SILEI 2023

Aligning Language Education and Assessment with the CEFR

Dra. Patricia Evelyn Grounds

pathomet@gmail.com

DGRI
Dirección General de Relaciones Internacionales

DCIA
Dirección de Centros de Idiomas y de Autoacceso

EXAVer®

SILEI 2023

Aligning Language Education and Assessment with the CEFR

1. A Comprehensive Learning System (CLS)
2. Definition of alignment
3. Example: an Unaligned Learning System (ULS)
4. The role of the CEFR in the creation of a CLS for foreign Language teaching
5. Questions and comments

SILEI 2023

Is there a fully comprehensive learning system at my school/faculty/language centre?

What is a comprehensive learning system?

How could understanding the CEFR strengthen our institutional learning system and my teaching?

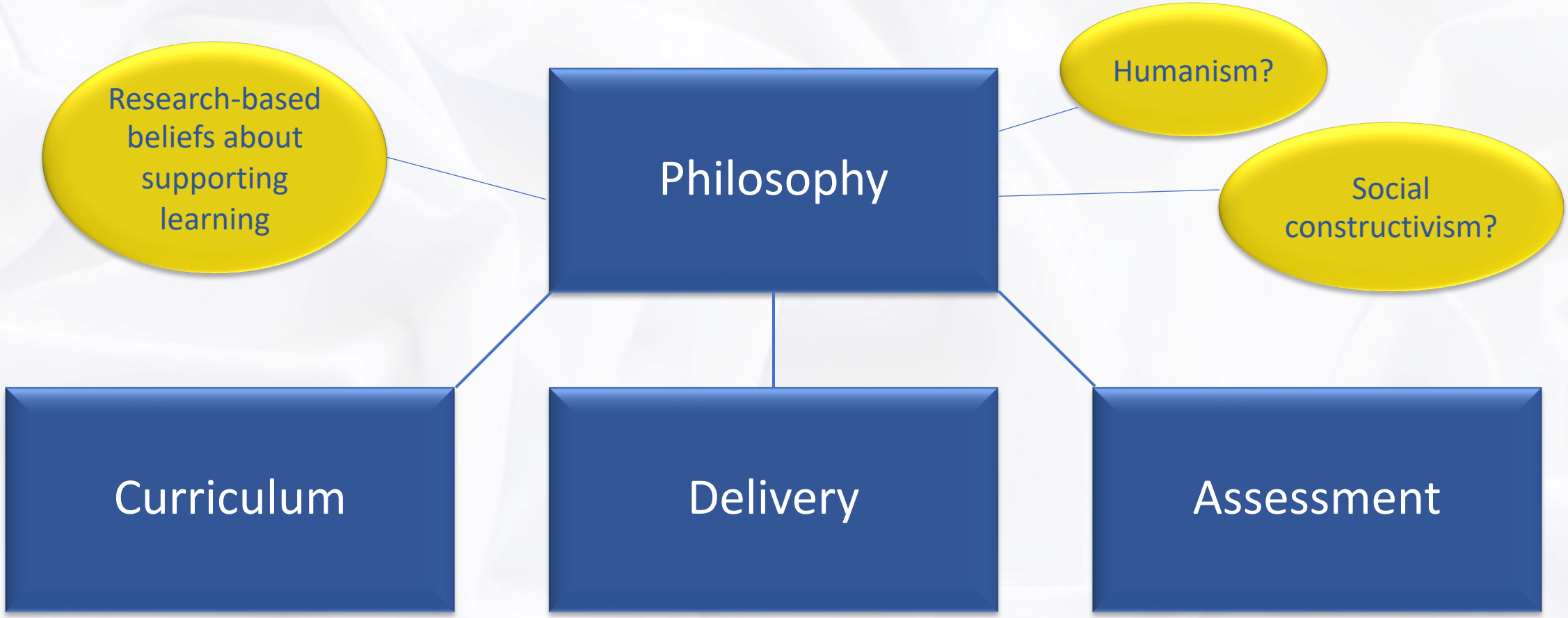
Does my work reflect the institutional learning system?

