, occupational and educational domains (Appendix 5)
 - details of how 16 of the 2001 descriptors are amended

Updating 2001 scales

- No changes except when necessary
- C-level enrichment
- Pre-A1 & A1 enrichment
- Plus levels filled out
- Phonology – scale replaced
- 3 new scales
- Native speaker – removed (from 13 B2 & C2 descriptors)
- Modality inclusive (sign language) – ISBN version

➡ A text on key aspects of the CEFR for teaching and learning languages

- The complete set of CEFR illustrative descriptors
 - rationale for each scale
 - updated 2001 scales
 - new scales for mediation and plurilingual/pluricultural
- Appendices:
 - overviews of the CEFR levels in Appendices 1-4
 - examples (new scales) for the personal, public, occupational and educational domains (Appendix 5)
 - details of how 16 of the 2001 descriptors are amended

Key aspects of the CEFR for teaching and learning

- The aims of the CEFR
- Implementing the action-oriented approach
- Plurilingual and pluricultural competence
- The CEFR descriptive scheme
- Mediation
- The CEFR common reference levels
- CEFR profiles
- The CEFR illustrative descriptors
- Using the CEFR illustrative descriptors
- Some useful resources for CEFR implementation

Key aspects of the CEFR for teaching and learning

- The aims of the CEFR
- Implementing the action-oriented approach
- **Plurilingual and pluricultural competence**
- The CEFR descriptive scheme
- **Mediation**
- The CEFR common reference levels
- CEFR profiles
- The CEFR illustrative descriptors
- Using the CEFR illustrative descriptors
- Some useful resources for CEFR implementation

1. The CEFR linking planning, teaching, assessment
2. The CEFR Companion Volume
- ➡ Completing the descriptive scheme
4. Operationalising the scheme with new scales for:
 - online interaction
 - mediation (including reactions to creative text)
 - plurilingual and pluricultural competence
 - signing competences
5. The new descriptor scales
6. Example tasks

- (co)-construct meaning
- in **real-life tasks**
- while engaging in **communicative activities**
- and drawing upon a series of **competences**
- and developing **communicative strategies**

In turn, by performing tasks, they develop competences and strategies

Seeing learners as **social agents** implies

- involving them in the learning process
- recognising the social nature of language learning and language use,
- recognising the interaction between the social and the individual in the process of learning
- extensive use of the target language in the classroom – learning to use the language
- allowing learners to use all their linguistic resources
- encouraging them to see similarities and regularities as well as differences between languages and cultures

Above all,

- **purposeful, collaborative TASKS**, whose primary focus is not language

- Tasks are a feature of **everyday life** in the personal, public, educational or occupational domain
- Task accomplishment by an individual involves the **strategic activation** of specific competences
- Any **purposeful action** considered by an individual as necessary in order to achieve a given result in the context of a problem to be solved, an obligation to fulfill or an objective to be achieved (CEFR p.10)

Realistic tasks are messy

they involve:

- integrated skills
- collaboration
- processing input (text)
- getting this input across to the others
- helping the progress of the task
- solving difficulties/disagreements

This is mediation

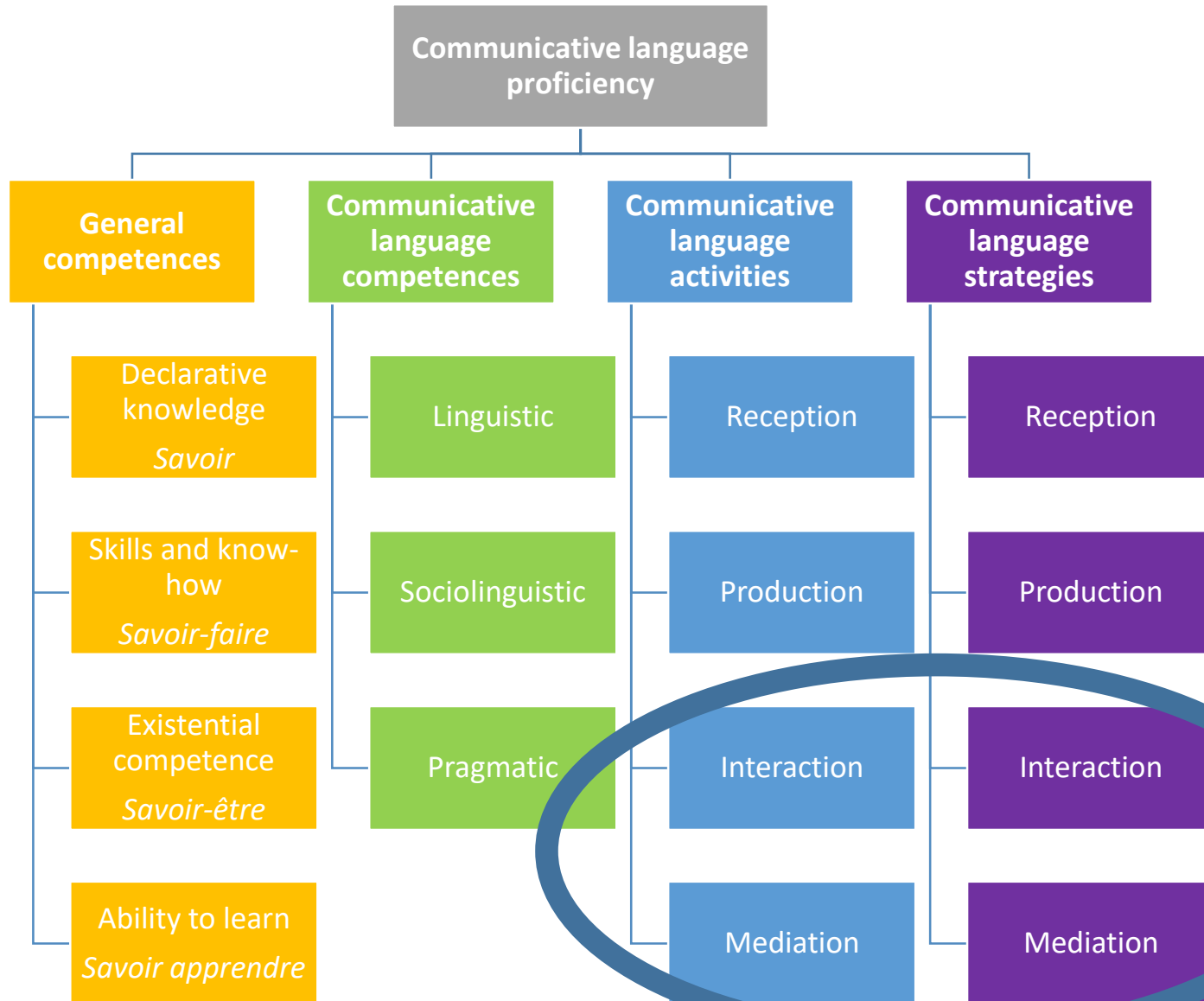
- “Communication is an integral part of tasks where participants engage in

