

A QUALITY MATRIX FOR CEFR USE: Examples of promising practices

1 OVERVIEW

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Country: Poland

Institution: University of Warsaw

Type of context: Classroom level

Educational sector: Lower Secondary

Main focus of your project: Teaching Practices

SUMMARY

Name: Receptive strategy training

Abstract:

Plurilingual reception strategy training systematically introduced in order to reverse a decline in competence and motivation in relation to learning the second foreign language (French) in lower secondary school.

Stage: Implementation

Theme: Teaching

Specific focus: Reception strategies, plurilingualism, action-oriented tasks

CEFR aspects used: Reception strategies: Identifying cues and inferring; Plurilingual comprehension

Main features of this example:

- scenario-based tasks
- strategy training (inferencing; building on plurilingual repertoire)
- learner reflection

Quality principles demonstrated: Relevance, Validity, Inclusiveness, Sustainability



2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background:

- There was a decline in the number of learners learning French at lower secondary school level in Poland. Based on interviews with learners and their parents, it was established that French was perceived as difficult and of relatively little importance when compared with other languages taught at schools.
- Adolescent language learners use rather ineffective language learning strategies. While learning French as the third language, learners do not seem to perceive and make use of similarities between French, English and Polish.
- According to the results of *European Survey on Language Competences*, adolescent learners' competence both in the second and third language is very low in Poland, below the minimum recommended in the national core curriculum.

Stated aims:

- To empower language learners by familiarising them with a number of language learning strategies, mainly in terms of receptive skills (reading and listening).
- Enabling language learners to use their linguistic repertoires to facilitate the learning of vocabulary and grammar

Steps/stages:

1. **Before:** learners took a language test to assess their competence in listening and reading and a learning strategy questionnaire for listening and reading. The results in both the text and the questionnaire were rather low and the use of plurilingual learning strategies was not observed. The teachers involved received training on how to develop learning strategies in the learners at this school level.
2. **Throughout one academic year,** based on 6 purpose-designed scenarios, teachers introduced listening and reading strategies. Each scenario comprised practical tasks that presented selected learning strategies and encouraged application of the strategies in a variety of tasks. Once this step was completed, learners discussed effectiveness. Once the strategies were introduced, they were frequently used and revised by the teachers as an inherent part of the teaching process. Additionally, learners took part in individual face-to-face conferences aimed at prompting learners' reflection on strategy use.

The strategies included, for instance:

- analysing text structure,
- drawing inferences from speaker's intonation,
- looking for cognates, analysing grammatical similarities and differences between French and other known languages,
- using existing language repertoires to understand different types of texts.

3. **Afterwards:** a language test and a learning strategy questionnaire were applied.

Timeline: 1 academic year (2013-2014)

People/roles: 5 schools

3 RESULTS

What was achieved:

- Some improvement in the use of learning strategies was observed; however, there is an evident need to start strategy training at earlier stages of education.
- French teachers were equipped with skills and ready-made tools that can be used to develop language learning strategies in adolescent learners.

Impact:

- Developing scenarios that encourage strategy training as regards receptive skills and plurilingual competences.
- Practical recommendations available in publications for teacher educators, teachers and future teachers

4 ADVICE AND LESSONS LEARNT:

- The learners are not accustomed to using plurilingual strategies; therefore, there is a need to introduce strategy training at earlier stages of education.
- Strategy training should be conducted on a regular basis for a longer period of time. Every attempt should be made to introduce strategies in a practical way – by illustrating the strategies by way of clear examples and encouraging learners to apply the strategies in their learning. Such an approach will help the learners to test a number of strategies and choose the ones that suit them best.
- Strategy training should be given a more prominent role in teacher education programmes.