



***The European Commission's Action Plan
for the Language learning and Linguistic diversity***

On 13 December 2001, at the end of the European Year of Languages, the European Parliament adopted a *Resolution* recommending measures to promote linguistic diversity and language learning.

A couple of months later, on 14 February 2002, the Education and Youth Council adopted a *Resolution* in which it asked the European Commission to submit proposals for actions aimed at promoting linguistic diversity and language learning.

In preparing its *Action Plan*, the European Commission undertook a public consultation involving the other European Institutions, national ministries, a wide range of organisations representing civil society, and the general public.

The consultation was in line with the Commission's general approach to involving interested parties in decision-taking and ensuring greater accountability.

The basis of this consultation was the Staff Working - ***Paper Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity - Consultation*** which was published in November 2002.

It was designed to encourage both stakeholder organisations and individuals to express their views on a number of key issues identified in the document, and in particular on seven salient questions.

Over 300 substantive responses to the consultation were received.

The European Commission would like to record its gratitude to all those organisations and individuals who took the time to make comments and suggestions.

These responses were analysed by an independent consultant Final report ELC.

The Consultation Process was rounded off by a conference held in Brussels on 10 April 2003.

On 27 July 2003 the European Commission adopted the *Action Plan* for the promotion of language learning and linguistic diversity.

The Action Plan makes concrete proposals for 45 actions to be undertaken from 2004 to 2006 in three broad areas:

- firstly, the key objective of extending the benefits of language learning to all citizens as a lifelong activity;
- secondly, the need to improve the quality of language teaching at all levels;
- thirdly, the need to build in Europe an environment which is really favourable to languages.

It proposes a series of actions to be taken at European level in 2004 – 2006 with the aim of supporting actions taken by local, regional and national authorities.

Taken together, actions proposed, and those taken by Member States, can secure a major step change in promoting language learning and linguistic diversity.



Teacher Education in Italy

National Background

In Italy, during secondary school education, one foreign language must be taught in academic and vocational strands. At primary school, foreign language teaching is compulsory between the ages of 8-11. In addition, the study of a first foreign language is compulsory for all university students regardless of their discipline.

Minority languages are officially recognised and learners are entitled to be taught in their mother tongue. At present, bilingual education is available in four regions.

Recent reforms have had a major impact on the education of language teachers in Italy.

Before 1998, there were no specific courses for language teacher education and future teachers were trained only in their academic discipline, without pedagogical training.

After 1998, future secondary school teachers were obliged to undertake two years of specialised teacher training at SSIS (Scuole di Specializzazione all'Insegnamento Secondario).

Both systems existed in parallel. The Moratti Reform of 2003 has agreed to change the system again. One proposal is that after their Bachelor's, teacher trainees will spend two years deepening their knowledge of their academic discipline, and a further two years at the SSIS focusing on practical experience of teaching.

Initial Teacher Education

For secondary level, teacher education comprises two phases: a first degree (Laurea), equivalent to a Bachelor's, lasting four years, followed by a specialised teaching postgraduate degree (Laurea Specialista) lasting two years and organised by the SSIS.

The SSIS institutions are part of universities but they are also autonomous bodies. Until the 2003 reform, academic staff from the Faculties of Education and Modern Languages taught at the SSIS, alongside the SSIS's own tutors and supervisors. The reform is not yet fully effective.

Primary school teachers are trained at universities and work towards a Bachelor's degree (Laurea). They are often language graduates who receive additional in-service education to update their language and pedagogical skills. There are two types of primary teacher: those who teach the full range of subjects including foreign languages, and those who are foreign language specialists and teach several classes, sometimes in different local schools.

All trainee teachers in Italy must take a state examination in order to qualify to work in state schools.

Continuing Teacher Education (in-service)

Until now, in-service teacher education has not been organised in a systematic way. It has been seen as a matter of individual choice on the teacher's part, and is not necessarily recognised in relation to the teacher's career. Funding for in-service education is also sporadic. Many schools organise in-service education themselves by employing professional associations and cultural institutions.

Following the 2003 reform, in-service teacher education will be provided by the universities in the same way as initial teacher education. The reform outlines a plan for 'centres of excellence' in universities that will be responsible for in-service education and professional development. However, it is yet to be decided how these will work in practice.

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Case Study Context

This case study will examine the Scuola di Specializzazione all'Insegnamento Secondario (SSIS) at the University of Venice, Ca' Foscari. The institution was founded in 1998 and provides trainee teachers for secondary level with two years' initial teacher education leading to the national teaching examination. The SSIS at the University of Venice works in collaboration with three other institutions, the University of Padua, the University of Verona and the University of Venice Institute of Architecture.

There are approximately 60 foreign language trainee teachers at the SSIS per year. Entry to the course is via a national competitive examination. Selection of students for the SSIS in Venice is based on applicants' general cultural knowledge, knowledge of linguistics and sociolinguistics etc, as well as general linguistic ability. Trainees throughout their initial teacher education are encouraged to refer to European documents. In the content of their courses, there is frequent reference to the debates around issues of multilingualism in the European Union.

There is strong cooperation between the university's Department of Linguistic Sciences and the SSIS Foreign Language Unit. Didactic research from the modern languages faculties feeds into teaching practices at the SSIS. At the SSIS, the Foreign Language Unit can put forward research proposals and the teachers involved in the research projects can receive funding for their work. An editorial series on didactic research investigates new methods and research activities. Such cross-fertilisation is one of the university's key policies.

Organisation of Institution: Structure

All trainee teachers, regardless of their discipline, follow a common programme in their first and fourth semesters, consisting of a wide range of theoretical studies of general didactics, philosophy and psychology of education, and social, interpersonal and intercultural aspects of learning and teaching. The aim of the common course is to give trainee teachers a strong foundation in didactics and to stimulate knowledge about teaching and learning.

During their second and third semesters, foreign language trainee teachers follow courses in the didactics of their discipline. The languages on offer for foreign language teacher trainees are English, Russian, French, German and Spanish. This section of teacher education focuses specifically on subject methodology and didactics, and is organised through a combination of classes and practical workshops.

While studying subject didactics in their second and third semesters, trainee teachers also undertake 300 hours of observation and teaching practice in schools. This is organised by supervisors, whose role is explained in more detail below. At the end of the two-year initial teacher education programme, candidates sit for the national teaching examination (*Abilitazione*) in order to become qualified teachers.

Content

The Common Programme is organised in five strands:

- 1) Theories of education and didactic planning: courses on general pedagogy and education theories; teaching methodology and an educational research and didactics workshop;
- 2) Psychology of development and school learning: courses on adolescent psychology, cognitive psychology and psychology of learning and a workshop on the analysis of learning processes;

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- 3) Psychopedagogy of teaching: courses on experimental pedagogy, psychology of education and a workshop on the analysis of educational interaction.
- 4) Logic and philosophy of knowledge;
- 5) School organisation and educational contexts: courses of educational politics and legislation, technology, evaluation, educational history and social psychology among others.

