

A QUALITY MATRIX FOR CEFR USE: Examples of promising practices

1 OVERVIEW

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Country: Finland

Institution: National Agency for Education (EDUFI)

Type of context: National (core curriculum driven)

Educational sector: Upper Secondary

Main focus of your project: Learning/Self-Assessment
Assessment of speaking skills

SUMMARY

Name: Alternative assessment of speaking at secondary level – LUKAS project

Abstract: LUKAS – digital assessment of speaking in Upper Secondary School
Models for producing a speaking assessment system, environment, for upper secondary students to ultimately certify their speaking skills in different languages studies

Stage: Planning; Evaluation

Theme: Curriculum; Assessment

CEFR aspects used: Levels, descriptors, assessment with defined criteria

Main features of this example:

- A1-C2 proficiency scale
- Finnish 2014-2015 core curriculum driven implementation of level descriptions

Quality principles demonstrated: Coherence, Inclusiveness



2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background:

We have a national speaking test (upper secondary school), which is outdated. We have new core curricula (as of 2015) that introduce a more broad-based view of language / the construct of speaking that is not met by our present speaking test.

Stated aims:

To combine formative and summative testing

The goal is to produce a national, digital environment that would act as a portfolio for students to gather evidence and feedback on their speaking skills throughout their three years of language learning in the Upper Secondary School. This would replace the national testing procedure presently applied.

Ideas have been presented to do this via uploading videos, and institute a system to provide feedback forms. Three types of feedback form are envisaged: (a) peer assessment, (b) school's language teacher/teachers, (c) other raters. The system would allow for different kinds of rater roles (peer, teacher, examiner) that would strengthen the reliability of the mark given.

Steps/stages:

- discussions with teachers / researchers (autumn 2016; various occasions)
- a vision
- a draft of the intended system and project (completed Dec 2016)

Timeline:

The work started in the autumn of 2016, but has been 'put on ice' at the moment due to other decisions to be made concerning the upper secondary school level in Finland.

People/roles:

The development involves administrators, teachers, researchers, students - all relevant parties with the aim to introduce a transparent and valid system that would benefit students, teachers as well as prospective employers.

- EDUFI working group, in charge of planning and execution
- Panel of researchers / teachers, an unofficial steering group
- Research assistant, compiling the report that introduces the vision

Publications that have been used or produced related to this example:

- <http://lukasuullinen.blogspot.fi/> in Finnish
- A report in Finnish (not published):
"Projektisuunnitelma - Suullisen kielitaidon arvioinnin kehittämishanke. Opetushallitus"

3 RESULTS

What was achieved:

- a concept/vision of a future system. Draft for a possible project.
- a draft for a self-assessment scale for speaking to be used as a mobile app.

Impact: (Potential)

- offer an alternative solution to problems on a national level related to language testing (especially assessment of speaking skills)
- integrate CEFR levels into national testing of language skills
- offer language skills certification that would serve:
 - pedagogical purposes
 - diagnostic and summative language testing
 - transparent reporting of language skills for job and study placement application purposes through the use of CEFR levels

4 ADVICE AND LESSONS LEARNT:

Do

- involve different stakeholders from the very beginning
- ask for practical contributions from different stakeholders
- keep people informed, to the point of annoyance
- trust your vision
- speak to others besides language learning experts (i.e. involve people outside the box)

Don't

- expect it will be easy
- make impossible time limits
- start anything unless you know you have the resources
- give up