

Frameworks and Inspiring Language Acquisition

Marianne Kayed, Manager, CCE
IL Sector Day - December 6, 2023

How do you describe language ability?

- Beginner? Basic?
- Intermediate?
- Advanced?
- Low?
- High?
- Fluent?



Which one are you?



What we hear....

“He doesn’t speak any _____”

“This student is very fluent.”

“John writes very well.”

“Mary needs to practice speaking more.”

“He doesn’t know very much (of the language.)”



Is an apple an apple?... or an Orange?

Advantages of Language Frameworks (or Proficiency Scales):

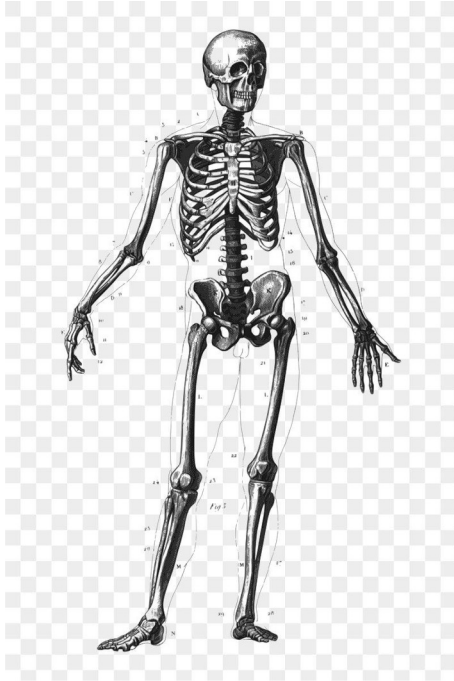
1. Provide a common language
2. Have “tasks” or “descriptors” someone can do in the language at each level of ability
3. Levels on a vertical or linear scale
4. Can be Standards (e.g. interprovincially, nationally, globally)
5. Contexts for use - in education, employment, or in daily life or other defined contexts.
6. Portability



Name Some Scales or Frameworks?

- Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB 1-12) (NCLC)
- Canadian Public Service Qualifications Standards (A,B,C) or E or P
- ACTFL
- STEP Framework (K-12 ESL/ELD)
- CEFR

Frameworks are not...



- a test or language assessment
- a curriculum tied to a specific teaching method
- May or may not describe discrete elements (e.g. grammar, pronunciation, cultural conventions, etc.)

It can inform curriculum and lesson planning and assessments

Language Standards

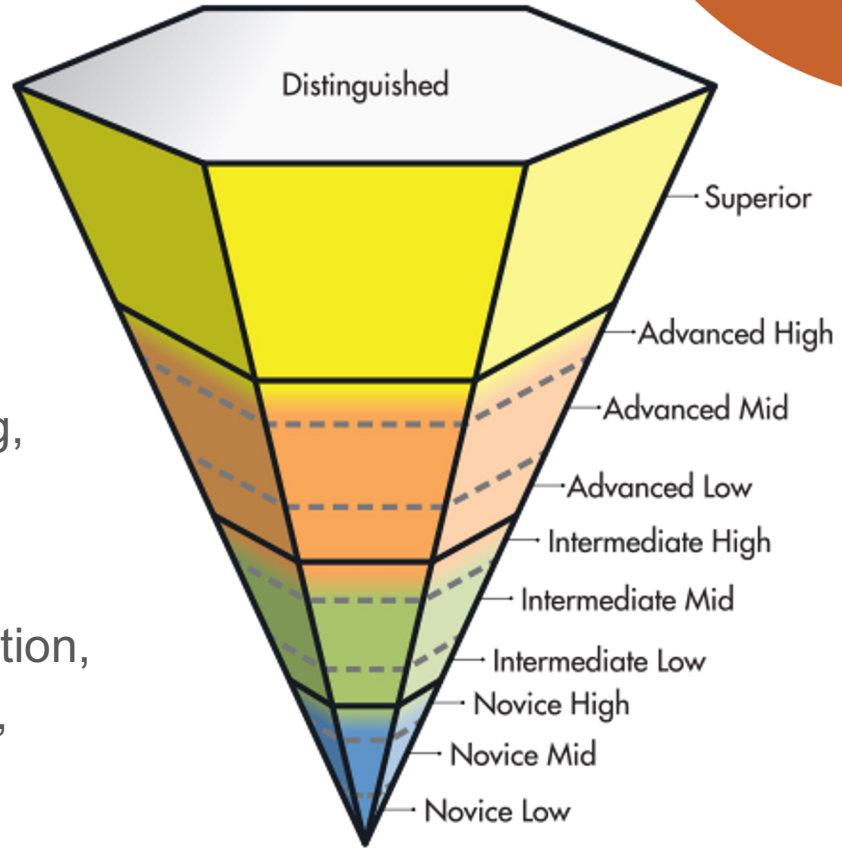
“The alignment of curricula, syllabi, tasks, texts, assessments, and other pedagogical resources onto proficiency scales and frameworks, which articulate and guide hypothesized language development.”

