

Much more than just language in the language classroom

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Language – a key Competence for Europe

A Conference on Teaching and Learning Languages



Overview

1. Context – heritage and challenge
2. Employability and citizenship
3. Language education and key competences
4. From multilingualism to plurilingualism
5. Learning to learn
6. Learner and teacher autonomy
7. Teaching / learning objectives ,
– the competence mix
- defining levels
8. Language education – some signposts
9. From best practice to next practice





COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Context - heritage and challenge

SOCIAL COHESION:
equality of opportunity
for personal
development, education,
employment, mobility,
access to information and
cultural enrichment



LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY:
Europe is multilingual and all
its languages are equally
valuable modes of
communication and
expressions of identity

MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING:
the opportunity to learn other languages is an
essential condition for intercultural communication
and acceptance of cultural differences

DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP:
participation in democratic and
social processes in multilingual
societies



Context - heritage and challenge



Context - heritage and challenge

"Everyone loses if one language is lost because then a nation and culture lose their memory, and so does the complex tapestry from which the world is woven and which makes the world an exciting place."

(Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, Former President of Iceland)

The limits of my language mean
the limits of my world.
(Ludwig Wittgenstein)

To have another language is to possess a second soul.
(Charlemagne)



Employability and citizenship

European Council – Lisbon 2000 - Lifelong learning

- the guiding principle for provision and participation across the full continuum of learning contexts
 - promoting employability and active citizenship
- „**purposeful** learning activity, undertaken on an **ongoing** basis with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence.“ (Luxemburg 1997)
 - to accompany a successful transition to a **knowledge-based economy and society**
 - to enable humans to live positively with **cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity**
 - to provide access to up-to-date information and **knowledge & motivation and skills** to use resources intelligently on behalf of oneself and the community as a whole



Employability and citizenship

Definitions

„A set of achievements – skills, understanding and personal attributes – that makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy.“
(Mantz Yorke 2006)

„Skills of enquiry, communication, participation and responsible action based on self-confidence, socially and morally responsible behaviour, community involvement and political literacy.“
(DFES, National Curriculum)



Language Education and Key Competences

Key Competences for Lifelong Learning

(... necessary for personal fulfilment, social cohesion and employability in a knowledge society ...)



1. Communication in the mother tongue;
2. Communication in the foreign languages;
3. Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology;
4. Digital competence;
5. Learning to learn;
6. Interpersonal, intercultural and social competences and civic competence;
7. Entrepreneurship;
8. Cultural expression.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on key competences for lifelong learning, Brussels, 10.11.2005, COM(2005)548 final



From multilingualism to plurilingualism

Multilingualism



Plurilingualism

... Knowledge of a number of languages, or the co-existence of different languages in a given society.

... may be attained by simply diversifying the languages on offer in a particular school or educational system, or by encouraging pupils to learn more than one foreign language ...

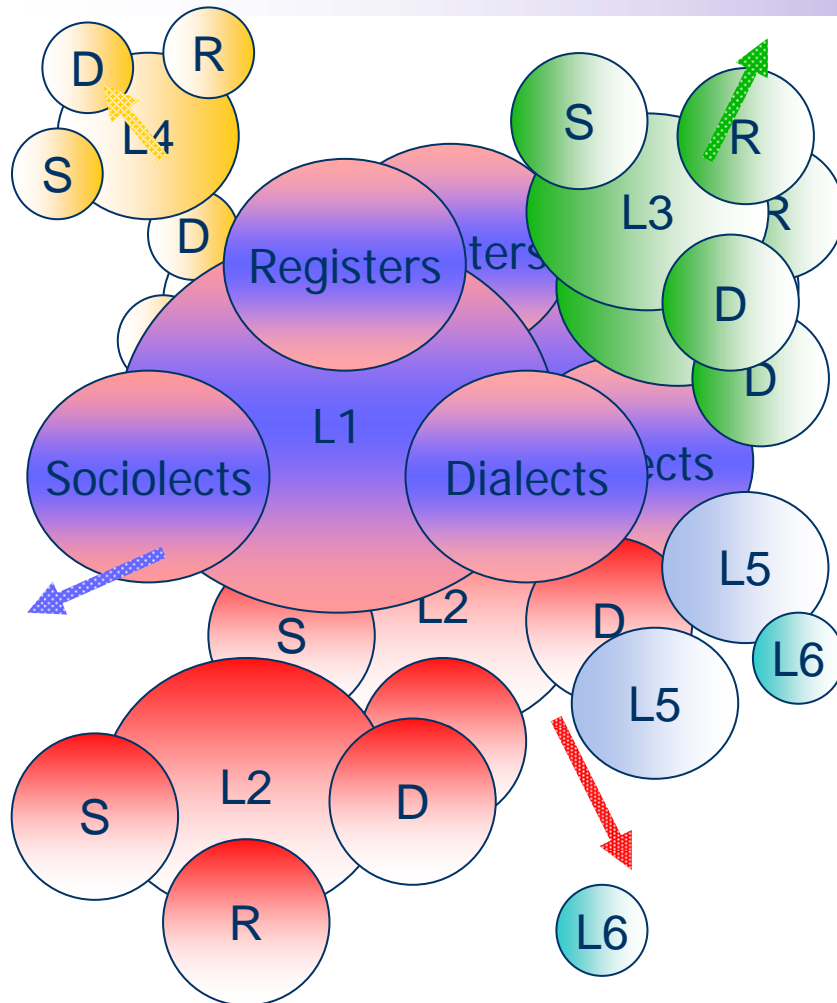
(CEFR, 1.3)