The specialisation in foreign language teaching (second and third semesters) requires the study of additional courses in teaching literature issues related to language learning and learning.

Trainee teachers also take specific courses in the didactics of their language specialisation.

These are all combined with workshops in these areas.

The 300 hours teaching practice that takes place in parallel to the subject didactics courses is divided into two sections. The first year (second semester) is focused on information and orientation, in which the trainee teacher finds out how the school works and observes experienced teachers teaching. The second year (third semester) is a teaching practice apprenticeship and involves close work between the trainee teacher, school mentor and university supervisor.

The Profile Elements Exemplified

The key factor in integrating the academic subject and practical experience of teaching at the SSIS is the role played by the supervisor. The supervisor is both a secondary school teacher and a university tutor. They are selected by the SSIS after a public evaluation, and as a result, combine up to 12 hours supervising at the SSIS with only 9 instead of 18 hours teaching at school.

Their role at the SSIS is a mixture of teaching, organisation, communication and mentoring. They are particularly crucial in arranging and monitoring trainees' practical experience in schools. Each supervisor is responsible for 17 trainees. An interdisciplinary group of 10-12 supervisors meets every month (one from each disciplinary area). The supervisors also have annual two to three-day seminars organised by SSIS to discuss important issues.

Supervisors are responsible for coordinating discussion groups and project work in the form of practical workshops that take place towards the start and end of the 300 hours of the trainees' observation and teaching practice. During observation and teaching practice, there are regular feedback meetings between supervisors and trainees.

Supervisors visit schools to ensure that the head teacher, curricula and mentor correspond with the interests of the trainee teacher on placement there.

For these discussion groups and project work, the supervisors use documents and materials they have used in their own schools when teaching. During their teaching experience in schools, trainees continue to have access to online tutoring for their didactics classes, following certain courses online if they are delivered in this way.

(Related item: 17). Workshops lead to trainees planning their own teaching modules and producing materials to be tried out directly in the classroom.

An explicit framework for teaching practice (stage/practicum)

As a result of the supervisor system, teaching practice at the SSIS is highly organised. To begin, trainees from the SSIS sign a convention with schools outlining the number of hours, the duties and responsibilities of the trainee and the school over the period of teaching experience.

In the first year, training related to teaching practice concerns the trainee's interaction and orientation. Of 90 hours of practice-oriented training, trainees spend ten hours in one school, and

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ten in another. Trainees work alongside an expert teacher, not necessarily a language teacher. They write a project that requires them to interview the head teacher and pupils at the school about a specific issue. One example is a project on how to prepare summer *stages*, for which the trainee prepared a questionnaire for a *stage* organiser asking about key issues such as aims, evaluation of the outcomes and funding.

Trainees present the result of their project to their peers during the supervisor's practical workshop sessions.

In the second year, the practice-oriented training is 210 hours, 60 of which are spent in classes observing and teaching. Here, the aim is to work on lesson planning, classroom management and other issues in cooperation with the class teacher as their mentor. This process ends in a dissertation. Throughout this process, supervisors continue their practice-oriented workshops, monitor the trainees' progress and keep up a close liaison with the trainee's mentor.

Working with a mentor and understanding the value of mentoring

The mentors used by the SSIS in Venice have a close relationship with supervisors. They are fully qualified teachers with five years' teaching experience. The role of the mentor is formalised in the apprenticeship agreement the trainee signs. Generally, their role is to welcome trainees, plan trainees' activities and tailor observation and teaching practice to the trainee's specific interests. Mentors give trainees feedback at the end of every school day. Mentors are unpaid, although schools can pay them from their own funds if they so wish.

The SSIS organises workshops and one or two plenary conferences with mentors throughout the academic year.



A period of work or study in a country or countries where the trainee's foreign language is spoken as native

The Foreign Language Unit at the SSIS in Venice sends an increasing number of trainees for periods lasting from a week to six months to teaching institutions in the UK, France, Spain and Holland to study their academic subject and/or foreign language teacher education.

There are partnerships with the IUFM at Nantes in France and the University of Salamanca in Spain.

A link with the University of Munich proved problematic because courses were not flexible enough to accommodate the needs of SSIS trainees but a more fruitful link is being pursued with Saarbrücken where the courses on offer to the SSIS trainees are more flexible and where trainees are able to pursue integrated courses in pedagogy and teaching methodology rather than focusing on theory alone.

The Erasmus coordinator at the SSIS in Venice is responsible for ensuring that trainees who go abroad for three to five months in their second year take courses that broadly correspond with the courses they were scheduled to take at Venice; this is to ensure their successful accreditation.

Erasmus and Comenius funding is being channelled into creating situations in which SSIS trainees can work abroad. Comenius Action 2.2 allows trainee teachers to go abroad as assistants for six months, and a few SSIS foreign language trainees use this time to observe teaching both of their foreign language and of other foreign languages being taught.

This is an integral part of their apprenticeship process.

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About ten trainees also self-fund *stages* abroad. These last two weeks or more and are organised by supervisors who often have personal contacts with schools. These activities once again are an integral part of the trainees' teaching and observation practice and are evaluated in terms of course credits.



The opportunity to observe or participate in teaching in more than one country

Before they go on *stages* abroad, trainees sign an apprenticeship agreement outlining their willingness to attend classes and what they will expect to do and achieve. The *stages* involve observing the school's organisation, as well as teaching; an example of one activity they might engage in is designing a mediation activity. Sometimes trainees teach their own mother tongue to learners, and it is

possible to work in two different schools over the two-week period.

At the end, the trainee completes an apprenticeship assessment sheet and writes a report on the period abroad, outlining the pros and cons of the experience. The SSIS receives feedback from the trainee, but also from the foreign school involved. The trainee shares the experience of being abroad at a general meeting of all those at the SSIS who have been on apprenticeships.

The SSIS is also trying to organise similar experiences during foreign language trainee's Erasmus exchanges, enabling the trainee at a foreign university to engage in some observation and/or teaching practice at a local school. These Erasmus-linked periods of teaching and observation would have the same structured format (apprenticeship agreement etc.) as the self-funded *stages*, the important difference being the resolution of the funding problem.

Continuous improvement of teaching skills as part of in-service education

The supervisors help ensure that initial and in-service education are part of a cycle. They liaise with in-service teachers and are able to identify and advise on suitable in-service education programmes available at the university. The universities are now in charge of in-service teacher education and a number of modules of 50 or 100 hours are available at the SSIS.

