CEFR Companion Volume implementation toolbox

Video scripts for "Constructive alignment"

This is the script of the videos in the constructive alignment module. The scripts follow the order of the videos, with a very brief introduction that summarises the topic for those who are interested in becoming familiar with it but do not wish to go any further, and additional sections that look at the different concepts in more detail. There is also a list of references in each of the sections.

Video 1. Constructive alignment at a glance

Slide 2

Constructive alignment is a pedagogical approach to teaching, assessment and curriculum design that emphasizes the alignment of learning objectives, teaching methods and assessment strategies. The main principle behind constructive alignment is that all aspects of the teaching and learning process should be carefully designed and organised to support the achievement of specific learning outcomes.

This approach seeks to optimize student learning by starting with the desired learning outcomes and then designing teaching and assessment accordingly to create a more effective and coherent learning environment for the students.

Slide 3

And why is the concept of constructive alignment relevant for the Companion Volume to the CEFR?

The Companion Volume does not use the term constructive alignment, but the idea underlines the methodological message behind the CEFR. By focusing on what learners CAN DO, we focus on communicative needs and on what the goals of students should be to fulfil those needs. In the Companion Volume the term used is "planning backwards" (p. 29).

As we have already seen in previous modules, the action-oriented approach in the CEFR, further emphasised in its Companion Volume, is a change of paradigm in teaching, learning and assessment. This approach looks at learners as social agents interacting in the real world, where they need to perform communicative tasks. Consequently, instead of looking at teaching and learning in an isolated manner, we are encouraged to avoid designing learning activities that cover content without a clear objective: learning activities should be designed around what the learner needs to achieve to reach an objective. Assessment is then designed accordingly to be meaningful to the learner and useful for learning.

Slide 4

Constructive alignment can be used to guide the design of curricula – that is, the content, activities, and learning experiences that students will encounter throughout a course or educational program, the teaching methodologies, and the assessment instruments, such as exams, rubrics, etc.

Fischer J. et al (2023), *CEFR Companion Volume implementation toolbox*, Council of Europe (European Centre for Modern Languages), Graz, available at www.ecml.at/companionvolumetoolbox.

Video 2. The action-oriented approach and constructive alignment

Slide 1

The CEFR Companion Volume stresses the action-oriented approach, but it also highlights the importance of aligning learning objectives, teaching and assessment – usually called “constructive alignment”.

Slide 2

Although the CEFR Companion Volume does not use the term “constructive alignment”, it points out that “the main function of descriptors is to help align curriculum, teaching and assessment” and that “educators can select CEFR descriptors according to their relevance to the particular context, adapting them in the process if necessary” (p. 42).

This obviously has an impact on curriculum design as teachers need to implement the action-oriented approach not only in teaching and learning, but also in assessment.

Slide 3

In this context, the CEFR descriptors are a valuable tool to develop meaningful and relevant tasks both for teaching and for assessment. These should reflect real-life situations and tasks students will encounter in the real world, covering the public domain, the private domain, the occupational domain and the educational domain.

Slide 4

To quote the Companion Volume: “[…] the primary function of descriptors is to facilitate the provision of **transparent and coherent alignment between curriculum, teaching and assessment**, particularly teacher assessment, and above all between the **‘language classroom world’ and the real world**” (p. 44).

Slide 5

Table 5 on page 44 of the Companion Volume shows how descriptors reflect what learners / test-takers can do, which is mainly relevant for teaching and learning, and how well they can perform – an aspect relevant for assessment. Assessment here addresses both formative assessment (including self-assessment) and summative assessment, allowing different stakeholders to evaluate language competence.

The database of descriptors includes simpler descriptors, for example, addressing the learner who may use them for self-assessment purposes, and also more complex descriptors for use by curriculum designers and teachers.

Slide 6

Let us now have a look at some definitions of constructive alignment, a term first brought up by Biggs in 1996.