- **interaction,**
- **production,**
- **reception,**
- **mediation,**

or a combination of two or more of these”

(CEFR, p. 157)

CEFR descriptive scheme



Learner

Reception

Production

Speaker/Hearer

Code:

accuracy / fluency

Mobilising linguistic
resources

Reception

Production

Speaker/Hearer

Code:
accuracy / fluency

Mobilising linguistic
resources

Interaction

Mediation

Participant

Social agent

Negotiation of meaning

21st century social agent

Reception

Production

Speaker/Hearer

Code: **complexity**,
accuracy / fluency

Interaction

Participant

Negotiation of meaning

Mediation

Social agent

**Co-construction of
meaning**

Mobilising general, **plurilingual and pluricultural** competences

21st century social agent

Reception

Production

Interaction

Mediation

Speaker/Hearer

Participant

Social agent

Code: **complexity**,
accuracy / fluency

Negotiation of meaning

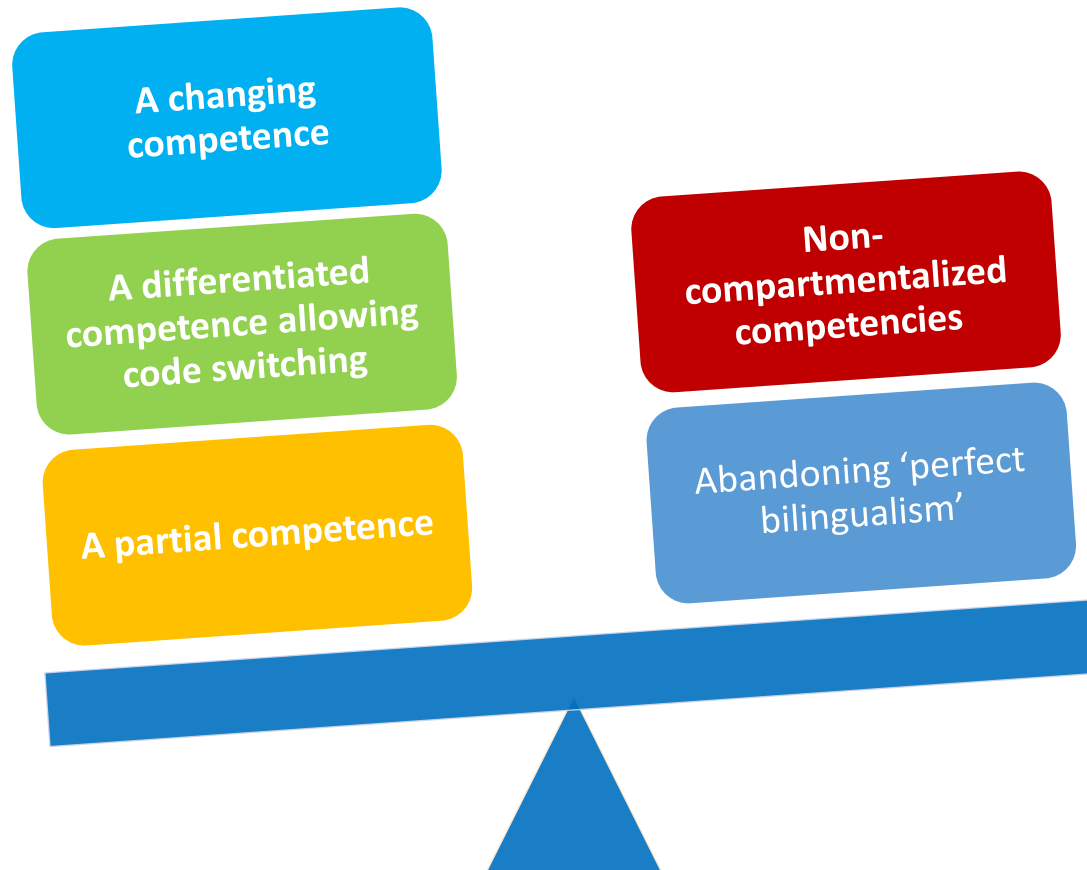
**Co-construction of
meaning**

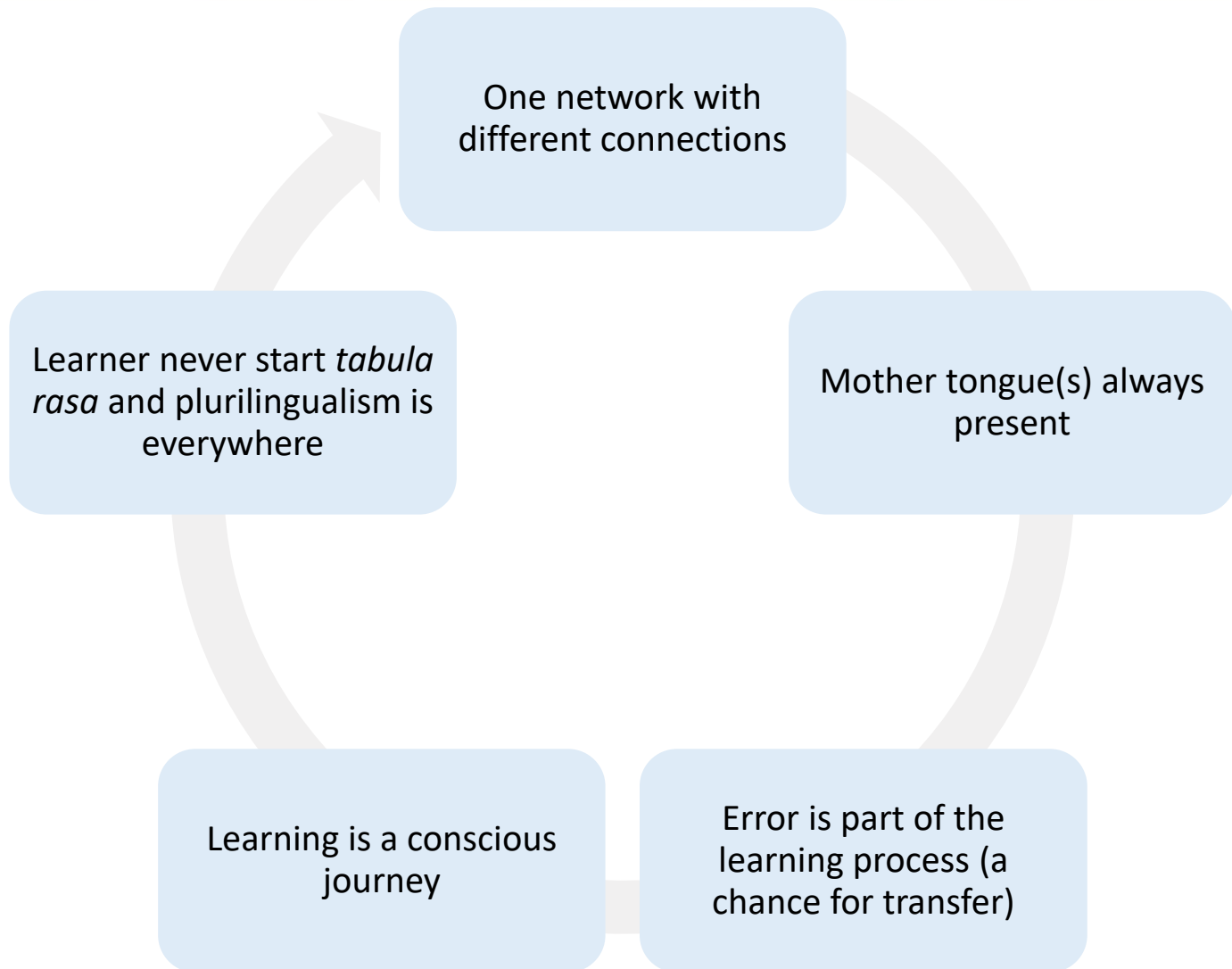
plurilingual and pluricultural competences

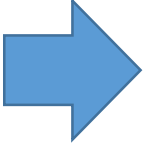
The ability to:

- switch from one language or dialect to another
- express themselves in one language and understand the other
- call upon the knowledge of a number of languages to make sense of a text
- recognise words from a common international store in a new guise.
- mediate between individuals with no common language
- bring the whole of their linguistic equipment into play, experimenting with alternative forms of expression
- exploit paralinguistics (mime, gesture, facial expression, etc.)

