

GENERAL PRESENTATION / QUESTIONS-ANSWERS

1. What are pluralistic approaches?

Pluralistic approaches to languages and cultures are defined as "didactic approaches which use teaching /learning activities involving several (i.e., more than one) varieties of languages or cultures" (<http://carap.ecml.at/>, « Pluralistic approaches »).

They encompass various approaches, also referred to as *Plurilingual teaching* (or in French '*Didactique du plurilinguisme*') and are directed both at learners who already have a diverse linguistic and cultural repertoire, aiming to accommodate and include them in a new environment, as well as at learners with repertoires that can be enriched.

Pluralistic approaches fall into **four main categories**: *awakening to languages, an integrated didactic approach, intercomprehension between related languages, and intercultural education.*

Bilingual education and CLIL approaches are part of pluralistic / plurilingual approaches when they facilitate contact between languages (for instance, through comparisons between the target language and the language of schooling). This also applies to interlinguistic mediation and intercultural mediation.¹

Pluralistic approaches to languages and cultures do **not replace** existing language teaching approaches: they can make them **more effective by establishing synergies**:

- between the teaching of various languages,
- between language teaching and competences acquired outside school.

These synergies are a crucial didactic consequence of the concept of plurilingual and pluricultural competence described in the CEFR:

"as an individual person's experience of language in its cultural contexts expands, from the language of the home to that of society at large and then to the languages of other peoples (whether learnt at school or college, or by direct experience), he or she does not keep these languages and cultures in strictly separated mental compartments, but rather builds up a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact." ²

¹ See p. 57 and following of Beacco, J.-C., Byram, M., Cavalli, M., Coste, D., Egli Cuenat, M., Goullier, F., Panthier, J. (2016). *Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe <https://www.coe.int/en/web/platform-plurilingual-intercultural-language-education/curricula-and-evaluation>.

² Council of Europe (2001). *Common European framework of references for languages* (p. 4). <https://rm.coe.int/1680459f97>.

Pluralistic approaches also **enrich** language education by reinforcing **the overall educational dimension** of language teaching and thereby promoting social inclusion.

To find out more about Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures, consult the website of the *Framework of reference for pluralistic approaches to languages and cultures* (<http://carap.ecml.at>).



2. What is the link between Pluralistic Approaches and Plurilingual and Intercultural Education?

In 2022 the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted a new Recommendation to member states on **The Importance of Plurilingual and Intercultural Education for Democratic Culture** (Recommendation CM/Rec (2022)1)³. The Recommendation defines plurilingual and intercultural education as follows:

“Plurilingual and intercultural education” is a holistic concept that has an impact on all areas of education policy and practice. Setting out to foster the development of integrated linguistic repertoires in which languages interrelate and interact, it takes explicit account of and seeks to bring into interaction with one another:

- i. *the languages and cultures that learners bring with them, including sign, minority and migrant languages and cultures;*
- ii. *the language/s of schooling, which vary in genre and terminology according to the different subjects taught and differ in significant ways from the language of informal everyday communication;*
- iii. *regional, minority and other languages and cultures that are part of the curriculum;*
- iv. *foreign languages (modern and classical);*
- v. *other languages and cultures that are not present in school and not part of the official curriculum.*

The learning of at least two languages in addition to the language/s of schooling is often considered an essential element of plurilingual and intercultural education. (appendix to the Recommendation, pages 13-14).

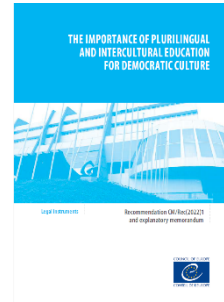
This definition echoes the description of the aims of plurilingual and intercultural education in a Council of Europe Guide⁴ published in 2016:

*Plurilingual and intercultural education has **two aims**.*

*First, it **facilitates the acquisition of linguistic and intercultural abilities**: this involves building upon and enriching the linguistic and cultural resources which make up individual repertoires, using the available means efficiently. ⁵ It covers the teaching of **all languages**, be they languages of schooling, foreign languages, regional or minority languages, or classical languages. [...]*

*Secondly, it promotes **personal development**, so that individuals can realise their full potential: this involves encouraging them to respect and accept diversity of languages and cultures in a multilingual and multicultural society and helping to make them aware of the extent of their own competences and development potential.”* (p.15 – our emphasis).