In his 2003 definition of “constructive alignment”, Biggs points out that the term “constructive alignment” covers two aspects, i.e. that learners “construct meaning through relevant learning activities” and that teachers create a learning environment “that supports the learning activities appropriate to achieving the desired learning outcomes”.

Slide 7

The term “constructive” in “constructive alignment” reflects the constructivist view on learning, which underlines that meaning is not transmitted from the teacher to the learner, but the learners need to take an active role in the learning process; they need to be given tasks that allow them to construct meaning.

Slide 8

As far as “alignment” is concerned, Biggs stresses that teaching methods and assessment tasks therefore need to be aligned with the learning activities in order to achieve the intended outcomes.

Slide 9

In brief, constructive alignment applies a constructivist approach to language education throughout the curriculum, i.e. in teaching, learning and assessment.

Learners need to be actively involved in the learning process and should be given meaningful tasks that require them to construct meaning.

In order to facilitate this approach, teachers need to align learning objectives, teaching and learning, and also assessment. By doing so, the constructivist approach can be applied throughout the whole curriculum in a coherent way, including assessment. Learners’ agency and active involvement in the learning process throughout the whole cycle are a key to constructing meaning and developing learners’ language skills.

Slide 10

This, however, requires a thorough needs analysis, which helps to define the learning objectives (e. g. in module descriptions), to develop the course syllabus and also the format of the assessment, which needs to be in line with the teaching and learning activities. Furthermore, it requires appropriate feedback at various stages of the learning cycle.

Slide 11

This diagram shows the cycle in which the relevant aspects are interrelated, starting with a needs analysis, the definition of the learning objectives, the definition of the teaching methods and the development of the teaching and learning activities, which then lead to appropriate assessment tasks and feedback to the learner.

Slide 12

In his diagram of the comprehensive learning system, Barry O’Sullivan presents a model showing the relationship between cognitive and constructivist learning theories, the curriculum and assessment, based on Shepard’s model of “an emergent constructivist paradigm”.

Slide 13

As in any other approach, an action-oriented and / or task-based approach requires coherence between learning objectives, teaching, students' activities (like projects or task-based global simulations) and assessment, which includes feedback (including peer and teacher feedback).

Slide 14

In this teaching – learning – assessment cycle the learners act as social agents and are at the centre of the activity. They co-construct meaning with their peers in collaborative group activities.

[For more detailed information on this diagram please have a look at the VITbox module on the action-oriented approach and the learner as a social agent.]

Slide 15

As far as needs analysis is concerned, we need to take into account the needs of various stakeholders. These include: a) decision makers at international, national or regional level, b) future employers, c) the institution, d) the teachers, e) the students and any other relevant party.

Slide 16

Let's now consider some aspects related to conducting a needs analysis.

When carrying out a needs analysis we need to define a) the learners' profile, b) the target level, c), the purpose of the task or test, including the type of language specified in the curriculum, d) the participants' role in interaction, e) the medium, mode and channel of communication and f) the communicative event in which the learners carry out real-life tasks

Slide 17

When we define the learning objectives or intended outcomes, we need to start with the needs analysis, as mentioned above, then define the targeted CEFR level and choose the descriptors relevant in our context(s).

Module descriptions can be a useful tool to describe the learning objectives and intended outcomes, the admission criteria (e. g. entrance level), the content of the course or module, the methodology applied, and the format and criteria for assessment.

Slide 18

When it comes to syllabus development, there are two options:

Option 1 is called "forward design" by Jack Richards, as educators or teachers will start with the teaching and then plan the assessment; i.e. the different steps are:

1. Identifying needs
2. Defining the learning objectives ("intended learning outcomes")
3. Specifying teaching methods
4. Developing teaching and learning activities
5. Developing assessment tasks

Slide 19

Option 2 is called “backward design”, as educators or teachers will first define the assessment and then develop teaching methods and teaching and learning activities. The steps will therefore follow the following order:

1. Identifying needs
2. Defining the learning objectives (“intended learning outcomes”)
3. Developing assessment tasks
4. Specifying teaching methods
5. Developing teaching and learning activities

That’s to say that assessment tasks are designed before addressing teaching methods and activities. Therefore, in this list the aspects under 3 to 5 appear in a different order.