Ongoing education for teacher educators

Supervisors at the Foreign Language Unit of the SSIS in Venice have become involved in the Grundtvig project on adult education as a way of promoting the ongoing education of teacher educators within the overall plan of the unit to highlight the international dimension of teacher education.

They asked the national Grundtvig agency if they could be considered as adult learners, and on agreement became entitled to apply for a grant from Europe distributed by local agencies. The Unit devised a plan requesting funds for access to courses that focus on professional aspects of teaching and teacher education.

Seven supervisors applied for scholarships, four to go to Utrecht, two to Portugal and one to France.

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The plan envisages that, before undertaking their in-service education, the seven meet and present the courses they have signed up for. After the courses, a seminar is organised in order to share their learning experiences.

The main problem with organising this form of in-service education is that some courses demand payment up front, whereas Grundtvig funds are not always available in time. However, flexibility on the part of the foreign education providers can help resolve this problem.

Training in language teaching methodologies, and in state-of-the-art classroom techniques and activities

As part of ICT training, trainees develop lessons that deal with intercultural learning and the impact of technology. This element of their course shows them how to use DVDs in classrooms, and project-based work focuses on integrating learning about technology with its use in the classroom. Trainees also have 24-hour modules with related 24-hour workshops on methodological and didactical issues relating to language, microlanguage, literature and culture and civilisation.



Training in information and communication technology for personal planning, organisation and resource discovery

All the course materials for foreign language subject-specific didactics are already online as part of the SSIS's *Univirtual*, and the general 'area commune' materials are also being put online. Trainees can follow their weekly modules online, where materials suggest teaching activities. Interactivity is highlighted through a web forum and exchange with online tutors. Online tutoring and resources are especially helpful in keeping trainees on placements abroad up to date with their

course requirements.

The *Univirtual* of the SSIS at Venice is the most developed in Italy. It contains not only courses for trainees, but information about the SSIS's European projects, about educational technology (use of the Internet and Powerpoint for presentations) and other pedagogical activities.

The *Univirtual* also includes courses for the training of online tutors. This teaches tutors how to run courses, how to evaluate course online and how to increase the vitality of virtual interaction.

Training in ways of adapting teaching approaches to the educational context and individual needs of learners

There are two major add-on courses in special needs education offered by the SSIS in Venice, composed of 800 and 400 hours teaching. The latter is an in-service course for already qualified teachers. (Related item: 10). The 400-hour course includes units in how to improve learning online for children with disabilities, which is organised in teams and through project.

There are also units in teacher professionalisation and improving the autonomy of learners with disabilities, especially through use of new learning environments.

The course ends in a final workshop and throughout emphasises flexible delivery, with intensive weekend teaching and course units available online.

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Training in the critical evaluation, development and practical application of teaching materials and resources

This forms part of the training in ICT. Trainees learn how to produce teaching materials using ICT and there is an online discussion forum available to them on this issue.

Alongside their training in ICT for creating materials, they have workshops in finding and using authentic materials on the Internet, and are shown how to use ICT for cooperation in finding and adapting materials. They are taught to see the Internet as part of a process, not a product.

In addition, workshops in groups show trainees how to create hypertexts, how to create learner-centred materials, how to create their own materials and how to archive materials so that they are available for colleagues to use. There is also an archive of net-based materials available.

Training in developing relationships with educational institutions in appropriate countries

Supervisors have a key role in passing on their communication experience to trainees. As a result of their close collaboration with trainees, i.e. in finding suitable schools for teaching practice and making personal contact with teachers abroad, trainees fully understand the value of adopting these strategies themselves.

Training in the importance of teaching and learning about foreign languages and cultures

Trainees explicitly see their supervisor as a point of reference when it comes to European issues such as gaining EU funding. All the taught modules touch on this aspect of foreign language teaching in some way. In particular, modules on 'The Principles of Language Teaching', 'Theory of Education' and 'Culture and Civilisation' explore the connection between language and culture, including focus on issues such as multiculturalism, identity, cultural competence and cultural relativism.

The SSIS organises presentations given by foreign exchange students studying at the SSIS in Venice on their experience of language learning in Italy and its relation to their own national context. SSIS trainees who go abroad are also given a platform to share their intercultural and enriching experiences with their peers.



The 2003 Moratti Reform

Although it is not yet in effect, the 2003 Moratti Reform promises a major shake-up of the Italian teacher education system. Although the plans have not yet been finalised, it is proposed that language teacher education be divided into a 3+2+2 model, in which the first period is the B.A. equivalent, the second involves further academic study and the third focuses on specific teacher education and classroom practice at the existing SSIS. In addition, universities will be fully responsible for in-service education. Reservations about the reform include the change from an integrated system of teacher education at the moment to a linear system that risks losing the benefits of studying teaching and undertaking classroom practice in parallel. Similarly, the role of the supervisors in this new system is yet to be defined.

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The role of the supervisor

Before the formation of the SSIS in 1998, the role of the supervisor did not formally exist. The duties and responsibilities of supervisors are largely dictated through a bottomup approach, and to that extent, more accurately reflect the needs of teacher educators and trainees. Since they work both as university tutors and school teachers, supervisors are in a unique position to respond to the issues trainee teachers face. At the SSIS in Venice, it is clear that the supervisors put great emphasis on communication and cooperation, working closely both with fellow supervisors, trainee teachers and mentors.

It is also clear the supervisors should have a major role in the new reform process, but one of their major activities in bridging the gap between subject didactics, methodology and teaching practice will become more difficult to carry out under the new system.

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Summary

Main strengths:

- The role of the supervisor as both university tutor and school teacher;
- The cooperation and regular meetings between the SSIS's supervisors;
- The involvement of supervisors in trainees' teaching practice;
- The framework for teaching practice (*stage/practicum*);
- The close connection between supervisors and mentors;
- The initiative of the Foreign Language Unit in using EU funds to finance inservice training;
- The availability of course materials for courses on education theory and subject didactics online, as well as online tutoring and training for tutors;
- The emphasis not simply on new learning environments, but also on how they can be implemented and integrated into classroom practice.

Areas for further consideration

- Improving the integration of the European dimension into foreign language teacher education and the extension of European exchange and study abroad schemes. Greater involvement of trainees in the SSIS's European projects.
- Greater recognition of the role of supervisors and mentors, including increased incentives.

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Training in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

There are several programmes for CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) aimed at trainees, studying for secondary level as an add-on qualification.

CLIL/'Primary English'/Teaching foreign languages to adult learners' are also add-on qualifications. All programmes are modularised in the curricular structure.

CLIL is aimed at trainee teachers with a second subject apart from English (i.e. biology, history, geography, politics).

The duration of training is four semesters with an approximate workload of four hours per week, per semester.