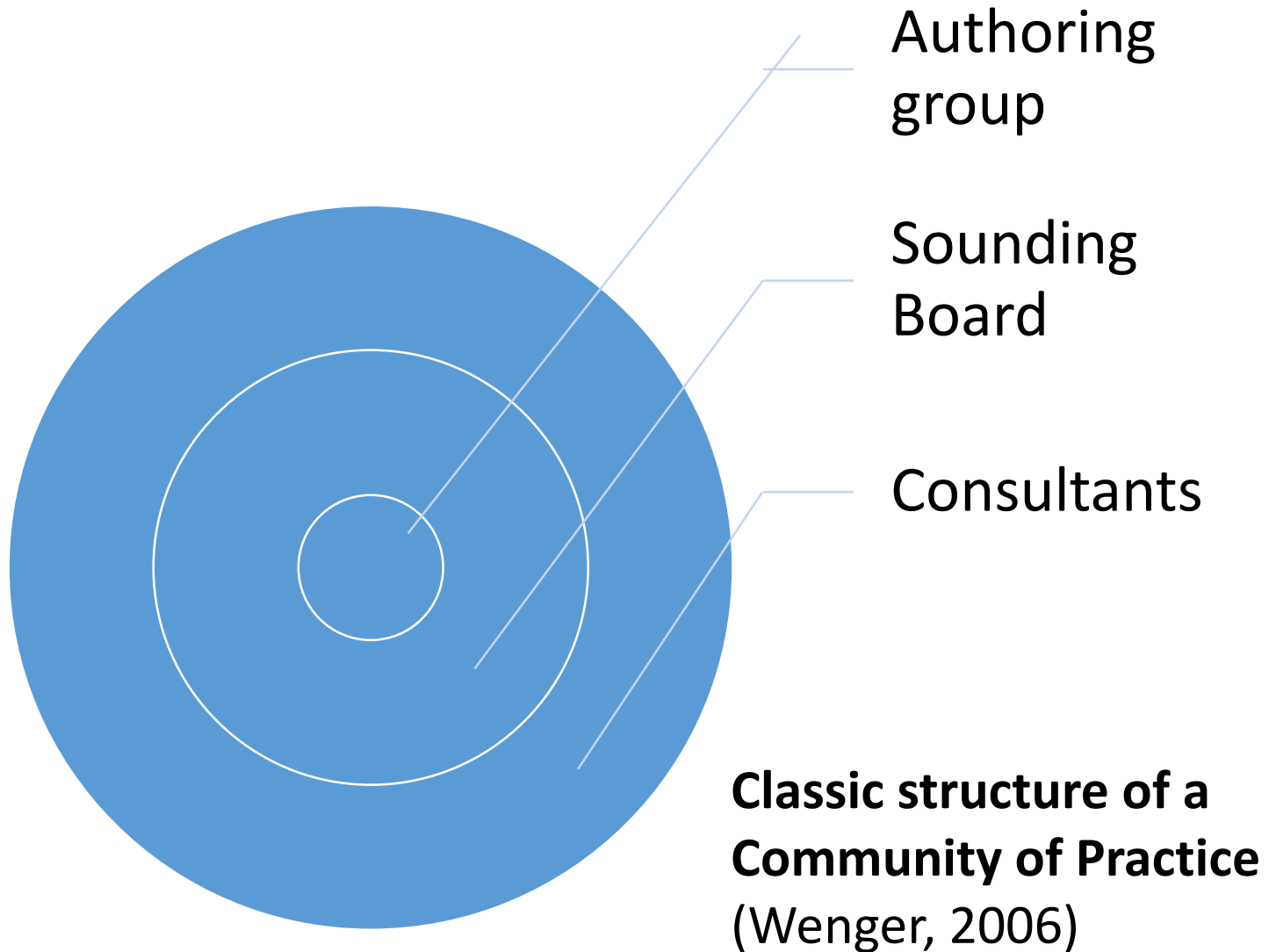
An uneven plurilingual competence





1. The CEFR linking planning, teaching, assessment
2. The CEFR Companion Volume
3. Completing the descriptive scheme
-  Operationalising the scheme with new scales for:
 - online interaction
 - mediation (including reactions to creative text)
 - plurilingual and pluricultural competence
 - signing competences
5. The new descriptor scales
6. Example tasks

1. Development (January 2014 – February 2015)
2. Validation (February 2015 – Febr 2016)
3. Analysis, revision (February – May 2016)
4. Consultation (June 2016 – February 2017)
5. Piloting (January – July 2017)
6. Finalisation (August-October 2017)



1. Development (January 2014 – February 2015)
- 2. Validation (February 2015 – Febr 2016)**
3. Analysis, revision (February – May 2016)
4. Consultation (June 2016 – February 2017)
5. Piloting (January – July 2017)
6. Finalisation (August-October 2017)

1. **Qualitative:** 990 informants in 140 institutes

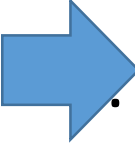
- assigning to categories
- evaluating
- suggesting reformulations (shortening)

2. **Quantitative:** 1294 informants in 189 institutes

- assigning to levels

3. **Quantitative:** 3503 usable responses

- Final calibration (Rasch model)
- Replicating original calibration task (North 1995, 2000)

1. The CEFR linking planning, teaching, assessment
2. The CEFR Companion Volume
3. Completing the descriptive scheme
4. Operationalising the scheme with new scales for:
 - online interaction
 - mediation (including reactions to creative text)
 - plurilingual and pluricultural competence
 - signing competences
-  5. The new descriptor scales
6. Example tasks

“In mediating activities, the language user **is not concerned to express his/her own meanings**, but simply **to act as an intermediary** between interlocutors who are unable to understand each other directly, normally (but not exclusively) speakers of different languages. ...”