Slide 20

Let's now consider how these approaches can be put into practice.

As far as teaching is concerned, after specifying the teaching methods, teachers need to define the projects to be carried out in class, select and prepare the resources to be uploaded onto the VLE (“virtual learning environment”), especially in a blended learning format, prepare the classroom activities, prepare self-assessment and-peer assessment tasks as well as formative assessment activities, and also define appropriate feedback strategies.

You may either apply a forward design and plan first teaching and learning activities, or a backward design where you start by preparing the assessment tasks, or a combination of both where you adapt your draft tasks depending on the progress of the learners’ project.

Slide 21

When applying the action-oriented approach to assessment, teachers need to develop authentic tasks embedded in a realistic, relevant and meaningful scenario. This needs to be aligned to the teaching activities. Teachers also need to verify that the scenario allows the test-takers to act as social agents, who can contribute with their own individual knowledge and skills to discuss a relevant and meaningful topic, develop an output or product, or solve an authentic problem.

Slide 22

When teachers align their teaching methods, the learning activities and assessment, the positive outcome is first of all a high level of transparency and secondly the harmonisation of teaching and assessment practices. Constructive alignment allows teachers and learners to put things into perspective, it increases face validity and makes teaching, learning and assessment more meaningful to the learner. This helps to increase the satisfaction rate of students, teachers and future employers, and will hopefully increase the motivation of learners and test-takers.

Slide 23

This list of references offers access to more detailed information on constructive alignment.

Biggs, John B. (1996). “Enhancing teaching through constructive alignment”, in: Higher Education No 32, 247-264.

Biggs, John B. (2003). “Aligning teaching for constructing learning”. In: The Higher Education Academy: https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/aligning-teaching-constructing-learning (online publication).

Fischer, Johann / Wolder, Nicole (2021). Erfahrungen in der Umsetzung der Inhalte des Begleitbands zum GeR im Hochschulkontext – Ergebnisse eines Projektes des Europarates und Handlungsbedarf für Hochschulsprachenzentren. *Fremdsprachen und Hochschule* 96, 7-27.

Fischer, Johann / Wolder, Nicole (2022). Implementation of the CEFR Companion Volume in the UNIcert® and NULTE Networks. In: North, Brian / Piccardo, Enrica / Goodier, Tim / Fasoglio, Daniela / Margonis-Pasinetti, Rosanna / Rüschoff, Bernd (eds.): *Enriching 21st century language education. The CEFR Companion Volume in practice*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing, 185-201; https://rm.coe.int/enriching-21st-century-language-education-the-cefr-companion-volume-in/1680a68ed0.

Graves, Kathleen (2008). “The language curriculum: A social contextual perspective”. In: *Language Teaching* 41 (2), 147-181.

Green, Anthony (2016). Assessment literacy for language teacher[s]. In Dina Tsagari (ed.), Classroom-based Assessment in L2 Contexts. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. 8-29.

O’Sullivan, Barry (2020), The Comprehensive Learning System. British Council: https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/cls_bcps1_bos_30-09-2020_final.pdf (online publication)

Richards, Jack C. (2013). Curriculum approaches in language teaching: Forward, central and backward design. In RELC Journal 44 (1). 5-33.

Video 3. Constructive alignment in practice: designing tasks

Slide 2

In our previous presentation, we have learnt about the principles of constructive alignment, let's now look at an example of how to use the Companion Volume to put into practice the principles of constructive alignment. Let's start first by remembering what constructive alignment means. Constructive alignment means harmonising learners' needs, teaching and learning and assessment.

In this sense, and as we have already seen, we can use the descriptors to facilitate transparent and coherent alignment between curriculum, teaching and assessment, and above all between the language classroom world and the real world.