As is clear from these extracts, the pluralistic approaches outlined in the previous section can make a decisive and concrete contribution to various dimensions of **plurilingual and intercultural education**, especially the enrichment of learners’ linguistic and cultural repertoires.



³ <https://rm.coe.int/prems-013522-gbr-2508-cmrec-2022-1-et-expose-motifs-couv-a5-bat-web/1680a967b4ECML#:~:text=This%20recommendation%20aims%20to%20give.and%20participation%20in%20democratic%20culture.>

⁴ The *Guide to the Development and Implementation of Curricula for Plurilingual and Intercultural Education* by Beacco, J.-C., Byram, M., Cavalli, M., Coste, D., Egli Cuenat, M., Goullier, F., Panthier, J.

⁵ our translation of the text in French

3. What is the place of pluralistic approaches in education systems today? Why a project for the development of teacher education focusing on pluralistic approaches?

The recent Recommendation on *the Importance of Plurilingual and Intercultural Education* urges governments of Council of Europe member states to implement certain measures that are listed in its appendix. These include nine measures that relate specifically to initial and further teacher education. This sample provides a flavour:

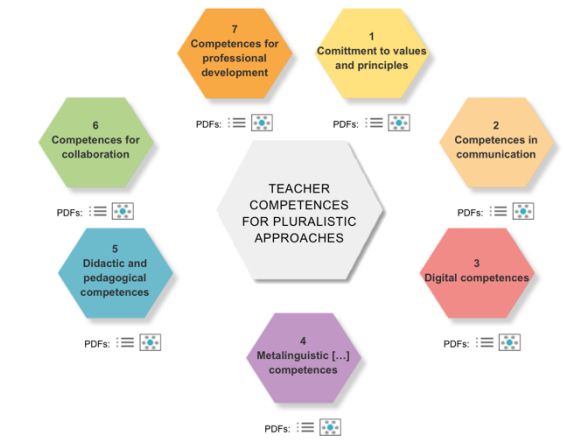
*“[...] The successful implementation of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture **depends crucially on teachers**, regardless of the subject/s they are teaching; they are the agents of change. It is thus essential that **teacher education helps them to develop the necessary professional competences**. Particular importance should be given to a focus on language and culture in all subjects and an exploration of those aspects of teaching and learning that **all teachers have in common**.”* (page 34 – our emphasis).

Pluralistic approaches are gradually making their way into the school curricula of an increasing number of European countries (details about the use of pluralistic approaches in various countries and languages are provided [here](#) on the FREPA website. Depending on the countries and sometimes even regions, the emphasis may be placed on different pluralistic approaches, and the same applies to teaching materials. For instance, ‘integrated language teaching’ is more prevalent in German-speaking countries or regions than in most Romance-speaking countries, where ‘awakening to languages’ is often more widespread. However, the diverse educational contexts in Europe share a common challenge regardless of the place occupied by pluralistic approaches in official curricula and the availability of teaching materials: teacher education in this field and in the broader field of plurilingual and intercultural education is insufficient or not provided. As a result, the pluralistic and other approaches required for plurilingual and intercultural education are generally applied only in a limited way in actual classroom practice. Some inspiring examples of relevant teaching materials can be found [here](#) on the FREPA website.

4. What types of teacher education tools are offered here?

There are two **types**:

- first, a **reference framework defining the competences** which are likely to facilitate the successful implementation of pluralistic approaches. (*Reference framework of teacher competences for pluralistic approaches - FTC-PA*);



- secondly, a set of **materials for teacher education** (sequences of teacher education tasks) which aim to help teachers and future teachers in all disciplines to develop these competences.