Claudia Harsch & Margaret E. Malone

“Language Proficiency Frameworks and Scales”, 2020

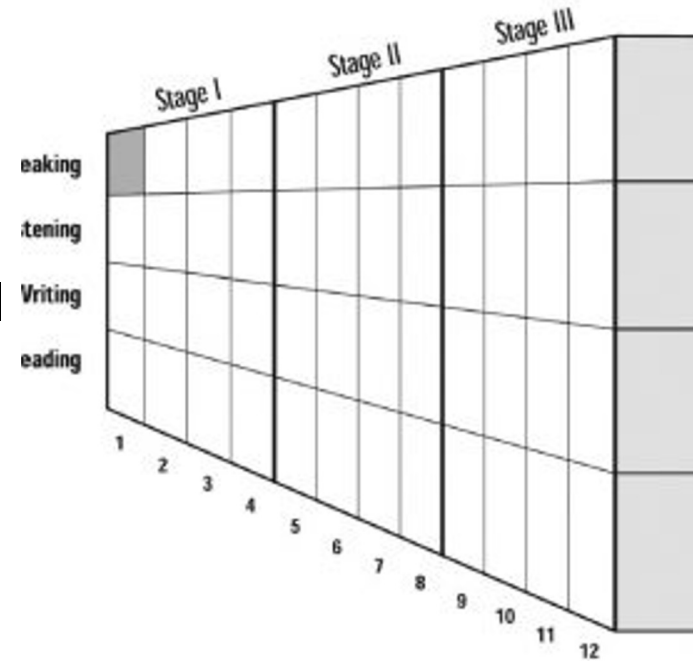
ACTFL

- 5 levels of proficiency
- Functional Ability focus
- 4 skills (Speaking, Writing, Listening, Reading)
- 5 C's For Goal Setting (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities)
- OPI Assessment - 120 languages



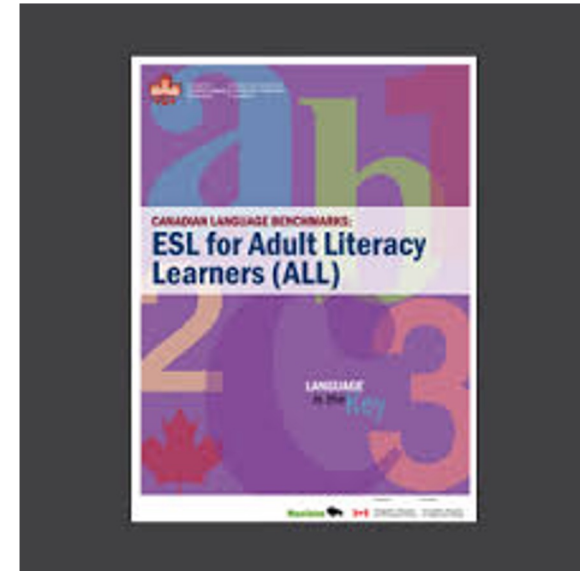
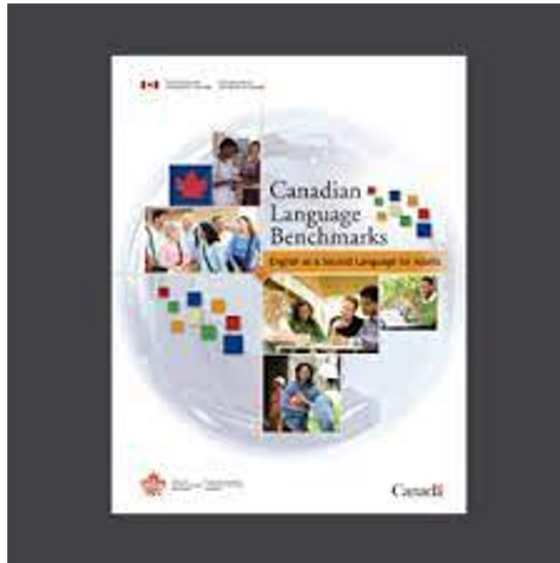
Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB)