Slide 3

So how can we apply the descriptors to the design of a task? The first thing we need to remember is that language users are social agents that use language to perform a task and do so in the real world. The learner or language user takes a central role, and they need to engage in meaningful and relevant tasks that will be carried out cooperatively with other learners to complete a real-life activity.

So how can we use the descriptors for this? Let's look at a possible approach. We first need to think about what we want the learner to do and, once decided, we need to find the descriptors that fit these activities. Now that we know what the learners' goals are and which can-do descriptors apply, we are ready to design an activity that will allow our learners to practise the skills described in the descriptors we chose. We need to remember that the activity needs to be meaningful to the learners and related to the real world. Once our task is designed, we need to decide how this task will be assessed, and we can use the assessment grids in the appendixes of the Companion Volume (appendixes 1-4) for that. All in all, when designing a task, we need to remember that languages are used to achieve a purpose, but simply using language is not, in itself, a purpose.

Slide 4

So, let's look at this example of how we can use the descriptors in the Companion Volume to design our tasks. Our students are young learners, learning English at a B1 level; they will use English for travelling (leisure) and to interact with children their age. Our task will be to prepare a cultural trip to France for German students

Slide 5

We must remember that this is an example, and it will not include all that learners will need to do to fulfil their needs (that is, communicating with children their age). In this case, our students will need to prepare a cultural trip to France for German students, and we are going to give them several tasks for them to do that.

Our students will need to search online to find information, summarise the information, debate with other students about the information found, discuss ideas, and inform others about the information and the discussions. Ideally, we would like our students to carry out these tasks online, to be able to exploit the multimodality of online interaction. According to the tasks that they will need to carry out, we have chosen descriptors related to:

- relaying specific information in writing (mediation_mediating a text)
- processing text in speech (mediation_processing text in speech)
- collaborating to construct meaning (overall written interaction) (mediating concepts)
- building on a pluricultural repertoire (plurilingual and pluricultural competence)
- and carrying out online conversations and discussions (online conversation and discussion)

Slide 6

Since our learners in this case are children, we can go to the list of representative samples of descriptors developed for language learners available on the Council of Europe website (https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/bank-of-supplementary-descriptors). This resource for educators includes CEFR descriptors organised by scale, their suggested relevance (or not) to young learners, and examples of young learners' descriptors from the European Language Portfolio showing a correspondence to the CEFR descriptors. The document provides an overview of how descriptors can be related, in content and focus, to the needs of young learners. For more information on this document, go to the bibliography section of this presentation.

Looking at the descriptors we had chosen in the list of representative samples of descriptors developed for language learners (we can see on the screen a captured image of this document), we see that they are considered to be relevant (or partially relevant) as long as we are careful with the topic chosen (since it must be appropriate for the age) and if we provide the necessary support and guidance for the completion of the task.

Slide 7

Let's remember that our students are learning English at a B1 level and they will use learning for travelling and to interact with children their age. In order to have them learn and practise related vocabulary, we are designing an activity to maximise interaction and we will do so by making use of technologies in the classroom.

As stated before, the goal of our activity is to have students search for information online, summarise the information, debate with other students about the information found, discuss ideas, and transmit these ideas orally. Since our activity mainly refers to online activities and mediation, in order to further specify the setting of our tasks, we can go to appendix 6 of the Companion Volume, which gives us examples of use in different domains for descriptors of online interaction and mediation activities. This is a useful resource as it can help us choose or design relevant activities for each of the levels.

In this case, we will choose the personal domain (as they are children) and the public domain (carefully choosing a topic adapted to their age) and we will look at leaflets, brochures, and information panels.

Slide 8

We now need to decide how our task will be assessed, and we can use the qualitative characteristics of spoken language included in appendix 3 to have an idea of the characteristics that a spoken production of the level should have. The appendix gives us information on what a B1 level user should be able to do in terms of range, accuracy, fluency, interaction, coherence and phonology.