Teacher education materials

The materials proposed here are sequences of tasks organised around the development of one or more of the competences identified in the *Reference framework of teacher competence for pluralistic approaches* (FTC-PA). These sequences can be used as they stand in initial or continuing teacher education. They can also be adapted, by replacing certain tasks or materials with others that are more suitable for the specific context, or by changing the order in which they are proposed.

For each of them, the following is provided:

1. A handout for participants (students in initial teacher education, teachers in continuing education, etc.) containing the tasks to be carried out and the instructions.
2. A document for teacher educators, with:
 - o A scenario providing an overview of the tasks and their aims, as well as comments intended to facilitate use and/or adaptation.
 - o Where appropriate, particularly for units of a certain length, more detailed indications or theoretical elements to guide instructors in conducting the unit.
 - o Where appropriate, appendices containing examples of activities, questionnaires, etc.

The sequences vary in length. To help plan the use of materials, two categories are proposed: short sequences range from 45' to 3 hours maximum and longer ones can be spread over several teaching/education periods. A code indicates to which category each one belongs.

A number of them were developed by (inserts rlf)

5. How is the Reference framework of teacher competences for pluralistic approaches (FTC-PA) designed?

What is its overall design?

Just like the *Framework of reference for pluralistic approaches to languages and cultures* ([FREPA](#)), which describes the competences, knowledge, attitudes and skills that pluralistic approaches enable learners to develop and use, the proposed framework for teaching competences is **not normative**.

Its purpose is to provide **an organised description** of the range of teacher competences that facilitate the use of pluralistic approaches. It aims to highlight the various areas of competence and thereby enable users including teacher educators, teachers and educational authorities, designers of university teacher education programmes, language centres and any institution or association providing initial and in-service teacher training, to select objectives for teacher education based on their understanding of the relevant educational context.

In a given context, only certain descriptors will appear to be necessary, depending both on the specific use of pluralistic approaches envisaged, as well as on the teachers' existing competences. Also, priorities can be established in terms of progression. The large number of descriptors provided does not mean that teachers need to be systematically trained in all of them before starting to use pluralistic approaches in the classroom.

The descriptors provided in the FTC-PA clarify the teacher education objectives targeted in the other type of tool offered, namely the sequences of tasks to be used in teacher education.

This reference framework is based on an analysis of existing frameworks and recent literature concerning pluralistic approaches and teacher education. It also draws on the authors' experience as teacher educators. It is organised according to the seven dimensions established in the [general taxonomy](#) developed in an earlier ECML project, [A guide to teacher competences for languages in education](#).

It follows the order of this taxonomy, which emphasizes the importance given to "values and principles" (dimension 1). However, each user can decide on the order in which they wish to refer to the dimensions.

The framework proposed here focuses on aspects of these dimensions that are specifically **relevant to pluralistic approaches**.

See the overview of the [seven dimensions of the framework](#).



6. How is each of the dimensions of the reference framework of competences designed?



Dimension 1 – Commitment to values and principles for the use of pluralistic approaches

Dimension 1 focuses on the commitment to values and principles that underpin and encourage the engagement of teachers with pluralistic approaches.

As in the FREPA (<http://carap.ecml.at>, under the heading "[FREPA descriptors](#)"), the *Reference framework of teacher competences for pluralistic approaches* (FTC-PA) views competences as the mobilisation of *resources* in response to a given task, whether internal (categorized as knowledge, attitudes and skills), or external (such as tools or reference to a mediator).⁶

In such a model, commitment to a value or principle is not a competence, but an attitude. **Dimension 1, unlike the other dimensions which specify competences, comprises only attitudes.** These attitudes, together with other factors, underpin the competences described in the other dimensions of the FTC-PA. For example, an attitude such as 1-d (*Viewing the learner as both a beneficiary of and a resource for plurilingual and intercultural education*), which is found in dimension 1, underlies competence 5.1-h in dimension 5 (*Competence in organising teaching in a flexible way which acknowledges learners' linguistic and intercultural experiences*). This competence 5.1-h may also involve 1-j (*Believing in the benefits of teaching methods informed by pluralistic approaches.*) This same attitude 1-j is also involved in other competences in dimension 5, e.g. 5.2-e (*Competence in helping learners to make use of the similarities between languages in order to understand and learn them*). A detailed examination of all the competences listed in dimensions 2 to 7 would result in a description of a large number of attitudes. As mentioned earlier, those selected for dimension 1 have been chosen due to their fundamental importance in encouraging teachers' real commitment to the use of pluralistic approaches.

