



Evaluating Languages

Report of the Evaluation of Foreign Languages at Upper Secondary Level
(EFLUSL) Project

PROMOTING THE QUALITY OF LEARNING

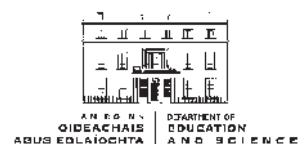

AN B OIOMH OIDEACHAIS | DEPARTMENT OF
AGUS EOLAÍOCHTA | EDUCATION
AND SCIENCE
INSPECTORATE

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Report of the Evaluation of Foreign Languages at Upper Secondary Level
(EFLUSL) Project



The EFLUSL Project is organised on behalf of the
European Network of Policy-Makers
for the Evaluation of Educational Systems by the
Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Science, Ireland.



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Foreword

I welcome the publication of this final report on the Evaluation of Foreign Languages at Upper Secondary Level (EFLUSL) project, published by the Department of Education and Science on behalf of the European Network of Policy-Makers for the Evaluation of Educational Systems. The main aim of the project was to develop, test and refine a set of instruments for the evaluation of the teaching and learning of foreign languages at upper secondary level. The successful completion of this international project means that inspectors, evaluators and researchers throughout Europe now have, for the first time, a framework of indicators that can be used in evaluating the teaching and learning of foreign languages. The framework comes with a user-friendly suite of instruments that will allow it to be used flexibly in various evaluation contexts.

In addition to presenting the evaluation instruments, this report describes the development of the EFLUSL project, and provides an analysis of the findings of the evaluation reports in the schools that participated in trials of the instruments. The report is a rich source of information on the national contexts for language teaching in the seven participating countries. It also contains illustrations of good practice in three very different schools in three of the countries. This research and analysis of practice will be of great interest to policy-makers, as well as to teachers and evaluators.

One of the aims of the European Network of Policy-Makers for the Evaluation of Educational Systems is to promote cooperation between member states in the evaluation of school-based education. The EFLUSL project is an excellent example of cooperation among researchers, inspectors, school administrators and language teachers throughout the seven participating countries: Belgium (Flemish Community), France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland. I warmly congratulate everybody who has participated in the project. I especially wish to thank the project co-ordinators in each of the countries: without their commitment at every stage, the project would have been impossible. A special word of thanks is also due to Dr Seán Devitt of Trinity College, Dublin, who acted as academic advisor to the steering group in the Department of Education and Science. Finally, I wish to acknowledge the funding received for this project from the Department's Research and Development Committee.



Eamon Stack
Chief Inspector



Chapter 1

Introduction – The beginning



1.1 Background information

The European Network of Policy-Makers for the Evaluation of Educational Systems (European Network) is an intergovernmental organisation, composed of senior officials in ministries of education, inspectorates and evaluation agencies in the EU member states and other European countries. It seeks to promote co-operation among participant states in the evaluation of school-based education. The European Network promotes best practice in various aspects of school evaluation and the use of evaluation outcomes to inform and develop educational policies at national level.

The development of robust, transparent criteria for the evaluation of educational provision is ongoing in education ministries and research institutes throughout Europe. Research and developmental work designed to enhance quality assurance and to ensure that evaluations are based on the collection of objective, dependable and high-quality data is a priority of the European Network. For this reason, the European Network developed a project proposal to devise a common set of quality indicators for the evaluation of teaching and learning in foreign languages at upper secondary level. Seven member countries from the European Network committed to participate in

the project: Belgium (Flemish Community), France, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and Luxembourg.

The Evaluation of Foreign Languages at Upper Secondary Level (EFLUSL) project was initiated as an international cooperative project organised under the auspices of the European Network and managed by the Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Science in Ireland.

1.2 Project objectives

The objectives of the EFLUSL project were:

- to develop, test and refine an evaluation framework for teaching and learning of foreign languages
- to exchange information on best practice in the area of foreign language teaching and learning
- to compare elements of quality and practice in different education systems, with particular emphasis on the impact of national and international language initiatives,
- to agree and report on best practice observed when using the evaluation instruments across countries, drafting a number of case studies of best practice for inclusion in the final report
- to prepare for publication a short inter-country report on the outcomes of the project.

1.3 Project principles

The EFLUSL evaluation framework has been developed in accordance with the principle that effective evaluation and reporting can enhance the richness of the teaching and learning process. EFLUSL participants were conscious that, although written testing and examinations are used widely at upper secondary level, such written assessment provides limited information on the effectiveness of language teaching and learning. Participants considered that when evaluators¹ observe and interact with teachers and learners in schools, the result is a much more complete form of evaluation.

The EFLUSL project was primarily concerned with the development of a framework for use in external evaluation. In each of the participating countries there is a growing realisation that self-review and external evaluation can complement each other in promoting quality assurance in schools. The EFLUSL project participants recognised the contribution the project could make to the development of quality indicators that could be used in schools for self-review and for external evaluation.

The project drew on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)² in developing the draft evaluation instruments. The CEFR provides a basis for European consensus on standards of quality and transparency in the area of language learning, teaching and assessment. The CEFR provided an essential theoretical backdrop to the work of the project, both in relation to levels of linguistic competence and its use of “can-do” descriptors and illustrations.

¹ The term ‘evaluator’ is used throughout the report to refer to inspectors, researchers or evaluators.

² Council of Europe, *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

The EFLUSL project has had respect for diversity as a guiding principle: diversity in education systems, in curricula and in methodologies. The schools included in the EFLUSL project were drawn from the national education systems of the seven participating countries.

1.4 Project report outline

The first part of this report comprises a description of:

- the national contexts of the participating countries
- the development of the project and the evaluation instruments
- the evaluation instruments
- illustrations of best practice
- the main findings of the evaluation reports.

The second part of the report contains the EFLUSL evaluation instruments, including the EFLUSL Quality Indicators. These materials are presented in a flexible, user-friendly format to ensure ease of application. A CD-ROM containing the evaluation instruments accompanies this report.



Chapter 2

The Context – The richness and challenges of diversity

2.1 Country background statements

It was understood from the outset that the evaluation instruments developed through the EFLUSL project should be capable of use in any or all of the national systems represented by the European Network. While these national systems have much in common, they also differ in many respects. One of the challenges of the EFLUSL project was to develop quality indicators which were universally valid, but which also respected national and local contexts.

The seven participating countries provided sufficient variety to test the flexibility of the instruments. If the instruments were tested and found practicable in these seven countries, it was reasonable to presume that they could be used in other countries also. At the beginning of the project, each participating country was asked to prepare a national country statement according to a template provided, describing the types of upper secondary schooling present in the national system; the place of languages in the education system; the language curricula; the arrangements for school and teacher self-review; and the arrangements for external evaluation of teachers and schools. This chapter summarises the content of the country statements. It reflects the situation that pertained at the beginning of 2004 when the country statements were being written. It does not reflect developments that may have occurred in the intervening period. The summary serves to highlight the diversity of the various school contexts and to indicate some features and concerns common to the education systems of the participating countries.

2.2 General structure of upper secondary school

Diversity becomes apparent first of all in the general structure of upper secondary education. In most countries, there is a traditional division between academic and vocational schooling at upper secondary level. In both France and Luxembourg, for example, there are two types of upper secondary school: general upper secondary schools and technical/vocational schools. In a few of the participating countries, there is a wider differentiation in school types. Switzerland has three main educational options at upper secondary level: vocationally-oriented schools, academically-oriented schools and a small number of diploma middle schools that prepare students for higher training in the health and social services areas. In Flanders, there are four types of upper secondary school: general, technical, vocational and artistic.

In Norway and Sweden, there is a single integrated school type at upper secondary level, but schools offer a variety of programmes, including academic and vocational elements. In Norway, there are fifteen courses, though not all are offered in every school. In Sweden, there are seventeen three-year national programmes at upper secondary level, covering a wide range of subjects. In Ireland, there are three types of school, secondary, vocational and community-comprehensive, but all schools offer the same broad, comprehensive-type curriculum to all students.



2.3 Place of foreign languages in the upper secondary school system

The place of foreign languages in the school system depends to a large extent on the national political and linguistic situation. In Switzerland, for example, each canton has its own system of education and its own policy on foreign language teaching. The country is officially multilingual, with four national languages. The learning of a second national language (French or German) is a high priority, and English, Italian and Spanish are the most commonly taught foreign languages. At the moment, there is a concern among some politicians and educators that English is becoming the dominant second language at the expense of the other Swiss national languages. In Norway and Sweden, English is compulsory for all students at upper secondary level, and other foreign languages are also offered. Students in Norway who are following more academic programmes must study another foreign language in addition to English. The primary objective of foreign language teaching in France is that all students, by the end of their schooling, will have mastered two languages to a comparable level. The most commonly studied foreign languages in French schools are English, Spanish, German and Italian. In Luxembourg, there are three compulsory languages at upper secondary level: French, German and English. Luxembourgish, the national language, is not studied at this level, although it is the mother tongue of many students. A further feature of this multilingual society is that a significant percentage of the population speaks a

language other than French, German or Luxembourgish as mother tongue. In Ireland, by contrast, the learning of foreign languages is not compulsory at any stage. All students study Irish and English, the two official languages, and in addition the majority of students at upper secondary level study a foreign language, most often French. German, Spanish, Italian, Russian and Japanese are also offered.

2.4 Foreign language curricula and the influence of the CEFR

Given the variety of school types represented in the participating countries, it is not surprising that there is also a great variety of language curricula. In some countries, France and Ireland for example, the curricula are defined at national level. In other countries, regions or even individual schools are free to establish their own language curricula. In general, the curricula in use in the participating countries are communicative in their emphasis and they combine communication skills with grammatical and lexical content. The template for the country statements asked participating countries whether or not the CEFR had influenced their curricula. In some countries, Ireland for example, the current syllabus documents predated the CEFR, and the work of relating the syllabus objectives to the CEFR levels had not yet been undertaken or completed. In Switzerland, on the other hand, the CEFR had influenced the foreign language syllabuses for vocational schools directly, as it was found to provide a clear curricular structure that evaluators from various regions could agree upon. In the academic upper secondary schools, however, the influence was more indirect, coming via course books and international examinations such as Cambridge³ and DELF⁴. In Sweden, new foreign language syllabuses were introduced in 2000, and the starting point for the development of these syllabuses was an analysis of the CEFR. The aim was to construct for all modern languages levels that could be applied to the learning and teaching of languages irrespective of the learner's age and the type of school.

2.5 Teaching methodologies

A common feature of the national systems represented in the project is the professional autonomy of teachers in relation to methodologies. Whether curricula are established at national or at local level, teachers have considerable latitude within the curriculum framework to choose their own teaching methods, textbooks and other teaching tools. Teachers are free to adopt the approaches that they deem most appropriate. The factors most commonly taken into account by teachers when deciding on approaches and methodologies are: the aims of the curriculum; attainment targets; the interests, abilities and motivation of students; and modes of assessment. The country statements referred to best practice in the use of a wide range of classroom methodologies such as group work, discussion, and project work to supplement formal teaching. Features of methodology highlighted in the country statements included: the extent to which the target language was used as the language of instruction and for classroom communication; the influence of textbooks on

³ University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations, e.g. Certificate in Advanced English (CAE)

⁴ DELF: Diplôme d'études en langue française



classroom methodologies; the extent of reliance on whole-class, lecture-style teaching; and the level of use of ICT in language teaching. In general, the country statements painted a positive picture of language classrooms as places where the teaching and learning style was, appropriately, mainly communicative in approach.

2.6 Assessment of foreign language learning

The country statements describe the arrangements in place for the formative assessment and the summative assessment of language learning. In some countries, such as Ireland and Norway, written final examinations are centrally set. In other countries, they are set at school level or even, as in the case of Switzerland, by individual teachers. In some instances, the results of continuous assessment and of terminal examinations are combined to arrive at the student's final grade. In Sweden, there are no national final examinations, but the Swedish National Agency for Education is responsible for the development of assessment instruments and national tests that are provided for teachers to use in the assessment of their students. The use of such tests is compulsory in the core subjects of Swedish, English, and Mathematics. The use of written assessments still dominated the evaluation

practices of language teachers in France at the time of writing the country statements, and it was noted that there was rarely a concerted policy on assessment within French schools. The effect of this practice on language learning was seen as being negative, and other participating countries expressed similar concerns.

2.7 Arrangements for school self-review and teacher self-review

In some of the participating countries there is no obligation on teachers at upper secondary level to engage in self-review and little is done at national level to support self-review for teachers or schools. In others, self-review is an integral part of the national system. For example, in Sweden there is a requirement that each school engage in a quality review, and these reviews are published. Schools in Norway often use some of their five annual planning days to carry out self-evaluation. All of the educational institutions are obliged to evaluate on a regular basis the extent to which the organisation and implementation of their work are in line with the objectives of the curriculum. In Ireland, school self-review through school development planning has been supported by a national initiative since 1999. Schools are encouraged at a whole-school level and at a subject level to review their current activities, to identify priorities for development, to plan and to implement strategies for improvement, and to monitor the outcomes. Self-review is not obligatory in Swiss schools but a number of voluntary self-evaluation projects had been launched at the time of the writing of the country statement. Similarly, school self-review is optional in Flanders, but there is a growing interest in the area and teachers attend in-service courses in self-review.

2.8 Arrangements for external evaluation of teachers and schools

Four of the seven participating countries, France, Luxembourg, Flanders and Ireland, have national inspectorates with responsibility for the external evaluation of teachers and schools. For example, in Ireland specialist inspectors of languages evaluate the teaching and learning of the languages and they write reports that are issued to schools and also published on the web site of the Department of Education and Science. The emphasis is on evaluating the subject in a whole-school context, not on the work of individual teachers. The Flemish inspectorate evaluates the quality of foreign language teaching by examining students' work, tests, and examinations, and by observing lessons. Three participating countries, Switzerland, Norway and Sweden, do not have national inspectorates, and in Switzerland there is no external evaluation of schools. In Norway, the regional education offices have a supervisory role in respect of schools, and they present annual reports. The Swedish National Agency for Education collects and publishes data on schools' organisation and results achieved. Since 2003, it has been commissioned to publish, within a six-year period, data about every school in Sweden. These evaluations aim to give a comprehensive view and they do not go into details in different subjects.



Chapter 3

The Story – Project development

3.1 Initial research phase and project launch

Invitations to participate in the EFLUSL project were issued by the European Network in October 2003. A steering group, comprising members of the Irish Inspectorate and an academic advisor from Trinity College, Dublin, was established. Preparatory research and development work was carried out prior to the initial plenary meeting of the project. The country statements submitted by the participating countries were collated and analysed by the steering group and this analysis provided the starting point for the development of the evaluation instruments. The steering group developed a draft framework of indicators, a set of accompanying evaluation instruments and templates, and a set of guidelines for testing the evaluation instruments.

As part of the Irish presidency of the EU in 2004, a meeting of the European Network was held in Navan, County Meath, Ireland. This meeting was followed by the first plenary meeting and an introductory seminar to launch the EFLUSL project. At their first meeting the representatives examined the draft evaluation instruments. The participants included representatives from research institutes and from teacher-training institutes, as well as in-service providers, practising teachers, evaluators and inspectors. The seminar provided an opportunity for country participants, network members and educational experts and researchers, both national and international, to contribute to the development of the evaluation instruments.

Participating countries agreed a number of principles that should guide the project. Some of these principles emerged from issues raised by participants in their country statements, as well as from perspectives articulated at the plenary meeting. The ensuing discussions also contributed to the development of a shared understanding among participants in relation to the work of the project. The initial plenary meeting resulted in agreement on the form and content of the evaluation instruments that were to be tested in the initial trial phase. The arrangements for testing the evaluation instruments were also discussed and agreed.

3.2 Initial trial phase: testing the instruments

The main purpose of the evaluation visits to schools in the EFLUSL project was to test the effectiveness of the evaluation instruments that had been developed. These instruments, which are described briefly in the next chapter and are reproduced in full in Part Two of this report, were tested in two phases. The initial trial phase took place during the months of November and December 2004.

During the initial trial phase, each participating country was asked to carry out an evaluation of the teaching and learning of foreign languages in the upper secondary cycle in three schools, using the EFLUSL evaluation instruments. The evaluation guidelines outlined a number of criteria for the selection of schools. The schools selected were to reflect the different school types: academically oriented, vocationally oriented and comprehensive. The student groups selected for observation



should be studying the target languages through various types of curricula, should be studying the language as a second or third language and should include a range of student ability. It was also stipulated that male and female students should be included. For the purposes of the project, upper secondary was defined to mean students more than sixteen years of age. The number of schools to be inspected and the number of classroom visits to take place were to be broadly similar in each of the participating countries. A total of twenty-one schools and forty-four teachers took part in the evaluation during the initial trial phase. Among the forty-four language teachers there were twenty teachers of English, thirteen teachers of French, seven teachers of German and four teachers of Spanish.

To ensure the collection of a comprehensive evidence base, a range of evaluation activities was to be undertaken at whole-school level, at individual teacher level and at classroom level. Reporting within the EFLUSL evaluation was concerned primarily with the evaluation of teaching and learning in the school and not with the assessment of individual teachers or students. On conclusion of each evaluation, feedback was to be given to the school and teachers.

3.3 Evaluating the effectiveness of the instruments

Towards the end of the initial trial phase, questionnaires were circulated to participating evaluators to assess the effectiveness of the evaluation instruments. For example, participants were asked to indicate their satisfaction with the quality indicators and to suggest amendments and additions, where appropriate. Participants were also asked to indicate their satisfaction in relation to the evidence gathering schedules, the reporting mechanisms and the evaluation activities themselves. The completed questionnaires were analysed by the steering group, together with the school evaluation reports. The results of this analysis were presented at an interim plenary meeting of the representatives from the participating countries. This meeting was held in Luxembourg in June 2005.

At the heart of the EFLUSL evaluation instruments is a set of fifteen quality indicators (see section 4.2), grouped into four broad areas: readiness/preparedness for teaching; planning and preparation; management of classroom learning; and student learning and achievement. Each of the indicators is accompanied by illustrations of practice at two levels, "optimum practice" and "scope for development". The project participants were asked to rate each of the fifteen quality indicators on a scale of 1 to 4 for its usefulness in evaluating the quality of teaching and learning. The analysis of the responses revealed a high level of satisfaction with the indicators. In general, the ratings were very good: most of the indicators were rated at 4 (very useful), with some 3s, occasional 2s and just one rating of 1 (not useful). In the case of a few of the indicators, respondents considered the indicator important and useful, but not easy to apply in the context of classroom observation. In the area of planning and preparation, the participants expressed a high level of satisfaction with the indicators, while noting that the requirements regarding teacher planning varied from country to country. In the area of student learning and achievement, there was only one indicator that was not rated highly. This indicator related to students' ability to assess their own progress and reflect on their learning. It was considered difficult to assess this ability by classroom observation or by interviewing students.