DGRI
Dirección General de Relaciones Internacionales

DCIA
Dirección de Centros de Idiomas y de Autoacceso

EXAVer®

A comprehensive learning system (CLS)



A comprehensive learning system (CLS)

- A learning programme system consists of three central elements (curriculum, delivery, assessment)
- A CLS is based on:

A single philosophy of learning

A clearly defined model of language ability and progression

Supported by a sound model for the measurement of learning

- All elements need to be fully in harmony for the learning system to be effective

(O'Sullivan, 2020)

Definition: Alignment

- In assessment of learning, including **testing**, **Alignment** refers to **how far the items of the test**, both individually and collectively, **match the [content], structure and intent of the curriculum and instruction**." (Bunch, 2012)

Definition: Alignment

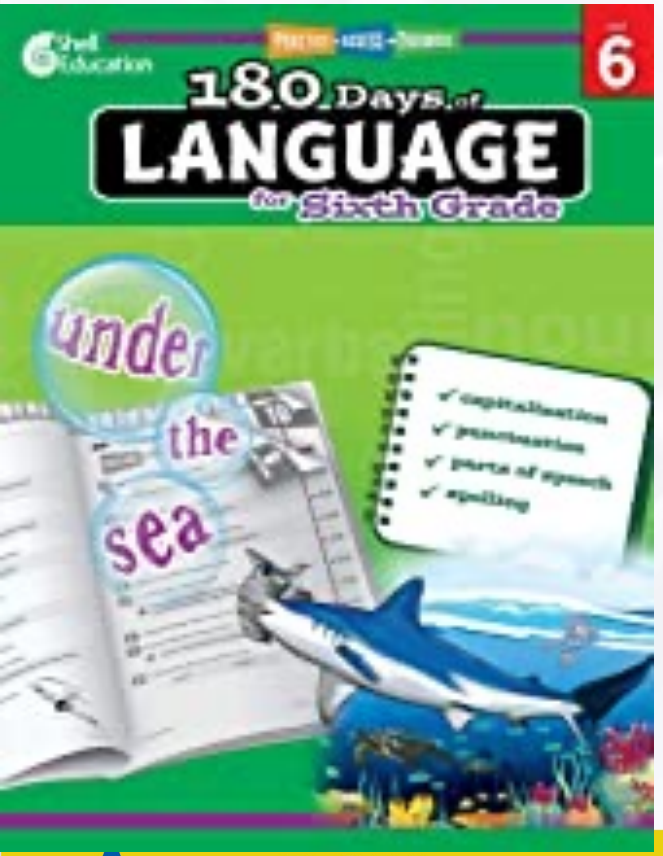
- In teaching and learning, **Alignment** refers to how far the curriculum or programme and the delivery or methodology are in harmony with the educational philosophy

Philosophy: Social interactionism and constructivism
Methodology: Behaviourist, learning by heart, repetition etc.
Assessment: Multiple choice

Philosophy: Social interactionism and constructivism
Methodology: Guided discovery, problem solving, interactive & collaborative learning
Assessment:
Test how you teach

SILEI 2023

An unaligned system of teaching, testing and assessment



a box of ☐ D. beer

a cup of ☐ E. cornflakes

a can of ☐ F. T-shirt

leather ☐ G. chocolate

a cotton ☐ H. honey

D/Fill in the blanks with the verbs of the list in the right form. /4

fit sound feel suit

1/Touch this coat. It _____ so soft!

2/Don't wear that dress. It doesn't _____ you.

3/Can I have a larger size? This one doesn't _____ me.

4/Listen to this new song. It _____ great!

E/Fill in the blanks. /10 a) Use *much/many/a lot of*

1/There aren't _____ muffins left.

2/There's _____ coffee in the pot. Would you like some?

3/How _____ butter do we need for the cake?

b) Use *some/any*

1/Are there _____ chops in the freezer?

2/Sorry! We haven't got _____ navy blue skirts.

3/Look! There are _____ desserts in the menu.

c) Use *a few/few/a little/little*

1/There are _____ biscuits in the box. Would you like some?

2/Sorry, but there's _____ tea. Would you like something else instead?

3/I've got _____ water in my bottle. We could share it.

4/There are _____ doughnuts.