It's worth noting that the use of the term "commitment" is important. It is the commitment to a given value or principle that constitutes an attitude, not the value and principle itself.



[list of descriptors](#)



[diagramm](#)

⁶ See [glossary](#)



Dimension 2 – Competences in communication specific to pluralistic approaches

The teacher competences related to communication that have been brought together in dimension 2 focus on those aspects of plurilingual and intercultural competence that facilitate better communication in multilingual and multicultural situations by moving from one language to another, both linguistically and culturally. This can be achieved, for example, by alternating languages, by drawing on languages one knows better as a means of understanding those that are less familiar, and by drawing on one's entire previous cultural experience when involved in less familiar intercultural situations, etc. To develop proficiency in such competences, it is necessary to work simultaneously with several varieties of languages and cultures, i.e. to use pluralistic approaches as defined above.

To effectively assist learners in developing these competences, which is generally one of the aims of using pluralistic approaches, teachers must themselves master them. Moreover, mastery of these competences will strengthen teachers' ability to communicate in various other areas of their professional, social and personal lives.

The decision was made not to rigidly separate linguistic and cultural aspects by creating separate sub-dimensions for them. Instead, the relevant descriptors have been grouped together, linguistic first, then cultural.

Descriptor 2-h indicates that it is appropriate to include non-linguistic modalities in individuals' global communicative repertoires. However, given the focus of pluralistic approaches, it was decided not to address the specific domain of **multimodality**, regardless of the interesting nature of the work, particularly in didactics, which is currently being carried out in this area. Teachers (as well as learners) may well combine various languages and various media (slide shows, video clips, etc.); however, being able to manage these various media well should not be confused⁷ with the mastery and management of linguistic varieties, which are among the competences targeted by pluralistic approaches.

It should also be noted that, for the desired communication to be successful, activating the competences described in dimension 2 presupposes, that speakers also possess a more general competence. This competence, which is not specific to pluralistic approaches, allows them to consider the communicative competences of their interlocutors, their reactions and the general context of the interaction. Elements of this general competence are detailed in 2-a and 2-e.



[list of descriptors](#)



[diagramm](#)

⁷ The confusion is understandable as there are many parallels between an individual's management of the linguistic and cultural diversity within their repertoire (as expressed in dimension 2) and the way in which they are able to manage the diversity of semiotic modalities at their disposal. To do this, they must have competence to alternate these modalities while taking account of their specific characteristics, those of the message to be conveyed, and of the context (similar to competence 2-a) or have the competence to mediate between non-linguistic modalities (similar to competences 2-d and 2-g).



Dimension 3 – Digital competences related to pluralistic approaches

Technological developments offer potential for new forms of contact between languages and multilingual practice within the digital environment. These can enable educators to enrich their communicative and didactic repertoires. Digital competences allow them to engage in forms of communication in learning which are coherent with those of social space. The Council of Europe Recommendation discussed in section 2 above ⁸ stresses that *“the digital environment provides an unprecedented means for people to express themselves using different languages and opens new opportunities to enhance language learning and to support and promote languages not taught in the curriculum, all of which underpins the culture of democracy that enables democratic institutions to function properly.”* (page 9).

With this in mind, dimension 3 focuses on the development of competences relevant to pluralistic approaches in the digital domain for example, image and sound processing, online resources such as dictionaries and translators, communication tools, platforms and websites, including interactive ones, various applications, tools using artificial intelligence, etc. All of these can be used in teaching. These rapidly evolving technologies require competence in analysing technical innovations – along with new forms of multilingual and multimodal usage - which can help to enrich one’s didactic repertoire for pluralistic approaches and reinforce effective use of the multilingual and intercultural resources available.