The programme consists of four modules. Practical training includes one four-week scheme (strongly recommended to be abroad or alternatively in a local CLIL-school) and another period on a one-day-perweek-basis throughout summer term. There is also a programme for Primary English, aimed at trainee teachers studying for a degree in Primary Education. English as their third subject can be studied within the Primary Education study programme. Courses are modularised and the duration of training is three semesters with a minimum workload of six hours per week, per semester.

Strategies and skills

The initial teacher education course structure for primary trainee teachers contains a study of six semesters (three years), combining a good balance between theory and practice. From the first semester onwards, trainees experience a practical dimension of training, starting with classroom observation. From the second semester onwards, trainees are required to teach (or team-teach) lessons in the on-site training schools or other primary schools in Innsbruck. Tuesday and Thursday mornings are always designated for such placements, leading on to block placements later during the course. As far as subject competence is concerned, trainee teachers are trained to teach English in an integrated way, as such conventional lessons are taught through English. With a new curriculum introducing foreign languages into primary education, only recently implemented in Austria, the education of teachers underwent major changes. Trainee teachers are already required to switch languages in their lessons during their training period and receive training in CLIL methodologies. A high language competence is required from trainees from the start and elective courses are on offer for improving language competence (also available for qualified teaching staff).

Initial teacher education that includes a course in language proficiency and assesses trainees' linguistic competence

The Centre for Applied Language Studies is one of the core partners of the DIALANG project at www.dialang.org, which is the first major language assessment system based on the Council of Europe's "Common European Framework of Reference" offering tests in different language skills (reading, writing, listening, grammar and vocabulary) in 14 languages. Language teacher trainees are made aware of the benefits of DIALANG, which can be downloaded for free. In addition to the tests, a wide range of feedback and expert advice is given relating to the improvement of language skills. Although they do not issue language certificates of any kind, the tests at DIALANG establish language levels and give tips on how to improve language competence.

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As many trainee teachers lack a practical concept of the use of the assessment scales of the Common European Framework, DIALANG offers them the possibility of concrete examples and an option for self-assessment.



Training in the application of various assessment procedures and ways of recording learners' progress.

Educational Aims:

- To introduce you to the teacher's role in formal assessment procedures.
- To develop knowledge of the benefits of different informal assessment techniques that can be employed in the classroom.
- To enable you to assess your learners correctly and record their progress in a meaningful manner.
- To introduce you to the scales of Common European Framework and encourage you to use them to assess the four aspects of language (reading, writing speaking and listening).

Intended Learning Outcomes:

a) Knowledge and Understanding

- You will have a repertoire of assessment procedures which you can use flexibly according to the particular setting. These include, for example, written and oral tests, group work presentations and continuous assessment.
- You will understand which of these techniques to use to best display the learners' progress in the area in which you are interested.
- You will be able to record all results and interpret them to chart the learner's progress in a meaningful way. This will also allow you to see areas in which the learner is weak and where more work needs to be done.

Transferable Skills:

- You will be able to record accurately and interpret statistical information.
- You will be able to apply a number of assessment techniques to your teaching when necessary.

Checklist

What they do:

- Trainees are introduced to formal assessment procedures. They understand how the marks of formal assessment have to be recorded and the procedures surrounding this.
- Trainees are familiar with a repertoire of assessment techniques and understand the contexts in which different techniques are appropriate.
- Trainees understand how to use an assessment technique to obtain accurate results.

How they do it

- Trainees can use tools such as the Common European Framework scales to assess their own language proficiency accurately. They then can use them to assess the language proficiency of their learners.

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- Trainees understand the advantages of different assessment techniques and are able to select a technique appropriate to what they are hoping to test.

How they know they do it:

- During the school experience, trainees will have the opportunity to assess learners.
- Trainees critically evaluate the benefits of one particular assessment technique over another in a given context and can justify their reasons.

Training in the use of the European Language Portfolio for self-evaluation Educational Aims:

- To use the European Language Portfolio to further enhance your language learning.
- To use the European Language Portfolio to motivate you to continue learning.
- To use the European Language Portfolio to record and reflect upon linguistic skills and cultural experiences.

Intended Learning Outcomes:

a) Knowledge and Understanding

- You understand how the document is structured in three parts and understand the different functions of the three parts (language passport, language biography and dossier).
- You recognise that the compilation of the European Language Portfolio is an ongoing process.
- You are aware of the importance of adding to it following a period of study, work or training abroad.

Transferable Skills:

- You will further develop your linguistic and communication skills through the use of the document.
- You will be required to critically evaluate and reflect upon your cultural experience and linguistic skills.
- The Portfolio will act as basis for similar forms of documentation throughout the trainees' education and their subsequent career.

Check list

What they do:

- Trainees learn about the European Language Portfolio from the early stages of their initial teacher education.
- Trainees refer to the Portfolio regularly in order to evaluate their own language competence and to assemble evidence of their achievements and experience in relation to foreign languages and cultures.

How they do it:

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- Through the theoretical aspect of the teacher education programme, trainees are introduced to using the European Language Portfolio.
- Trainees follow a collection, selection and reflection approach in order to compile the portfolio.

How they know they do it:

- Through their Portfolio trainees can demonstrate that they have used a variety of methods and approaches to further enhance their language skills and add to their cultural experiences.

Training in teaching European citizenship Educational Aims:

- To develop your understanding of Europe and the European Union.
- To develop your understanding of citizenship as a concept and how this relates to Europe.
- To think of language learning as a necessary step to participating in Europe and being able to relate this to teaching content.

Intended Learning Outcomes:

a) Knowledge and Understanding

- You will understand what makes a good citizen, both legally and socially.
- You will understand the importance of your role as a language teacher in opening up Europe for your learners.
- You will understand the workings of Europe, not only on a political level but also on a social level.
- You will be able to talk positively about Europe to your learners and foster an interest in international networks and cultural exchange.
- You will be able to ensure that your learners understand their rights and obligations as a European citizen.
- You will be able to foster an atmosphere of respect and understanding in relation to the diversity of your learners and within the educational institution.

b) Transferable Skills

- The content of your lessons will become more varied as you can incorporate Europe into your teaching. You will know how to gain access to a wider variety of materials and resources.

Checklist

What they do:

- Trainees are made aware of the workings of Europe and the European Union.
- They understand citizenship, both from a legal and social point of view.
- They are aware of how this can be incorporated into the content of their teaching.
- Trainees understand the importance of mobility and to this end have a working knowledge of the opportunities available to an individual who wants to study or work within Europe.

How they do it:

- European citizenship is taught through the educational institution and through a trainee's own research.

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- Trainees are encouraged to seek out material which would support the teaching of this subject and to be aware of the relevant websites and information providers.