NORTHFIELDS
Virtus et Honor

	GRADE	EFFORT	COMMENT
ENGLISH AND DRAMA L. Proctor	n/a	4	Adrien has been unable to work at the appropriate level so far and requires extensive assistance and support to complete basic language tasks. Unfortunately, his response to attempts to help him is often negative and his behaviour in class is disruptive. He is unable to work in a group, which is a hindrance to his progression. It is clear that he is receiving extensive support at home and this is benefiting him greatly but his lack of motivation in lessons needs to improve in order for him to reach his potential.
FRENCH S. Marrier d'Unienville	C	3	Adrien has the potential to achieve a higher grade but he does not seize every opportunity to improve his work. I wish that he starts being more positive about how to behave in class and to focus on his own work.
MATHEMATICS A. Gooljar	n/a	3	Adrien is working on a differentiated curriculum in order to improve his basic Maths skills; as such his results cannot be compared to other students in the class. His attitude in class can sometimes be negative and this must be an area for improvement.
SCIENCE A. Gooljar	C	2	Adrien has shown good progress in science. He is doing additional work and it is helping him to integrate better in the class. He showed good team spirit during class activities.
HISTORY L. Proctor	D	4	This term, we studied the ancient Greeks. Adrien's participation in lessons is limited and once again, his behaviour often gets in the way of productivity. He is unable to complete most tasks in the History classroom due to a lack of comprehension but he has started to make some effort to try, even when he is not completely confident, and I hope that this will improve further as the year develops.
ICT A. Gooljar	E	4	Adrien is having difficulty in understanding instructions and executing them. His motivation level is low. His IT manipulation skills are currently below the expected standard.
ART AND DESIGN T. Tambanivoul	B	1	Adrien shows interest in this subject. He has a positive attitude in class but should be more organised in his practical work.
DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY S. Carpenter	B	1	Adrien shows a good understanding of the shading work, oblique 3D drawing and freehand sketching. He has made a very positive start to the term.
PHYSICAL EDUCATION K. Ingamells	B	2	Adrien has made a good effort to improve his basic skills and techniques in basketball. He has listened to advice and implemented changes to his play. He would benefit from keeping his head up when dribbling so as to be aware where his opponents are.
MUSIC J. Ngeso		2	This term in Music, year Five has been learning music theory, including rhythmic and melodic notation, as they begin work on keyboard skills. They have also learnt to play percussion instruments as they sing together in unison. Adrien enjoys music very much, especially rhythm exercises. He does, however, get distracted and tends to start up conversations with friends during the lesson.

Labourdonnais Village, Mapou, Mauritius
Tel: (+230) 266-9448/9 - Fax: (+230) 266-9447
e-mail: office@northfieldsonline.com
website: www.northfieldsonline.com
BRN: C09039721

NORTHFIELDS
Virtus et Honor

FORM TWOB COMMENT:	HOUSE POINTS:	CLASS DOJO POINTS:	ABSENCES:	LATES:	HEAD OF SCHOOL COMMENT:
In PSHE we discussed how to maintain proper dental hygiene and students participated in group activities to improve their communication skills and bolster their confidence. In Beliefs and Values, students discussed the main values of the school. We did class activities on friendship and respect. Adrien needs to be more respectful to other students. He is slowly starting to integrate with other students and his interpersonal skills are improving.	0	45	0	0	Adrien has shown that he has the potential to be successful but this will require a certain degree of effort from him across the whole curriculum. There are areas for improvement in terms of focus and application and he must ensure that he applies himself consistently if he is to successfully overcome the current language issues that he has.

Placement tests	These give the teacher/school an idea of the level of language of incoming learners, and helps them to place learners appropriately into a class or level, within the school system.	**Developmental focus**: to identify the level most appropriate to the learner.
Benchmark tests	These help to assess the level of a group of learners (across a program, school, district, region or country) before starting a program. An exit version of the same instrument is often used, too.	**Developmental focus** – no individual, specific judgements are made based on test performance. The results ideally feed into program development.
Progress tests	These test what the learners have just been studying, and ensure that all learners are on target. Usually delivered at fixed points during the program, they can be **either developmental or judgmental.**	**Judgmental focus**, if the test outcomes contribute to program grade. **Developmental aspect**, when outcomes are analysed to support learning.
Diagnostic tests	These are formal or structured assessments of how well a learner has grasped a concept that has just been taught, and are always followed up with feedback. (see Alderson, 2005).	**Developmental only.** Since these assessments are designed purely for developmental reasons, they should never be scored, even where the score does not contribute to a learner's overall program grade.
Quizzes	These are short, focused tests, to assess very specific knowledge – e.g., specific vocabulary. Used **developmentally**, such quizzes are a common feature of successful teaching. Quizzes that are used for **judgmental** assessment should	Can be **either judgemental** (if test scores contribute to overall program grade) **or developmental** (if test performance informs individualised feedback to support learning). It is critical to ensure that learners are made aware of the nature of these quizzes (judgemental or