Some of the descriptors in other dimensions, such as Dimension 5, which is dedicated to didactic and pedagogical competences, already incorporate elements relating to digital technologies and therefore partially overlap with those found in Dimension 3. However, given the significance of their potential in today’s world, it seemed necessary to maintain a separate dimension that focuses on teacher competences in using digital technologies in connection with pluralistic approaches.



[list of descriptors](#)



[diagramm](#)

⁸ Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)1 of the Committee of Ministers to the Member States on the importance of plurilingual and intercultural education for a culture of democracy - Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on February 2, 2022



Dimension 4 – Metalinguistic, metadiscourse and metacultural competences specific to pluralistic approaches

Among the various aspects of reflection related to the use of pluralistic approaches, dimension 4 focuses on the reflective management of linguistic and cultural diversity and the ways in which individuals connect to this diversity. More precisely, this dimension describes the competences which enable teachers to develop and adopt a reflective stance when identifying and analysing the challenges and potential of communication situations from the point of view of plurilingualism and interculturality.

The proposed descriptors include

- the teacher's competence in situating their didactic practice in relation to the sociolinguistic characteristics of their environment: competence in analysing situations of multilingualism, the status and uses of languages in their contexts (4-a)
- the teacher's competence in analysing the plurilingual communicative practices of individuals as they evolve, as well as in identifying, within these communicative practices, what pertains to the cultural background of those involved (4-b and 4-e)
- the competence - more broadly useful to the teacher - in analysing and comparing languages and linguistic varieties (4-c), as well as diverse cultural phenomena (4-d), including aspects that are composite and evolving
- the teachers' competence in analysing specialised discourse, particularly types of discourse common in the educational sphere due to linguistic and cultural blends of various kinds (4-f). Beyond the knowledge to be mobilised, which relates to descriptors c and d, the focus here is particularly on deciphering the role of the types of discourse which are specific to various school subjects.



[list of descriptors](#)



[diagramm](#)



Dimension 5 – Didactic and pedagogical competences for pluralistic approaches

Dimension 5 covers didactic and pedagogical competences that facilitate the use of pluralistic approaches. It describes the competences that are useful for valorising the diversity of languages/cultures among learners and for promoting the development of their repertoire.

The competences have been grouped together based on their relevance to the effective use of pluralistic approaches enabling learners to develop the competences proposed by FREPA (<https://carap.ecml.at/>) and to expand their plurilingual and intercultural repertoire.

The competences in this dimension span all aspects of a teacher's work, enabling them to implement pluralistic approaches within educational situations while taking the characteristics and resources of their teaching environment into account.

They are organized into four sub-dimensions:

- **Planning a teaching/learning process using pluralistic approaches** – This includes descriptors focusing on competence in defining objectives for plurilingual and intercultural education, analysing the linguistic and cultural diversity of learners in order to make pedagogical and didactic decisions and to organise teaching as a multilingual 'space' by offering learners plurilingual and intercultural learning experiences.
- **Managing a teaching/learning process using pluralistic approaches** - This sub-dimension includes descriptors related to competence in using pluralistic approaches, taking learners' linguistic and cultural repertoires as well as their learning experience into account, with the aim of motivating them towards new learning and fostering their overall development in a learning atmosphere that embraces linguistic and cultural diversity.
- **Evaluating and assessing learners' progress and achievements developed through the use of pluralistic approaches** – This involves descriptors focusing on competence in defining what aspects of the plurilingual and intercultural learning objectives targeted by pluralistic approaches it is appropriate to assess, competence in organising assessment methods which are aligned with the goals of these approaches, and competence in providing learners with feedback that promotes the development of plurilingual and intercultural competence.
- **Reflection on the implementation of pluralistic approaches** – This sub-dimension includes descriptors of competences in reflecting on the results of implementing pluralistic approaches, in critically analysing one's own didactic action, and in identifying areas of linguistic and methodological insecurity related to the use of pluralistic approaches. (see also *Dimension 7 – Competences for professional learning and development*).



