

WORKSHEET A

Title Assessment: from competence to action																	
Objective(s) Understanding the pedagogical implications of the difference between assessing what a learner is actually doing and his/her potential, i.e. skills and knowledge behind it.																	
Keywords <ul style="list-style-type: none">• achievement assessment/ proficiency assessment• direct/indirect assessment• assessments of performance and of knowledge/competence																	
Ref to the Guide IV.5	Ref to the CEFR 9.3.1, 9.3.6, 9.3.7 Ch 4 and 5 as databanks of parameters for constructing tests and selecting competences																
Task A († † †)																	
Step 1 <p>Discuss the three pairs of keywords indicated above in relation to the title. Now insert the different types of assessments into the appropriate side of the following grid</p>																	
<table border="1"><tr><td>competence -----</td><td>----- action</td></tr><tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr><tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr><tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr><tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr><tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr><tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr><tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr></table>		competence -----	----- action														
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Step 2 <p>Skim paragraphs 9.3.1, 9.3.6 and 9.3.7 of the CEFR and continue filling in the grid. You will insert other keywords, examples of activities, and examples of tests.</p>																	
Step 3 <p>In the grid there are not two separate columns for competence and action but rather there is a continuum between the two concepts. Discuss possible reasons for that. Read again the following passage and discuss the type of tasks envisaged and the meaning of the expression “relevant situation”:</p>																	



In communicative testing in a needs-oriented teaching and learning context one can argue that the distinction between achievement (oriented to the content of the course) and proficiency (oriented to the continuum of real world ability) should ideally be small. To the extent that an achievement assessment tests practical language use in relevant situations and aims to offer a balanced picture of emerging competence, it has a proficiency angle. To the extent that a proficiency assessment consists of language and communicative tasks based on a transparent relevant syllabus, giving the learner the opportunity to show what they have achieved, that test has an achievement element.

(CEFR, p. 184)

Task B

Step 1 (†)

Consider your own context and curriculum and jot down examples of possible tasks in relevant situation. Do not forget practicality of the tests though.

Step 2 († † †)

Share with colleagues, discuss reasons for your choice and prepare a synthesis on a poster.

Task C

Step 1 (†)

Consider the following two quotations from the CEFR:

The language learner/user's communicative language competence is activated in the performance of the various *language activities*, involving **reception**, **production**, **interaction** or **mediation** (in particular interpreting or translating). Each of these types of activity is possible in relation to texts in oral or written form, or both.

(CEFR, p. 14)

Unfortunately one can never test competences directly. All one ever has to go on is a range of performances, from which one seeks to generalise about proficiency. Proficiency can be seen as competence put to use. In this sense, therefore, all tests assess only performance, though one may seek to draw inferences as to the underlying competences from this evidence.

(CEFR, p. 187)

Do you agree with these statements? Why? Why not?

Step 2 (†)

Read now the entire paragraph 9.3.7 and focus on the considerations concerning the notion of



performance and its link with assessment and assessment possibilities.

In what way the distinction between competence and performance is similar to the distinction between direct and indirect assessment? Make hypotheses, then read paragraph 9.3.6 and chapter IV, 5 of the Guide.

Step 3 (†)

As suggested in paragraph 9.3.6, explore chapter 5 for descriptors of different aspects of competence and chapter 4 for parameters which can be used for the selection of themes, texts and tasks to be used in testing both receptive and productive skills. Consider how these parameters can help you identify different linguistic competences while formulating test questions.

Step 4 († †)

Select aspects of competence and parameters you would like to focus on in order to improve your assessment practice. Discuss your choices with a colleague.