How they know they do it:

- European citizenship makes up a clear and comprehensive element of teacher education.
- Trainees are able to talk confidently about issues surrounding Europe.
- Trainees are able to present cogent arguments regarding European citizenship.

Training in team-working, collaboration and networking, inside and outside the immediate school context

Educational aims:

- To enable you to understand the importance of team-working, collaboration and networking.
- To be able to use these skills inside and outside the immediate school context.

Intended learning outcomes:

a) Knowledge and Understanding

- You will be able to work effectively as part of a team.
- You will be able how to establish and maintain contacts and networks.
- You will be able to rely on such connections inside and outside the immediate school context.

b) Transferable skills

- You will develop good communication skills.
- You will be able to work effectively as part of a team.
- You will improve your networking skills.

Checklist

What they do:

- Trainees can work effectively as part of a team.
- Trainees establish contacts and networks for greater collaboration, inside and outside the immediate school context.

How they do it:

- Trainees team-teach with other trainees and with qualified teachers.
- Trainees are trained in peer observation and peer review.
- Trainees become conscious of building up and maintaining networks with schools and other institutions during time spent working, studying or teaching abroad or in your home country.

How they know they do it:

- Trainees will see the benefits of work and collaborating effectively in a team effort.
- Trainees understand the necessity of having contacts and established networks to rely on and refer to when and where required.

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Language Awareness and Competency

Comparative aspects of the mother-tongue and foreign language should be taught during initial teacher training to improve learning outcomes

- Learning outcomes would be improved if comparative aspects of the mothertongue and foreign language were taught during teacher training.
- Training should include the teaching of one's own mother-tongue.

Theories of language learning and acquisition should be taught during initial training

- More emphasis should be put on theoretical courses specific to language learning and teaching.
- Training should include theories of language learning and pedagogy and language awareness.
- Teachers of languages need to reflect on the process of language learning.

Initial language training should include courses in language proficiency and the trainee's language competency should be assessed with reference to the Common European Framework

- Training should include courses in language proficiency.
- A minimum language competency defined by the CEF should be stated for any graduate starting teacher training.
- A trainee's knowledge of language should not be taken for granted. It must be assured that understanding of grammatical elements is appropriate to teaching.

The same level of language competency should be reached by all trainee language teachers regardless of whether they intend to teach primary, secondary or post-compulsory levels

- In a case where universities and teacher training colleges are both training teachers, the language competency of those teachers who have graduated from university is a lot higher.
- With the focus on communicative skills and language accuracy a whole generation of trainees are less familiar with the meta-language of grammar.

Comments: The greater a teacher's language competency, the more creative and thus effective their teaching would be. Moreover if a teacher has to lapse into the mother tongue, the learners will be less encouraged to use the language. Examining language competency with reference to the CEF would facilitate mobility. It is widely agreed that a high level of language competency is required if a teacher is going to stimulate meaningful communication and culturally appropriate lessons. However there is a clear split in the group between those who believed the CEF scales should be used in rigid manner to inform the level to which the teacher is able to teach and those who thought that the use of the scales is only relevant when viewed in tandem with the teaching-learning context.

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It was felt that the target language need not be used exclusively if it became a barrier to communication, and again this would depend on the context (i.e. the native language is perhaps the preferred means of communication for classroom management with younger learners and would equally be appropriate when explaining a complex grammar point to older learners). Overall, it was felt that the scales of the CEF are useful to facilitate mobility but should not necessarily be used definitively. To a certain extent, the national context should also be considered.



IAL FVG teachers training for European Language Certificates

(CELI CERTIFICATION)

The teachers' IAL FVG offers the European Language Certificates in several languages (English, Germany, French, Spanish, Slovenian, Italian). In particular IAL FVG hosts the **CELI Certificate Exam**, Certificate of Knowledge of Italian Language of The University for Foreigners of Perugia (Università per Stranieri di Perugia-USP).

Our Examination centre (*n. 696* <http://portal.unistrapg.it/elencosedi.asp>) is recommended by the Institutes and approved by the University of Perugia.

Of all the Italian institutions which conduct research into the teaching and acquisition of the Italian language and which foster knowledge of the Italian culture, the Università per Stranieri di Perugia (USP) is the oldest and most prestigious and is Member **ALTE** - *Association of Language Testers in Europe* - (association of institutions within Europe, each of which produces examinations and certification for language learners. Each member provides examinations of the language which is spoken as a mother tongue in their own country or region).

The Certification Unit of the Università per Stranieri di Perugia has developed a five-level examinations system (according to European Framework of Reference-European Council, 2000¹) in order of increasing difficulty at the end to assess learners of Italian as a Foreign Language and are an Official title of Italian Government:

Certificato di Conoscenza della Lingua Italiana (CELI 1) - Livello A2

Certificato di Conoscenza della Lingua Italiana (CELI 2) - Livello B1

1

A more detailed description of levels is available on the annex PAG 22.

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Certificato di Conoscenza della Lingua Italiana (CELI 3) - Livello B2

Certificato di Conoscenza della Lingua Italiana (CELI 4) - Livello C1

Certificato di Conoscenza della Lingua Italiana (CELI 5) - Livello C2

Our teachers advise our student on which level he should apply for. On arrival the student will take a placement test in order to be assigned the most appropriate level. A lesson (academic hour) lasts 60 minutes in the group courses.

Our courses are offered in order to prepare the students for the CELI Certificate Exam.

Twice a year (03 June 2005 and 07 November 2005), students can take the CELI (Certificato di Lingua Italiana) from the University for Foreigners of Perugia (Levels 1 to 5) which take place contemporarily worldwide. The examination is open to everybody interested in obtaining the Certificate. It is particularly important for those who intend to study or work in Italy and .

One of the main responsibilities of the Unit is the design and development of proficiency tests, and it is also in charge of the implementation of assessment programmes and the advancement of both applied and theoretical research used by our teachers (before to enter in the classrooms for a specific lesson).

Teachers training

Our teachers involved in the CELI Certificate Exam(*see you the Annex: Curriculum vitae; Visit Record Sheet*) are all native speakers and highly qualified in teaching Italian (**degree in foreign** languages and/or in Italian; **Itals diploma** : Italian as a second language; **Master in Teaching Italian** as Second Language or University Diploma Course in Teaching Italian to Foreigners-**DUILIS**). They have specialized experience in the teaching of Italian language and culture to foreigners and they attend teacher training seminars, courses funded by ESF Action 18 or *Information Day* (organised in each IAL Centre before the first lesson).



In particular, on 19/20 September 2004 one examiner training session for the **CELI Certificate** were held at the University for Foreigners of Perugia Examination Centre in Perugia for 3 our IAL Teachers.