tests	designed to look back at the language (or other content) studied as part of the program. The expectation is that all students should perform well on this test.	where the test outcomes contribute to program grade. However, it is **less likely to be developmental**, as outcomes are rarely analysed on an individual basis to support learning
Proficiency tests	This is an external measure of a learner's language and is independent of the program. Judgmental, as there is rarely if ever any developmental feedback offered in such tests.	If overall performance contributes to program development, then there is an argument that there can be some developmental outcome (although the same might be claimed of any test type on this list)
Self assessment	The reflective nature of self-assessment is a critical aspect of learning. Developmental – designed to encourage reflection on and the taking control of one's own learning	**Developmental** – designed to encourage reflection on and the taking control of one's own learning
Peer assessment	By encouraging learners to peer assess, the teacher can raise awareness of the complexities of the assessment and learning process, e.g., the use of particular strategies or language structures and what makes a successful performance.	**Developmental** – designed to encourage reflection on others' and own learning; also to encourage learners to take control of their learning
Ongoing formal and informal assessment	All good teachers constantly assess the impact of their teaching in real time to identify weaknesses in their own work and learner progress. It is essential to successful teaching.	Developmental – the assessment is dynamic (in that it takes place in real time response to real-time learning issues) and purposeful (in that it identifies specific issues and suggests specific solutions

The Common European Framework of Reference

The 2001 CEFR: a detailed description of language proficiency in terms of language use, which it divides into four modes:

- Reception (listening and reading)
- Production (speaking and writing)
- Interaction (spoken and written)
- Mediation

(i.e. facilitating communication between individuals or groups who for whatever reason cannot communicate directly).

Updated versions, e.g. 2018, 2020, etc.

The Common European Framework of Reference

The CEFR was developed to provide **a common basis for the explicit description of learning objectives, content and methods in second/foreign language education.**