While the participants generally rated the indicators highly, they were somewhat less satisfied with the illustrations that accompanied the indicators. In a number of cases, the illustrations were considered vague, unrealistic or overly optimistic. For example, "scope for development" level illustrations were generally considered to be too positive. In a workshop activity that followed on from the presentation of the feedback analysis at the Luxembourg interim plenary meeting, participants were asked whether they would make any changes to the indicators or to the illustrations. While there was general agreement that the illustrations needed to be reviewed, the indicators emerged unchanged from this exercise. This was a significant validation of the indicators by the evaluators who had tested the instruments during the initial trial phase of the project.

3.4 Analysis by the academic advisor

At the close of the initial trial phase, the academic advisor to the steering group carried out an analysis of the school evaluation reports, which was presented at the interim plenary meeting. This analysis revealed that there was a close correspondence between the evaluative comments in the narrative of the school reports and the numerical ratings assigned by evaluators to each of the four areas within the framework. It also revealed that some indicators were given high marks in most reports: for example, teachers' academic qualifications in language, and teachers' target language competence and familiarity with cultural nuances. On the other hand, certain indicators were consistently given low marks. These indicators included planning for resources and use of ICT, opportunities for learner autonomy/reflection/self-assessment, and students' awareness of their own linguistic and socio-cultural development. Certain items, such as whether or not teachers' long-term plans included plans for assessment, were frequently not reported on. The academic advisor's analysis showed some interesting correlations between indicators. Teachers' target language competence showed high correlation with the overall rating for teacher readiness; use of the target language by teachers and the overall rating for management of classroom learning were closely related; and students' use of the target language was directly related to the overall rating for student learning and achievement.



3.5 Main trial phase and final report

During and after the interim plenary meeting, revisions were made to the evaluation instruments in preparation for the main trial phase of the project. The illustrations of practice were revised in line with feedback from participants, and enriched with examples taken from the school evaluation reports. A significant addition to the instruments at this stage was the development of a student questionnaire. This was done in response to a concern on the part of participants to include the voice of the learner in the evaluation process and also to broaden and strengthen the evidence base. Other revisions centred around making the evaluation instruments easier to use, by reducing the number of evidence booklets to be completed, removing possible overlaps and ensuring clarity and flexibility in use.

The main trial phase of the project took place in the period November 2005 to April 2006. Each participating country was once again asked to carry out an evaluation of the teaching and learning of foreign languages in the upper secondary cycle in three schools, and most countries succeeded in completing evaluations in at least two schools. Six countries, sixteen schools, and thirty-eight teachers took part in this phase of the evaluation. The distribution of languages was as follows: seventeen teachers of English, twelve teachers of French, six teachers of German, two teachers of Spanish, and one teacher of Italian.

Based on the experiences of the participating evaluators and the analysis of the evaluation reports, the Irish steering group finalised the evaluation instruments. These instruments are described briefly in the next chapter. An analysis of the school evaluation reports written during the two trial phases reveals some interesting outcomes in relation to good and not so good practice in foreign language teaching and learning. Chapters five and six examine these findings.



Chapter 4

The Tools – The EFLUSL evaluation instruments

4.1 The components

There are six components in the EFLUSL evaluation instruments:

- a set of quality indicators with illustrations of practice
- guidelines for evaluators
- two record of evidence booklets
- a student questionnaire
- a reporting template

This chapter briefly introduces each of these components, which are reproduced in full in Part Two.

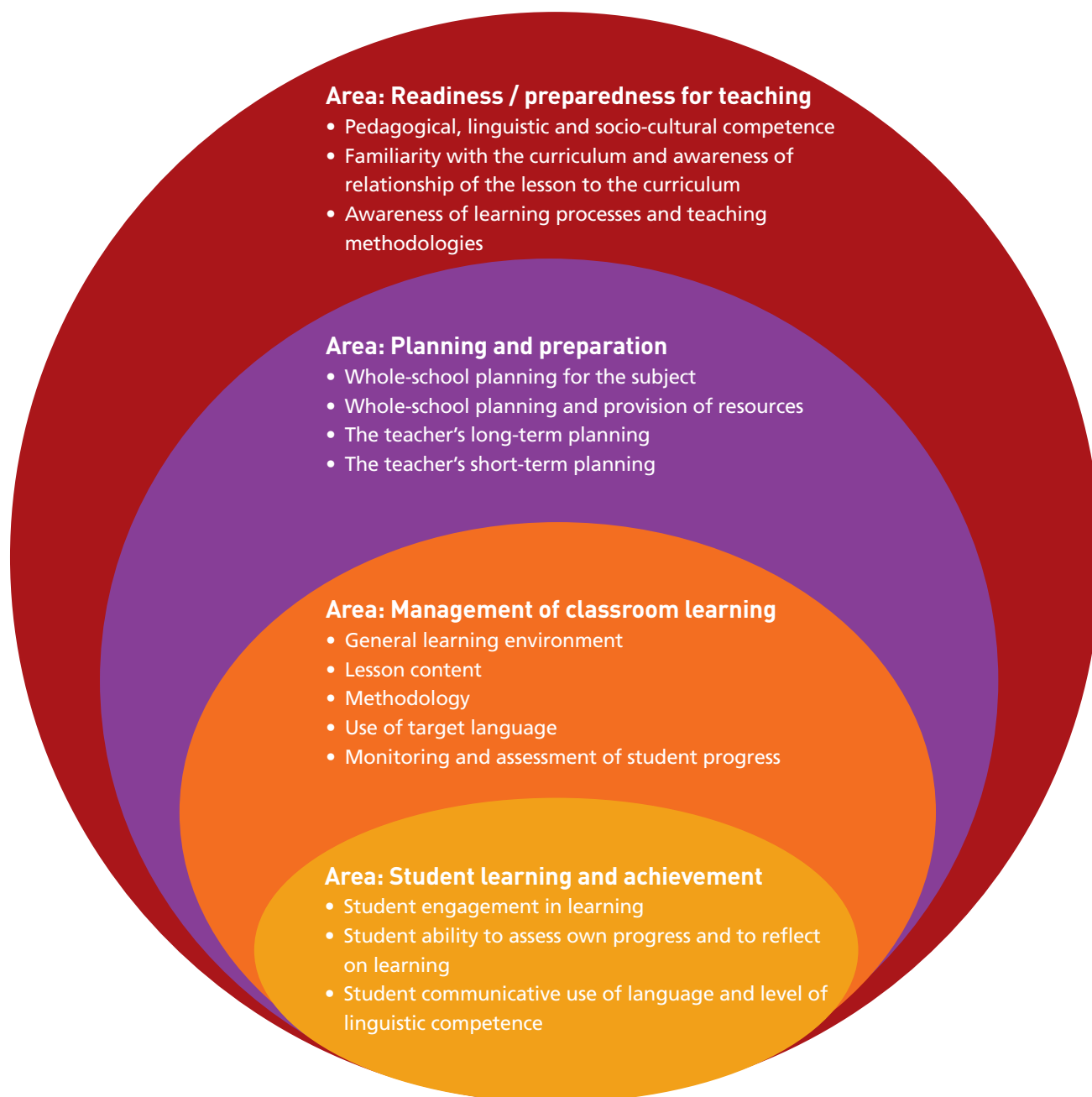
4.2 The EFLUSL Quality Indicators

The EFLUSL Quality Indicators are presented here in the form of a diagram, consisting of four conjoined ellipses. The fifteen indicators are grouped into four broad areas: readiness/preparedness for teaching; planning and preparation; management of classroom learning; and student learning and achievement.

The diagrammatic representation places the student at the centre of the teaching and learning process. It places the other key player in that process, the teacher, in the outermost of the ellipses. The indicators of readiness for teaching are given prominence because the teacher's pedagogical, linguistic and socio-cultural competence is an essential ingredient in the teaching process and the language-learning process. Between the learner and the teacher, the diagram represents processes of planning and preparation, and the management of classroom learning.

The teacher and the learner interact in a whole-school context, and the quality of that environment is an important factor in determining learning outcomes. The indicators reflect the importance of whole-school planning and provision, as well as individual teacher planning. The diagram shows that the area which impacts most directly on the learner and his or her acquisition of linguistic, communicative and socio-cultural competence is the management of classroom learning, which in turn is a function of the teacher's professional preparedness and of the planning and preparation processes.

EFLUSL Quality Indicators



The EFLUSL Quality Indicators are supplemented by illustrations of practice at two of four possible levels: 'optimum practice' (level 4) and 'scope for development' (level 2). The other two levels might be termed 'competent practice' (level 3) and 'requiring urgent attention' (level 1). An early draft of these illustrations was presented at the first plenary meeting of the project participants in 2004. In the course of the project, the illustrations were expanded and supplemented by examples based on actual practice described in the evaluation reports.

During the evaluations, evaluators assign ratings at one of the four possible levels to each area within the framework, using the illustrations as benchmarks. These ratings are used to assist evaluators when making judgements about the overall quality of each aspect of the teaching and learning of the target language in the school. The application of the ratings assists in identifying key areas of strength and areas for further development within the school.

The ratings could also be used to assist national agencies in compiling data on the general areas of strength and areas for further development that are common throughout schools in an education system. For example, in compiling a composite national report on language teaching, it would be possible to state the proportion of schools that show 'optimum practice' in the management of classroom learning or to identify the areas that need to be addressed in teacher education and continuous professional development programmes.

4.3 Guidelines for evaluators

The guidelines for evaluators provide background information on the development of the evaluation framework, outline the rationale underpinning the quality indicators, describe the instruments provided for collecting evidence and making evaluations, and advise on how the evaluation reports should be written.

4.4 Record of evidence booklets

Two record of evidence booklets were developed to support the evaluation. They provide a standard format for gathering evidence, and they are intended to assist evaluators in making consistent, reliable and objective judgements. Evaluators are required to ensure that the school report is consistent with the evidence and findings recorded in these booklets.

Record of Evidence Booklet 1: Structured Interview with Principal/Head of Department

The EFLUSL evaluation framework recognises that the whole-school context plays a significant role in facilitating effective language learning and teaching. Evidence concerning whole-school planning, and specifically how it impacts on planning for foreign language learning, is sought in a structured interview with the principal and with the head of the subject department, where relevant. The planning documentation for foreign language learning and for the target language is reviewed,

ideally some time before the school visits. Record of Evidence Booklet 1 provides a structured interview schedule and space on which to record the evidence collected during the interview and when reviewing the documentation. This booklet also provides space where the evaluator can record an overall evaluation of the quality of whole-school planning.

Record of Evidence Booklet 2: Structured Interview with the Teacher and Lesson Observations

This booklet is designed to support the evaluator when undertaking the aspects of evaluation that are concerned with the preparation for and the implementation of teaching and learning activities in the classroom. One booklet is completed for each teacher observed. Prior to visiting classrooms and observing lessons, the evaluator meets with the teacher. A structured interview schedule is included in Record of Evidence Booklet 2 to support this activity. Some parts of the interview are conducted in the target language.

The Record of Evidence Booklet 2 also requires the evaluator to make summary statements and overall evaluations in relation to each lesson observed for each of the four areas of the evaluation framework of indicators. The evaluator may also draw on the evidence gathered in the course of the structured interviews with teachers.

4.5 Student questionnaire

The student questionnaire was added to the evaluation instruments in response to a need identified during the initial trial phase to include the learner's voice in the evaluation and to broaden the evidence base. The use of this questionnaire was optional in the main trial phase.

4.6 Reporting template

The reporting template provides an electronic framework for drafting the final evaluation report. It allows the evaluator to enter text in the template under the various headings and subheadings, and it assists in maintaining a standard structure and format for evaluation reports, as can be seen from the case studies in chapter five.



Chapter 5

The Close-ups – Case studies of good practice

5.1 Completing the picture

This chapter presents three case studies of good practice, adapted from school evaluation reports written during trials of the EFLUSL instruments. The original reports have been edited to focus on good practice, to achieve a uniform narrative style, and so that the schools cannot be identified. These case studies do not claim to present a comprehensive picture of the range of practice which emerges from the school reports, but rather show the effectiveness of the instruments in capturing high quality teaching and learning of foreign languages.

5.2 Case Study One:

EFLUSL EVALUATION IN A FRENCH COLLEGE

Description

The college has an enrolment of more than one thousand students and serves a socially and geographically heterogeneous population, including a large proportion of students from an immigrant background. The languages taught are English, German, and Spanish as a first foreign language with Italian as a second foreign language. Exchange trips to Spain, Italy and Ireland are organised. There is a multi-media room with ten computers, headsets and microphones, and access to up-to-date authentic written texts, with subscriptions to English and Spanish daily newspapers and weekly publications provided by the college. There is a co-ordinator for all language activities and a co-ordinator for the Spanish language. College planning documentation is currently being developed.

Readiness/preparedness for teaching

The pedagogical, linguistic and socio-cultural skills were classified as optimal for all three teachers. On the one hand, such skills as excellent language competence, ease and enthusiasm in class and the capacity of the teachers to listen to the views of students were uniformly good. On the other hand, knowledge of the curriculum, links between the curriculum and teaching sessions, as well as awareness of the teaching-learning process, were present at different levels of competence. Good practice was characterised by situations where communication between students was encouraged and where account was taken of participation by students and of exchanges between students. Reinforcement of learning and learning by doing formed an integral part of the teaching and learning process.

Planning and preparation

In relation to the teachers' long-term planning, some excellent practice was observed where objectives in terms of linguistic level, interest in the subject and the abilities of students were clearly defined and implemented in practice. In the context of medium-term planning or planning for sequences of lessons, the linguistic objectives were, in the main, linked to facts and content, with a focus on grammar, and not specifically to language skills. However, in some cases, care had been taken to ensure progression, taking into account programme requirements and previous courses and material covered by students in the course of their studies.

Where there was excellent short-term planning by teachers, every effort had been made to provide students with language tools and linguistic elements which would build progressively on their ability to be autonomous in their learning. Assessments were conducted within reasonable timeframes to ensure progress had been achieved.

Management of classroom learning

The learning context and general learning environment created for students in the college ranged from good to excellent. The good relations in evidence between teachers and students were conducive to satisfactory study. The high-quality equipment and resources available also contributed to the positive learning environment. Where there was excellent practice, the lesson content and objectives were clearly described, communicated and shared with students. In effective lessons, different skills were integrated and developed in a complementary fashion, and considerable attention was paid to the variety in the language spoken by students, and corrections were made sensitively. There was cohesion in the materials presented but their use was not always optimised. For example, photographs in texts, which could have broadened the cultural and linguistic content, were not exploited to the full.

Where effective methodologies were deployed, considerable coherence was observed between the different phases of learning: acquisition of skills, practice of skills and consolidation of skills. Instructions and tasks were clearly presented to students. Individual students were carefully monitored and the final phase involved verification of skills. Language structures were studied in context and the students used them in context. Teachers did not ask directive questions, but worked by enhancing the autonomy of students. Lessons observed were well organised, with a sustained rhythm and pace.

Where constant use was made of the target language and where the teacher's level of language was appropriate, the language was satisfactorily understood by the students, who were accustomed to hearing it. Teachers made sure that students had understood before moving on and asking them to produce the language. Interactions between students were numerous and the language was authentic.

Assessment of student progress was based on the use of the European Language Portfolio and planned in advance by the teachers when designing the sequence of lessons. The teachers provided clear explanations to students, ensuring transparency with respect to assessments.

Student learning and achievement

Where students were motivated, all participated orally, in accordance with their abilities. The teachers were attentive and made every effort to encourage the participation of all students. Clear motivation was exhibited by most students. In other lessons, the students were keen and motivated but, in class, had few opportunities to express themselves freely. They answered teachers' questions, but not all students participated regularly in class.

In relation to students' ability to assess their own progress and to reflect on learning, teachers used an assessment sheet, of which students were aware, and therefore students participated in their evaluation and felt a part of it. In this way encouragement was given to learner autonomy.

The level of communicative use of language by students and their level of linguistic competence ranged from authentic language spoken by students, where their level of competence corresponded to expectations, to a situation where students did not have any opportunities to express themselves in the target language. The general linguistic level seemed satisfactory with respect to meta-language, taking account of elements such as vocabulary and structures.

5.3 Case Study Two:

EFLUSL EVALUATION IN A NORWEGIAN SECONDARY SCHOOL

Description

This Norwegian upper secondary school is situated in new premises, where the aesthetic dimension of the school building is eye-catching and inviting. The school building is designed to provide an active learning environment, with different designs for classrooms, open spaces, special rooms and workstations, all of which lend themselves to a variety of methodologies and different learning styles. The school's approach combines theory with practice, and its educational provision includes work experience, so that the life of the school is closely linked with the real world outside school. Collaboration with trade, industry and the local community is fostered during the school day and in the evenings. The school has between 450 and 500 students and 120 teachers, divided between general subjects and several vocational areas of study.

The school is involved in an international Leonardo project concerned with partnership and career guidance. A key objective in this project is collaboration across national borders with a focus on the students' ability to take ownership of their own career planning. The school also participates in a Comenius project involving a vocational exchange with Germany and the learning of German. This evaluation is of the teaching of Spanish in the school.

Readiness/preparedness for teaching

The teachers of Spanish were enthusiastic and motivated. They expressed themselves fluently and spontaneously in all contexts. They were familiar with cultural nuances, attitudes and behaviour and used this knowledge in their teaching. They were academically extremely competent and served as an optimum language model for the students. They maintained good contact with the target language, Spanish, and its culture.

The teachers' practice demonstrated familiarity with the syllabus. Their approach was generally effective, with some variety in methodology and use of teaching aids. This allowed the students to take greater responsibility for their own learning. The teachers displayed a good understanding of how the students learn. Classroom activities were well-managed, and instructions were clear.

Whole-school planning for the subject

Structures within the school facilitated collaboration in the planning of lessons. School management had appointed a department head to coordinate the work of the general subjects department, and team leaders who were responsible for long-term planning. Collaboration on whole-school planning was achieved at department level through fixed interdisciplinary meetings for two hours per week led by a department head. Team leaders developed long-term plans where foreign languages were included with other subjects.