- 12 levels of ability
- Competency-based
- Learner-centred
- Task-based learning
- By Stage, the Benchmark and Ability level defined as:
 - CLB 1 - Initial (CLB 5, CLB 9)
 - CLB 2 - Developing (CLB 6, 10)
 - CLB 3 - Adequate (CLB 7, 11)
 - CLB 4 - Fluent (CLB 8, 12)
- Correlated to CEFR (2018)

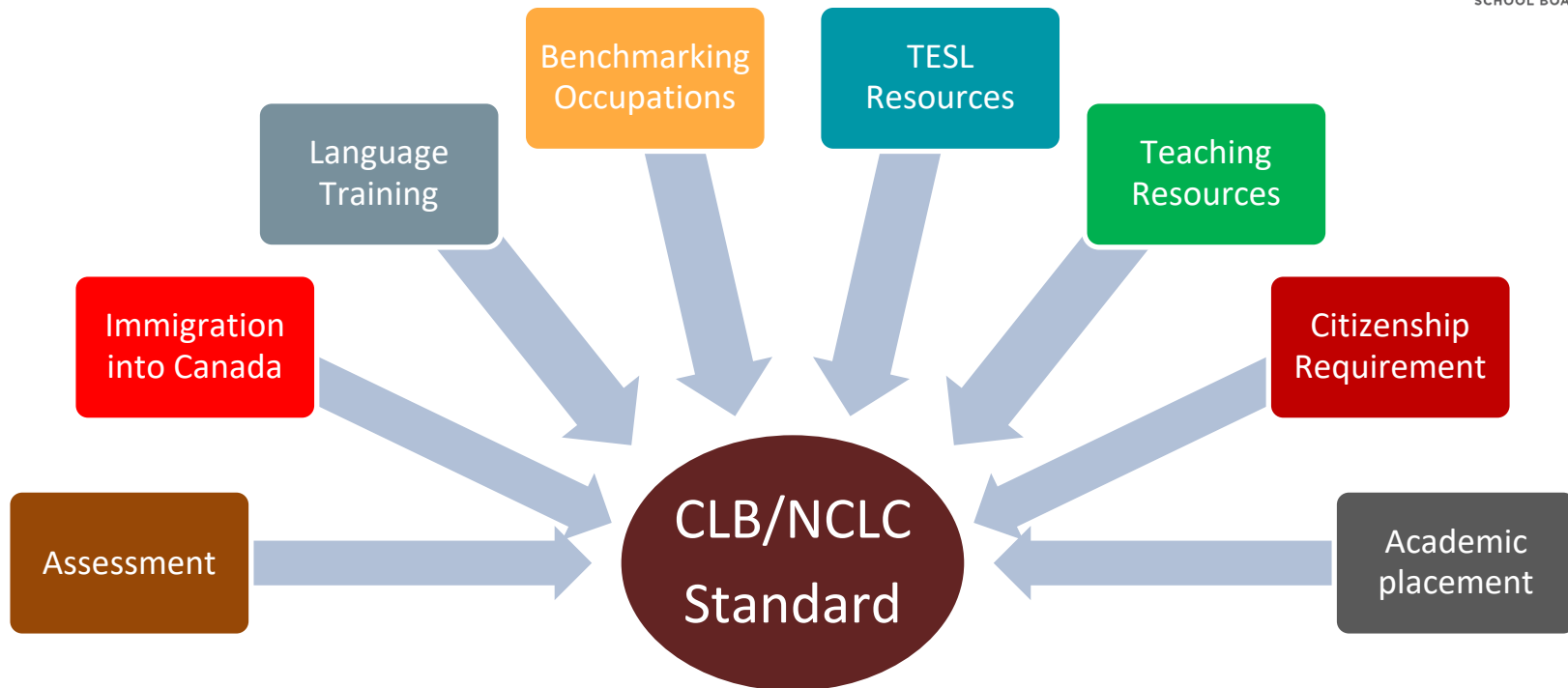


Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB)