The workshops were run by Prof. Bolli, who used the Common European Framework of Reference descriptors for the 5 levels to make clear the principles of standardised marking with the help of video-taped performances by candidates.

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More than 20 teachers of Italian altogether, from partner institutions of the University for Foreigners of Perugia attended the examiner training sessions to be licensed as examiners for the CELI.

During the oral examinations on last 22th November, these examiners had interview our 10 candidates individually at our examination centre. Marks are recorded on a mark sheet and sent to Perugia. Results'exam, in the form of grades, are sent to us (and all other examination centres) approximately three months after the examination. Diplomas are also sent out to our examination centre, who forward to candidates.



Selection of materials

Our teachers of courses of Italian preparing the students for the CELI Certificate Exam use the Materials for each level selected by a team of practising teachers' Università per Stranieri di Perugia (USP).

IAL Teachers provide a pack of course materials which is frequently updated. Preference is given to original and stimulating material that is aimed not only at improving language skills but also permits the student to learn more about Italian culture and present day Italy.

At each level there is a team leader, who acts as a co-ordinator for that level. The team leaders give detailed guidelines for selection of materials, including the following:

- skills to be assessed
- subject matter
- linguistic complexity
- cultural considerations
- reference to the University's Lexicon of Spoken Italian
- item types.

The material is selected from a number of different sources, which include books, newspapers and magazines, brochures, advertisements and radio or television items. All the examination papers are printed by the Università per Stranieri (*see you the annex*).

Team leaders check random samples of scripts from the examiners to assess their performance.

For oral components, team leaders make random checks on local examiners during courses or seminars, like as 22th November, in order to assess the accuracy of their marking.



Our Method of Teaching Italian Language

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IAL Teachers hold University degrees and have specialized experience in the teaching of Italian language and culture to foreigners. They attend teacher training *Information Day* or seminars.

The use of the language in discussion, conversation and exercises with selected authentic material is the focus point of CELI teaching method. The communication functions of the language are closely tied to grammatical structure, vocabulary and the function of the four language abilities: comprehension, speaking, reading and writing.

In line with the most up-to-date theories on Italian language teaching, our method aims at a harmonious development of all four linguistic skills: **listening** and **speaking, reading** and **writing**.

The language is always presented in context with the student immediately putting into practice what has been studied.

Our teachers conduct a lot of courses in the different IAL Centres following these UPS' guide lines and dividing its in lessons of language analysis followed by lessons of practice with communicative tasks.

Our average class size is generally between 10 and 12 students.

This Methodology following the objectives of ALTE:

- to establish common levels of proficiency in order to promote the transnational recognition of certification in Europe;
- to establish common standards for all stages of the language-testing process: that is, for test development, task and item writing, test administration, marking and grading, reporting of test results, test analysis and reporting of findings;
- to collaborate on joint projects and in the exchange of ideas and know-how.



The principal objectives of ALTE

The first of these objectives is particularly relevant to the needs of the workforce. The goal of establishing common levels of proficiency is being pursued by means of a long-term ALTE Framework Project. The first stage of this project was achieved in 1991 with the production of the first version of a book, containing descriptions of the general language examinations offered by all ALTE members. All the examinations included were described using the same format, and details given of recognition as educational or workplace qualifications, the relative importance attached to different skills, the testing focus of each paper, and the number and types of questions used. With the expansion of the membership of ALTE the original book has been fully revised and updated. The second of ALTE's objectives, that of establishing common standards for all stages of the language-testing process, is addressed in the Examination Systems section of this site. In making comparisons between qualifications in different languages it is important not only to establish the framework of levels on which the examinations can be placed, but to agree on the standards to which they are produced. Under the heading of

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Examination System, members of ALTE describe how their examinations are developed, and the quality control methods they employ. The Code of Practice specifies the conditions that members agree to.

The information on the language examinations and examination systems on this site exists both to provide information which is of use in itself, and to serve as the descriptive foundation for a definition of the framework of levels of proficiency on which the examinations provided by members of ALTE can be placed.

The concept of ALTE was initially formed by the Universities of Cambridge and Salamanca late in 1989, and at the first meeting of the association in 1990 there were eight founder members. Since then membership has grown so that there are now 28 members, representing 24 European Languages.

With the breaking down of international barriers between European states and increasing opportunities for the members of the workforce to move from one country to another, the need for transferability of qualifications is clear.

Employers and employees alike need to know what language qualifications gained in various countries mean – what the holder of a given certificate can actually be expected to be able to do – and how to make meaningful comparisons between qualifications gained in different states of the European Union. Employers need to know which particular language qualification it is realistic to demand when advertising a post, and employees have an interest in being able to rate their own present level of expertise and future training needs. Since 1990 the members of ALTE have been working together to devise a means of describing and comparing their examinations.

ANNEX

According to the Common European Reference Levels

-European Language Portfolio- our levels correspond as follows:

EUROPEAN LANGUAGE PORTFOLIO	UNIVERSITA' PER Stranieri di PERUGIA
A1	Beginner
A2	Intermediate 1- CELI 1
B1	Intermediate 2 / Intermediate 3 - CELI 2
B2	Advanced 1- CELI 3
C1	Advanced 2 - CELI 4
C2	Mastery- CELI 5

Beginning:

Will be able to interact in simple daily situations: at the café, restaurant, hotel, shops, railway stations, in the street. Will know how to introduce themselves and talk about themselves, to invite others to do something and to reply to an invitation. To ask for, and to give, information on people, places, services, articles to buy. Acquisition of the basic structures of the language through the use of the present and present perfect of the most commonly used verbs; article-adjective-noun agreement, direct and possessive pronouns.

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Intermediate 1:

Will be able to deal with daily situations such as at the gym, real estate and travel agencies etc. understanding the gist of information given. Ability to talk and write about personal habits and experiences through the correct use of the present, past and imperfect tenses. Will be able to describe, in simple terms, places, surroundings and people. Will be able to speak about personal plans and make promises using the future tense. Ability to express hopes and wishes by using the conditional. Will be able to give and follow instructions, advice and commands through the use of the imperative.

Intermediate 2:

Will be able to deal with more complex daily situations: at the doctor, at the pharmacy, on the telephone, at a job interview. Will be able to take part spontaneously in conversations on familiar or daily matters. Will be able to relate the plot of a movie or tell a story while at the same time expressing opinions and points of view by using the present subjunctive. Ability to describe in detail places and objects by using relative pronouns and making comparisons. Will be able to comprehend short articles and literary texts where the *passato remoto* is used.

Intermediate 3:

Will be able to deal with more complex daily situations: at the bank, hotel, the box office. Will be able to conjecture opinions with the use of grammatical structures such as the subjunctive and "if" clauses. Ability to argue personally held opinions, ideas, preferences. Will be able to understand without too much effort the significant points of short literary texts and articles even when expressed in complex forms such as the passive, impersonal and implicit. Will be able to understand the gist of radio and TV shows.