While there was no whole-school plan for foreign languages, the teachers could collaborate in informal joint planning. There was a separate plan for the evaluation of student achievement. The students had access to and influence on the placement of tests in this plan. On enrolment in the school, students could choose between continuing with the foreign language they had learned in comprehensive school and starting anew with a second foreign language, Spanish. All students had compulsory lessons in English. Students with special needs were integrated in ordinary classes which were divided into smaller groups.

The school management had a clear educational vision. The school had a pedagogical and methodological mission statement, which underpinned the organisation of lessons in interdisciplinary long-term plans. The school building was designed in accordance with this vision, and the resources supported it. The school was extremely well equipped with teaching aids, particularly with regard to digital tools, internet and audio-visual aids. There were plans and a budget for the acquisition of teaching aids. These were catalogued and distributed through the library. The library served as a learning base and support for teachers and students. Everyone had access to a computer and alternative workstations.

Teachers' planning and preparation for the subject

The teachers had clear, targeted long-term plans and short-term plans. The long-term plan was based on the syllabus for the subject and the structure of the textbook. It set out clearly the objectives and intentions for teaching and learning. The long-term goals ensured that language skills and cultural competence were developed in parallel.

The teaching was organised in units of work that concluded with an assessment. Each unit had a distinct learning objective, texts and assignments. However, the learning objectives were not always shared with the students. Planning of the assignments was sometimes differentiated to take into consideration the different needs of the students. In their short-term planning, the teachers took account of work that was already completed and of assessments that had been carried out. The planning did not take account of the teaching aids which were available.

Management of classroom learning

There were positive relationships between the teachers and the students and among the students. The atmosphere in the classrooms was conducive to learning. The students were free to discuss their learning and interests with the teachers. The lesson content was coherent, challenging, and appropriate to the students' levels of competence.

The atmosphere in the classrooms was relaxed yet serious and focused on the assignments. The design of the classrooms, with chairs and tables in groups, contributed to a positive learning environment. The teaching was in part teacher-managed, with elements of group work. The teachers' academic and cultural knowledge was well exploited.

The students were presented with authentic language, adapted to their level, but the selection of texts was taken from the textbook. The written and oral assignments were suited to the students' different levels. The development of cultural awareness was an integral part of every lesson. Grammar was approached through reading texts and other assignments that situated grammar in a communicative context. Work on developing good pronunciation was linked to meaningful conversation. Vocabulary, too, was studied in a communicative context.

The structure and pace of the lessons were adapted to the abilities of the students. Active learning strategies were used so that the students paid attention and participated. The teaching methods contributed effectively to promoting linguistic competence. Homework was assigned and the work was followed up in the subsequent lesson. The students were encouraged to work independently with the language during group work, when completing homework and in conversation with the teachers about the topics for each unit of work.

The target language was used for instruction and for conversation in the classroom. The teachers helped the students to use the target language. The teachers were proficient at giving positive feedback to the students' contributions in lessons. The students were corrected in a positive manner. They had a good understanding of and willingness to use the language.

The students' progress was monitored regularly. The teachers emphasised written and oral production and the reading of texts, but perhaps students' spontaneous oral interaction was not sufficiently emphasised. Evaluations reflected the learning objectives, and the results of student assessments were recorded. The students were informed of the results of formal tests. The teachers used the results of assessment when planning lessons.

Student learning and achievement

The teaching resulted in above average language competence. The students used the language effectively to communicate about the themes that they were studying. They came to class prepared and willing to learn. Students were engaged in the lessons. They willingly participated in classroom activities and were eager to complete their assignments. The students' interaction with the teachers and fellow students was characterised by respect and collaboration.

The students were motivated to learn and use the language. They used the target language effectively and willingly at their own level to interact and to work with assignments. In their interaction, the students demonstrated knowledge of the culture. They had a good repertoire of structures and vocabulary to communicate at their own level on topics covered in class.

Learning goals were determined by the teachers, course books and examinations. Students assessed their own progress mainly on the basis of test results. They were certainly aware of their strengths and limitations, but did not seem to have any conscious strategy for taking responsibility for their own learning.

5.4 Case Study Three:

EFLUSL EVALUATION IN A SWISS SECONDARY SCHOOL

Description

This school is one of the main gymnasias (i.e. university-track upper secondary schools) in the city. Students can specialise in the natural sciences, in economics or in literature. Each of these specialisations is called a separate gymnasium for administrative and curricular purposes, although students of all three share the same facilities and teachers. This means that any given language class consists of students from only one of the three parts of the school, and that language level, interests and requirements vary accordingly. There are 744 students (400 female and 344 male).

Readiness/preparedness for teaching

Of the two teachers observed, one was a native speaker of English and the other spoke English extremely well. As required, they both had at least a Master of Arts degree in English from a Swiss university and had undergone the additional required pedagogical training and teaching practice (1.5 years) for gymnasium teachers. Both were obviously very interested in teaching and welcomed the chance to discuss their work in the course of the evaluation.

Both teachers showed high awareness of learning processes and of setting up and staging lessons to provide maximum intellectual challenge without ignoring the language learning opportunities which each new stage offered.

Swiss teachers at this level are obliged to do between 45 and 90 hours of professional development each year. A great many workshop-type courses for teachers are offered by the national teacher education centre in Lucerne. Gymnasium teachers are also entitled to sabbaticals. One of the teachers observed had recently attended courses at the Central School of Speech and Drama in London.

Whole-school planning for the subject

The number of hours spent learning English at gymnasium level is determined by the cantonal authorities in consultation with teachers. English was an L3 for these students, which meant that they spent 3 hours per week learning it in a single and a double lesson for their 4 years at gymnasium. French (the L2) was accorded the same amount of time. Other possible L3s at this school were Italian or Latin.

Given the cantonal framework, the head teachers of each gymnasium set the syllabus for the school. Beyond that, each teacher was free to define what he or she wanted to do, setting the emphasis for each term's work in consultation with the class. Although there were no formal language department structures in the school, individual English teachers did cooperate on a

voluntary basis. In fact, this school was unusual in the degree to which English teachers cooperated with each other, as the concept of a language department does not as yet exist.

This was a well equipped school, especially in terms of access to ICT for learning. There was a generous budget for acquisition of teaching materials and the school offered extremely attractive learning facilities and premises. It had its own library and a good supply of books, films and CDs. In addition, teachers could borrow 24 notebook computers, wirelessly networked, and a printer for classroom use for lessons requiring internet research. Each teacher had his or her own well-equipped classroom, which meant that posters and semi-permanent displays were used to motivate learners and contributed to peripheral learning.

A number of students had recently arrived from abroad and were finding it challenging to learn two or three foreign languages at the same time. The teachers were aware of this and were providing extra classroom support.

Teachers' planning and preparation for the subject

Teachers did not write day-to-day lesson plans, but prepared long-term plans for each group of students, designing their own syllabus based on themes or skills and planning tests in consultation with students. Thus, they might base part of the term's work on a novel that the class was reading, drawing grammar topics and vocabulary from the book and using it as an introduction for skills and practice activities. The quality of planning was testament to extremely well-prepared and knowledgeable teachers.

Both teachers also planned thematic units of between six and ten lessons, using current events, films and music, as well as commercially produced English course books, and varying skills work as appropriate. Tests were given at the end of these units, normally at intervals of three to four weeks. These usually encompassed more than one skill or knowledge area such as vocabulary with an oral presentation, or reading and grammar with essay writing.

English teachers in this school had recently started using the same Matura or school-leaving examination for all classes, a practice that was relatively rare in the area. Students will also sit the Cambridge Certificate in Advanced English (level C1) at the end of their final year, so that they have an international qualification in addition to their matriculation. The more able students in the literature gymnasium were encouraged to sit the Certificate of Proficiency in English (level C2), and were offered a special exam-preparation class. Particularly commendable was the teacher cooperation on setting one school-leaving examination.

Management of classroom learning

Both teachers used the target language at all times. Students were exposed to a wide variety of texts in the target language and encouraged to use a range of skills and strategies in working with

them. For example, in one class the students read a short text of current interest, then summarised and presented it orally to classmates, which created natural information gaps. Students were then encouraged to find answers to these information gaps using the internet and were asked to prepare a new talk on the original topic using the additional information. This evoked such high concentration that students did not want to stop working to take a break. The lesson was brilliant in its stimulation of authentic communication.

Both teachers seemed highly content-focused and at the same time they expressed a desire to give tasks that could be done at different levels. Both also fostered cooperative group work, a certain amount of autonomy, and student-student feedback.

Although the classes had a course book that they were using intermittently, there was no teaching from a course book during the evaluation visit. There was, however, evidence of the kind of focused grammar learning that can be facilitated by a course book, following a test that was returned to a class during the visit. The test was very fair in the way it had been marked, and tried to reflect the way students had been taught. The careful way in which students went over their test papers was impressive, as was the obvious effort the teacher had put into its marking to balance accuracy and fluency. Students appreciated the teachers' efforts and were ready to participate actively in learning.

Student learning and achievement

The students in both groups observed were in their next to last year of gymnasium and their average age was seventeen years. This is an age at which students can become tired of school and classroom activities. However there was no evidence of boredom or lack of interest, just shyness and inhibition. In both classes students were highly motivated and they worked independently through well-staged lessons. Their self-direction showed that they were familiar with working independently, although in one case it was the first time they had used computers in the English classroom.

Students spoke English to their teachers all the time, and even used the target language in most pair work, although not always. The students spoke to the evaluator fluently and without difficulty at a good B2 level and they were even better at comprehension. There was a high level of English competence observed among students.



Chapter 6

The Overview – Comparing elements of quality and practice across countries

6.1 Analysing the data

At the conclusion of each of the two trial phases of the EFLUSL project the Irish steering group carried out an analysis of the evaluation reports and of the feedback from the participating countries. The first purpose of this analysis was to improve and refine the evaluation instruments themselves in the light of the evaluators' experiences in the trial phases. The second purpose was to compare and analyse elements of quality and practice in the different education systems and to select examples of good practice for inclusion as case studies in the final report. Given the very different school systems involved and the variety of conditions under which the evaluation instruments were used, analysing the data presented certain challenges. These challenges arose mainly from: the limited number of schools and teachers; the different teaching environments; the diverse kinds and amounts of data in each report; and the various styles of presentation and narrative in the evaluation reports. It is also important to remember that the documentation available to the steering group was the collection of school reports, not the booklets of evidence. For all these reasons, caution needs to be exercised in interpreting the findings. In spite of these limitations, what emerges from the analysis of the evaluation reports is a clear picture of practice across the participating countries.

The previous chapter presented three case studies of good practice adapted from individual school reports written in the course of the trial phases of the project. This chapter sets out to present a thematic analysis under a number of headings of the range of practice described in the evaluation reports. It begins with an overview of the main findings under the four broad areas and goes on to present an analysis of some cross-cutting issues and patterns.

6.2 Readiness for teaching

Although the evaluation framework contains three indicators under the general area of readiness /preparedness for teaching, the evaluation reports commented mainly on teachers' pedagogical, linguistic and socio-cultural competence. It may be that the other indicators that cover familiarity with the curriculum and awareness of learning processes were more difficult to assess or were more easily dealt with when describing the management of classroom learning. In the examples of best practice, teachers demonstrated a high level of linguistic competence in the language they taught as well as familiarity with the culture of the target language communities. They maintained this competence and familiarity by means of ongoing contact with the target language country and through attendance at in-service courses. In some cases, the reports commented on the failure of teachers, for whatever reason, to keep up their level of linguistic and socio-cultural competence. In the analysis of the reports, the relationship between linguistic, cultural and pedagogical competences was noteworthy. A high level of linguistic competence was often paralleled by an equally high level of socio-cultural competence. Parallels could also be drawn between pedagogical competence and linguistic competence in the sense that teachers with high linguistic competence

were able to motivate their classes and were aware of the need to foster communication, motivation and enthusiasm for learning and were more capable of doing so.

6.3 Planning and preparation

Under this general heading, there are four indicators: two relating to whole-school planning and two relating to the individual teacher's planning. The purpose of the whole-school indicators is to capture the extent to which schools engage in planning at whole-school level to provide for the teaching and learning of languages. The sections of the school evaluation reports corresponding to these indicators reveal much about the quality of school management. For example, where there was planning at whole-school level for the acquisition of language teaching resources the teachers' work and the students' learning were greatly facilitated. In some schools, there was little or no evidence of whole-school planning for the teaching of languages. In some of the participating countries, there was no requirement and no expectation that schools should develop whole-school policies or plans for languages. Planning was a matter mainly for individual teachers or, at best, for teachers of a particular language working together on a voluntary basis. On the other hand, some evaluation reports described schools where collaborative planning among language teachers was well developed, where time was allocated for teachers to meet and plan their work together. The schools' planning for the support of teachers' continuous professional development was also reported upon using this indicator.

At the level of individual teacher planning, some reports described situations where there was a commitment to long-term planning. The best long-term planning was informed by the curriculum and provided for the varied learning needs and interests of students. It also included planning for the regular assessment of students' progress. Many teachers had developed the commendable practice of sharing the long-term goals with their students at the beginning of the school year or the school term. By contrast, the reports also provided occasional glimpses of situations where there was significant scope for improvement in the long-term planning. The evaluation reports also described practice in the area of short-term planning. In some instances the textbook was the main instrument of short-term planning, while on the other hand there were some excellent examples of short-term planning based on learning objectives. Other examples demonstrated the need for flexible short-term planning to allow for changing circumstances which might provide unexpected and positive learning opportunities.

6.4 Management of classroom learning

The first of the five indicators in the area of management of classroom learning refers to the creation of a learning environment in the classroom which is favourable to language learning. An important factor in creating a positive learning environment which was commented on in the evaluation reports was the quality of the teacher-student relationships and interactions. Classroom

layout was also a significant factor which either helped or hindered effective language teaching. Displays of appropriate posters, maps and students' work further contributed to creating a stimulating environment.

In relation to lesson content, some examples of excellent practice were observed, where content was challenging and stimulating. Some evaluation reports were critical of the content of lessons observed. In a few instances, reports noted that lesson content was not challenging enough for students, or not suited to students' needs or interests. Evaluators sometimes commented on the teaching of grammar in isolation from other aspects of the language.

Not surprisingly, the evaluation reports described a broad range of teaching methodologies. Although all the teachers had embraced a communicative methodology, their classroom methods varied considerably. Methodologies ranged from a teacher-driven, rote-learning approach, through lively but teacher-dominated discussions to an approach involving transparency, greater learner autonomy and enthusiasm. The rich language content, good continuity and seamless progression of some lessons were highly commended. An approach that integrated the teaching of grammar in the body of the lesson and that developed students' awareness of the communicative use of grammatical structures was deemed most effective. Some of the lessons observed followed a traditional pattern where grammar was taught by gap-fill exercises and by translating specially-composed sentences that were often unnatural and peculiar.

There were also descriptions of inspired and inspiring teaching, where students were exposed to a wide variety of texts in the target language and encouraged to use a range of skills and strategies in working with them.

The consistent use of the target language by the teacher and the students was a further focus in evaluating the management of classroom learning. Even when the teacher was consistent in using the target language as the medium of instruction and of classroom communication, it required considerable skill and patience to develop in the students the confidence to use the target language spontaneously. The evaluation reports gave good insights into strategies and ideas that teachers might use to foster further use of the target language by students. The tendency to rely on translation was identified as one of the greatest hindrances to developing an ability to use the target language. The good practice that was observed included the regular monitoring and assessment of students' progress, based on the learning objectives as set out in the long-term planning and the short-term planning, and the communication of the outcomes to the students.

6.5 Student learning and achievement

While the preceding indicators referred mainly to the teacher domain, this area focused on outcomes for the students. This is an area that was not always easy to evaluate in the context of

lesson observation. Nevertheless, some of the evaluation reports were quite revealing about students' learning outcomes, beginning with their engagement in the learning process. Many reports were positive about this engagement. There were also good examples of students' reflection on their own learning that, interestingly, involved the use of the European Language Portfolio and the EFLUSL student questionnaire. The possibility of interviewing students facilitated the evaluation of this area.

6.6 Cross-cutting issues and patterns

In analysing the data from the evaluation reports at the conclusion of the main trial phase, it was decided that it would be useful to identify indicators from the different areas that were clearly related to one another. Three themes emerged as being of particular significance:

- the levels of the teachers' and the students' knowledge of the target language and the use of the target language by teachers and students in the classroom context
- aspects of learner autonomy as described in the evaluation framework, namely the ability of students to reflect on their own learning and their ability to take responsibility for their learning
- planning in relation to the curriculum, especially at a whole-school level and for the longer term.

Each of these themes is critical for achieving quality in language teaching and learning and yet, as the analysis shows, each of them is an area where there is much scope for development, judging from the evaluation reports.

6.7 Target language knowledge and classroom usage by teachers and students

One indicator in each of three areas of the quality indicators relates to linguistic competence. In the area of readiness/preparedness for teaching, the indicator is expressed in terms of the teacher's linguistic and socio-cultural competence in the target language. In the area of management of classroom learning, the indicator is expressed as the use of the target language as the medium of instruction and of communication by the teacher. The indicator in the area of student learning and achievement is expressed in terms of students' communicative use of language and level of linguistic competence. This section analyses what the reports tell us about how these indicators relate to one another.

The level of linguistic and socio-cultural competence of the teachers was given in most reports as very high; only in a small number of reports was it suggested that there was room for improvement. There was more variety in relation to the teachers' use of the target language as the medium of instruction and of communication in the classroom. In relation to the students' use of the target language the comments in reports, where they occurred, were quite negative. Students did not use the target language very much for meaningful communication in the classroom. In one report, the

evaluator stated that the students were apprehensive about using the target language in public, but were willing to try it in pair work and in group work. In another report, the evaluator commented that the students' use of the target language was *'restrained both by the difficulty of the language itself and by the schoolmates and the inspectors.'* Evaluators acknowledged that the presence of an external evaluator might inhibit learners.

In another report it was suggested that the topic of the lesson and the task involved created the problem: the students were required to comment on a literary text. The task was quite complex and required specialised language. The students were unable to do more than make factual statements about the text, whereas the teacher expected them to make evaluative comments. The report commented: *'The students used the target language for responses, not for interaction. There was no uninterrupted speech.'* The context did not lend itself to spontaneous interaction, and the task was beyond the students' capabilities. Another evaluator mentioned that the students' use of the target language was very competent, but that students *'lacked an adequate repertoire for the task'*, which once again was a commentary on a literary text. The evaluator in another school report commented that

there are few possibilities for the students to use the target language in a communicative way. Tasks and exercises are often closed and do not offer opportunities for spontaneous communication.