A clearly defined model of language ability and progression

The Common European Framework of Reference

The CEFR

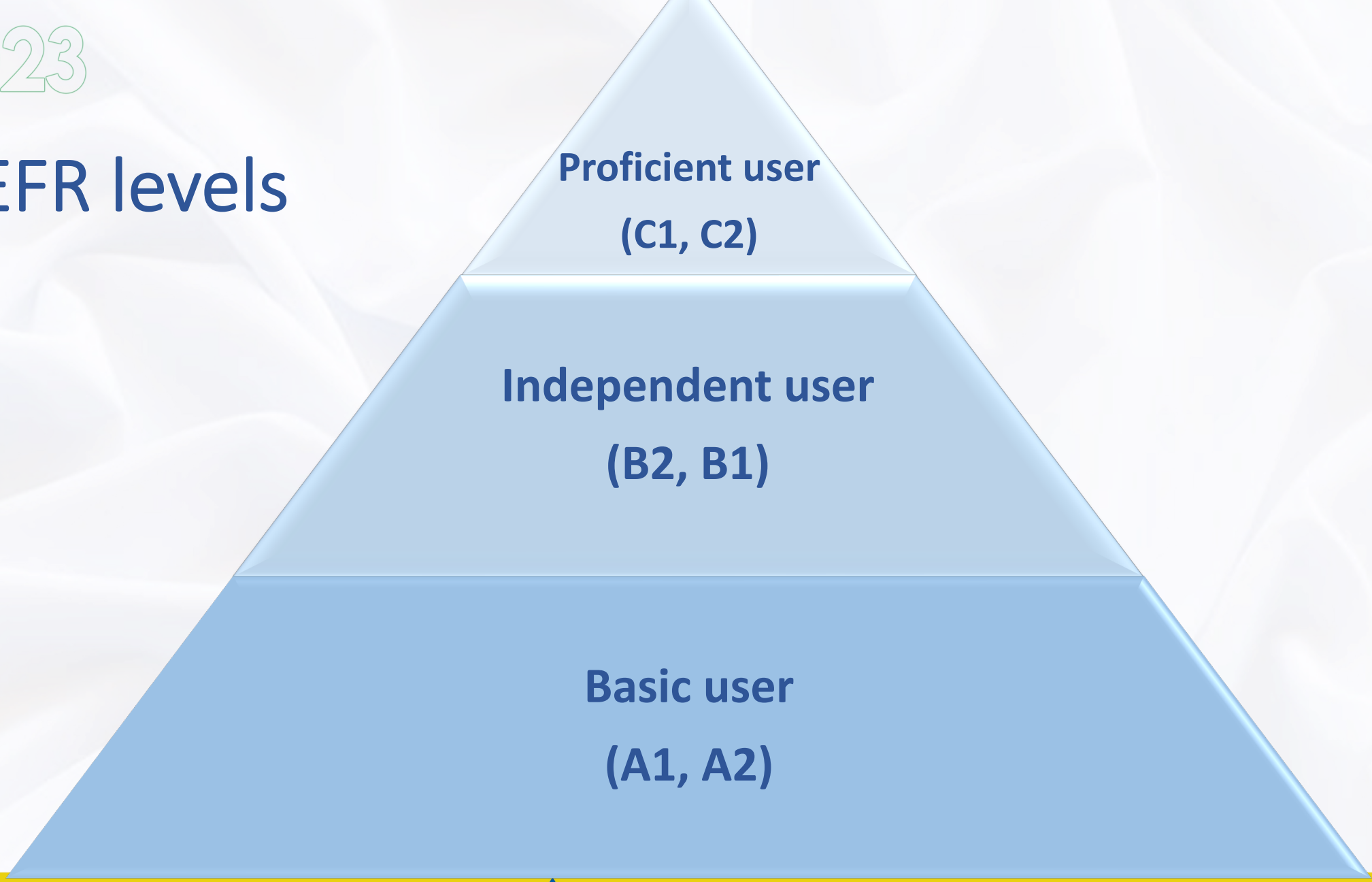
- Describes language learning outcomes in terms of language use
- Has **3 main DIMENSIONS**: (i) **language activities**, (ii) **the domains where they occur**, and **the different competences** we use to engage in them
- Includes **4 kinds of language ACTIVITIES**: **reception** (listening and reading), **production** (spoken and written), **interaction** (spoken and written), and **mediation** (translating and interpreting);
- Describes in detail **4 DOMAINS of language use** – public, personal, educational, professional – for each of which it specifies locations, institutions, persons, objects, events, operations, and texts

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR) - European Language Portfolio (ELP) (coe.int)

https://www.researchgate.net/figure/The-structure-of-the-CEFR-descriptive-scheme-28_fig1_344467246

SILEI 2023

CEFR levels



CEFR C2 PROFICIENT	• Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. • Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. • Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
CEFR C1 ADVANCED	• Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. • Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. • Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. • Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
CEFR B2 UPPER INTERMEDIATE	• Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. • Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. • Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
CEFR B1 INTERMEDIATE	• Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. • Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. • Can produce simple connected text on topics, which are familiar, or of personal interest. • Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
CEFR A2 PRE-INTERMEDIATE **CEFR A-1-A2 ELEMENTARY**	• Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). • Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. • Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
CEFR A-1 BEGINNER	• Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. • Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. • Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