(CEFR Section 4.4.4. English p.87)

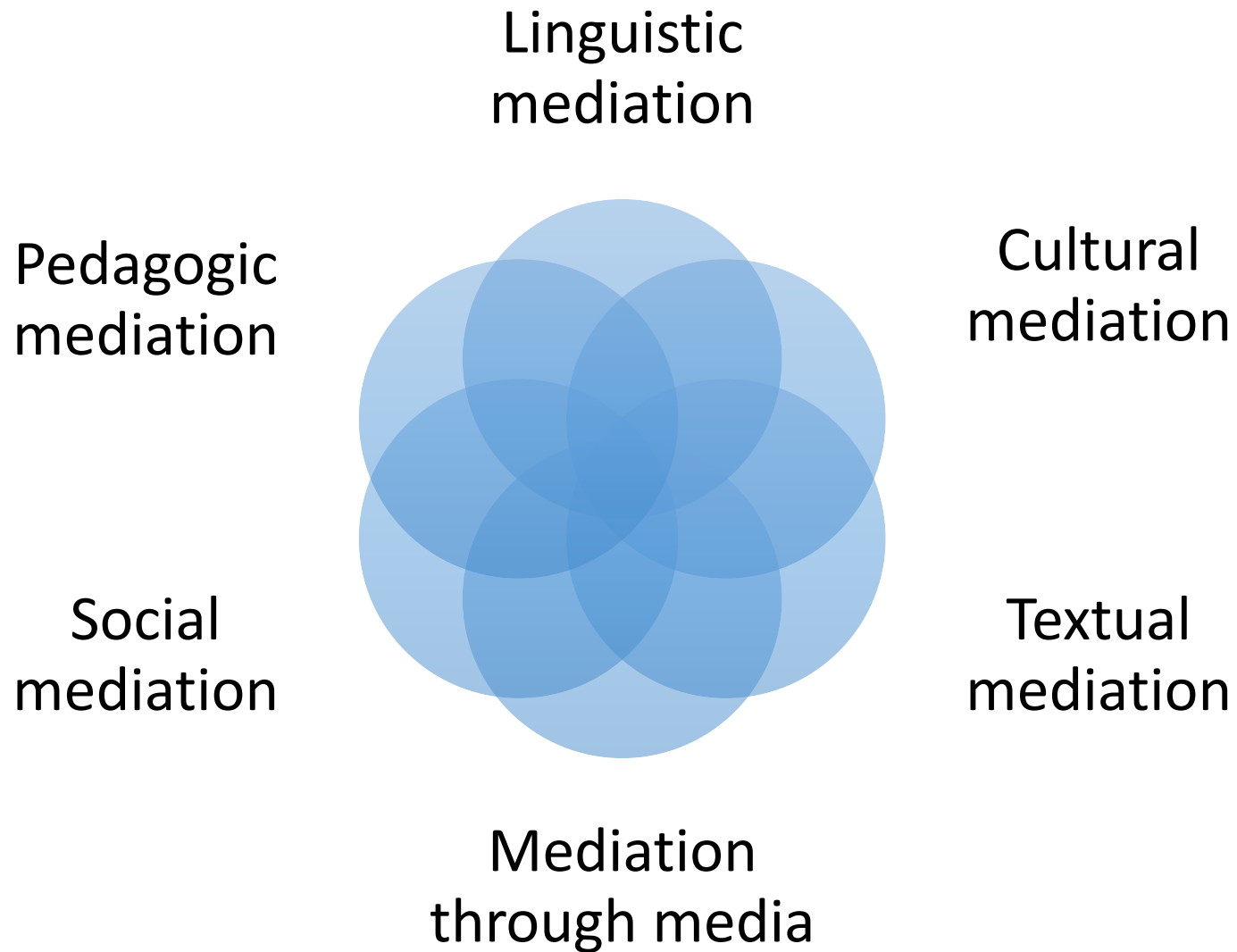
“Mediation language activities, **(re)processing an existing text**, occupy an important place in the normal linguistic functioning of our societies.”

(CEFR, Section 2.1.3. English, p.14)