This is something that is frequently noted by researchers in second language acquisition, where a complex task can cause a learner to perform well below his or her competence in other domains. In relation to the task of commenting on a literary text, it may be worth noting the level at which the CEFR might pitch this competence. In the CEFR (p.28) the descriptor of speaking ability at level B2 is given as:

Has a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints on most general topics, without much conspicuous searching for words, using some complex sentence forms to do so.

One may rightly wonder whether the ability to comment on features of literary texts would require a higher level of linguistic ability than one could expect from a student in upper secondary school, perhaps C1, as described in the CEFR (p.28):

Has a good command of a broad range of language allowing him/her to select a formulation to express him or herself clearly in an appropriate style on a wide range of general, academic, professional or leisure topics without having to restrict what he/she wants to say.

It is possible that the requirements of national syllabuses may not match what one can really expect from students at this level. One evaluator mentioned that the students' competence *'cannot really be evaluated without clearly identified activities'*. These activities should ideally be calibrated to match the CEFR scaled descriptors for linguistic competence that are to be expected at different



levels. Another evaluator commented in the section on the management of classroom learning that, even though the teachers used the target language as much as possible,

students are expected to use the foreign language to communicate in class, but they are not really prepared to do it by the teachers who provide only limited assistance to achieve it.

Then in the section on student learning and achievement it was reported that

student communicative use of language and the level of linguistic competence are rather low ... the use of the target language is voluntarily limited to the interactions between the teacher and the students.

The lack of provision of adequate linguistic scaffolding is evident in the examples highlighted above. It is also clear that the question of effective use of the target language in the classroom is complex. The tasks required by the various national syllabuses may need to be re-examined in the light of the CEFR descriptors of language competence. Students need to be supported with additional linguistic scaffolding in their use of the target language for certain tasks. They need coping strategies for use in the case of break downs, and teachers may have to recognise that a lower level of performance in complex tasks is to be expected. The circumstances in which tasks have to be performed may also need to be considered, as changes in these may add an extra layer of difficulty.

6.8 Aspects of learner autonomy as described in the quality indicators

The aspects of learner autonomy that relate to learner reflection and the ability to take responsibility for one's language learning were raised in each of the four areas of the EFLUSL Quality Indicators. For example, in the area of readiness or preparedness for teaching statements such as 'the teacher affords the students opportunities to reflect on their own learning' or 'the teacher encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning' appear in the illustrations at an optimum level of practice. In the area of planning and preparation, mention is made of the support for the development of cultural awareness, student autonomy and responsibility for learning in the long-term plan. In relation to the management of classroom learning, the illustration at an optimum level includes reference to the fact that 'there are strategies in place for the development of student learner autonomy' and, in student learning and achievement, that students 'regularly reflect on their own linguistic and socio-cultural development' and that they are developing as 'autonomous and independent learners.'

Evaluators commented in various ways on learner autonomy. If the focus is narrowed to just two aspects, the ability of learners to reflect on their own learning and their ability to take responsibility for their own learning, then it can be inferred from the evaluation reports that there was little evidence of students reflecting on their own learning. Typical comments from evaluators included:

In general there was little evidence of students being encouraged to reflect on their own learning.

Students are not very often encouraged to think about their learning methods.

The students are not encouraged to think about their learning methods or to become autonomous students.

Various reasons were offered for the lack of reflection by students on their own learning. One report attributed it to the students' lack of maturity as follows:

It was obvious, however, that some students are a little too young and immature to fully understand the concept of autonomous learning and reflection.

They may never have thought about it or else they learned unconsciously, as in another report:

Some of them think they have by themselves developed strategies which help them to learn and use the target language. When asked how they learn the TL, the students explained their methods but did not seem to have given it much thought before.

This indicates the beginning of the process of reflection on the part of students and the need for further and perhaps more explicit fostering of learner autonomy by language teachers.

Students could assess their language ability, but only in relation to tests or final examinations. This was stated as follows by several evaluators:

Students could probably assess their ability in terms of their test results, but since tests frequently reflect grammar and vocabulary learning instead of skills, it is questionable whether students can judge their progress in terms of skills.

One particularly insightful comment on why teachers had problems encouraging students to be reflective and to take responsibility for their own learning suggested that

the understanding of learning process could be influenced by the methods of learning of the teachers in their own schooling and by methods used previously by them in lower school level.

There were some examples of students being allowed to take some responsibility for their own learning. These examples included being allowed to complete tasks in class using dictionaries and the teacher constantly endeavouring to reactivate and structure students' knowledge. Other examples related to collaborative learning, students being allowed to negotiate the length of practice activities and test dates with their teachers. But generally, the situation seemed to be as described here:

The teaching did not make use of the fact that there were a group of people together who would have been able to co-operate and negotiate in the TL.

In only one school was there a clear example of learner autonomy in practice, where the teacher provided 'an outstanding learning environment'. The comment in the area of student learning and achievement elaborated on this:

There was clear evidence of student ability to reflect on learning in only one class, because the teacher happened to be working with the European Language Portfolio, getting students to reflect on past and future TL learning.

In the same school evaluation report, the evaluator commented on a very high level of communicative use of language by students and on their levels of linguistic competence:

Not surprisingly, in the class where students were encouraged to formulate their own learning goals and otherwise take responsibility for their own language learning, the level of linguistic competence seemed quite high (B2 to B2+) for [this class level].

It seems obvious therefore that, no matter the country, there was very little evidence of the development of learner autonomy in the schools evaluated. However, it is only fair to say that language teachers and learners have only recently begun to hear about learner autonomy, and may not yet have had sufficient time to come to grips with the theory and practice or to understand the implications of promoting learner autonomy. The inclusion of students' ability to assess their own

progress and to reflect on their own learning in the quality indicators is an important step in the promotion of learner autonomy. The creation of a student questionnaire for inclusion in the suite of evaluation instruments may also facilitate the development of learner autonomy.

6.9 Planning in relation to the curriculum

Finally, the question of planning and preparation in the reports was an interesting theme. What was striking about this was the fact that in many countries certain aspects of planning and preparation as outlined in the evaluation instruments were simply not relevant. For example, in a context where curricula are strictly laid down by public authorities, either government departments or regional authorities, schools may not have the freedom to change anything in the curriculum or in its application. One school report stated:

Because of the elements of the context above and the specificities of the educational system (centralisation, national policies relating to diplomas, programmes, and examinations), the action of the principal is limited. The policy of the establishment regarding the teaching and learning process only affects some of the academic decisions.

Almost the same can be said for long-term planning. Teachers may not have the autonomy to change anything in either the structure or the content of the syllabus as laid down by school authorities. A report from another country stated:

All English teachers atfollow the school curriculum. This consists of (a) the national curriculum for English at commercial schools, combined with (b) an English curriculum developed for the school by two head teachers. These well-established and fairly specific curricula allow teachers little leeway for individual touches in long-term planning.

Obviously, this can very easily lead to an apparent over-dependence on textbooks that reflect the national curriculum or syllabus. The evidence of this in the school reports was very interesting and in several reports the statements in the area of planning were difficult to link to the indicators or illustrations of practice, as they were statements of the conditions to which schools and teachers were obliged to adhere. What this illustrates is that balance is required between the need for long-term planning, even in highly centralised systems, and the question of curricular flexibility or indeed inflexibility.



Chapter 7

The Outcomes - Project outcomes

7.1 Fulfilment of objectives

Evaluation framework for teaching and learning of foreign languages

The main objective of the EFLUSL project was to develop, test and refine an evaluation framework for the teaching and learning of foreign languages. Such a framework would be invaluable for inspectors and other professionals (such as researchers and teacher educators) involved in the evaluation of language education in schools. The European Network's identification of the need for a set of agreed standards in foreign language teaching and learning against which schools' performance could be benchmarked was both timely and correct. Participant countries were asked to submit as part of their country statement any evaluation criteria which had been developed, or were in the process of being developed. In the main, countries did not have agreed criteria for their evaluations. Now a set of standards has been tested and agreed. The effectiveness of the EFLUSL Quality Indicators and of the accompanying instruments was tested during visits to schools and classrooms. Feedback from project participants indicated a high level of satisfaction with the instruments in meeting the needs of evaluators in differing contexts.

Exchange of information on best practice

A second objective articulated from the outset was to exchange information on best practice in the area of foreign language teaching and learning. During the EFLUSL project, evaluators observed teaching and learning in many classrooms in a number of schools across the participant countries. In spite of national differences that were apparent in the country statements, the EFLUSL school evaluation reports highlighted the fact that there are fundamental similarities in language teaching and learning in the participating countries. Notwithstanding the differences in context from country to country and the diversity in reporting styles, what emerges from the evaluation reports is that the similarities in practice are far greater than the differences. The two preceding chapters show how the evaluation instruments served to draw out the characteristics of effective and less effective practice across the participating countries, and to contribute to a shared understanding of what constitutes good practice in language teaching and learning. In this regard, it is worth noting that the illustrations of practice that accompany the EFLUSL Quality Indicators have been revised and elaborated in the light of analysis of the school evaluation reports at each trial stage. As a result, the indicators are not just a theoretical framework, but are a set of evaluation criteria supported by examples at optimum and scope-for-development levels, based on practice actually observed in the sample of schools in each of the seven European countries.

Effect of language initiatives on practice

A further objective of the EFLUSL project focused on the possibility of comparing elements of quality and practice in different education systems, with particular emphasis on the effect of language initiatives (both national and international) on practice in teaching and learning of foreign languages. No evidence in relation to the impact of language initiatives, either national or international, emerged in the course of the evaluations conducted in the thirty-seven schools across the seven countries. There were some passing references to the use by teachers of the European

Language Portfolio in developing students' learning and their achievement and also references to the impact of the CEFR on syllabus design or assessment modes. However, the expectation inherent in the objective that the promotion of language initiatives was a feature of the provision in different countries either was misplaced, or else the sample of schools and countries was too small to highlight such initiatives.

Application of evaluation instruments in diverse contexts

The project was not intended to produce any trans-national rankings or comparisons regarding the effectiveness of schools or educational systems and it did not do so. The resulting school evaluation reports provided an overall judgement on the quality of the teaching and learning of a particular target language in a school at a particular moment in time. An important conclusion of the project is that the EFLUSL suite of evaluation instruments can be employed in diverse language learning contexts and used validly and uniformly by an evaluator who will be fully aware of the specific content of the national curriculum and context applicable in the school.

7.2 Other project outcomes

Increased awareness among professionals

The previous section outlines the main outcomes of the EFLUSL project. However, there are other outcomes, which are less tangible and more tentative but nonetheless interesting and worth outlining briefly by way of conclusion. If there is a word that connects these secondary outcomes it is "awareness". Participation in a collaborative, international project like EFLUSL cannot but raise the awareness of all the participants in regard to aspects of their day-to-day professional activities which they might otherwise take for granted. This is true for evaluators, for school communities, for individual language teachers and for learners. For each of these four categories of participant, there are project outcomes which could become points of departure for further reflection, dialogue and action.

The importance of criteria for evaluation

One of the project outcomes was a greater awareness among evaluators of the importance of using definite criteria in carrying out evaluations of language teaching and learning. It emerged quite early on in the project that the participating countries did not generally have specific criteria for evaluating the teaching and learning of languages. There may have been generic criteria in use across curricular areas, and perhaps implicit criteria for languages, based on generally accepted ideas of what constituted good practice. During the two plenary meetings of the project participants, there were many opportunities for professional dialogue among evaluators regarding possible indicators of good practice. What was remarkable during the two trial phases of the project was the degree of consistency across evaluators and across countries in the application of the evaluation instruments and, in particular, in forming judgements based on the quality indicators. Nevertheless, during the interim plenary meeting of the project participants, the idea was mooted that in the main trial phase evaluators from different countries might work in pairs, evaluating the

same lessons but independently, in order to compare two sets of evaluative judgements arrived at by using the same quality indicators. Unfortunately, this proposal did not prove practicable, due to the many demands on participating evaluators in their own countries. But it does suggest the idea of a formal research project, based on the EFLUSL instruments, which would look at the collection of evidence and the inter-rater reliability of the ensuing judgements.

The whole-school context for language teaching and learning

A significant aspect of the EFLUSL project was the level of involvement of school communities, and not just individual teachers, in the evaluation process. A guide for participating schools was prepared, and in some countries briefing sessions were held for school principals and language teachers prior to the evaluation visits. Some countries elicited the view of the school management and of teachers on the evaluation instruments and on the evaluation process itself during and after the evaluation. There is anecdotal evidence that participation in the project contributed to a heightened awareness of what constitutes good practice at a whole-school level regarding provision for languages and whole-school planning. While the main focus of the EFLUSL project was external evaluation, there is no doubt that making the evaluation instruments available to schools could enhance the capacity of school communities as a whole to engage in self-evaluation and self-review.

Focus on the teacher as a reflective practitioner

A novel feature of the EFLUSL Quality Indicators is the inclusion of three specific indicators for the readiness or preparedness for teaching of the individual language teacher. These indicators centre on the teacher's linguistic, cultural and pedagogical competence. Traditionally, evaluators have tended to focus on the teacher's planning and pedagogical input as observed during lessons. But the three EFLUSL indicators in the area of teacher readiness shift the focus to the teacher as a professional who brings certain qualities and competences to the task of language teaching. The structured interview with the teacher and the observation schedules are intended to assist the evaluator in forming a judgement on the teacher's professional capacity, rather than on what he or she does on a given day. This emphasis fits very well with the idea of the teacher as a reflective practitioner, who has an awareness of what makes a good language teacher, and who continues to develop his or her own professional profile throughout a lifetime in teaching.

Learner autonomy

Finally, the EFLUSL project has made some contribution to the development of learner autonomy. Each of the four areas of the quality indicators makes some reference to learner reflection and the ability of learners to take responsibility for their own language learning. Even if there was little evidence of the development of learner autonomy in the schools evaluated, it is true that language teachers are beginning to become more aware of its importance. Similarly learners, especially through using the European Language Portfolio, will become increasingly aware of their own learning and begin to take responsibility for it. The inclusion of a student questionnaire among the EFLUSL evaluation instruments serves to underline the importance of learner autonomy and could become the basis for a research project in the area.



PART TWO:

The EFLUSL evaluation instruments

Part Two presents the full suite of EFLUSL evaluation instruments in their final form. They are made available here for use by national systems and by individual researchers, evaluators and schools. A CD-ROM containing the evaluation instruments in electronic format accompanies this report. The full list of documents presented here is:

- EFLUSL Quality Indicators
- Guidelines for Evaluators
- Record of Evidence Booklet 1
- Record of Evidence Booklet 2
- Student Questionnaire
- Reporting Template

European Network of Policy-Makers for the Evaluation of Educational Systems

Evaluation of Foreign Languages at Upper Secondary Level (EFLUSL)

EFLUSL QUALITY INDICATORS

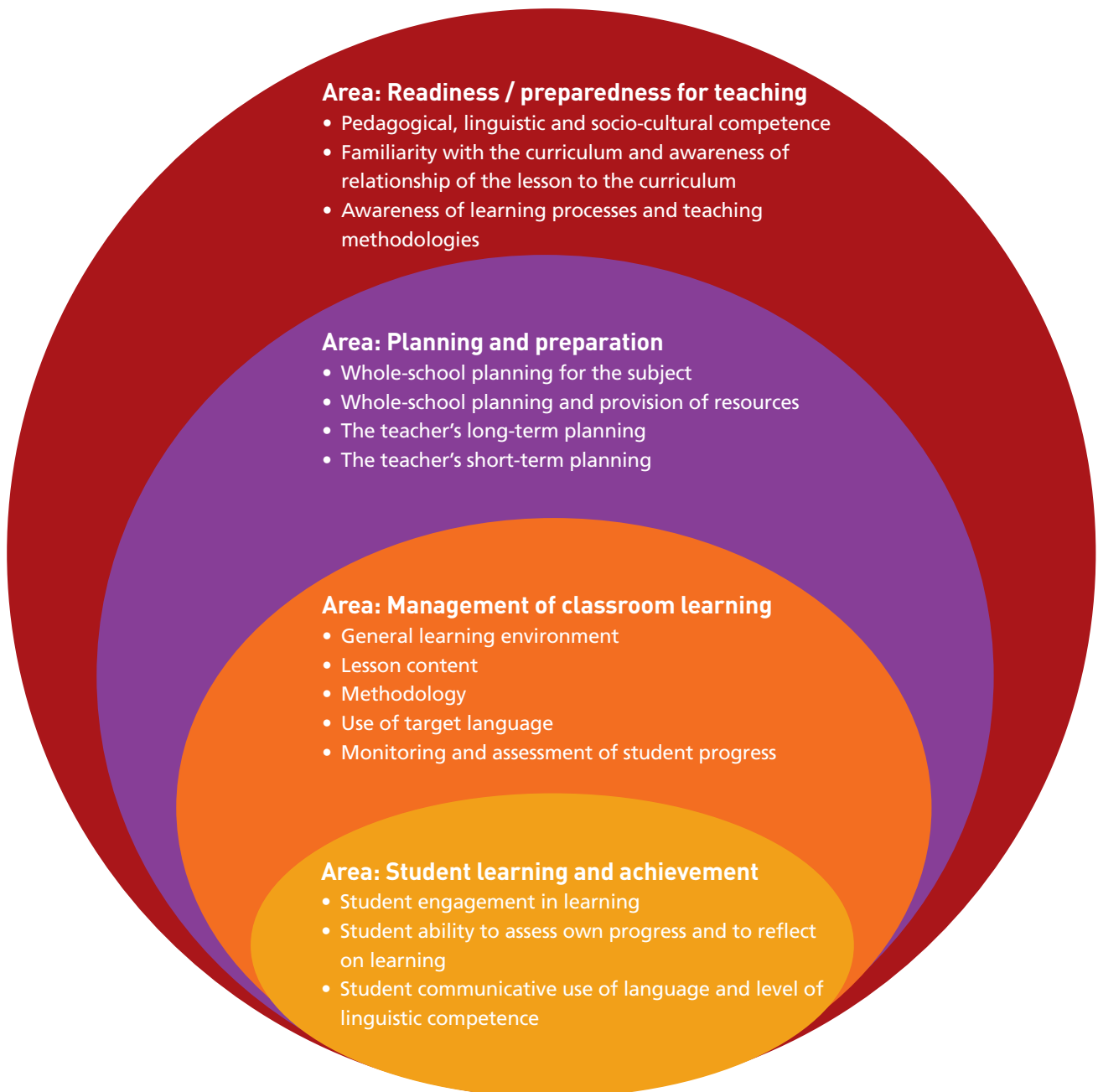


The EFLUSL Project is organised on behalf of the
European Network of Policy-Makers
for the Evaluation of Educational Systems by the
Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Science, Ireland.