https://adrianaespinozacorona11.blogspot.com/2018/05/

CEFR can help in alignment because

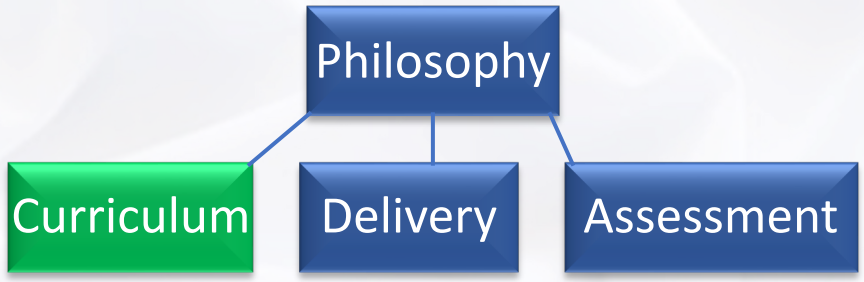
- The CEFR describes language proficiency in terms of communicative language use
- It provides descriptions of levels and scales of achievement which can be used to:
    - **design** curricula and syllabuses, textbooks and other teaching/learning materials, tests and other forms of assessment and help us to demonstrate alignment between two or more of these aspects of language education
    - show that an **existing** curriculum, syllabus, textbook, test or other form of assessment is aligned with relevant parts of the CEFR's descriptive scheme and one or more of its proficiency levels
    - **compare** curricula and syllabuses, textbooks and other teaching/learning materials, tests and other forms of assessment

SILEI 2023

What are some advantages of claiming alignment of teaching materials and assessment with the CEFR?

- **Coherence and transparency**
  - We can describe, explain and justify what, why and how we teach
- **A basis for principled comparison**
  - We can compare individual achievement with international standards
- **Quality assurance**
  - We can monitor all elements of our **foreign language learning system** and ensure they are meeting international standards

A comprehensive learning system (CLS)

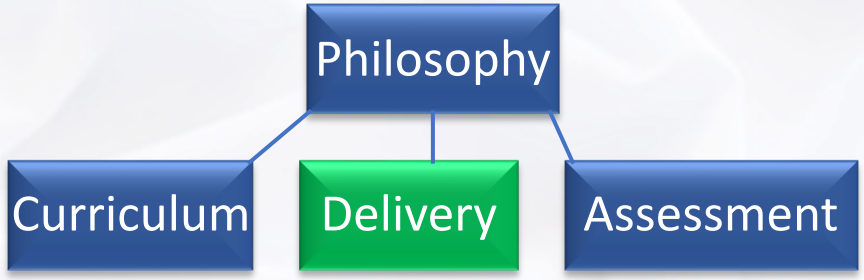


The language curriculum should include

- **aspects of the language and its use**
- **the social consequences of teaching language**
- **The social consequences of teaching language in a particular way**

Adapted from
Kelly (2009, in O'Sullivan 2021, p.8)

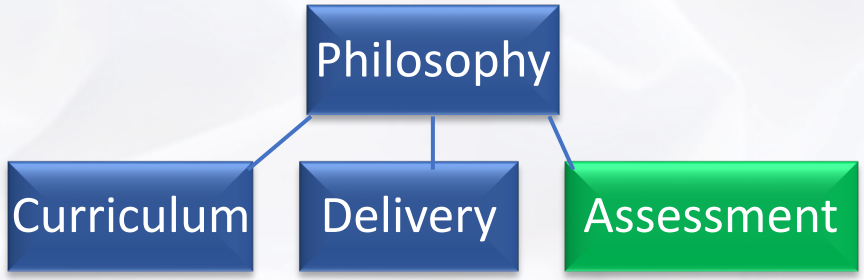
A comprehensive learning system (CLS)



The delivery/methodology should take into account "all aspects of the delivery of the curriculum" (O'Sullivan 2021, p.5)