[list of descriptors](#)



[diagramm](#)



Dimension 6 – Competences in collaborating with the whole educational community on the implementation of pluralistic approaches

Dimension 6 is justified by the need to establish collaboration among teachers and with the entire educational community in order to build a shared teaching culture that promotes education for diversity and the inclusion of languages and cultures no longer as separate objects, but as elements of a global, plurilingual and intercultural competence.

Teachers often feel isolated in their work and unable to make pedagogical and didactic choices that diverge from the common practices, which is necessary in education that aims to celebrate linguistic and cultural diversity. Teachers who are able to collaborate with others in the educational world or to be part of a supportive team in which responsibilities can be shared at various levels feel empowered. This enables them to overcome feelings of insecurity and to create plurilingual and intercultural development pathways tailored to the interests and needs of learners.

The descriptors within this dimension are organised by type of actors. For instance, there are descriptors dedicated to identifying and mobilising members of the educational community (6.1-a and 6.1-b) with whom to collaborate in setting up interdisciplinary and pluralistic curricula (6.1-c). Another group of descriptors focuses on collaborative work with fellow teachers for the development of joint initiatives in plurilingual and intercultural education (6.2-a) or for using shared terminology related to language/culture related teaching (6.2-e). The descriptors in this dimension also describe the competences needed to collaborate, for example, with those responsible for school administration, pedagogical guidance, inspections and teacher education. The goal is to collectively define strategies for a policy on plurilingual and intercultural educational (6.3-a). The last two groups of descriptors focus on work with families (6.4-a) and with learners in defining and carrying out their own projects for plurilingual and intercultural development (6.5-a).

The descriptors of collaborative competences relate to the entirety of the work that teachers need to undertake at various levels in order to implement pluralistic approaches. Thus, the professional development of teachers (Dimension 7), the commitment to values and principles relevant to the use of pluralistic approaches (Dimension 1), the development of competences in communication (Dimension 2), metalinguistic, metacommunicative and metacultural competences (Dimension 4), the use of digital technology (Dimension 3) and pedagogical-didactic competences specific to pluralistic approaches (Dimension 5) all require interaction with others in the educational community if collaborative learning spaces are to be created.



[list of descriptors](#)



[diagramm](#)



Dimension 7 – Competences for professional learning and development for pluralistic approaches

Dimension 7 focuses on professional learning, understood as the process and outcome of a willingness and capacity to develop as teachers and/or teacher educators through reflection, action and collaboration with other actors in the educational community, throughout one's career.

Considering the specific professional learning that the use of pluralistic approaches requires, the descriptors within this dimension are structured at two levels.

At the first level, the elements making up dimension 7 relate to the specific features of each of the dimensions 1 to 6.

Two examples:



Dimension 1

Compétence 7.1

Commitment to values and principles for using pluralistic approaches

Competence in developing one's own values and principles regarding linguistic and cultural diversity and plurilingual and intercultural education



Dimension 2

Compétence 7.2

Competences in communication specific to pluralistic approaches

Competence in developing the plurilingual and intercultural dimensions of one's communicative repertoire

However, these first-level competences cover very broad areas, which require refinement and greater specificity if they are to guide educational work.

What options for refinement exist?

A more detailed treatment could lead to very long and unmanageable lists of sub-competences. In order to avoid this pitfall, the framework proposes a limited number of examples of descriptors to which users can add their own to meet the priorities within their specific contexts by drawing on existing formulations.

In selecting these examples, the intention was to choose from among the vectors⁹ of professional development described in the existing literature those which may be of particular relevance for teacher education in the specific field of pluralistic approaches.