... Knowledge and experience related to languages and cultures are not kept in strictly separated mental compartments, but rather build up a communicative competence ... in which languages interrelate and interact.

In different situations, a person can call flexibly upon different parts of this competence to achieve effective communication with a particular interlocutor. ...



From multilingualism to plurilingualism



Awareness that language/s and culture/s interrelate and interact

Conscious (guided) search for links, „good“ & „false“ friends and development of transferable skills

General openness, curiosity and acceptance that the „native speaker model“ is not *ultima ratio*

Repertoire of languages and language varieties at different levels



From multilingualism to plurilingualism

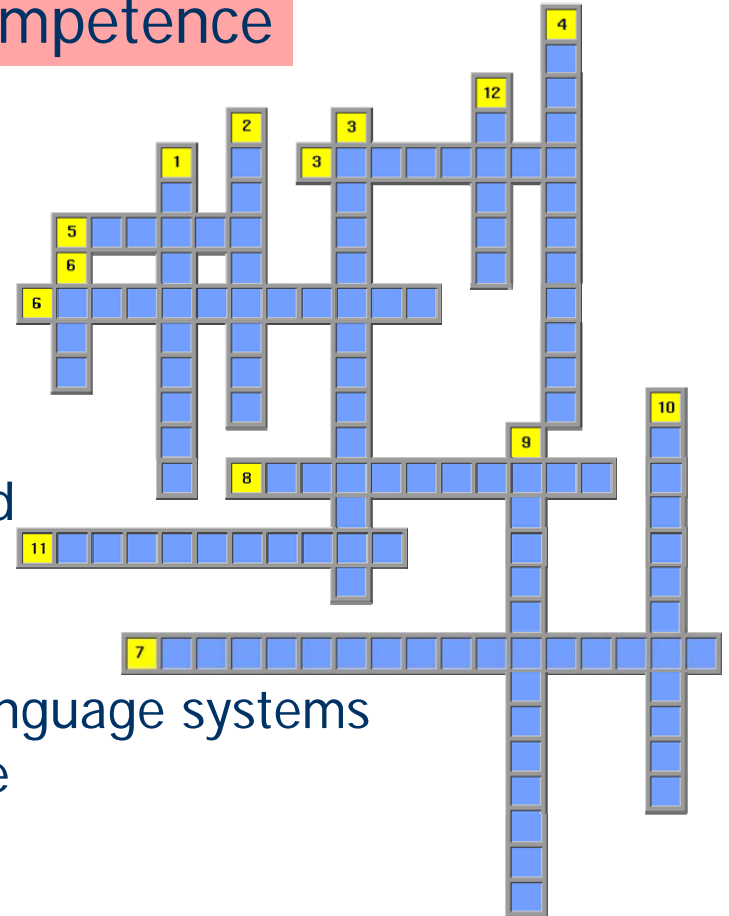
Development of plurilingual competence

with a clear commitment to

- „purpose“ (the reason why)
- objectives
- responsibilities

embedded in a comprehensive concept of reflected and documented „exposure“ and „immersion“

with a balanced view to individual language systems and to how these systems interrelate



From multilingualism to plurilingualism

Development of plurilingual competence - Task

1. Find someone whose mother tongue is different from yours.
2. Exchange information as to how you ...
 - greet and introduce each other
 - suggest working together
 - agree with the suggestion
 - check understanding
 - invite him/her to have a more extensive chat after the session
 - say good-bye.
3. Make notes of what you have learnt, and try to identify common language elements and communication patterns. Do not correct each other's notes.
4. Change roles and languages and practice what you have learnt.
5. Together, discuss which skills you have employed.
How did you learn what you have learnt?