Area: Planning and preparation

EFLUSL Quality Indicators



Area: Readiness / Preparedness for teaching

Indicator	Illustrations of practice
Pedagogical, linguistic and socio-cultural competence	<p>Level 4: Optimum practice</p> <p>The teacher is highly qualified, professional, enthusiastic and motivated to teach. The teacher demonstrates fluent and spontaneous expression within most contexts, including those that are unprepared and unpredictable.</p> <p><i>The teacher is enthusiastic and at ease with his/her teaching. The teacher demonstrates flexible and accurate use of language for communication and teaching; accurate pronunciation and natural intonation; very good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms; a broad lexical repertoire. Can vary expressions to suit the level of the students.</i></p> <p><i>The teacher has spent a significant period of time in the target language community, and continues to maintain contact with it. The teacher can effectively model or represent the culture and social conventions of the target language community. The teacher demonstrates ease of reference to, and is comfortable with cultural nuances, attitudes and behaviour.</i></p> <p><i>The teacher maintains high standards of fluency and accuracy through regular visits to the country, reading literature and current affairs magazines, watching TV and films and using the internet.</i></p> <p><i>School management facilitates ongoing professional development for teachers through centrally provided in-service and through contact with the education departments of the national universities. The teacher avails of ongoing professional development both at home and in the country of the target language. The teacher has also up skilled in the application of ICT to language teaching.</i></p>
	<p>Level 2: Scope for development</p> <p>The teacher is professional in his/her approach, but enthusiasm and motivation may be diminished. Within prepared and predictable contexts, the teacher uses a range of structures, lexis and idioms accurately and with ease.</p> <p><i>Within prepared and predictable contexts, the teacher demonstrates linguistic accuracy for prepared and predictable material, and a good level of competence in the use of language for classroom communication and teaching. Outside of these contexts, the teacher demonstrates: reasonable fluency and spontaneity, with perhaps a certain hesitancy in oral expression; reasonable accuracy and appropriateness of vocabulary, grammar, and syntax, though pronunciation and intonation may be marked by mother tongue influence.</i></p> <p><i>The teacher may not have spent a significant period of time in the target language community, but may maintain some contact with it. The teacher demonstrates reasonable familiarity with predictable socio-cultural content, although on occasions may not represent the culture and social conventions of the target language community appropriately.</i></p> <p><i>The teacher makes a reasonable effort to maintain standards through visiting the country fairly regularly, reading literature and current affairs magazines, watching TV and films and using the internet.</i></p> <p><i>School management facilitates ongoing professional development to a limited extent. The teacher avails of ongoing professional development only when it is facilitated by the school management. The teacher has limited skills in the application of ICT to language teaching.</i></p>

Area: Readiness / Preparedness for teaching - continued

Indicator	Illustrations of practice
Familiarity with the curriculum and awareness of the relationship of the lesson to the curriculum	<p>Level 4: Optimum practice</p> <p>The teacher's planning and classroom practice reflect a thorough and up-to-date knowledge and understanding of the curriculum.</p> <p><i>Lessons are in line with syllabus and curriculum requirements and the topics chosen are suited to the ability level and interests of students. The teacher makes students aware of curricular requirements.</i></p> <p><i>The teacher demonstrates flexibility in adapting teaching and learning materials and resources (including ICT) to curricular objectives. The teacher keeps the curriculum at the centre of the teaching and learning processes and maintains an ongoing awareness of the relationship of the lesson to the long-term plan and to the curriculum.</i></p> <p><i>The teacher's experience in marking State examinations promotes greater understanding of the relationship between the lesson, the curriculum and the national examinations.</i></p>
	<p>Level 2: Scope for development</p> <p>The teacher's planning and classroom practice reflect a reasonable, but, in some cases, incomplete understanding of the curriculum.</p> <p><i>There is a certain lack of direction and focus in the implementation of curricular aims. The teacher is reasonably aware of the syllabus and curriculum, but the textbook and national examinations form the basis for planning. The teacher does not refer openly to the syllabus or the curriculum.</i></p> <p><i>Teaching and learning materials and resources (including ICT) are not always meaningfully related to curricular objectives. There is often an over-reliance on textbooks, some of which may be somewhat outdated.</i></p> <p><i>The teacher's knowledge of the relationship between the lesson, the curriculum and the national examinations is limited.</i></p>

Area: Readiness / Preparedness for teaching - continued

Indicator	Illustrations of practice
Awareness of learning processes and teaching methodologies	<p>Level 4: Optimum practice</p> <p>The teacher demonstrates a thorough understanding of learning processes, particularly language learning processes, and the methodologies most suited to effective learning.</p> <p><i>The teacher demonstrates a good understanding of how students learn and the importance of providing active learning experiences for students through teacher-student and student-student interactions. The teacher affords the students opportunities to reflect on their own learning and encourages them to share their own approaches to learning with others in the class. The teacher is aware of students' differentiated learning needs and styles and adapts teaching methodologies appropriately. The teacher is particularly conscious of the differences likely to arise in teaching and learning when using new modes of communication made possible through ICT.</i></p> <p><i>The teacher encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning and provides opportunities for students to work on their own with monitoring and support. The teacher negotiates some activities with students. The teacher is familiar with the European Language Portfolio and some of its elements inform planning and practice.</i></p> <p><i>The teacher's understanding of how students learn is progressed by ongoing professional development.</i></p>
	<p>Level 2: Scope for development</p> <p>The teacher demonstrates a limited understanding of learning processes, in particular language learning processes. The teacher is not fully cognisant of the methodologies most suited to effective learning.</p> <p><i>The teacher's understanding of the learning process may be influenced by how he/she learned in the past. Teaching methods may be primarily based on traditional practices with limited awareness of an integrated skills approach in promoting communicative competency. The teacher is not fully cognisant of the benefits of active learning.</i></p> <p><i>The teacher is aware that there may be differences in teaching and learning in an ICT environment but does not probe them.</i></p> <p><i>The teacher is open to students' ideas about learning, and allows limited discussion of them, without always seeing their value. The teacher expects students to learn on their own, but does not always provide them with the strategies to become more autonomous and take responsibility for their own learning. The teacher has a limited knowledge of the European Language Portfolio and there is little reference to it in planning or practice.</i></p>

Area: Planning and preparation

Indicator	Illustrations of practice
Whole-school planning for the subject	<p>Level 4: Optimum practice</p> <p>The school has a vision that places the student's learning at the centre and sees the school as a learning organisation. Structures within the school facilitate a collaborative approach by teachers to subject planning. An effective whole-school subject plan for the teaching and learning of modern languages is in place.</p> <p><i>Modern languages have a high profile and are actively promoted in the school. School management facilitates open access to the study of one or more languages and timetables them in accordance with best practice. Whole-school planning ensures that students, including those with special learning needs, are offered a choice of languages and, where appropriate, the possibility of studying more than one language.</i></p> <p><i>School management facilitates formal subject department meetings. There is an agreed whole-school subject plan that reflects the mission statement of the school.</i></p> <p><i>The whole-school subject plan sets out clear aims and objectives for learning and teaching and identifies desired learning outcomes for each year and each year group. The plan promotes a range of teaching and learning approaches aimed at meeting the differentiated needs of the student cohort. It outlines how students' learning is assessed and how assessment outcomes are communicated to students and parents. Whole school planning involves planning for students with special educational needs (SEN).</i></p> <p><i>There is regular monitoring, review and evaluation of the whole-school subject plan and assessment outcomes are examined in these reviews. The plan provides for continuing professional development for teachers and the acquisition of resources.</i></p> <p><i>As part of a learning organisation, there is a whole-school teaching and learning committee and teachers avail of opportunities to discuss pedagogical issues related to the teaching and learning of modern languages, to share good practice and to provide peer support.</i></p>
	<p>Level 2: Scope for development</p> <p>Structures within the school facilitate a collaborative approach to planning to a limited extent and some elements of a whole-school subject plan may exist.</p> <p><i>Modern languages do not have a high profile and are perceived by students as difficult and demanding. School management limits student access to the study of one or more modern languages. Some students have little or no choice regarding the language that they study, and those with special learning needs are sometimes denied access to the study of languages. Languages are timetabled on an ad hoc basis.</i></p> <p><i>There are no formal subject or language departments. There is informal, collaborative planning by teachers of the subject, but this is not always clearly recorded.</i></p> <p><i>There is a level of agreement about aims and objectives, but it is content oriented, often in accordance with the chapters in the textbook. The plan contains limited references to teaching and learning approaches. Arrangements regarding assessment of learning outcomes lack clarity. There is no formal commitment to planning for students with SEN.</i></p> <p><i>While student assessment may be used, it does not contribute to ongoing review and development of the plan. Limited attention is given to the acquisition and use of resources in the whole-school subject plan. There is limited reference to ongoing professional development in the plan.</i></p> <p><i>Teachers rarely avail of opportunities to discuss pedagogical issues related to the teaching and learning of modern languages and to share good practice. There is no provision for peer support in the school plan.</i></p>

Area: Planning and preparation – continued

Indicator	Illustrations of practice
Whole-school planning and provision of resources	<p>Level 4: Optimum practice</p> <p>There are effective long-term and short-term plans for the acquisition of resources. The classroom is a stimulating learning environment.</p> <p><i>There are designated language classrooms that are fully equipped with the relevant technical equipment and are brightly decorated with subject-specific materials. An extensive range of resources is provided for language learning, including ICT. There is an annual budget and teachers plan together and prioritise for the future acquisition of resources. A bank of common resources is built up and catalogued over time. The school library has funding for further resources, which are made available to students to further support their learning.</i></p> <p><i>Planning addresses the continuing professional development needs of teachers. It also incorporates and provides for the work of the language assistant, or other native speakers, as appropriate.</i></p>
	<p>Level 2: Scope for development</p> <p>Resources are acquired in an informal and generally unplanned manner. The classroom environment is reasonably stimulating for language learning.</p> <p><i>Classrooms and equipment are not always designated for language learning. A limited range of resources for language teaching and learning is provided and there is no systematic planning or prioritising for future needs. Where resources are provided, it is on an ad hoc basis, on request to management. Prioritising and planning for the future acquisition of resources and the supports needed for teaching and learning, including the use of ICT in language learning is limited.</i></p> <p><i>The continuing professional development needs of teachers are not addressed systematically. Generally, the role and work of the language assistant is planned on an ad hoc basis.</i></p>

Area: Planning and preparation – continued

Indicator	Illustrations of practice
The teacher's long-term planning	<p>Level 4: Optimum practice</p> <p>The teacher's long-term planning is informed by the relevant curriculum. It demonstrates a level of reflection on the aims and objectives for teaching and learning.</p> <p><i>The long-term plan identifies desired learning outcomes for the students in each class group, reflecting their differentiated needs and abilities, their interests and learning styles. Long-term planning also takes into account the substantial informal learning outside the classroom.</i></p> <p><i>The teacher's long-term planning proposes the methodologies, strategies and resources to fulfil these objectives and to support the integration of the different language skills in teaching and learning. It includes an inventory of core and up-to-date supplementary materials and resources, including ICT, to respond to the differentiated needs of the learners and a list of co-curricular activities to support and enhance the teaching and learning of the language.</i></p> <p><i>The long-term plan provides for the communication of these outcomes and the modes of assessment to students. It supports the development of cultural awareness, student autonomy and responsibility for learning. The teacher's long-term planning allows for review of student performance, resources, and methodologies and for self-review.</i></p> <p>Level 2: Scope for development</p> <p>Some cognisance is taken of the curriculum and of the varied learning needs and interests of students. Most of the time however, the syllabus is not a living document with the students and the long-term plan is often equivalent to the plan of the textbook.</p> <p><i>Because the school curriculum is based on a certain course book, teachers may not feel that they need to do specific planning in terms of aims and student needs, since this has already been done for them by the head teacher and textbook authors. Long-term planning focuses primarily on the delivery of the programme and takes little account of the learning capacities and styles of the students.</i></p> <p><i>Aims and objectives for teaching and learning are stated but are defined in terms of content rather than learning outcomes. Long-term planning does not evolve to meet the differentiated needs and interests of the student cohort. Resources are usually confined to the contents of the textbook and there is limited reference to up-to-date materials and resources including ICT. The teacher's long-term planning does not take into account the substantial informal learning outside the classroom.</i></p> <p><i>Some information is included on methodologies and teaching strategies in use, but there is limited provision for the integration of the different language skills. Planning lacks clarity and precision.</i></p> <p><i>Some provision is made in the long-term plan for the assessment of language skills.</i></p>

Area: Planning and preparation – continued

Indicator	Illustrations of practice
The teacher's short-term planning	<p>Level 4: Optimum practice</p> <p>The teacher's short-term planning is informed by the aims and objectives established in the long-term plan. Short-term learning objectives are clearly identified and provision is made for meeting the learning abilities, needs and interests of students.</p> <p><i>There is an overall coherence to the plan for the sequence of lessons and the different phases all relate to the learning objectives. The teacher's short-term planning establishes desired learning outcomes for individual or sequences of lessons, indicating how the different language learning skills are integrated through a topic or thematic approach. These learning outcomes are, in turn, communicated to the students, in a clear and coherent manner. Cognisance is taken of previous work and planning for tasks is differentiated to cater for the different needs of students.</i></p> <p><i>Planning for lessons includes optimum use of up-to-date materials and resources, including ICT, and it also promotes cultural awareness. The teacher's short-term planning allows for ongoing review of students' progress and, where necessary, revision of planning which is informed by previous work and student assessment.</i></p> <p><i>Some of the short term plans for lessons which had already taken place included comments on students' responses and outcomes to the teaching of a particular topic.</i></p> <p>Level 2: Scope for development</p> <p>Short-term learning objectives are not always identified and some provision is made for the varied learning needs and interests of students.</p> <p><i>There is a reasonable coherence to the plan for the lesson, though not all stages and phases relate to the learning objectives. Learning objectives are not always clearly communicated to students.</i></p> <p><i>Some cognisance is taken of previous work and planning for tasks is sometimes differentiated to cater for the different needs of students.</i></p> <p><i>Planning of lessons does not always facilitate the best use of resources.</i></p>

Area: Management of classroom learning

Indicator	Illustrations of practice
General learning environment	<p>Level 4: Optimum practice</p> <p>Positive teacher-student relationships foster effective learning. The classroom atmosphere is conducive to learning.</p> <p><i>A positive and effective learning environment is facilitated by the planning of attractive activities, the promotion of a calm reflective atmosphere at intervals and the giving of transparent instructions and supportive evaluations. The pace and structure of the lessons ensures that students remain focused on the learning tasks.</i></p> <p><i>Teacher-student relationships are positive and relaxed and there is an atmosphere of mutual respect, co-operation and good humour. There is affirmation of students' contributions and sensitive and skilful correction of errors. Every opportunity is taken to maintain individual contact with students, in particular with the less motivated students.</i></p> <p><i>Classrooms are large and bright and very well equipped with the relevant technical equipment and movable furniture to facilitate active and interactive learning. Teachers are able to circulate freely among students and monitor their work. The display of maps, posters and samples of students' work creates a stimulating and culture-rich learning environment fostering greater cultural awareness and ownership of the language learning process.</i></p>
	<p>Level 2: Scope for development</p> <p>The teacher-student relationships facilitate learning to a certain degree. The classroom atmosphere is reasonably conducive to learning.</p> <p><i>The language learning environment is often restrictive and the atmosphere may be either too rigid or too relaxed. Lessons are sometimes unsuitably structured and the pace is slow, with teachers and students losing focus on tasks.</i></p> <p><i>Teacher-student relationships are not always conducive to enthusiastic and effective learning. The teaching process is predominantly teacher centred with limited interaction with students.</i></p> <p><i>Languages are taught in classrooms with traditional seating arrangements which inhibit active and interactive learning. Where flexible seating arrangements exist, they are not always fully exploited. There is limited use of technical equipment to support learning. The absence of a print-rich environment moderates the development of cultural awareness and limits students' ownership of the language learning process.</i></p>

Area: Management of classroom learning - continued

Indicator	Illustrations of practice
Lesson content	<p>Level 4: Optimum practice</p> <p>Lesson content is coherent, challenging, and appropriate to the level of students' interests and abilities.</p> <p><i>Lessons are well structured, with the content appropriate to the needs, interests and abilities of the students. Students are given the opportunity to influence the lesson content and show a willingness to discuss the age appropriate themes selected. There is good continuity and progression from one lesson to the next. The purpose of the lesson, as defined by its content, is clear to students from the outset.</i></p> <p><i>Materials used include the textbook, past examination papers, articles downloaded from the internet and the teacher's own notes and/or worksheets. Texts and activities are chosen with a view to meeting the differentiated needs of the students and integrating vocabulary, language structures and content information. Resources are culture-rich and the development of cultural awareness is an integral part of every lesson.</i></p> <p><i>A thematic approach allows for the integration of the four language skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing – and the promotion of cultural awareness. Students are exposed to a wide variety of suitably challenging authentic listening and reading material, including literary texts. Writing and speaking tasks generally involve real communication and allow for personal responses from students. Vocabulary is studied in context. Grammatical elements and structures are approached through authentic texts, and are related to communicative activities. They are analysed in context. Activities with a focus on grammar and vocabulary contribute to the development of language awareness. Work on pronunciation and intonation is integrated into the body of the lesson and is related to meaningful communication. Student tasks are designed to promote authentic communication.</i></p> <p>Level 2: Scope for development</p> <p>Lesson content is reasonably coherent and is fairly well matched to the level of students' interest and ability, but it may not create a sufficient challenge for students.</p> <p><i>Aims and objectives are not always clearly communicated to the students. Students are given limited opportunities to influence lesson content.</i></p> <p><i>Learning materials, student tasks and the development of cultural awareness are generally bound by the contents of the textbook. The use of resources for the promotion of cultural awareness is availed of to a limited extent.</i></p> <p><i>While reasonably interesting and challenging, the listening and reading texts are not always relevant to the lives and interests of a particular student cohort and do not always respond to their differentiated needs and abilities.</i></p> <p><i>The topics and tasks chosen do not always facilitate the integration of the different language skills. Writing and speaking tasks may on occasions involve real communication, but are more frequently somewhat mechanical and lacking in authenticity. Vocabulary is studied out of context. Presentation and analysis of grammatical elements and structures may arise from authentic texts, but are generally kept separate from communicative activities, though they may contribute to the development of language awareness. Student tasks and activities are generally not differentiated to cater for students' ability and interests.</i></p> <p><i>Work on pronunciation and intonation is done in isolation.</i></p>