Advanced 1:

Will be able to recount and write about events, personal experiences, traditions and habits using quite complex grammatical patterns such as subordination, tense agreement and indirect speech. A broadening of vocabulary will allow a very good understanding of literary prose as well as articles and

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news reports on current events. Will be able to follow without too much effort movies and radio and TV programs in standard Italian. Would be able to work or study in an Italian environment.

Advanced 2:

Will be able to interact with native speakers, orally or in writing, in any given situation whether it be formal or informal. Ability to discuss and express personal ideas including in an academic or professional context - in an elegant and well articulated manner through the use of forms of the subjunctive, "if" clauses and the passive voice. Ability to read a wide range of texts making distinctions between different styles of writing. Will be able to understand without difficulty TV and radio shows and movies.

Mastery:

Will be able to write fluently using correct grammar, sentence construction and the appropriate linguistic register. Will have acquired a wide vocabulary with specific application to specialized area such as Italian bureaucracy, youth culture and the field of medicine. Will be able to understand movies and TV programs even when idiomatic Italian, regional accents and slang expressions are used. Will be able to understand works of literature in both form and content.

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ANNEX

Teachers' Curriculum vitae

Teachers' Visit Record Sheet

ANNEX



Glossary

ACCREDITATION

The granting of recognition of a test, usually by an official body such as a government department, examinations board, etc.

ADMINISTRATION

The date or period during which a test takes place. Many tests have a fixed date of administration several times a year, while others may be administered on demand.

ASSESSOR

Someone who assigns a score to a candidate's performance in a test, using subjective judgement to do so. Assessors are normally qualified in the relevant field, and are required to undergo a process of training and standardisation. In oral testing the roles of Assessor and Interlocutor are sometimes distinguished. Also referred to as Examiner or Rater.

CALIBRATION

The process of determining the scale of a test or tests. Calibration may involve anchoring items from different tests to a common difficulty scale (the theta scale). When a test is constructed from calibrated items, then scores on the test indicate the candidates' ability, i.e. their location on the theta scale.

CLERICAL MARKING

A method of marking in which Markers do not need to exercise any special expertise or subjective judgement. They mark by following a mark scheme which specifies all acceptable responses to each test item.

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COMMUNICATIVE TASK / ACTIVITY

A classroom or examination exercise which involves or tests an individual's ability to deal with a communication event.

COMPONENT

Part of an examination, often presented as a separate test, with its own instruction booklet and time limit. Components are often skills-based, and have titles such as Listening Comprehension or Composition. Also referred to as subtest.

COMPUTERISED MARKING (SCORING)

Various ways of using computer systems to minimise error in the marking of objective tests. For example, this can be done by scanning information from the candidate's mark sheet by means of an optical mark reader, and producing data which can be used to provide scores or analyses.

CONTENT ANALYSIS

A means of describing and analysing the content of test materials. This analysis is necessary in order to ensure that the content of the test meets its specification. It is essential in establishing content and construct validity.

DESCRIPTOR

A brief description accompanying a band on a rating scale, which summarises the degree of proficiency or type of performance expected for a candidate to achieve that particular score.

DISCRETE ITEM

A self-contained item. It is not linked to a text, other items or any supplementary material. An example of an item type used in this way is multiple-choice.

DISCRIMINATION

The power of an item to discriminate between weaker and stronger candidates. Various indices of discrimination are used. Some (e.g. point-biserial, biserial) are based on a correlation between the score on the item and a criterion, such as total score on the test or some external measure of proficiency. Others are based on the difference in the item's difficulty for low and high ability groups. In item response theory the 2 and 3 parameter models estimate item discrimination as the A-parameter.

DISCURSIVE COMPOSITION

A writing task in which the candidate has to discuss a topic on which various views can be held, or argue in support of personal opinions.

DOUBLE MARKING

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A method of assessing performance in which two individuals independently assess candidate performance on a test.

EDITING

The process by which examination materials submitted by item writers are modified and put into the form in which they will appear on an examination paper.

EXAMINER

Refer to definition for Assessor.

FACILITY INDEX

The proportion of correct responses to an item, expressed on a scale of 0 to 1. It is also sometimes expressed as a percentage. Also referred to as facility value or p-value.

GAP-FILLING ITEM

Any type of item which requires the candidate to insert some written material – letters, numbers, single words, phrases, sentences or paragraphs – into spaces in a text. The response may be supplied by the candidate or selected from a set of options.

GRADE

A test score may be reported to the candidate as a grade, for example on a scale of A to E, where A is the highest grade available, B is a good pass, C a pass and D and E are failing grades.

GRADING

The process of converting test scores or marks into grades.

GUIDED WRITING TASK

A task which involves the candidate in the production of a written text, where graphic or textual information, such as pictures, letters, postcards and instructions, is used to control and standardise the expected response.

INFORMATION TRANSFER

A technique of testing which involves taking information given in a certain form and presenting it in a different form. Examples of such tasks are: taking information from a text and using it to label a diagram; rewriting an informal note as a formal announcement.

INTERVAL SCALE

A scale of measurement on which the distance between any two adjacent units of measurement is the same, but in which there is no absolute zero point.

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INTONATION

The tone given to words with the effect that, for example, a question can be distinguished from a statement.

ITEM

Each testing point in a test which is given a separate mark or marks. Examples are: one gap in a cloze test; one multiple-choice question with three or four options; one sentence for grammatical transformation; one question to which a sentence-length response is expected.

ITEM BANKING

An approach to the management of test items which entails storing information about items so that tests of known content and difficulty can be constructed. Normally, the approach makes use of a computer database, and is based on latent trait theory, which means that items can be related to each other by means of a common difficulty scale.

ITEM RESPONSE THEORY

A group of mathematical models for relating an individual's test performance to that individual's level of ability. These models are based on the fundamental theory that an individual's expected performance on a particular test question, or item, is a function of both the level of difficulty of the item and the individual's level of ability.

LANGUAGE FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES (LSP)

Language teaching or testing which focuses on the area of language used for a particular activity or profession; for example, English for Air Traffic Control, Spanish for Commerce.

MARK

The outcome of an examination, often expressed as a percentage. Because of adjustments such as heavier weighting for some items, the mark is not always the same as the total score.

MARK SCHEME

A list of all the acceptable responses to the items in a test. A mark scheme makes it possible for a Marker to assign a score to a test accurately.

MARKER

Someone who assigns a score to a candidate's responses to a written test. This may involve the use of expert judgement or, in the case of a clerical Marker, the relatively unskilled application of a mark scheme.