Slide 9

Since we want to design a task that exploits the multimodality of online interaction, in order to design its assessment, we will also look at the evaluation scale for written texts provided in appendix 4. In this case, we have a description of what B1 users would be able to do in terms of overall performance, range, coherence, and accuracy, when describing something or providing arguments and giving opinions.

Slide 10

And with all this in mind, it's time to define our task. The task will be to prepare a cultural trip to France for German students. In order to achieve this meta-task, we will give our students several sub-tasks that will have them engage in real life activities: looking online for information, summarising information in writing, debating about the information chosen, engaging in discussions about different cultures, and transmitting information effectively.

Slide 11

We will also need to decide on a form of assessment (teacher assessment, self -evaluation, peer assessment). We can use the descriptors in the appendixes as a guide and create our evaluation grid. We can even have different grids depending on whether they are going to be used by teachers or students. In this particular example, the grid created responds to the objective of the task: summarizing, writing a text, encouraging discussion, talking about cultural differences, being intelligible, etc.

Slide 12

So let's summarise our process: we set out the objectives of our task, deciding what our learners needed to do in real life and making sure that it was relevant for their profile. We then looked at descriptors in the Companion Volume and chose those that we believed were more relevant. We compiled a list of descriptors and made sure they applied to our young learners by looking at representative samples of descriptors developed for language learners. To find ideas for context of use that would be appropriate for our task and our learners, we went to appendix 6 of the Companion Volume and chose the domains that best suited our purposes. Since we knew that we were going to ask our learners to write and speak, to have an idea of the characteristics of the target language we were expecting, we looked at appendix 3, characteristics of spoken use, and appendix 4, written assessment grid. Lastly, and with all the information that we had compiled, we fine-tuned the design of our activity, with a parent task, and several sub-tasks that would be required to achieve the parent task.

Slide 13

We have looked at an example of the process, but how can we decide on the type of tasks that we need? What sort of questions should we ask ourselves? We should have a clear idea of our objectives, in terms of teaching, learning and assessment of our students, and then we need to decide about the type of task that we are going to develop: is it designed to elicit writing skills, speaking skills, mediation skills, a combination of the above? When we think of the task, considering our objectives and the level and profile of our students, can we say that our task is aligned to what learners can do at the level according to the CEFR Companion Volume? And finally, is this task aligned to what we are teaching and to our objectives?

Slide 14

If you want to learn more, have a look at the following bibliography.

European Centre for Modern Languages thematic pages for the CEFR and the ELP: see www.ecml.at/Thematicareas/CEFRandELP/tabid/1935/language/en-GB/Default.aspx, accessed 25 September 2023.

European Language Portfolio (ELP): www.coe.int/en/web/portfolio, accessed 25 September 2023.

Goodier T. (ed.) (2018). *Collated Representative Samples of Descriptors of Language Competences Developed for Young Learners – resource for educators, Volume 1: Ages 7-10*, Education Policy Division, Council of Europe, available at https://rm.coe.int/16808b1688, accessed 25 September 2023.

Goodier T. (ed.) (2018). *Collated Representative Samples of Descriptors of Language Competences Developed for Young Learners – resource for educators, Volume 2: Ages 11-15*, Education Policy Division, Council of Europe, available at https://rm.coe.int/16808b1689, accessed 25 September 2023.

Goullier F. (2007). *Council of Europe Tools for Language Teaching – Common European framework and portfolios*, Didier/Council of Europe, Paris/Strasbourg, available at https://rm.coe.int/168069ce6e, accessed 25 September 2023.

Video 4. Constructive alignment in practice: designing rating scales

Slide 2

Designing a good rating scale for language assessment is crucial to ensure accurate and reliable measurement of language proficiency or performance. A well-designed rating scale provides clear guidelines and criteria for assessors to evaluate language abilities consistently and fairly. It helps minimize subjectivity and enhances the validity and reliability of the assessment process.