Area: Management of classroom learning - continued

Indicator	Illustrations of practice
Methodology	<p>Level 4: Optimum practice</p> <p>The structure and pace of the lesson and the teaching and learning strategies deployed take due account of students' abilities, needs, interests and learning styles. Active teaching and learning strategies are used to promote student engagement.</p> <p><i>Lessons are lively and motivating and students are generally responsive. A variety of methodologies is used to create opportunities for learning. These include oral teacher presentation, Q&A, teacher-student discussions, student-student discussions, pair-work task completion, pair-work dialogue practice, group-work, self-study, individual written work, individual oral presentation of written work and task-based language awareness.</i></p> <p><i>Teaching methodologies are effective in integrating language skills and promoting cultural awareness. Appropriate strategies are used to extend vocabulary, which is studied in context, and students are shown how vocabulary can be adapted and integrated in different situations. The teaching of grammar is systematic, approached through the use of authentic texts and integrated within a communicative approach. Situations are created to encourage students' oral participation, thereby promoting the development of oral language skills. The teacher challenges students, but provides appropriate scaffolding for meaning and language forms as necessary. There is good linkage with, and strong emphasis on, the consolidation of previously learned material and on skills transferability.</i></p> <p><i>Relevant homework is assigned. Students are given constructive feedback on class work and homework. The teacher corrects errors sensitively and systematically. There are strategies in place for the development of student learner autonomy.</i></p> <p>Level 2: Scope for development</p> <p>Students' abilities, needs, interests and learning styles are catered for to a limited extent by the methodologies employed, and by the structure and pace of the lesson. The teaching style promotes a certain level of student engagement.</p> <p><i>Lessons are teacher centred and most of the language production is provided by the teacher. Learners are given limited opportunities to use the language acquired. Students are not always sufficiently challenged. Explanations, illustrations and classroom tasks are generally suitable, but can be confusing at times.</i></p> <p><i>There is a need for more active methodologies responding to the differentiated needs and abilities of the students. Listening and reading material is exploited to a reasonable extent but students' listening skills are not always sufficiently developed. Reading skills are prioritised with the emphasis on comprehension rather than on learning something. Translation is the main strategy used to support comprehension and written production. Language skills tend to be taught in isolation. Grammar teaching consists of isolated mechanical tasks and exercises that are not an integral part of the content that is being worked with. Work on pronunciation and intonation is limited. Opportunities to develop oral language skills and to encourage students' oral participation are often missed. There is limited use of resources to promote cultural awareness.</i></p> <p><i>Where homework is assigned, it does not always follow on from the lesson. Feedback on class work and homework is given, but not always consistently. Student errors are corrected, but in an ad hoc manner. Student learner autonomy is fostered to a limited extent but students are not actively encouraged to take greater responsibility for their own learning.</i></p>

Area: Management of classroom learning - continued

Indicator	Illustrations of practice
Use of target language	<p>Level 4: Optimum practice</p> <p>The target language is used as the medium of instruction and for classroom communication in an optimal manner, appropriately to the level and circumstances of the particular learners.</p> <p><i>The teacher's use of the target language is consistently fluent, idiomatic and grammatically correct. There is extensive and sustained use of the target language as the language of instruction and communication. Classroom interactions demonstrate a good understanding of the target language by students. The target language is used in all aspects of the lesson. The teacher provides appropriate target language input in managing the lesson, in illustrating and explaining, and for spelling and grammatical terminology.</i></p> <p><i>The teacher supports students in their use of the target language, providing appropriate scaffolding through a variety of strategies including the display of key questions and expressions. Students are accustomed to the teacher's use of the target language. Students also use the target language in classroom discussions and group work.</i></p>
	<p>Level 2: Scope for development</p> <p>There is some use of the target language as the medium of instruction and for classroom communication, but the mother tongue is often used as a fall-back, even where the target language could be used with appropriate scaffolding.</p> <p><i>There is considerable variation in the use of the target language both between the teacher and the students and among the students. The teacher tries to use the target language as much as possible but the students' interactions are limited and they are not prepared to be challenged by the teacher's use of the target language. All important exchanges regarding explanations, tests and assignments are in the first language. Students are expected to use the foreign language to communicate in class but are not sufficiently supported through appropriate scaffolding such as the display of key questions and expressions. Students and the teacher fall back on the mother tongue to overcome a problem or to gain time or when engaged in pair work. Translation is the dominant methodology for checking comprehension and getting students to put into practice the linguistic strategies being taught. Students do not normally use the target language to communicate with the teacher or with one another. The students only speak the target language from prepared dialogues that are often written, but not in spontaneous speech.</i></p>

Area: Management of classroom learning - continued

Indicator	Illustrations of practice
Monitoring and assessment of student progress	<p>Level 4: Optimum practice</p> <p>Student progress is carefully monitored and assessment outcomes inform the teacher's review of lesson planning and teaching strategies.</p> <p><i>Assessment reflects the learning objectives as set out in the curriculum and the teacher's planning. All language skills are regularly assessed, using a range of formal and informal assessment modes. These include questioning in class, written quizzes, course tests, formal school examinations and the assignment of homework. Modes of assessment are taken into account in the teacher's planning.</i></p> <p><i>The teacher is skilled in adapting the exercises and questions to students' abilities to help them answer correctly. Students are given constructive feedback during the lesson. Assessment outcomes are communicated clearly to students. The Common European Framework of Reference is used to help students assess their own learning and development.</i></p> <p><i>Relevant homework is set and corrected and it is commented on by the teacher. Time is allocated in the lesson for a review of common errors in order to inform future learning. Regular tests are given and students keep a record of their progress. Records of class tests are entered into the student's journal and the teacher may also include comments. There is systematic recording of student attendance and attainment by the teacher and school reports are sent home regularly.</i></p> <p><i>Teachers set common examinations where feasible. There are formative and summative assessments of students' aural and oral competencies. Trial oral examinations are administered by a teacher other than the student's own. Assessment outcomes are communicated clearly to students. Results at class, group, school and municipal level are reviewed, compared against national norms and commented upon. Analysis of results informs school planning.</i></p>
	<p>Level 2: Scope for development</p> <p>Student progress is monitored occasionally. Assessment outcomes inform the teacher's review of lesson planning and teaching strategies to a limited extent.</p> <p><i>Assessment does not always reflect the learning objectives as set out in the curriculum and the teacher's planning. Language skills are regularly assessed, using a limited range of assessment modes. They are based on the requirements of national examinations rather than on the acquisition and development of relevant linguistic skills. Students are unclear as to the relationship between school assessments and national programme requirements.</i></p> <p><i>Grammar and vocabulary are assessed more than aural or oral skills. Oral skills are not a feature of regular evaluation.</i></p> <p><i>Teachers do not provide appropriate assessments for different levels. Assessment outcomes are generally communicated to students. Students are rarely provided with a means of assessing their own learning and development through the use of the Common European Framework of Reference.</i></p> <p><i>While homework is assigned too great a proportion of class time is often spent correcting it. There is frequently no review of the common errors that were made, to provide a basis on which learning can take place.</i></p>

Area: Student learning and achievement

Indicator	Illustrations of practice
Student engagement in learning	<p>Level 4: Optimum practice</p> <p>Students come prepared for the lesson and are purposeful in their learning. They are enthusiastic about the language and culture.</p> <p><i>Students demonstrate: high levels of motivation and enthusiasm for learning; willing participation in tasks and activities; commitment to task completion and a strong willingness to communicate in the target language. They respond willingly to questions asked by the teacher and volunteer their own comments. Their responses suggest good comprehension of the target language and a clear understanding of what has been taught in previous lessons. Student interactions with the teacher and co-learners are characterised by respect and co-operation. Collaborative learning is a feature of the language classroom. Students participate in out-of-class activities related to the language and culture. Students consider the learning of European languages important.</i></p>
	<p>Level 2: Scope for development</p> <p>Some students come prepared for the lesson and there is some engagement with the lesson. They show some interest in the language and culture.</p> <p><i>Students demonstrate: varying degrees of motivation and enthusiasm for learning; apprehension about communicating in the target language; motivation by the examination rather than a desire to learn the language; some reluctance to participate in tasks and activities; a lack of total commitment to task completion. Lesson content does not interest students and closed exercises limit opportunities for students to communicate spontaneously in the target language. Student interactions with the teacher and co-learners are, in the main, characterised by respect and co-operation. Students work individually, with some efforts at collaboration in the language classroom. Some students participate in out-of-class activities related to the language and culture.</i></p>
Student ability to assess own progress and to reflect on learning	<p>Level 4: Optimum practice</p> <p>Students regularly reflect on their own linguistic and socio-cultural development.</p> <p><i>Students are encouraged to reflect on their own learning. Their progress is assessed qualitatively as well as quantitatively, in terms of skills development and transfer as well as results. They are developing as autonomous and independent learners. They have set learning targets for themselves in cooperation with the teacher, and evaluate their progress in relation to these targets. They seek answers and use higher-order thinking skills in their questioning. They are aware of their own limitations in relation to different targets, and are prepared to re-examine their strategies accordingly. Students are actively working with the European Language Portfolio (ELP) in the pursuit of greater learner autonomy.</i></p> <p>Level 2: Scope for development</p> <p>Students are not really concerned with their linguistic and socio-cultural development except in so far as it relates to examinations.</p> <p><i>Students are not aware of the possibility or not actively encouraged to reflect on their own learning and to become independent learners. Their learning targets are generally dictated by examinations and course books. They tend to be reactive, responding to questions rather than raising them. Most of the questions asked relate to seeking clarification rather than being part of a more reflective process. There are some opportunities to evaluate progress through discussion with the teacher but progress is in terms of results in periodic tests rather than skills acquisition or development. Students are proud of their progress but not always conscious of their needs or of the aims of the learning process. They may be aware of their own limitations in relation to different targets, but do not feel they are capable of taking responsibility for their own learning.</i></p>

Area: Student learning and achievement - continued

Indicator	Illustrations of practice
Student communicative use of language and level of linguistic competence	<p>Level 4: Optimum practice</p> <p>Students use the target language effectively and consistently at the appropriate level for transactional and communicative purposes in the classroom.</p> <p><i>Students have an adequate repertoire of linguistic structures and lexis to communicate effectively at an appropriate level and to complete most tasks. When in difficulties, they have a range of strategies to compensate. In their interactions, students demonstrate accurate use of the target language and sensitivity to social conventions of the target language community through correct use of register. Their use of language demonstrates good awareness of language as a linguistic system.</i></p> <p><i>The students demonstrate mastery of the learning targets for reading and writing as defined by the relevant curriculum and syllabus.</i></p>
	<p>Level 2: Scope for development</p> <p>Students demonstrate some success when using the target language for transactional and communicative purposes in the classroom.</p> <p><i>Not all students have an adequate repertoire of linguistic structures and lexis to communicate at an appropriate level and to complete tasks. Their range of strategies to compensate for limitations is very restricted. Their interactions are restricted by a lack of vocabulary or an over-emphasis on correct grammar and they demonstrate little awareness of social conventions of the target language community. Their use of language demonstrates limited awareness of language as a linguistic system.</i></p> <p><i>The students demonstrate a fair level of competence regarding the learning targets for reading and writing as defined by the relevant curriculum and syllabus.</i></p>

European Network of Policy-Makers for the Evaluation of Educational Systems

Evaluation of Foreign Languages at Upper Secondary Level (EFLUSL)

GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATORS



The EFLUSL Project is organised on behalf of the
European Network of Policy-Makers
for the Evaluation of Educational Systems by the
Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Science, Ireland.



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The evaluation pack

These guidelines form part of a suite of evaluation instruments developed as part of the Evaluation of Foreign Languages at Upper Secondary Level (EFLUSL) project. The full contents of the pack are:

- *The EFLUSL Quality Indicators*

This document forms the basis of the evaluation activities. It consists of a set of fifteen quality indicators grouped under four broad areas, with illustrations of practice at two levels for each indicator.

- *Guidelines for Evaluators*

This document provides background information on the project and a guide to the use of the evaluation instruments. It describes how the evaluation is to be carried out and how the report is to be written.

- *Record of Evidence Booklet 1: Structured Interview with Principal/Head of Department*

This booklet is for use by evaluators when collecting evidence and making evaluations concerning planning for languages at a whole-school level. One booklet should be completed in each school.

- *Record of Evidence Booklet 2: Structured Interview with Teacher and Lesson Observations*

This booklet is used when gathering evidence concerning the teacher's planning and preparation, the teacher's readiness for teaching, including his/her competence in the target language. It is also used to collect evidence and record evaluations during the observation of language lessons. One booklet is used for each teacher observed.

- *Student Questionnaire*

This questionnaire, to be administered by the class teacher, may be used to gather additional information in relation to student learning and achievement.

- *School Report Template*

This electronic template should be used when writing the school evaluation report.

Introduction

The European Network of Policy-Makers for the Evaluation of Educational Systems

The European Network of Policy-Makers for the Evaluation of Educational Systems is an intergovernmental organisation, composed of senior officials in ministries of education, Inspectorates and evaluation agencies in the EU member states and other European countries. It seeks to promote co-operation between member states in the evaluation of school-based education. The network promotes best practice in various aspects of school evaluation and the use of evaluation outcomes to inform and develop educational policies at national level. The EFLUSL evaluation instruments are the outcome of a number of research projects organised under the auspices of the network. The secretariat of the network is based in the Department de l'Éducation Nationale in Paris.

Origins of the EFLUSL evaluation framework

In 2004 the European Network of Policy-Makers for the Evaluation of Educational Systems initiated the EFLUSL project with the aim of developing a common set of quality indicators for the evaluation of teaching and learning in foreign languages. The main outcome of the project was the development of an evaluation framework for foreign language teaching and learning that may be used within various inspection and evaluation contexts.

The EFLUSL evaluation framework was developed in accordance with the principle that effective evaluation and reporting can enhance the richness of the teaching and learning process. EFLUSL participants were conscious that, although written testing and examinations are used widely at upper secondary level, such written assessment provides limited information on the effectiveness of language teaching and learning. Participants considered that when evaluators observe and interact with teachers and learners in schools, a much more complete form of evaluation becomes possible. By means of such evaluation, good practice in language teaching and learning can be acknowledged and affirmed and areas for development and improvement can be identified.

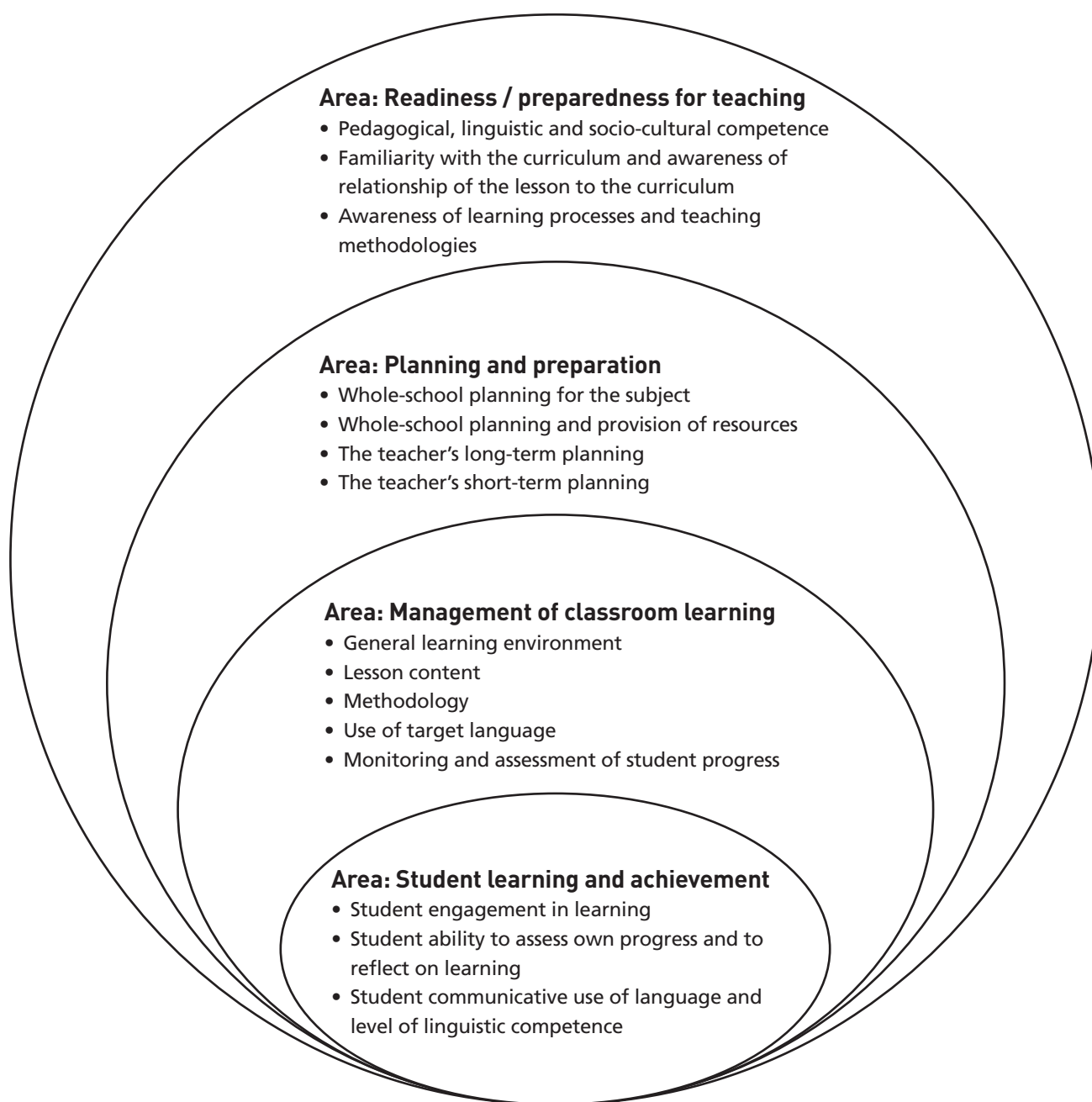
The EFLUSL project was primarily concerned with the development of a framework for use in external evaluation. In each of the participating countries, there was a growing realisation that internal self-review and external evaluation can complement each other in promoting quality assurance in schools. The EFLUSL project participants agreed therefore on the principle that the external evaluation framework should complement school self-review and recognised the contribution the project could make to the development of quality indicators which could be used in schools for school self-review and internal evaluation. For this reason, the EFLUSL framework includes indicators for school-level planning for language provision, as well as including indicators for individual teacher planning and review of language teaching and learning.