Learning to learn

Eight types of intelligences

linguistic
logical/mathematical
visual/spatial
musical
bodily/kinaesthetic
interpersonal
intrapersonal
naturalistic

- the word player
- the questioner
- the visualiser
- the music lover
- the mover
- the socialiser
- the loner
- the nature lover

Howard Gardner (1983)

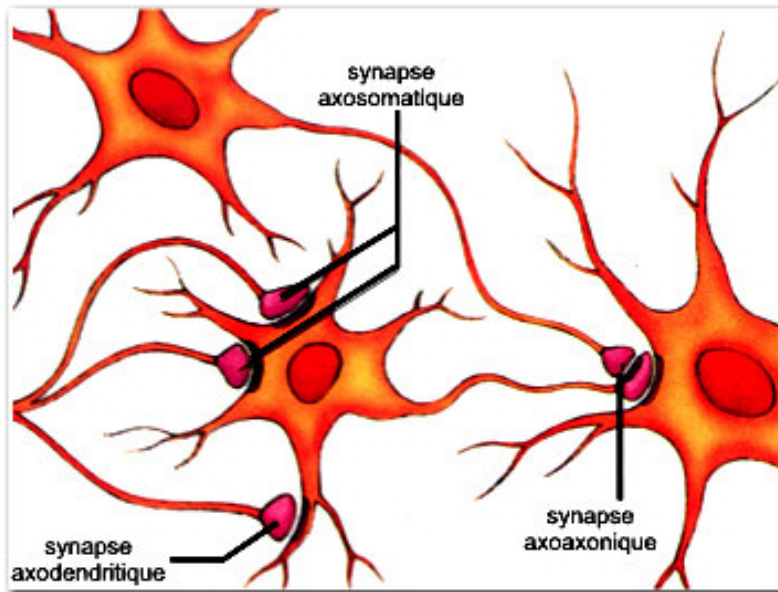
How many ways of teaching?



"You call that teaching?"

Learning to learn

How do we learn?



understanding how the brain works

cf Brain Science Programme, Brown University, Providence,
Brainscience@brown.edu

What makes learners tick?



You can take a horse to the water
but you can't make it drink.

Common sense



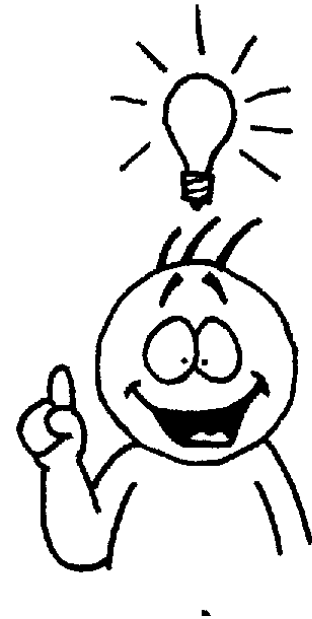
Learning to learn

Attempting to conclude ...

The more successful we are in ...

- activating the brain
- addressing a variety of learner types
- linking „new“ with „established“
- keeping these links active
- providing good reasons for all that
- setting clear objectives
- providing helpful support and feedback
- employing valid strategies and instruments of evaluation ...

The more likely ...