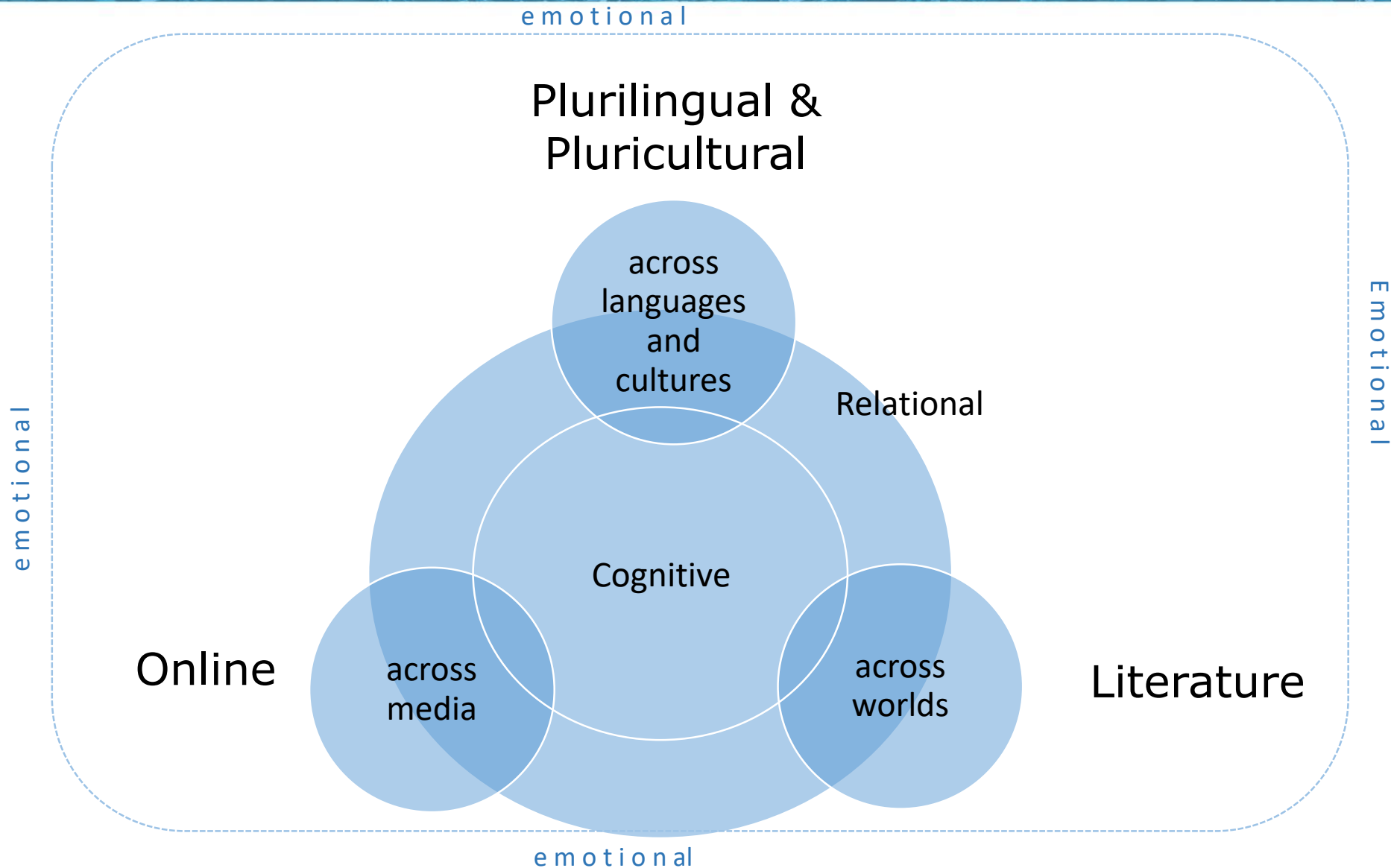


The reality is much more complex

- **Linguistic mediation/textual mediation**
> interlinguistic and intralinguistic;
- **Cultural mediation** > facilitating understanding;
cultural awareness (within a language and across
languages and cultures),
- **Social mediation (including through media)** > playing
the role of intermediary (linguistic and cultural
mediator); critical cultural awareness;
- **Pedagogic mediation** > educators mediating
knowledge, concepts and thinking (cognitively and
relationally)



Mediation Conceptual model



- Creating space, managing tensions, counselling, conflict resolution, guidance
→ **Mediating communication**
- (Co)constructing meaning/knowledge > social ↔ individual
→ **Mediating concepts**
- Reformulating, transcoding, alternating languages, switching oral to written, changing genres, combining text and other modes
→ **Mediating text**

Mediating communication

- Facilitating conditions and understanding
- Handling trouble

Mediating concepts

- Collaboration in small groups
 - Collaborative strategies
 - Cognitive strategies

Mediating text

- Integrated skills
- Summarising/précis
- Relaying info / explaining graphics

Mediating communication

- Facilitating conditions & understanding
- Handling trouble

New

Mediating concepts

- Collaboration in small groups
 - Collaborative strategies
 - Cognitive strategies

**“Two-tier
group work”
(1980s)**

Mediating text

- Integrated skills
- Summarising/précis
- Relaying info / explaining graphics

Mediating communication

- Facilitating conditions & understand
- Handling trouble

Mediating concepts

- Collaboration in small groups
 - Collaborative strategies
 - Cognitive strategies

Mediating text

- Integrated skills
- Summarising/précis
- Relaying info / explaining graphics

- in one language
(e.g. English)

CLIL

Mediating communication

- Facilitating conditions & understand
- Handling trouble

Mediating concepts

- Collaboration in small groups
 - Collaborative strategies
 - Cognitive strategies

Mediating text

- Integrated skills
- Summarising/précis
- Relaying info / explaining graphics

- in one language
- across langs
- alternating langs
- meshing langs

Mediating a text

- Relaying specific information
- Explaining data (e.g. in graphs)
- Processing text
- Translating written text
- Listening & note-taking
- Expressing a personal response to creative text (including literature)
- Analysis and criticism of creative text (including literature)

Mediation strategies

- Linking to previous knowledge
- Breaking down complicated information
- Adapting language
- Elaborating a dense text
- Streamlining a text