Designing a good rating scale is important because it provides: validity, reliability, feedback for improvement and a common framework.

Slide 3

1. Validity: Validity in the context of language testing refers to the extent to which the test used measures what it is intended to measure. It assesses whether the test is a valid tool for evaluating the specific construct or attribute it is designed to assess, in this case, language proficiency. The rating scale should reflect the constructs and skills being measured accurately. By defining the specific criteria for different proficiency levels or performance descriptors, the rating scale ensures that the assessment is measuring what it intends to measure. A valid rating scale aligns with established frameworks or theories of language proficiency and provides a reliable basis for interpreting test scores.

Slide 4

2. Reliability: Reliability in language testing refers to the degree to which a language test consistently and accurately measures the language skills or abilities it is designed to assess. In other words, it assesses the extent to which the test yields consistent results when administered to the same individuals under similar conditions. A well-designed rating scale enhances the reliability of the assessment. It promotes consistent scoring by different assessors, reducing individual biases and idiosyncrasies. The scale should be clear and unambiguous, ensuring that assessors can apply the criteria consistently across multiple test takers and across different assessment contexts. Reliability is essential for producing consistent and dependable results.

Slide 5

3. Feedback for improvement: A good rating scale allows for meaningful feedback to test takers. Clear and specific descriptors at different proficiency levels help candidates understand their strengths and weaknesses, enabling them to focus on areas that need improvement. It also allows test developers to identify areas where test takers commonly struggle, leading to the refinement and improvement of teaching methods and assessment materials.

Slide 6

4. A common framework: a good rating scale allows for standardization in language assessment. It provides a common framework that all assessors can follow, ensuring that candidates are evaluated

consistently across different contexts and exam administrations. This standardization is crucial for comparing results over time, across different populations, or between different testing centres.

Slide 7

There are two main types of rating scales: holistic and analytic.

Holistic rating scales provide an overall assessment of a candidate's language proficiency or performance. They typically involve assigning a single score or rating to reflect the overall quality of the candidate's language abilities. We can see on screen an example of how a holistic rating scale could look.

Slide 8

Analytic rating scales break down the language abilities into specific criteria or dimensions. Assessors evaluate each criterion separately and assign individual scores or ratings. This type of scale provides detailed feedback on different aspects of language proficiency, allowing for a more precise/detailed assessment. We can see on screen an example of how an analytic rating scale could look.

Slide 9

Both types of scales have characteristics that make them more suitable for one context or another. These characteristics are not absolute, but in general, and according to the literature, analytic scales are often more reliable, offer richer diagnostic information to help the learning process and are better suited for novice raters. On the other hand, holistic scales are more inclined towards authenticity, because they assess the overall performance without breaking it down into specific components or criteria, and favour rating speed.

Slide 10

The type of scale we choose will depend on the purpose of our assessment, the type or types of tasks that will be assessed, the profile of our raters, the feedback we want to provide to our students and practicality issues, such as the resources available at our disposal.

Slide 11

Before looking at an example in practice, let us review the tools that we can use to develop our own rating scales.

The CEFR and the Companion Volume can help rating scale designers align the scales with the levels of proficiency described in both documents while the manual for relating language examinations to the CEFR and its reference supplement describe step by step how to design assessment instruments.

Slide 12

There are also resources that offer specific examples of language proficiency at each level, as well as guidelines for test developers working with language for specific purposes tests.

Slide 13

The manual for relating language examinations to the CEFR is particularly useful, offering instructions, resource documents, grids, and checklists.

Slide 14

And has a section that focusses on speaking, where criteria particularly relevant to this skill are listed, such as interactive communication or pronunciation.

Slide 15

And writing, where criteria particularly relevant to this skill are listed, such as grammatical range and accuracy or lexical accuracy.