⁹ In the sense of elements that facilitate professional development, that lead to this development (from the Latin "vector", meaning one that leads, transports)

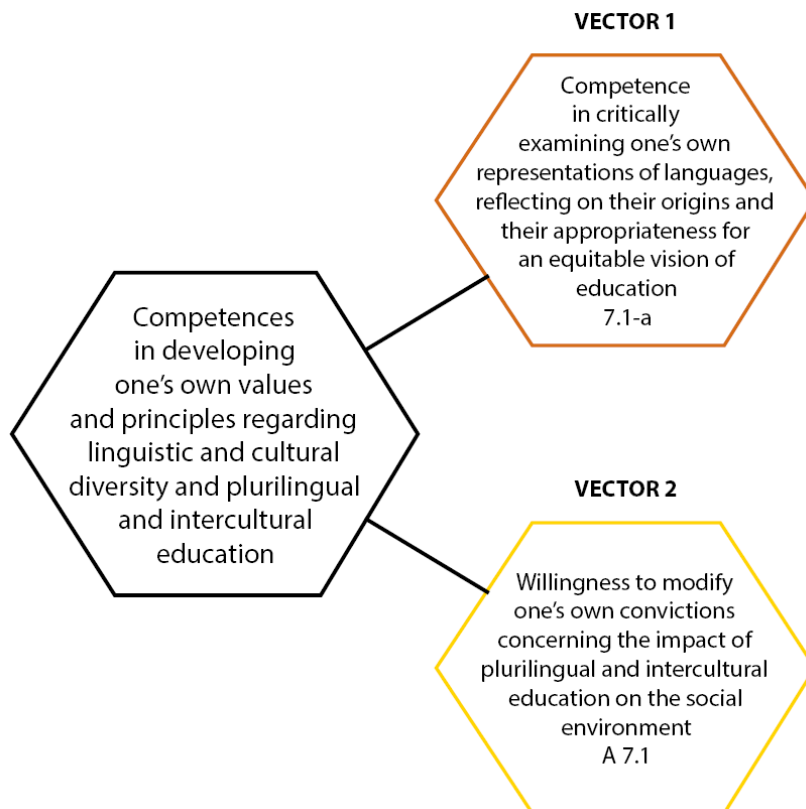
The following two vectors were selected:

- active use of a reflective approach (vector 1) ;
- a willingness to change as an individual and adapt to contextual changes (vector 2)

The choice made stems from the recognition that pluralistic approaches today constitute an innovation that breaks away from many preconceptions. For teachers or future teachers, they often involve a profound shift in their convictions and those commonly held within their educational context. This is particularly true of the way multilingual/plurilingual and intercultural communication functions, of the language teaching/learning process, and of the role of languages/cultures in other disciplines.

How can these principles be put into practice?

For each first-level competence (such as competences 7.1 and 7.2 in the example above), the reference framework proposes one example of a descriptor that aligns with the perspective of the first vector (the reflective approach) and another descriptor aligned with the second vector (willingness of the individual to change and to adapt to contextual changes), as illustrated here for competence 7.1 :



As can be seen from vector 2, we are not dealing with a competence, but an attitude (A). This is due to the very nature of the vector: "a willingness" is not a competence, but an attitude.



[list of descriptors](#)



[diagramm](#)

7. How are the materials for teacher education designed?

The teacher training materials are designed as sequences of tasks organised around the development of one or more of the competences (and attitudes) in the Reference framework of teacher competences for pluralistic approaches (FTC-PA). They vary in length and are aimed at teachers in initial or in-service teacher education, whether or not they are familiar with pluralistic approaches, who are working with or preparing to work with learners of different ages following a specific curriculum for pluralistic approaches or a more general curriculum.

The sequences can be adapted to suit the contexts in which they are used and the target participants. This can involve replacing the examples of activities or the texts and questions used for reflective purposes with elements that are tailored to specific levels of education, particular contexts, and/or languages.

The scenarios provided in the resources for teacher educators are designed for adaptation: they offer an overview of the unit (pedagogical aims and tasks) as well as possible alternatives for certain sections. Where necessary the resources also provide theoretical elements (or reminders of such elements), advice on use, supporting materials, etc.

Examples can be found in the [Power Point presentation](#).

The sequences can be accessed [here](#).