Mediating concepts

- Facilitating collaborative interaction with peers
- Collaborating to construct meaning
- Managing interaction
- Encouraging conceptual thought

Mediating communication

- Facilitating pluricultural space
- Acting as an intermediary
- Facilitating communication in delicate situations / disputes

Across
languages/cultures

Plurilingual/cultural competence

- Building on pluricultural repertoire
- Plurilingual comprehension
- Building on plurilingual repertoire

Across media

Online interaction

- Online conversation and discussion
- Goal-oriented online transactions and collaboration

Across worlds

Literature

- Expressing a personal response to creative text (including literature)
- Analysis and criticism of creative text (including literature)
- Reading as a leisure activity

Mediating concepts – collaborative group work

- *Can use questions, comments and simple reformulations to maintain the focus of a discussion.*
- *Can ask questions to invite people to clarify their reasoning.*

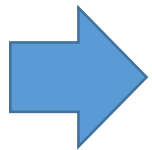
Mediating a text – relaying specific information in speech

- *Can relay (in Language B) specific information given in straightforward informational texts (such as leaflets, brochure entries, notices and letters or emails) (written in Language A).*

Mediating communication – facilitating comm. in delicate situations

- *Can demonstrate his/her understanding of the key issues in a disagreement on a topic familiar to him/her and make simple requests for confirmation and/or clarification.*

1. The CEFR linking planning, teaching, assessment
2. The CEFR Companion Volume
3. Completing the descriptive scheme
4. Operationalising the scheme with new scales for:
 - online interaction
 - mediation (including reactions to creative text)
 - plurilingual and pluricultural competence
 - signing competences
5. The new descriptor scales



Example tasks

English Country Kitchen

ENTRÉES

Soupe du jour	6,00€
Camembert Rôti au miel et sa tranche de lard grillé	7,00€
Pain grillé à l'ail	3,80€
Beans on toast	5,50€
Poêlée de foies de volaille aux champignons	7,00€
Œuf cocotte à la crème et au bacon	6,00€
Petite salade de chèvre chaud, choux pickles	7,00€



PLATS (garniture incluse)

L'assiette Anglaise (roti de bœuf froid, charcuterie, légumes et fromages, Garden mint Marmelade)	13,00€
L'assiette Anglaise végétarienne (Saucisse végétarienne et assortiment de légumes, fromages, Garden Mint marmelade)	13,00€
Fish & chips	13,00€
Rumsteck simmental	14,00€
Burger ECK	13,50€
Poisson du jour	14,00€
Confit de Canard et sa gelée de cassis	13,50€
Salade caesar	11,50€
Bruschetta de chèvre chaud, choux pickles	11,50€
Tourte boeuf et champignons	13,50€



GARNITURES au choix (supplément 3,80€)

Pommes de terre rôties à la graisse de canard
Purée de pois cassés
Frites maison
Haricots verts



DESSERTS

Tartes aux deux noix	6,80€
Victoria sponge	6,50€
Cheese cake (gluten free)	6,50€
Coulant chocolat (gluten free)	6,00€
Café gourmand	7,80€
Cookie	2,50€
Scone	2,00€
(accompagné de clotted Cream et de confiture)	
Assiette de fromage (FR et UK)	7,00€



STARTERS

Soup of the day	6,00€
Roasted camembert with a slice of grilled bacon	7,00€
Garlic bread	3,80€
Beans on toast	5,50€
Stir fry of chicken livers with mushrooms	7,00€
Baked egg with cream and bacon	6,00€
Salad with warm goat cheese, pickled cabbage	7,00€

MAIN COURSES (sides included)

English Plate (Cold roast beef, cooked meats, vegetables, cheese, Garden mint Marmelade)	13,00€
English Plate vegetarian (Vegetarian sausage and mixed vegetable, cheese, Garden Mint marmelade)	13,00€
Fish & chips	13,00€
Simmental rump steak	14,00€
ECK Burger	13,50€
Fish of the day	14,00€
Duck confit with blackcurrant jelly	13,50€
Caesar salad	11,50€
Hot goat's cheese bruschetta, pickled cabbage	11,50€
Beef and mushrooms pie	13,50€



SIDE ORDERS (surcharge 3,80€)

Duck fat roasted potatoes and roasted bacon cubes
Mushy peas
Homemade chips
Green beans

DESSERTS

Double pecan pie	6,80€
Victoria sponge	6,50€
Cheese cake (gluten free)	6,50€
Classic chocolate lava cake (gluten free)	6,00€
«Café gourmand»	7,80€
Cookie	2,50€
Scone	2,00€
(with clotted Cream and marmelade)	
Cheese platter (FR et UK)	7,00€



Phase 1 Dialogue

Mediating a text

- Student A: Explain the different dishes and options to your friend who does not speak English. Prepare yourself in advance with the help of a dictionary, the glossary on your textbook, and role play.
- Student B: After understanding the menu, choose what you want to and drink and tell your friend, who will place the order for both