MARKING

Assigning a mark to a candidate's responses to a test. This may involve professional judgement, or the application of a mark scheme which lists all acceptable responses.

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MATCHING TASK

A test type which involves bringing together elements from two separate lists. One kind of matching test consists of selecting the correct phrase to complete each of a number of unfinished sentences. A type used in tests of reading comprehension involves choosing from a list something like a holiday or a book to suit a person whose particular requirements are described.

MEASUREMENT

Generally, the process of finding the amount of something by comparison with a fixed unit, e.g. using a ruler to measure length. In the social sciences, measurement often refers to the quantification of characteristics of persons, such as language proficiency.

MULTIPLE-CHOICE GAP-FILLING

A type of test item in which the candidate's task is to select from a set of options the correct word or phrase to insert into a space in a text.

MULTIPLE-CHOICE ITEM

A type of test item which consists of a question or incomplete sentence (stem), with a choice of answers or ways of completing the sentence. The candidate's task is to choose the correct option (key) from a set of three, four or five possibilities, and no production of language is involved. For this reason, multiple-choice items are normally used in tests of reading and listening. They may be discrete or text-based.

MULTIPLE-MATCHING TASK

A test task in which a number of questions or sentence completion items, generally based on a reading text, are set. The responses are provided in the form of a bank of words or phrases, each of which can be used an unlimited number of times. The advantage is that options are not removed as the candidate works through the items (as with other forms of matching) so that the task does not become progressively easier.

NARRATIVE TEXT

A text in which a story is told or events recounted.

OBJECTIVE TEST

A test which can be scored by applying a mark scheme, without the need to bring expert opinion or subjective judgement to the task.

OPEN-ENDED QUESTION

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A type of item or task in a written test which requires the candidate to supply, as opposed to select, a response. The purpose of this kind of item is to elicit a relatively unconstrained response, which may vary in length from a few words to an extended essay. The mark scheme therefore allows for a range of acceptable answers.

OPTICAL MARK READER (OMR)

An electronic device used for scanning information directly from mark sheets or answer sheets. Candidates or Examiners can mark item responses or tasks on a mark sheet and this information can be directly read into the computer. Also referred to as scanner.

PAPER CONSTRUCTION

The process of selecting the items which will make up an examination paper, and adding rubrics and an answer key.

PREPOSITION

A word which expresses the relationship between a noun or pronoun and another word: for example on, with, for.

PRETESTING

A stage in the development of test materials at which items are tried out with representative samples from the target population in order to determine their difficulty. Following statistical analysis, those items that are considered satisfactory can be used in live tests.

PROMPT

In tests of speaking or writing, graphic materials or texts designed to elicit a response from the candidate.

PROOF-READING TASK

A test task which involves checking a text for errors of a specified type, e.g. spelling or structure. Part of the task may also consist of marking errors and supplying correct forms.

QUESTION

Sometimes used to refer to a test task or item.

RASCH MODEL

A mathematical model, also known as the simple logistic model, which posits a relationship between the probability of a person completing a task and the difference between the ability of the person and the difficulty of the task. Mathematically equivalent to the one-parameter model in item response theory. The Rasch model has been extended in various ways, e.g. to handle scalar responses or multiple facets accounting for the 'difficulty' of a task.

RAW SCORE

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A test score that has not been statistically manipulated by any transformation, weighting or re-scaling.

REGISTER

A distinct variety of speech or writing characteristic of a particular activity or a particular degree of formality.

ROLE PLAY

A task type which is sometimes used in speaking tests in which candidates have to imagine themselves in a specific situation or adopt specific roles.

RUBRIC

The instructions given to candidates to guide their responses to a particular test task.

SCALE

A set of numbers or categories for measuring something. Four types of measurement scale are distinguished - nominal, ordinal, interval and ratio.

SCALE DESCRIPTOR

Refer to definition for Descriptor.

SCAN

To read something quickly, in order to look for a specific piece of information or answer to a question. A scanning exercise often consists of questions placed before a text.

SCRIPT

The paper containing a candidate's responses to a test, used particularly of open-ended task types.

SEMI-AUTHENTIC TEXT

A text taken from a real-life source that has been edited for use in a test, e.g. to adapt the vocabulary and/or grammar to the level of the candidates.

SENTENCE COMPLETION

An item type in which only half of a sentence is given. The candidate's task is to complete the sentence, either by supplying suitable words (possibly based on the reading of a text) or by choosing them from various options given.

SENTENCE TRANSFORMATION

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An item type in which a complete sentence is given as a prompt, followed by the first one or two words of a second sentence which expresses the content of the first in a different grammatical form. For example, the first sentence may be active, and the candidate's task is to present the identical content in passive form.

SETTING

The whole process by which examination materials are produced and papers constructed.

SKIM

To read rapidly so that the main point is understood, although details will be missed.

SPECIFICATIONS

A description of the characteristics of an examination, including what is tested, how it is tested, details such as number and length of papers, item types used, etc.

STRESS

The emphasis put on a syllable or word in spoken language.

STRUCTURAL COMPETENCE

Structural competence refers to an individual's ability in and knowledge of the grammatical structures of a language.

SYLLABUS

A detailed document which lists all the areas covered in a particular programme of study, and the order in which content is presented.

SYNONYM

Two words which mean the same, or almost the same, as each other; for example, 'shut the door' and 'close the door'.

SYNTACTIC STRUCTURES

The grammatical structures of language.

TASK

A combination of rubric, input and response. For example, a reading text with several multiple-choice items, all of which can be responded to by referring to a single rubric.

TEST METHOD CHARACTERISTICS

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The defining characteristics of different test methods. These may include environment, rubric, language of instructions, format, etc.

TEXT

A piece of connected discourse, written or spoken, used as the basis for a set of test items.

THRESHOLD LEVEL

An influential specification in functional terms of a basic level of foreign language competence, published by the Council of Europe in 1976 for English, and updated in 1990. Versions have since been produced for a number of European languages.

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TRANSFORMATION ITEM

Refer to definition for sentence transformation.

UTTERANCE

A chain of spoken words.

VETTING

A stage in the cycle of test production at which the test developers assess materials commissioned from item writers and decide which should be rejected as not fulfilling the specifications of the test, and which can go forward to the editing stage.

WAYSTAGE LEVEL

A specification of an elementary level of foreign language competence first published by the Council of Europe in 1977 for English and revised in 1990. It provides a less demanding objective than Threshold, being estimated to have approximately half the Threshold learning load.

WEIGHTING

The assignment of a different number of maximum points to a test item, task or component in order to change its relative contribution in relation to other parts of the same test. For example, if double marks are given to all the items in Task One of a test, Task One will account for a greater proportion of the total score than other tasks.

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