- Uses a Communicative approach...Can Do statements
- English/French and ASL versions
- Culturally relevant to Canadian/ North American context but can be used globally
- Validated for adults
- Special populations



Uses of CLB/NCLC in Canada



Intermission 🎵🎵

You're Awesome!! ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡

Song: [Get Lucky](#)



Common European Framework for Language

- 6 levels of ability and “Action-oriented” approach
- “I can...” statements or “I say...”
- Plurilingualism - 40 language versions (including ASL, Mandarin and Japanese)
- Recognized and used in Europe and
- Used for curriculum, assessment and immigration purposes



Global Scale and an Example



Common European framework

On this level you can...

A1

- understand simple conversations.
- introduce yourself and others.
- ask and answer questions about personal details.
- interact in a simple way.

Breakthrough!

A2

- understand sentences related to areas of most immediate relevance.
- communicate in simple and routine tasks.
- describe in simple terms aspects of your background.

Waystage

B1

- understand the main points of regular situations.
- produce simple texts on topics which are familiar or of personal interest.
- describe experiences, events, dreams, and ambitions and briefly give explanations.

Threshold

B2

- understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics.
- interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers.
- produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue.

Vantage

C1

- understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognize implicit meaning.
- express yourself fluently and spontaneously.
- use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes.
- produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects.

Effective
operational
proficiency

C2

- understand with ease virtually everything heard or read.
- summarize information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation.
- express yourself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.

Mastery!

Qualitative Aspects of Spoken Language

Range

Fluency

Accuracy

Interaction

Coherence

B2

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.

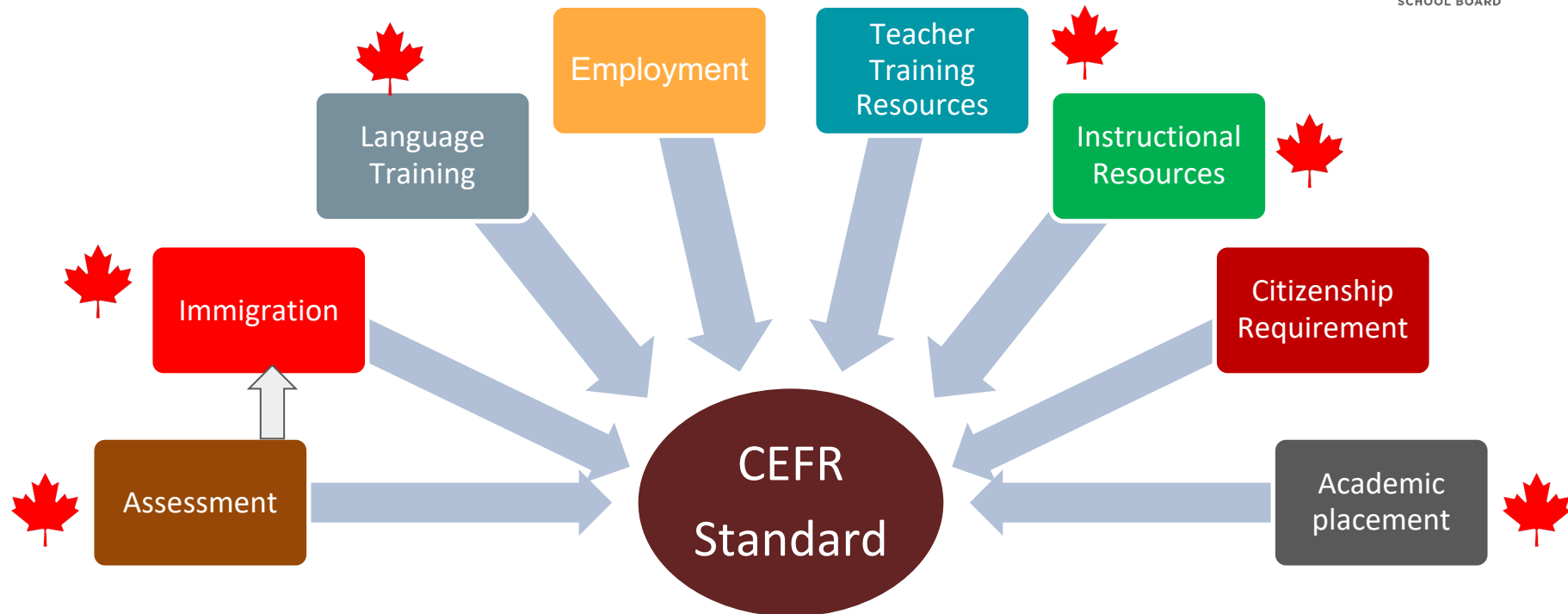
Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. Does not make errors which cause misunderstanding, and can correct most of his/her mistakes.