Phase 2 Trialogue

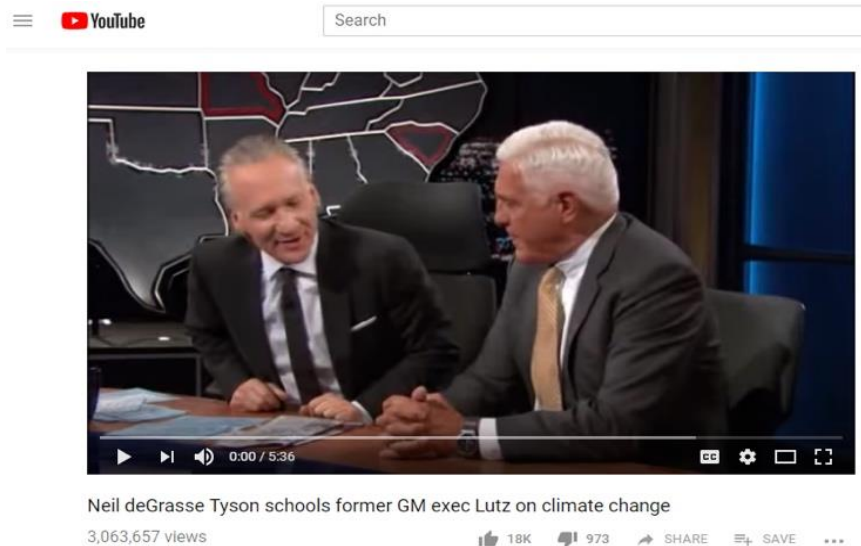
Mediating communication

- Acting as an intermediary in informal situations

- Student C: the server
- Student A and B at the table: Student A and B have questions about the different dishes that the server needs to answer. Student A will then pass the order for both. Student C will ask questions (like how do you want your steak ? what side dishes do you want?...) that student A has to mediate to student B and back to student C.

Plurilingual comprehension	A2	Can understand short, clearly written messages and instructions by piecing together what he/she understands from the versions in <u>different languages</u> .
Plurilingual comprehension	B1	Can use parallel translations of texts (e.g. magazine articles, stories, passages from novels) to develop comprehension in <u>different languages</u> .
Acting as an intermediary	A2	Can communicate (in Language B) the main point of what is said (in Language A) in predictable everyday situations, conveying back and forth information about personal wants and needs, provided the speakers help with formulation.
Acting as an intermediary	A2+	Can communicate (in Language B) the overall sense of what is said (in Language A) in everyday situations, following basic cultural conventions and conveying the essential information, provided the speakers articulate clearly in standard language and that he/she can ask for repetition and clarification.

A Climate Change Denier



5 minute video talk show discussion with a Climate change denier.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kl_gp_qDiRhQ

The findings of the latest Climate Change report (IPCC)



15 minute video on the findings of the latest Climate Change conference

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=40&v=onlLqIG3rvU

Phase 1 Reception Mediating text: Note-taking

- Student A: Watch Video A and take notes on main points
- Student B: Watch Video Band take notes on main points

Phase 2 Dialogue Mediating text: Processing a text

- Explain to your partner the facts and viewpoints expressed in your video. Listen to your partner's explanation of theirs. Interrupt to ask for clarification, check comprehension, ask for more details, etc.

Phase 3 Discussion Mediating concepts:

- **Facilitating collaboration with peers**
- **Collaborating to construct meaning**
- Join another pair to form a group of four. Discuss the two videos. Formulate (a) what you think must be done; (b) how people like you could help to persuade your government to adopt this policy.

Note-taking (lectures, seminars, meetings, etc.)	B1	Can take notes as a list of key points during a straightforward lecture, provided the topic is familiar, and the talk is both formulated in simple language and delivered in clearly articulated standard speech.
Processing a text in speech	B1	Can summarise (in Language B) the main points made in long texts (delivered orally in Language A) on topics in his/her fields of interest, provided standard language is used and that he/she can listen/view several times. Can summarise (in Language B) the main points or events in TV programmes and video clips (in Language A), provided he/she can view them several times.
Facilitating collaboration	B1	Can define the task in basic terms in a discussion and ask others to contribute their expertise and experience.
Collaborating to construct meaning	B1	Can use questions, comments and simple reformulations to maintain the focus of a discussion.

Cross-linguistic mediation in examinations:

- Greek KPG exam:
 - *Processing a text in writing*
- German KMK exams:
 - *Relaying specific information in speech / in writing*
 - *Processing a text in writing*
 - *Acting as an intermediary*
- **Austrian Berufs-Matura: Certificate of Plurilingualism:**
 - *Explaining data*
 - *Processing a text in speech*
 - *Acting as an intermediary*

Cross-linguistic mediation in examinations:

- Greek KPG exam:
 - *Processing a text in writing*
- German KMK exams:
 - *Relaying specific information in speech / in writing*
 - *Processing a text in writing*
 - *Acting as an intermediary*
- **Austrian Berufs-Matura: Certificate of Plurilingualism:**
 - *Explaining data*
 - *Processing a text in speech*
 - *Acting as an intermediary*

Professional Baccalaureat - Oral – English & French

Topic: Healthy living

Context: Your class has organized a meeting with schools in other countries to organize an international project

Interlocutors: One speaker of each of the candidates first and second foreign languages – who do not speak each other's language

Spoken Production: Presentation, during the meeting, on a survey carried out in Austrian Schools
→ English
→ French

Spoken Interaction: Mediate information (English ↔ French)
Discuss and make suggestions for a joint project (English ↔ French)