Slide 16

What are the first steps in designing a rating scale? First of all we need to decide on the type of scale. In this case and for the purpose of this example, we will focus on an analytic scale for one type of mediation activity: reading into writing. We will need to decide which criteria we want to have on our scale and for this, and following the principles of constructive alignment, we will look at our learning objectives and our syllabus or teaching, as well as at the purpose of our assessment.

Slide 17

Let’s look at an example and think of a rating scale to assess students in an English for tourism course. We will go from the general objectives of the course to the specific objectives of the task we are designing the scale for reading into writing objectives. And so, what are our main goals? What are our goals in the task of reading into writing? Defining our goals also identifies our target audience.

Slide 18

In the case of teaching, we will also go from the general, how do we help our students achieve their objectives in our field, to the specific, how do we help them reach their goals in activities that require reading into writing?

Slide 19

And lastly, we will define what we want to assess and how, in this case we decided to assess using tasks or scenarios related to the initial objectives and the teaching delivered. In a task-based approach, the primary focus is on accomplishing a specific goal or objective and the tasks might be presented as stand-alone activities. The emphasis is on performing a particular task or set of tasks. In a scenario-based approach, the primary focus is on creating a realistic situation or context in which participants or learners must make decisions, solve problems, or respond to challenges. Scenarios aim to replicate real-world situations, making them more immersive and relevant.

Slide 20

We are now ready to decide which criteria we want included in our scale. For this we will turn to the Companion Volume and its descriptors, and we will break down the tasks required to complete the parent task or main task (reading a text or texts and producing a related written text using the information understood) to decide which criteria can help us define success in these tasks.

We can break the process into three subtasks: understanding a text, writing a text in which the arguments read are integrated and reused, and achieving the communicative goal. Once decided which subtasks the learner needs to accomplish, we can look at existing scales and see how they can be used for our purposes. In this case, we have chosen several scales from the Companion Volume that can help us define success in the different activities.

Slide 21

Our next step will be to decide which criteria will be included in our rating scale; in this case we have decided on four main criteria:

- Comprehension of the text and reutilisation of arguments, which will include reading comprehension and the ability to process and streamline written text;
- Grammatical accuracy and vocabulary control;
- Thematic development, including the ability to express ideas in a logical and coherent manner, and
- Achievement of the communicative purpose, which will include completing the task effectively producing the desired effect on the reader.

Slide 22

We are now ready to write our assessment criteria and we can start by adapting the descriptors chosen to suit our needs. We can start by defining the middle band, that is, what would constitute an accepted performance at the level we are examining, and then work from there. To adapt the descriptors and create our own, we should focus on our specific goals, and we can also use performances from the learners to look at their characteristics so that our rating scale is meaningful for our context.

Slide 23

Our last step would be the qualitative and quantitative validation. We will not go into detail here; we will only provide a general overview of what qualitative validation would entail and give some references to guide you in case you are interested in quantitative validation. In this diagram, you can see the different steps that could be followed for the qualitative validation of a scale. First, we need to collect student performances (pieces of writing for example), then, we would need to assess them and divide them into groups, putting all good performances together, all average performances together, and so on. Then, we would need to examine each group of performances to see what are the characteristics that define them, that is, what characteristics do good performances have? What are the things that characterise a below average performance? Once this is done, we need to go back to our scale and see if the descriptors for the highest score in our scale coincide with the characteristics observed in the very good performances, we would repeat this process for each band in our scale. Finally, we can re-write our descriptors to add any characteristics that we found on the performances, and we think need to be represented in the scale or to eliminate or reformulate those characteristics that were on the scale but maybe were not that useful when looking at the performances.

Slide 24

Since we cannot go into detail describing what would be required for quantitative validation, that is, for the statistical validation of our scale, let us provide two useful references in case you are interested in understanding quantitative validation and want to learn more.

Slide 25

If you want to know more, have a look at the following bibliography.

Barkaoui, Khaled. (2010). Explaining ESL essay holistic scores: A multilevel modeling approach. *Language Testing*, 27(4), 515–535.

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