A cornerstone of the EFLUSL project was respect for diversity in curricula, methodologies, schools and educational systems. The participating schools in the EFLUSL project were drawn from seven different countries. In developing the evaluation instruments, the project drew on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and on best practice in the participating countries. The CEFR provides a basis for European consensus on standards of quality and transparency in the area of language teaching, learning and assessment. For this reason, the CEFR formed an essential theoretical backdrop to the work of the project, both in relation to levels of linguistic competence and its use of "can-do" type descriptors and illustrations.

The EFLUSL Quality Indicators

The evaluation framework provides indicators under four areas. As illustrated in the diagram, these areas are closely inter-related and have at their centre the student and the development of his/her linguistic, communicative and socio-cultural competence.

The EFLUSL Quality Indicators



Areas, indicators and illustrations

Within each of the four areas in the evaluation framework, a number of indicators have been identified. For each indicator, illustrations of relevant features of practice have been delineated at two levels so as to aid the evaluator in evaluating the quality of teaching and learning in the school.

The **area** is indicated by the shaded band at the top of the page.

An **illustration of practice** in relation to the indicator is provided in bold print at two levels – “optimum practice” (Level 4) or “scope for development” (Level 2) – see next page.

Area: Planning and preparation

Indicator	Illustrations of practice
The teacher's long-term planning	<p>Level 4: Optimum practice The teacher's long-term planning is informed by the relevant curriculum. It demonstrates a level of reflection on the aims and objectives for teaching and learning.</p> <p><i>The long-term plan identifies desired learning outcomes for the students in each class group, reflecting their differentiated needs and abilities, their interests and learning styles. Long-term planning also takes into account the substantial informal learning outside the classroom.</i></p>
	<p>Level 2: Scope for development Some cognisance is taken of the curriculum and of the varied learning needs and interests of students. Most of the time however, the syllabus is not a living document with the students and the long-term plan is often equivalent to the plan of the textbook.</p> <p><i>Because the school curriculum is based on a certain course book, teachers may not feel that they need to do specific planning in terms of aims and student needs, since this has already been done for them by the head teacher and textbook authors. Long-term planning focuses primarily on the delivery of the programme and takes little account of the learning capacities and styles of the students.</i></p>

Indicators are listed on the left.

Further examples, in *italic* print are used to expand the illustration. These examples may or may not be observed during the evaluation but they provide some additional prompts for the evaluator.

Evaluation Ratings: four levels of performance

During the evaluations, evaluators assign ratings at one of four levels to each area within the framework. These levels are:

- Level 4: Optimum practice
- Level 3: Competent practice
- Level 2: Scope for development
- Level 1: Requiring urgent attention

These ratings can be used to assist evaluators when making judgements about the overall quality of each aspect of the teaching and learning of the target language in the school.

In making judgements and drawing conclusions in relation to each of the indicators, the evaluator should assign a rating consistent with the practice observed and consistent with the illustration of the particular level of performance. This will assist in identifying key areas of strength and areas for further development within the school.

The ratings could also be used to assist national agencies in compiling data on the general areas of strength and areas for further development that are common throughout schools in an education system. For example, in compiling a composite national report on language teaching, it would be possible to state the proportion of schools that show 'optimum practice' in the management of classroom learning or identify the areas that need to be addressed in teacher education programmes.

It is important to note that the areas and indicators have not been assigned a particular weighting or importance relative to each other. This means that it is not possible or valid to combine the ratings from each area for a particular school or so as to produce a single aggregated 'score' for the school. It is not possible, therefore, to use the ratings to produce a 'league table' of schools or individual teachers.

Conducting the in-school evaluation

Purpose of the evaluations in schools and classrooms

The evaluation framework is designed primarily to enhance classroom observations and evaluation visits to schools by external evaluators.

Overview of evaluation activities

In conducting the in-school evaluation a range of evaluation activities is used to ensure the collection of a comprehensive evidence base. The activities include:

Evaluation activities at whole-school level

- Structured interview with the school principal and, where relevant, the head of the subject department
- Review of planning documentation for foreign languages and/or for the target language that is being evaluated

Evaluation activities at classroom/lesson level

- Structured interviews with the individual language teachers

- Review of each teacher's long-term and short-term planning documentation
- Review of assessment records and records of students' progress
- Observation of teaching and learning in language lessons
- Observation of student-student interaction
- Interaction with students in the target language
- Examination and review of students' work
- Administering the student questionnaire

Record of evidence booklets

Two record of evidence booklets are provided to support the evaluation activities at whole-school level and at classroom/lesson level:

- *Record of Evidence Booklet 1: Structured Interview with Principal/Head of Department* - one booklet per school
- *Record of Evidence Booklet 2: Structured Interview with Teacher and Lesson Observations* - one booklet per teacher

These booklets are designed to assist evaluators in making accurate observations and in recording evidence in a reliable and convenient manner. They are based on the evaluation framework and so assist the evaluator in making consistent, reliable and objective judgements about the quality of teaching and learning in the school. The findings in the evaluation report should be consistent with the evidence and findings recorded in these booklets.

Record of Evidence Booklet 1: Structured Interview with Principal/Head of Department

The EFLUSL Quality Indicators recognise that the whole-school context plays a significant role in ensuring effective language learning and teaching. Evidence concerning whole-school planning, and specifically how it impacts on planning for foreign language learning, is sought in a structured interview with the principal and with the head of the subject department, where relevant. The planning documentation for foreign language learning and/or the target language should also be reviewed, ideally some time before the visit to the school.

Record of Evidence Booklet 1 provides a structured interview schedule and space on which to record the evidence collected during the interview and when reviewing the documentation. This booklet also provides space where the evaluator can draw conclusions in the form of summary statements and an overall rating of the quality of whole-school planning.

Record of Evidence Booklet 2: Structured Interview with Teacher and Lesson Observations

This booklet is designed to support the evaluator in undertaking the aspects of the evaluation that are concerned with preparing for and implementing the teaching and learning activities in the classroom. One booklet should be completed for each teacher observed. The booklet provides for the observation of two lessons with the same class group. Prior to visiting classrooms and observing lessons the evaluator should also meet with the teacher.

A structured interview schedule is included in *Record of Evidence Booklet 2* to support this activity. Some parts of the interview should be conducted in the target language. The interview and lesson observation should provide an opportunity to gather evidence concerning:

- the teacher's readiness for teaching, including his/her competence in the target language, his/her ongoing contact with the target language community, his/her experience of teaching the target language, and his/her continuing professional development

- the teacher's planning and preparation
- general information on the class group, including information on the students' general ability levels, the type of curriculum and course that they are following and the extent to which the subject is optional or mandatory
- contextual details regarding the lesson that will be observed, including information on where the lesson comes in the teacher's plan of work
- the teacher's management of classroom learning
- students' learning and achievement.

Record of Evidence Booklet 2 also provides space where the evaluator can draw conclusions in the form of summary statements and overall ratings for the four areas of the framework, except the two indicators relating to whole-school planning, which are recorded in *Record of Evidence Booklet 1*.

Evaluation activities in the classroom

Observing learning and teaching

The most important evidence for the evaluation is collected during the period of observation in the classroom. The greater part of this period should be spent in observing the teacher and students engaged in teaching and learning activities. It is desirable that the evaluator observes the main elements of a complete lesson, including the opening or introduction, development, and consolidation of lesson objectives.

Interacting with students

The evaluator should also interact with the students: this interaction is a useful means for the evaluator to augment and complete the evidence base in relation to student learning. Evaluators may interact with students at the end of the teaching period or at an appropriate occasion in the course of the lesson. This interaction should be based on the lesson content, following on naturally from the teacher's work just observed, and broadening the discussion to test further the linguistic, communicative and socio-cultural competence of the students within the parameters of the curriculum. In engaging with the students, the evaluator may use a variety of questioning strategies to elicit information and to affirm students in their learning. The Student Questionnaire (to be administered by the class teacher) should also provide relevant information and evidence of student learning and achievement.

Recording the evidence

Space is provided in *Record of Evidence Booklet 2* for the evaluator to make notes during the observation of lessons. Immediately following the period of observation, the evaluator should use his/her notes to complete the summary statements and assign overall ratings.

Recording and compiling the evaluation

The evaluator should assign an overall rating to each of the following areas using the four-point scale described above:

- In *Record of Evidence Booklet 1* the evaluator should record a rating for the area: Planning and preparation, in relation to the two whole-school indicators
- In *Record of Evidence Booklet 2* the evaluator should record a rating for the areas:
 - o Readiness/preparedness for teaching
 - o Planning and preparation, in relation to the two indicators for individual teacher planning

- o Management of classroom learning
 - o Student learning and achievement.
- At the conclusion of the evaluation activities in a school, the evaluator will have completed one *Record of Evidence Booklet 1* and, depending on the numbers of teachers observed, one or more than one *Record of Evidence Booklet 2*. There is an appendix to *Record of Evidence Booklet 1* where the ratings recorded in all the booklets used in the school are collated to assist the evaluator in making judgments about the overall quality of each aspect of the teaching and learning in the school.

Feedback to teachers

The aim of the feedback should be to enhance the motivation and overall capacity of the school community to achieve its goals and strive for further improvements. The evaluation should aim to be of considerable benefit for the school through engaging teachers in a process of structured discussion and review about the effectiveness of their teaching and the learning of foreign languages. By sharing the evaluation framework and its indicators with the teachers, evaluators may also enhance the capacity of the teachers and the school to engage in self-evaluation and review.

The evaluation report

The evaluator should prepare an evaluation report on the quality of teaching and learning in the target language in the school. The evaluation report should not make reference to individual teachers but rather draw on the evidence gathered from the observation of a number of lessons to identify findings and present conclusions relating to the learning and teaching in the relevant language in the school as a whole.

General principles for report writing

The report should:

- identify, acknowledge and affirm good practice in language teaching and learning in the school
- promote continuing improvement in the quality of language teaching offered by the school
- promote self-evaluation and continuous development by the school and the teachers
- provide an assurance of quality for the school and for the system as a whole, based on the collection of objective, dependable, high quality data.

In writing the evaluation report, evaluators should ensure that:

- all statements in the report are based on the evidence gathered – it is not necessary to present all available evidence in the report, but sufficient reference should be made to it so as to convince the reader of the accuracy of the judgements made in the report
- all findings are objective and sustainable
- the report indicates clearly the quality of the education that is being provided
- the evaluative statements in the report reflect the findings recorded in the record of evidence booklets
- the evaluation report affirms good practice and includes specific illustrations, where appropriate
- shortcomings are clearly identified as areas for further development
- the narrative in the evaluation report reflects the ratings assigned in the record of evidence booklets
- the written report is consistent with any verbal findings communicated to the teachers or school principal.

In summary, evaluators should:

- keep to the structure of the framework of indicators
- use the headings and sub-headings provided
- aim for a concise narrative style
- make clear evaluative statements
- briefly justify statements.

Content of the report

It is suggested that the report should have the following sections:

Introduction

- Size, location, type or orientation of the school; socio-economic context of students; range of student ability; number of teachers teaching languages and number of teachers visited
- A context note should cover any sensitive or unique circumstances which should be taken into account
- Evaluation activities: A short account of the evaluation activities conducted and the sources of evidence on which the report is based

Quality of readiness/preparedness for teaching

- Pedagogical, linguistic and socio-cultural competence
- Familiarity with the curriculum and awareness of the relationship of the lesson to the curriculum
- Awareness of the learning processes and teaching methodologies

Quality of planning and preparation

- Whole-school planning for the subject
- Whole-school planning and provision of resources
- The teachers' long-term planning
- The teachers' short-term planning

Quality of management of classroom learning

- General learning environment
- Lesson content
- Methodology
- Use of target language
- Monitoring and assessment of student progress

Quality of student learning and achievement

- Student engagement in learning
- Student ability to assess own progress and to reflect on learning
- Student communicative use of language and level of linguistic competence

Summary of strengths and areas for development

European Network of Policy-Makers for the Evaluation of Educational Systems

Evaluation of Foreign Languages at Upper Secondary Level (EFLUSL)

RECORD OF EVIDENCE BOOKLET 1

Structured Interview with Principal/Head of Department

School name		School number
Address		
Telephone	Fax	E-mail
Name of principal		
Name of head of department		
Date of evaluation visit(s)	Name of evaluator	
Target language L2 / L3 (delete as appropriate)	School type (tick one) <input type="checkbox"/> Academically orientated/Lycée/Gymnasium/Secondary <input type="checkbox"/> Vocationally-orientated <input type="checkbox"/> Comprehensive / Community school <input type="checkbox"/> Other – please specify	



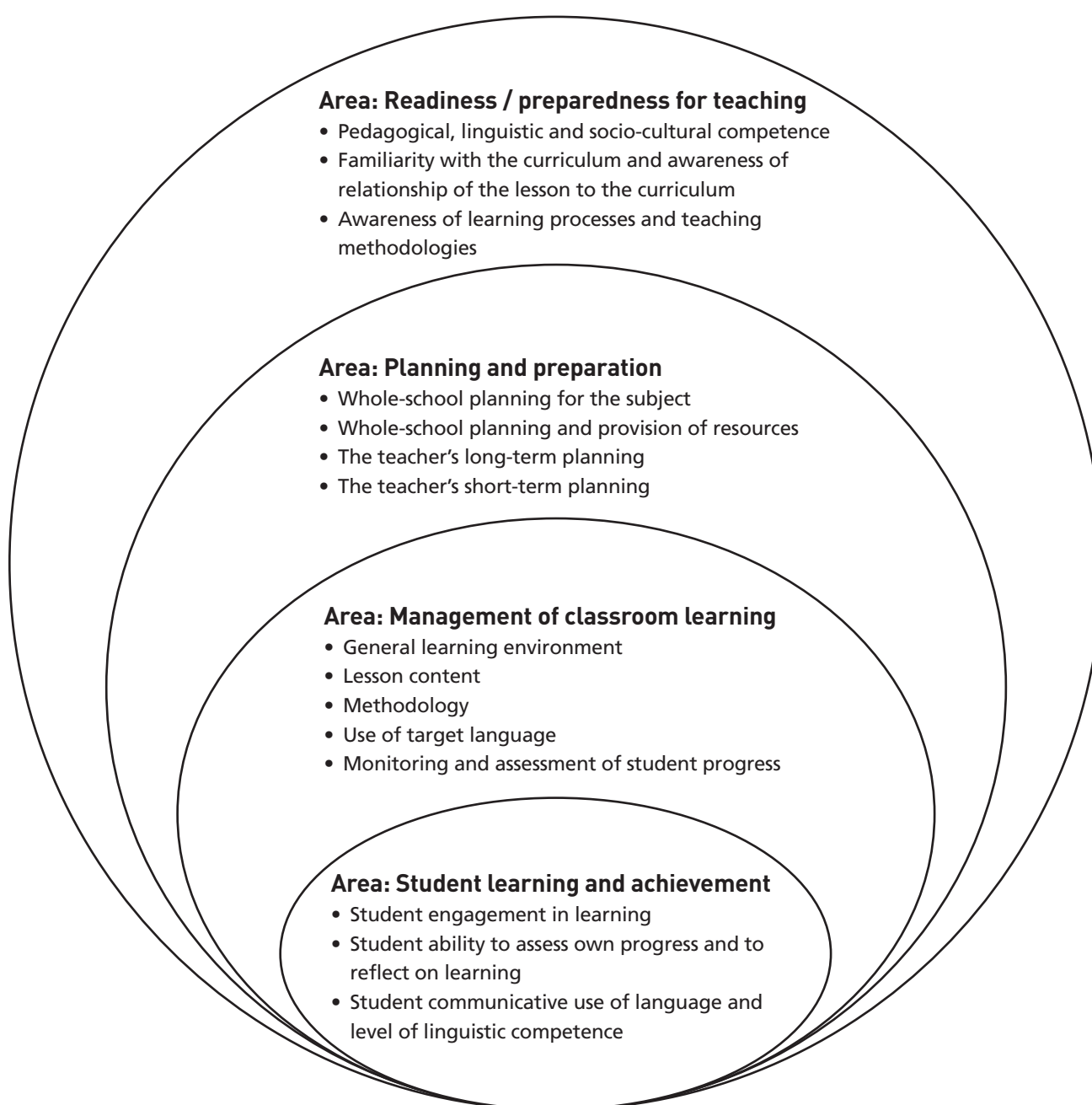
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EFLUSL Quality Indicators



Introduction

Purpose of this booklet

This booklet forms part of a suite of evaluation instruments developed as part of the Evaluation of Foreign Languages at Upper Secondary Level (EFLUSL) project. Detailed advice on the use of this document will be found in the *Guidelines for Evaluators*. Evaluators should be thoroughly familiar with the contents of the guidelines prior to using this booklet.

Record of Evidence Booklet 1 is designed to assist evaluation of whole-school issues. In particular, it focuses on the whole-school indicators in the area Planning and preparation (i.e. whole-school planning for the subject and whole-school planning and provision of resources). A complementary booklet, *Record of Evidence Booklet 2*, is used to conduct structured interviews with individual language teachers and to assist with the classroom-based observation of lessons that supports the evaluation of the remaining indicators and areas.

Record of Evidence Booklet 1 will assist the evaluator in:

- conducting a structured interview with the principal (and, where relevant, with the head of the subject department) in the school
- recording observations on whole-school planning documentation
- determining and recording his/her evaluation of the whole-school aspects
- collating the ratings for all four areas (Appendix)

The EFLUSL Quality Indicators

The evaluation framework provides indicators under four areas. As illustrated in the diagram, these areas are closely inter-related and have at their centre the student and the development of his/her linguistic, communicative and socio-cultural competence.

Areas, indicators and illustrations

Within each of the four areas, a number of indicators have been identified. For each indicator, illustrations of practice have been provided at two levels to aid the evaluator in assessing the quality of teaching and learning in the school.

A whole-school evaluation

The EFLUSL suite of instruments is intended to improve the evaluation of the teaching of foreign languages in the school as a whole. It is not concerned with the evaluation of individual teacher performance. The evidence, evaluations and ratings recorded in the booklet will inform the writing of the evaluator's report on the overall quality of teaching and learning of the target language in the school.

Structured interview with principal (and, where relevant, with head of subject department)

Whole-school planning

1.1 Does the school engage in school development planning?

For example: Has the school developed a school plan, a mission statement, or a statement of its overall aims and objectives?

1.2 What are the arrangements for collaborative planning for foreign languages?

For example: Are formal subject department meetings held? How often? How are the outcomes of planning recorded? Has a member of staff responsibility for co-ordination of planning? Is team teaching encouraged?