Learner and teacher autonomy

Constraints on teacher autonomy

Policy constraints

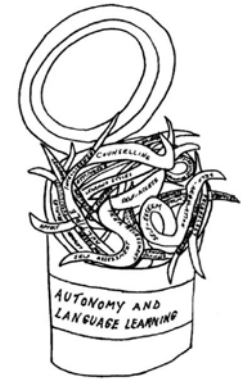
- (inter)national directives
- funding
- curricula
- exam specifications

Institutional constraints

- school rules
- accepted institutional norms regarding teacher behaviour
- time & timetable / admin

Views of language / language teaching

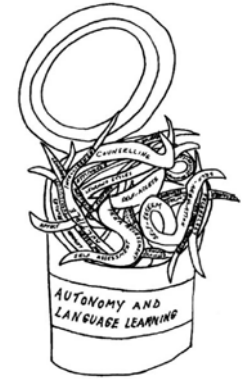
- e.g. the place of grammar, vocabulary etc
- a view of errors and their correction
- the role of the textbook
- types of practice & classroom interaction patterns



Learner and teacher autonomy

Constraints on learner autonomy

- traditions of teaching and learning (see above)
- educational 'conditioning' (learn/teach as you learnt/were taught)
- dependency and lack of teacher autonomy
- parental attitudes and expectations
- public attitudes and expectations
- peer pressure
- time frames
-
-
-



Learner and teacher autonomy

Attributes needed to promote autonomy

Learner

- awareness of own learning style
- curiosity and a spirit of enquiry
- a desire to learn
- a good level of personal organization
- willingness to take risks and to learn by trial and error
- an ability to make choices and to take decisions
- a capacity for reflection on learning

Teacher

- self-awareness as a learner
- belief and trust in learners' capacity for autonomous action
- genuine desire to foster autonomous development

(Breen & Mann 1997)



Teaching/learning objectives – the competence mix

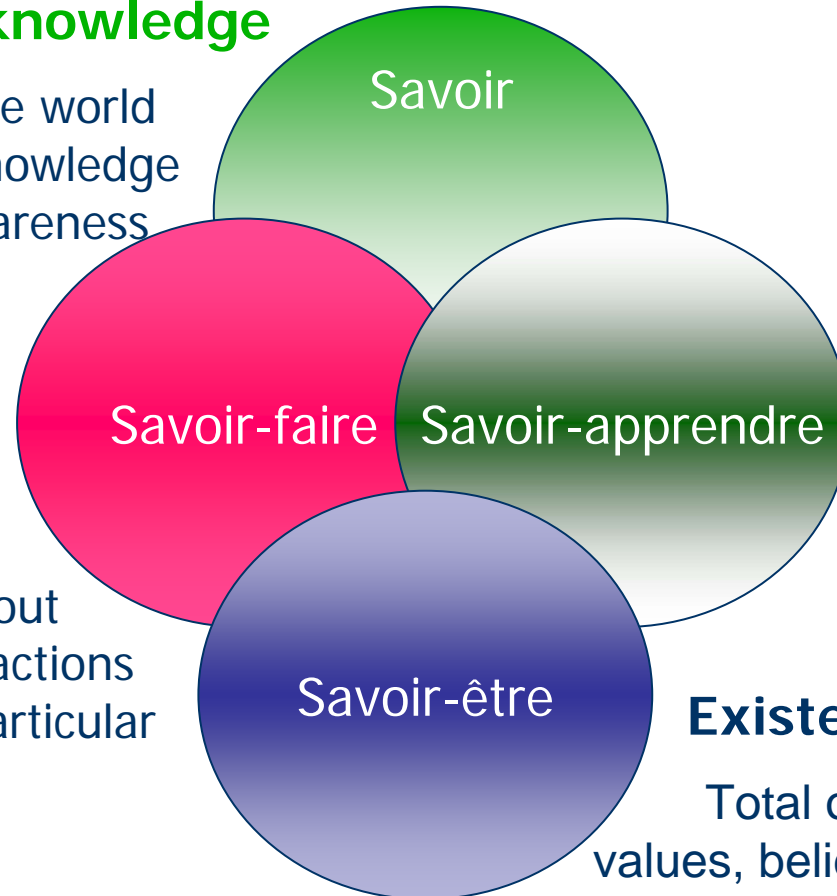
Declarative knowledge

knowledge of the world
socio-cultural knowledge
intercultural awareness

Skills and know-how

ability to carry out effectively the actions required in a particular situation and environment

CEFR 5.1.