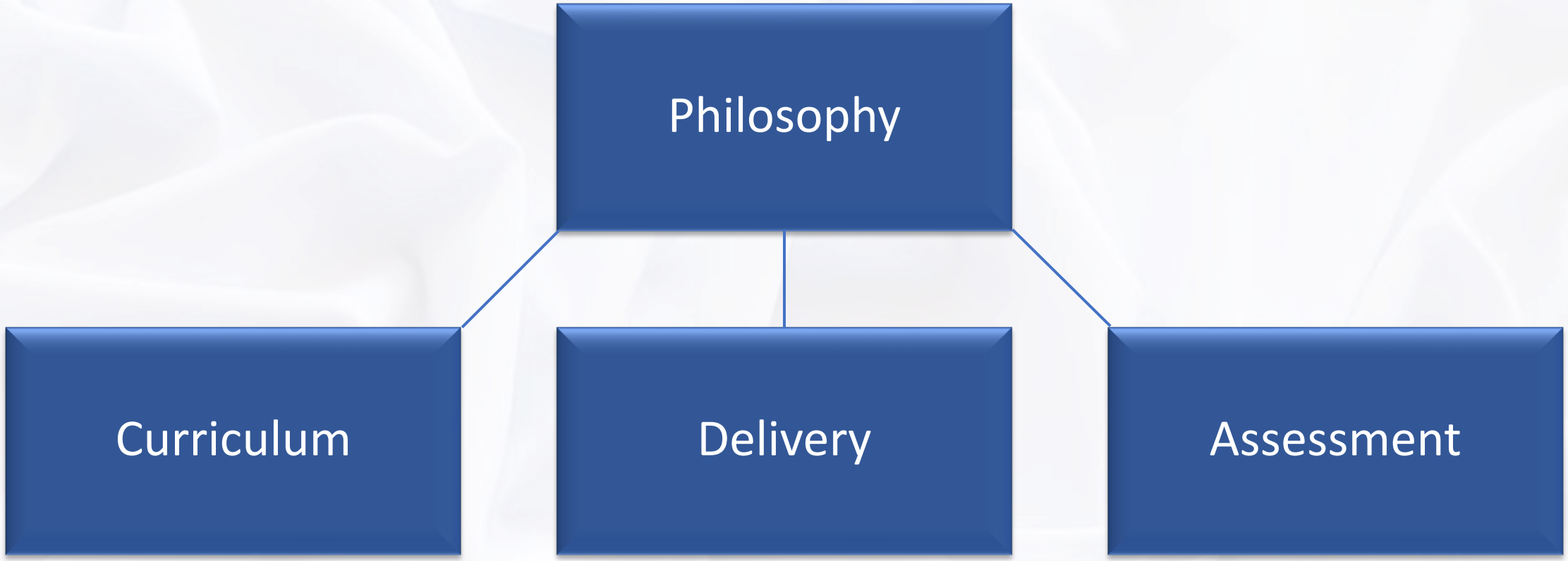
The physical environment	• the school building • the classroom • technology hardware • additional structures used in the formal or hidden/informal curriculum (e.g. gym, auditorium, outside nature areas) • playing areas or fields • surrounding community	Delivery
The school staff	• leadership • teaching • administrative • management • support (technology, teaching etc.) • grounds staff • voluntary staff	• selection • training • continuing professional development • monitoring and evaluation
Learning materials (O'Sullivan 2021, p.6)	• formal • informal	• textbooks • reading material – books, articles, blogs etc. (hard or soft copies) • social media • technology software • games (online and real) • TV/films • Music/spoken word (radio/podcasts

A comprehensive learning system (CLS)



The Assessment system must match the curriculum and delivery philosophically, culturally and methodologically and should include a range of assessment opportunities

A comprehensive learning system (CLS)



Localization

- **Localization:** ensuring something is appropriate to a specific context and social grouping
- **Test localization:** making test approach and content appropriate to a specific group of test-takers
- **CLS localization:** making all decisions about curriculum, delivery and assessment considering the local learner population and context

Advantages and disadvantages of developing a CLAFR (Common Latin American Frame of Reference for foreign language learning)?

SILEI 2023

Aligning Language Education a Assessment with the CEFR

1. A Comprehensive Learning System (CLS)
2. Definition of alignment
3. Example: an Unaligned Learning System (ULS)
4. The role of the CEFR in the creation of a CLS for foreign Language teaching
5. Questions and comments

Points for reflection:

- Is the CEFR what we need for CLSs in FLT in LA? Why?
- Advantages and disadvantages of developing a CLAFR (Common Latin American Frame of Reference for foreign language learning)?

O'Sullivan (2020). The Comprehensive Learning System. *Perspectives on English Language Policy and Education*, The British Council. www.britishcouncil.org/exam/aptis/research/publications/british-councilperspectives-english-language-policy-and-education

pathomet@gmail.com

SILEI 2023

Bibliography

O'Sullivan, B. (2020). The Comprehensive Learning System | British Council

Bunch, M. B. (2012). Aligning Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment. White paper for the USA-based Measurement Inc. Accessed on 31 May 2023, from: Formative, Interim, and Summative Assessment: It Takes All Three (measurementinc.com)

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR) - European Language Portfolio (ELP) (coe.int)

Phillips, J. K. (2007). Foreign Language Education: Whose Definition? *The Modern Language Journal*, *91*(2), 266–268.