Can produce stretches of language with a fairly even tempo; although he/she can be hesitant as he or she searches for patterns and expressions, there are few noticeably long pauses.

Can initiate discourse, take his/her turn when appropriate and end conversation when he / she needs to, though he /she may not always do this elegantly. Can help the discussion along on familiar ground confirming comprehension, inviting others in, etc.

Can use a limited number of cohesive devices to link his/her utterances into clear, coherent discourse, though there may be some "jumpiness" in a long contribution.

Uses of CEFR in Other Countries



 = Use in Canada

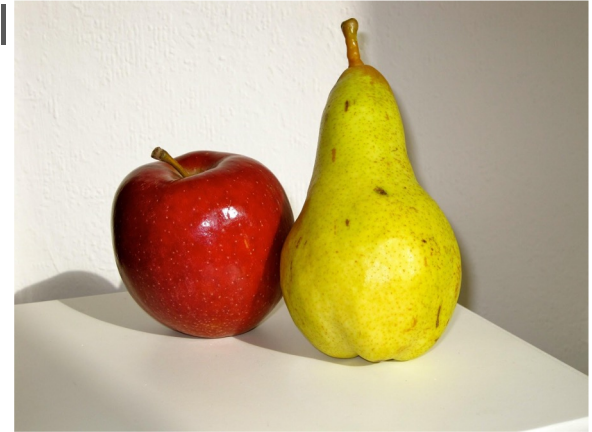
Uses in Education

- In FSL programs in elementary and secondary schools across Canada
- Used in some universities for Modern Languages, Official Languages, and for research purposes
- The Edmonton School Board and Calgary Catholic School Boards use the CEFR in FSL, for International Languages, and for language credentialing e.g. with language tests of staff and/or students (e.g. DELF)



Implications in Language Teaching

- Validated Correlations e.g. CEFR with ACTFL or CLB/NCLC or tests like IELTS, Pearson, etc. = general Equivalency of apples to pears, etc.
- Reduces need to retest students
- Increased mobility between programs
- Fair, valid, defensible standards
- Useful for youth in high schools who transition to adult education or post-secondary language programs (in theory)



Challenges ...Food for Thought

- Complexity and amount of time to master (months, years)
- Use or adapt for a context?
- Teaching to the Test (not to the curriculum or themes)
- Not in every language..then what?



Thank You! You are Awesome!



References

ACTFL <https://www.actfl.org>

B. North & E. Piccardo, Aligning the Canadian Language Benchmarks to CEFR, 2018 <https://www.language.ca/aligning-clb-and-cefr>

CEFR Ontario, <https://sites.google.com/teltgafe.com/cefr-ontario>

Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, <https://www.language.ca/home>

Councils of Ministers of Education, [Working with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages \(CEFR\) in the Canadian Context: Guide for policy-makers and curriculum designers](#), Toronto, 2010

References (Cont'd)

European Union, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/level-descriptions>

M. Kayed, CLB/NCLC and the CEFR: Implications for language instruction in Canada and globally, International Metropolis Conference, June 2019