GENERAL

Ability to learn

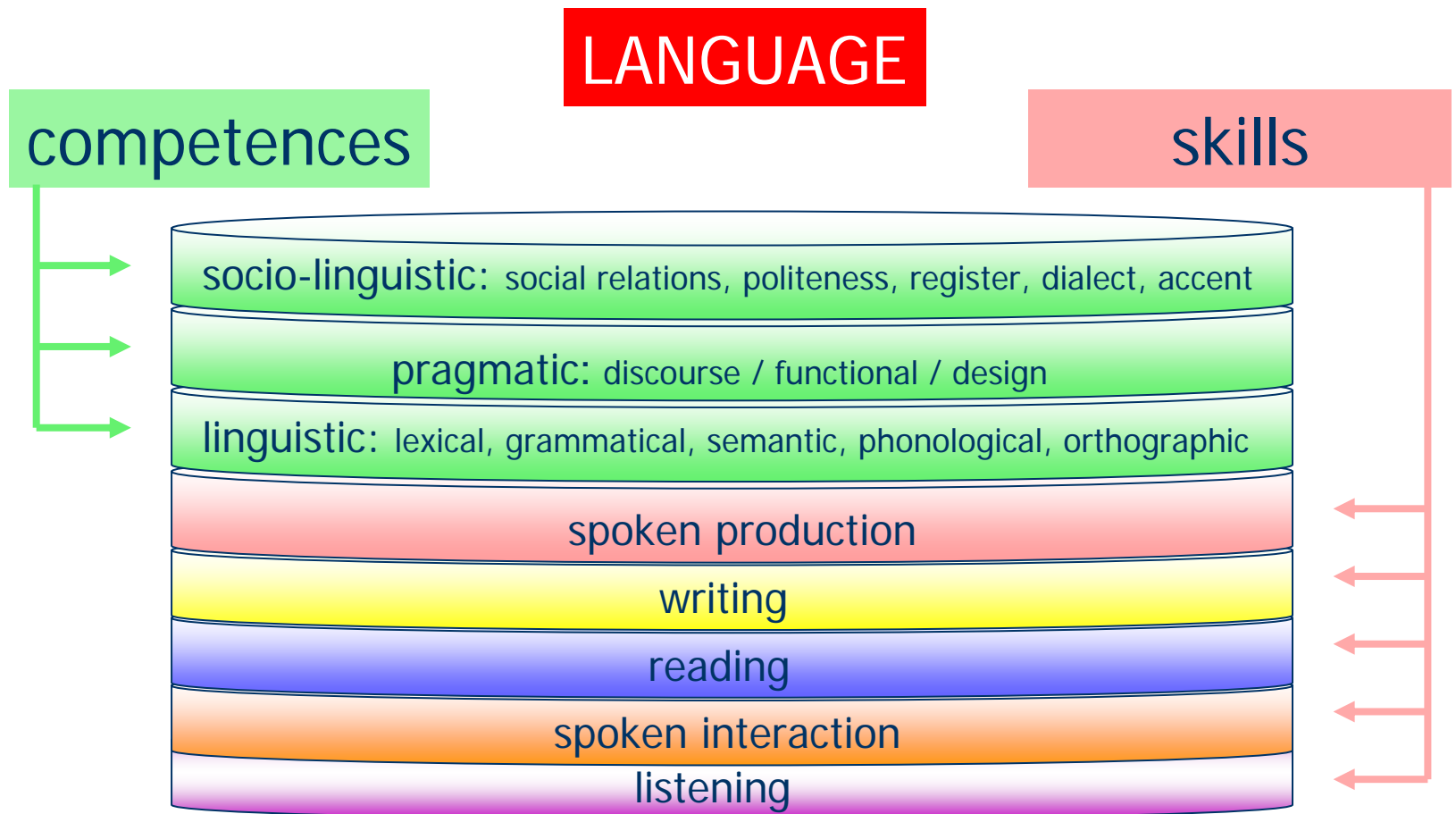
ability to observe and participate in new experiences and to incorporate new knowledge into existing knowledge, study skills

Existential competence

Total of attitudes, motivations, values, beliefs, cognitive styles and personality types which contribute to an individual's identity.



Teaching/learning objectives – the competence mix



CEFR 5.2.