1.3 Is there an agreed whole-school plan for foreign languages or a whole-school plan for the target language under study?

If yes, what arrangements are in place for monitoring and reviewing the plan? If no, is such a plan under development? To what stage has this development progressed?

1.4 Does the school have a policy regarding student access to language subjects?

For example: Are foreign languages mandatory or optional? Is the number of languages available limited in any way? If languages are optional, how are these options arranged in relation to other subjects? Are language subjects available to students with special learning needs?

1.5 Does the whole-school plan for foreign languages (or the whole-school plan for the target language under study) draw on the regular analysis of student learning outcomes, including examination results?

For example: How does school management facilitate or encourage teachers to examine assessment outcomes regularly and adjust the plan accordingly? Is the use of the European Language Portfolio encouraged?

1.6 What activities/initiatives (other than classroom learning) are provided by the school to support foreign language learning?

For example: involvement in initiatives or projects to support language learning, student exchanges (virtual or real), study visits abroad, extracurricular activities, international language certificates or bilingual diplomas.

Whole-school provision of resources

1.7 What range of resources is available to support the teaching of foreign languages (or the teaching of the target language under study)?

For example: printed resources, teaching materials, audio-visual equipment, information and communication technologies (ICT), designated classrooms, etc.

1.8 Is there a plan for the renewal of teaching resources or the acquisition of additional resources?

For example: Is there an annual budget for the renewal/acquisition of resources? Is the budget adequate? How are spending priorities determined?

1.9 What arrangements are in place to facilitate access to, use of, and sharing of resources?

For example: By teachers? By students?

1.10 How are the continuing professional development needs of teachers determined and provided for?

For example: Does the school plan provide for the continuing professional development needs of teachers? How are needs identified? What methods are used to support the continuing professional development of teachers?

NOTES

Review of planning documentation

The school plan for the target language (and/or school planning for foreign languages)

Review the available school planning documentation, including the plan for foreign languages and/or the plan for the target language under study. Record your observations below.

Reminder: At an optimum level, the school plan for the target language should:

- reflect the mission statement of the school
- identify clear aims and objectives for learning and teaching
- list targets for each year
- promote a range of teaching and learning approaches
- outline how student learning is assessed and how assessment outcomes are communicated to students and parents
- provide for regular monitoring, review and evaluation of the subject plan
- ensure that assessment outcomes are examined in reviews of the school plan
- provide for continuing professional development needs for teachers and the acquisition of resources
- ensure that students, including those with special learning needs, are offered a choice of languages and, where appropriate, the possibility of studying more than one language.

NOTES

Summary statements and rating

Use this page to draw conclusions in the form of summary statements and an overall rating. The rating should be copied to the row “whole-school planning” in the Appendix.

Area: Planning and preparation (whole-school indicators)

The evaluation under these indicators should be based on the evidence that was collected:

- during the structured interview with the principal (and, if appropriate, the head of the subject department)
- from the review of whole-school planning documentation.

Rating

Whole-school planning for the subject

Whole-school planning and provision of resources

Appendix: Summary of ratings for the school

At the conclusion of the evaluation activities in a school, the evaluator will have completed one *Record of Evidence Booklet 1* and—depending on the numbers of teachers and lessons observed—one or more than one *Record of Evidence Booklet 2*. This table should be used to collate the ratings for each area of the evaluation framework for teaching and learning in the school. The rating for the whole-school planning and preparation indicators will be found on page 7 of this *Record of Evidence Booklet 1*. All other ratings will be found in *Record of Evidence Booklet 2*.

This table will be a useful reference point in coming to an overall evaluation concerning teaching and learning in the school. However, this overall evaluation should be based on the broad range of evidence recorded in all of the booklets and not simply on the numerical ratings recorded in the table.

Planning & preparation		Lesson 1 Lesson 2	Lesson 3 Lesson 4	Lesson 5 Lesson 6
Whole-school planning				
Teacher planning				

Readiness/preparedness for teaching	Lesson 1 Lesson 2	Lesson 3 Lesson 4	Lesson 5 Lesson 6

Management of classroom learning	Lesson 1 Lesson 2	Lesson 3 Lesson 4	Lesson 5 Lesson 6

Student learning and achievement	Lesson 1 Lesson 2	Lesson 3 Lesson 4	Lesson 5 Lesson 6

European Network of Policy-Makers for the Evaluation of Educational Systems

Evaluation of Foreign Languages at Upper Secondary Level (EFLUSL)

RECORD OF EVIDENCE BOOKLET 2

Structured Interview with Teacher and Lesson Observations

School name	School number
Name of teacher	Name of evaluator
<p>Date & time of evaluation visits</p> <p>Lesson 1 -</p> <p>Lesson 2 -</p>	



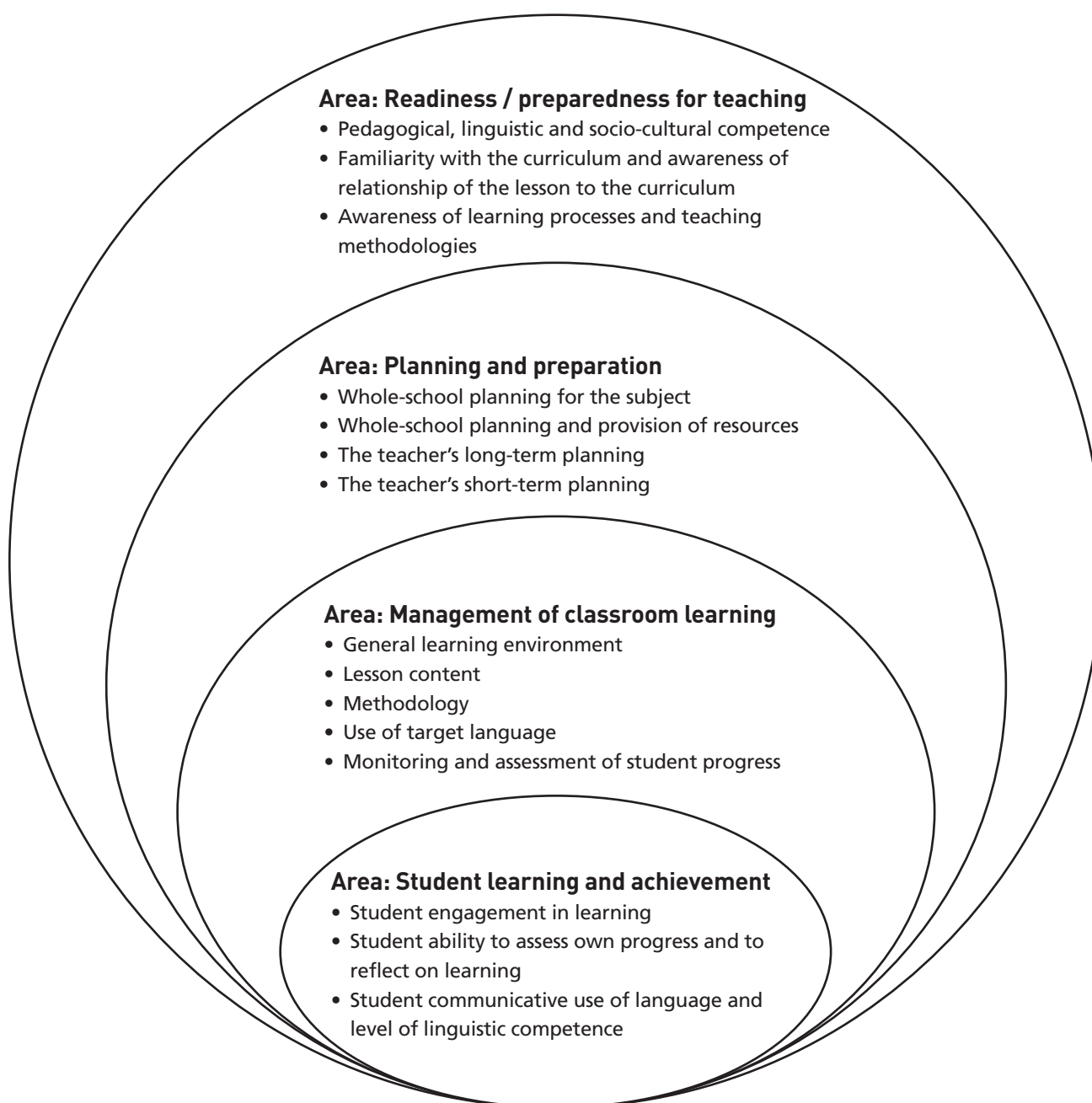
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EFLUSL Quality Indicators



Introduction

Purpose of this booklet

This booklet forms part of a suite of evaluation instruments developed as part of the Evaluation of Foreign Languages at Upper Secondary Level (EFLUSL) project. Detailed advice on the use of this document will be found in the *Guidelines for Evaluators*. Evaluators should be thoroughly familiar with the contents of the guidelines prior to using this booklet.

Record of Evidence Booklet 2 is designed to be used in the evaluation of all language lessons observed for an individual teacher with a specific class group. It is also to be used for gathering evidence when interviewing the individual teacher. One booklet should be used for each teacher observed.

Record of Evidence Booklet 2 will assist the evaluator in:

- conducting a structured interview with the teacher prior to the lessons
- recording observations on the teacher's planning documentation
- gathering background information on the lessons to be observed
- structuring his/her observation of the teaching and learning activities during the lessons
- determining and recording his/her evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning
- giving feedback to the teacher.

The EFLUSL Quality Indicators

The evaluation framework provides indicators under four areas. As illustrated in the diagram, these areas are closely inter-related and have at their centre the student and the development of his/her linguistic, communicative and socio-cultural competence.

Areas, indicators and illustrations

Within each of the four areas, a number of indicators have been identified. For each indicator, illustrations of practice have been delineated at two levels to aid the evaluator in evaluating the quality of teaching and learning in the school.

A whole-school evaluation

The EFLUSL suite of instruments is intended to improve the evaluation of the teaching of foreign languages in the school as a whole. It is not concerned with the evaluation of individual teacher performance. The evidence, evaluations and ratings recorded in the booklet will inform the writing of the evaluator's report on the overall quality of teaching and learning of the target language in the school.

Structured interview with teacher

Readiness/preparedness for teaching

1.1 Tell me about your experience in learning and teaching the target language.

For example: Where did you learn the target language? Details of courses undertaken, qualifications, additional study undertaken, time spent in country of the target language.

What opportunities do you have to keep in contact with the target language and culture? For example, reading, correspondence with friends, radio, television, ICT, visits to country of the target language, etc.

How long have you been teaching the target language? Years of teaching experience, levels/ages of students taught, etc.

1.2 What opportunities do you have for continuing professional development?

For example: What courses have you completed recently? What courses do you intend taking in the near future? How does the school plan support continuing professional development?

Long-term planning and short-term planning

1.3 How do the arrangements for whole-school planning for the subject support you in your planning and preparation?

For example: Do formal subject department meetings help? How do your long-term planning and short-term planning relate to the whole-school plan for the foreign languages or the whole-school plan for the target language?

1.4 Tell me about your long-term plan of work.

For example: How often is the long-term plan formulated? How is it recorded? What is the main basis of the long-term plan? Do you have access to assessment information on students when formulating your long-term plan? How do you monitor and record progress on the implementation of your long-term plan?

1.5 Tell me about your short-term plan of work.

For example: How often is the short-term plan formulated? How is it recorded? What forms the main content of the short-term plan? What level of detail do you include? How specific is the plan? How do you cater for varying needs of students? To what extent do you review information on the progress of students when drawing up the plan? How do you monitor and record progress on the implementation of your short-term plan?

1.6 What teaching resources are available to you to support your teaching of the target language?

For example: printed resources, teaching materials, audio-visual equipment, information and communication technologies (ICT), designated classroom, etc. What resources do you use most often?

Review of planning documentation

The teacher's long-term plan

Review the available teacher planning documentation. Record your observations.

Reminder: At an optimum level, the teacher's long-term planning should:

- *reflect the whole-school plan for the target language or whole school plan for foreign languages (if available)*
- *identify clear aims and objectives for learning and teaching*
- *be informed by the relevant curriculum*
- *provide for the varied learning needs and interests of students*
- *provide for the integration of language skills*
- *indicate the range of teaching strategies in use*
- *provide for the regular assessment of all language skills.*

The teacher's short-term plan

Review the available short-term planning documentation (for example the plan for the lesson or the theme/unit of work under study). Record your observations below.

Reminder: At an optimum level, the teacher's short-term planning should:

- *identify clear learning objectives*
- *provide for the varied learning needs and interests of students, including differentiated learning tasks*
- *be informed by previous work and student assessment*
- *show that lessons are planned to include the use of appropriate resources.*

Background information on the lessons to be observed

Is the class group <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed ability? <input type="checkbox"/> Streamed?		How is access to the class group determined?
Target language: L2 / L3 (delete as appropriate)		
How long have the students been studying the language? No. of years: No. of hours per week:		For these students, is the subject <input type="checkbox"/> Optional? <input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory?
Time per week for the subject Number of lessons: Total time for the subject per week:	Type of curriculum/course being followed (tick one) <input type="checkbox"/> Academically-oriented course leading to matriculation and entry to a university course <input type="checkbox"/> Vocationally-oriented <input type="checkbox"/> Other – please specify	

1.7 Tell me about the general ability level of the students in the class group.

For example: What is your estimate of the general ability level of the students in the class group?

1.8 How do you cater for the varying learning needs of students?

For example: How do you adjust learning activities or materials? How do you cater for students with special educational needs?

1.9 Tell me about the background to this lesson/these lessons.

For example: What learning activities have preceded this lesson/these lessons? What progress has been achieved by the class group to date? What will be the focus of the lessons to be observed?

Lesson observations

These pages may be used to record a chronological description of the teaching and learning activities that are observed in the classroom.

Class group

Number of students

Age range of students

Male Female Total

(years)

Observation of lesson 1

Observation of lesson 2

Review of student progress/assessment records

Review any available records of work completed with the class and assessment information compiled by the teacher. Review students' copies. Record your observations below:

Summary statements and overall ratings

Use the following three pages to draw conclusions in the form of summary statements and ratings. The ratings should also be copied to the Appendix in Record of Evidence Booklet 1.

Area: Readiness / preparedness for teaching

The evaluation under these indicators should be based on evidence collected:

- during the structured interview with the teacher
- during classroom observations when readiness/preparedness for teaching may be evaluated.

Rating

Pedagogical, linguistic and socio-cultural competence

Familiarity with the curriculum and awareness of the relationship of the lesson to the curriculum

Awareness of learning processes and teaching methodologies

Area: Planning and preparation (individual teacher planning indicators)

The evaluation under these indicators should be based on evidence collected:

- during the structured interview with the teacher
- from the review of teacher planning documentation
- during classroom observations when the effectiveness of implementation may be evaluated.

Rating

The teacher's long-term planning

The teacher's short-term planning

Area: Management of classroom learning

The evaluation under these indicators should be based on evidence collected during classroom observations.

Rating

General learning environment

Lesson content

Methodology

Use of target language

Monitoring and assessment of student progress

Reflection on the lessons

Teacher reflection on lessons

Area: Student learning and achievement

The evaluation under these indicators should be based on:

- evidence collected during classroom observations
- interaction/interview with students
- examination of students' work
- examination of student records.

Rating

Student engagement in learning

Student ability to assess own progress and to reflect on learning

Student communicative use of language and level of linguistic competence

Feedback to the teacher

Overall impression of evaluator: Strengths/areas for improvement

Teacher response to feedback

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EFLUSL STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

This statement about me is true: (Mark the box that best matches you)	Yes definitely true	Yes fairly true	Not really true	Definitely not true
I am enthusiastic about learning this language				
I am interested in the culture of the country where they speak this language				
I am interested in finding out all I can about the country				
I enjoy listening to people speaking the language				
I listen to music in the target language				
I watch TV or films in the language whenever I get the chance				
I take every chance I get to use the language				
I read for myself in this language (newspapers, magazines, or books etc)				
I use the internet, email, or other technology to improve my language				
I take part in out-of-class activities in the language				
I am happy with the progress I am making in learning the language				
I know what I need to improve on in the language				
I set learning targets for myself in the language				
I think about ways of learning more effectively				
I have developed some strategies of my own to help me learn and use the language				
I am aware of differences in ways of behaving in the country where they speak the language				
I am worried about making mistakes in the language				
I chose this language because I wanted to				
I feel this language is important for my future career				
I feel it is important for Europeans to learn languages				



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Evaluation of Foreign Languages at Upper Secondary Level (EFLUSL)

QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN [TARGET LANGUAGE]

School name		
School address		
School number		
Target language		L2/L3
Dates of evaluation		
Evaluator(s)		
Number of lessons	Number of teachers	



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INTRODUCTION

Size, location, type or orientation of the school; socio-economic context of students; student range of ability; number of teachers teaching languages and number of teachers visited.

A context note should cover any sensitive or unique circumstances which should be taken into account.

Evaluation activities and sources of evidence on which the report is based

QUALITY OF READINESS/PREPAREDNESS FOR TEACHING

Pedagogical, linguistic and socio-cultural competence

Familiarity with the curriculum and awareness of the relationship of the lesson to the curriculum

Awareness of the learning processes and teaching methodologies

QUALITY OF PLANNING AND PREPARATION

Whole-school planning for the subject

Whole-school planning and provision of resources

The teachers' long-term planning

The teachers' short-term planning

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT OF CLASSROOM LEARNING

General learning environment

Lesson content

Methodology

Use of the target language

Monitoring and assessment of student progress

QUALITY OF STUDENT LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT

Student engagement in learning

Student ability to assess own progress and to reflect on learning

Student communicative use of language and level of linguistic competence

SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Evaluating Languages

Evaluating Languages is an account of a unique international evaluation project, carried out under the auspices of the European Network of Policy Makers for the Evaluation of Educational Systems, and led by the Inspectorate of the Irish Department of Education and Science. The EFLUSL project developed a framework of quality indicators for the evaluation of the teaching and learning of foreign languages at upper secondary level. The quality framework was pilot tested in thirty-seven schools throughout Europe. Seven countries participated in the project: Belgium (Flemish Community), France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland.

The EFLUSL framework is presented here for use by national systems, individual inspectors and evaluators, and by schools engaged in self-evaluation. It comes with a user-friendly suite of instruments on CD ROM that will allow it to be used flexibly in different national contexts. This report also contains a full account of the project and case studies of good practice encountered during the testing of the instruments.

P R O M O T I N G T H E Q U A L I T Y O F L E A R N I N G



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