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Teaching/learning objectives – defining levels

Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)



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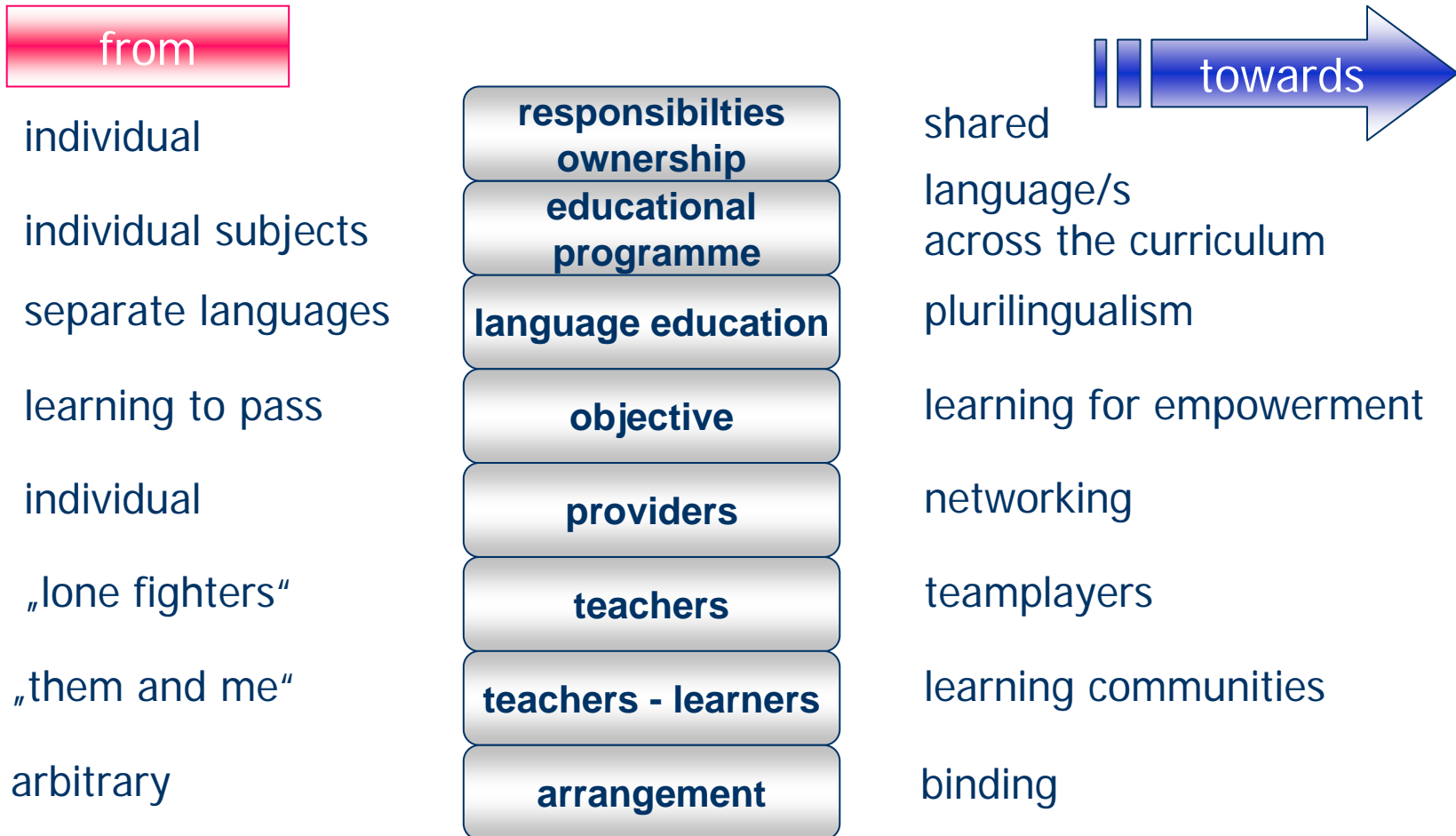


European Language Portfolios

(Inter)national institutional standards



Language education – some signposts



Language education – some signposts



We do not grow absolutely, chronologically. We grow sometimes in one dimension, and not in another; unevenly. We grow partially. We are mature in one realm, childish in another. The past, present, and future mingle and pull us backward, forward, or fix us in the present. We are made up of layers, cells, constellations. (*Anais Nin*)



From best practice to next practice *)

Some food for thought ...



Then and now



No matter how hard we try in perfecting existing practice and standards, we are likely to hit limits of what we do.

These are the moments when, building on the best of what is known from current thinking and practice, we should explore ways that may be radically different.

*) Leadbeater, C, 2004, Keynote address to the Leading Network of Schools Conference, Birmingham, October 2004





Thank you

Hvala



Danke

TACK

Kiitos

TAKK



Köszönöm

Eucharisto

grazie



Multumesc

Merci

Obrigado



Gracias



Paldis

Achu

Dziękuję

Dank



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