

Relating the GEPT to the CEFR: Policy, Practice, and Reflections

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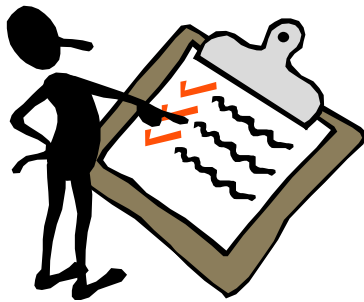
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For what uses is the CEFR intended?

Aims to provide “a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe.”

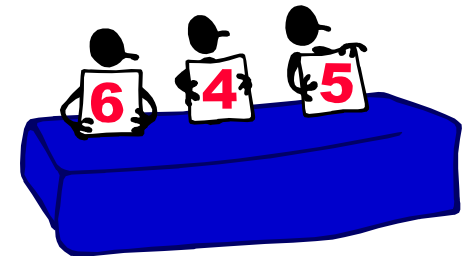
(Council of Europe, 2001:1)



Language learning
programmes



Self-directed
learning



Language certification

CEFR in Taiwan

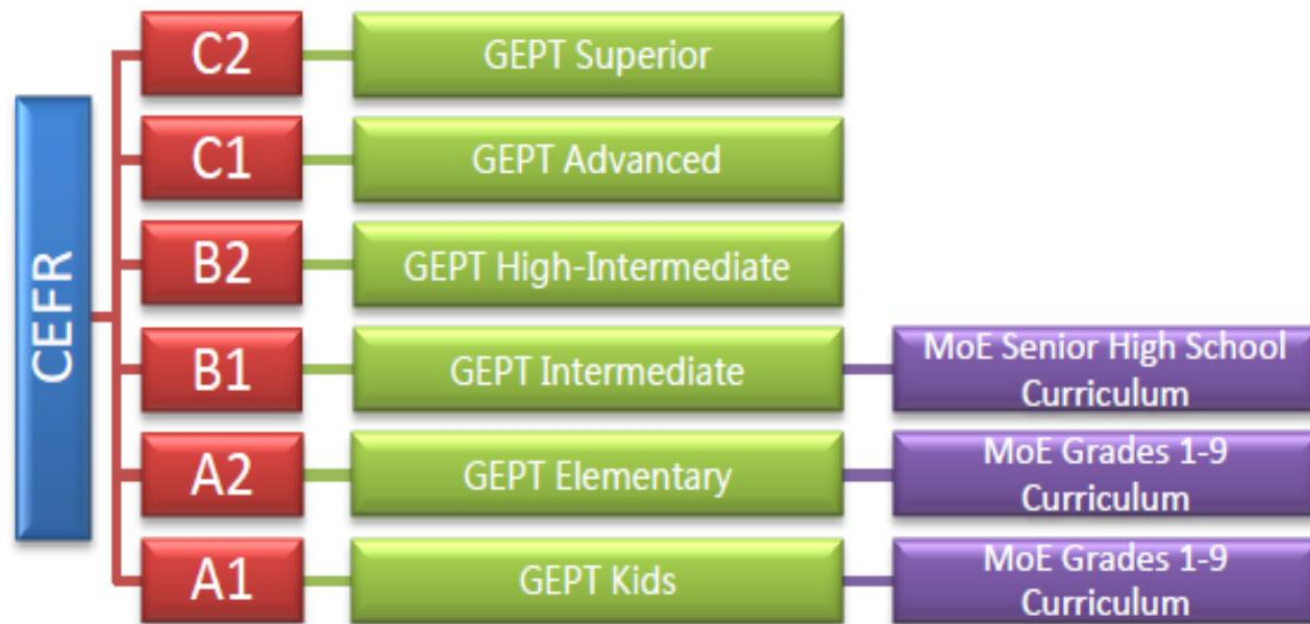
- Primarily used for assessment purposes
- MoE decided to adopt the CEFR in 2005 to use it as a common yardstick to benchmark test results and set English proficiency targets for local learners.
- Test providers are required to calibrate their tests against the CEFR levels.
- [A score comparison table](#) from which score users are free to choose an appropriate test.
- College students, English teachers and civil servants are required to demonstrate English proficiency at a certain CEFR level (eg., English graduation requirement).

A Score Concordance Table

Cambridge Main Suite	BULATS	GEPT	CEFR	TOEFL	TOEIC	IELTS
KET	Level 1	Elementary	A2	--	350	3
PET	Level 2	Intermediate	B1	57	550	5
FCE	Level 3	High-Intermediate	B2	87	750	6
CAE	Level 4	Advanced	C1	110	880	7
CPE	Level 5	Superior	C2	--	950	8

The General English Proficiency Test

- developed with reference to the English curriculum in Taiwan to provide accessible attainment targets for English learners at different stages
- widely used by government sectors and private institutions for recruitment or job promotion, and schools for graduation requirements
- linked with the CEFR to provide further information for interpreting GEPT scores



GEPT-CEFR linking Studies: Green et al forthcoming, Harding & Brunfaut 2014, Knoch 2016, Wu 2014, Wu & Wu 2010

GEPT-CEFR linking studies

<https://www.lttc.ntu.edu.tw/thesis.htm>

	Component
Wu & Wu, 2010	Reading
Brunfaut & Harding, 2014	Listening
Wu, 2014	Reading
Knoch, 2016	Writing
Green, et al., 2017	Speaking

Two-fold purpose:

- Meeting the MoE's requirement
- Establishing GEPT's criterion validity
- ✓ GEPT Research Grants Programs starting 2010
- ✓ Research reports are available online.

CEFR Linking procedures

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Development of policies
Development and implementation of curricula
Common European

The CEFR and language examinations: a toolkit

The CEFR has had a particular influence on language assessment. The following tools are available to assessment providers and other practitioners with an interest in language testing:


- a *Manual for Relating Language Examinations to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* accompanied by *Further Material on Maintaining Standards across Languages, Contexts and Administrations* by exploiting *Teacher Judgment and IRT Scaling*;
- a technical *Reference Supplement to the Manual for Relating Examinations to the CEFR*
- a *Manual for Language test development and examining for use with the CEFR* – produced by ALTE on behalf of the Language Policy Unit, Council of Europe (2011). This *Manual* has also been translated into German and into Basque.
- illustrations of the European levels of language proficiency
- content analysis grids for speaking, writing, listening and reading materials
- the proceedings of the colloquium on *Standard Setting Research and its Relevance to the CEFR*
- *Reference Level Descriptions (RLD)* for national and regional languages

Manual for relating Language Examinations to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)

The primary aim of this Manual is to help the providers of examinations to develop, apply and report transparent, practical procedures in a

http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Manual1_EN.asp

January 2009


COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE
Language Policy Division
Division des Politiques Linguistiques

Relating Language Examinations to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR)

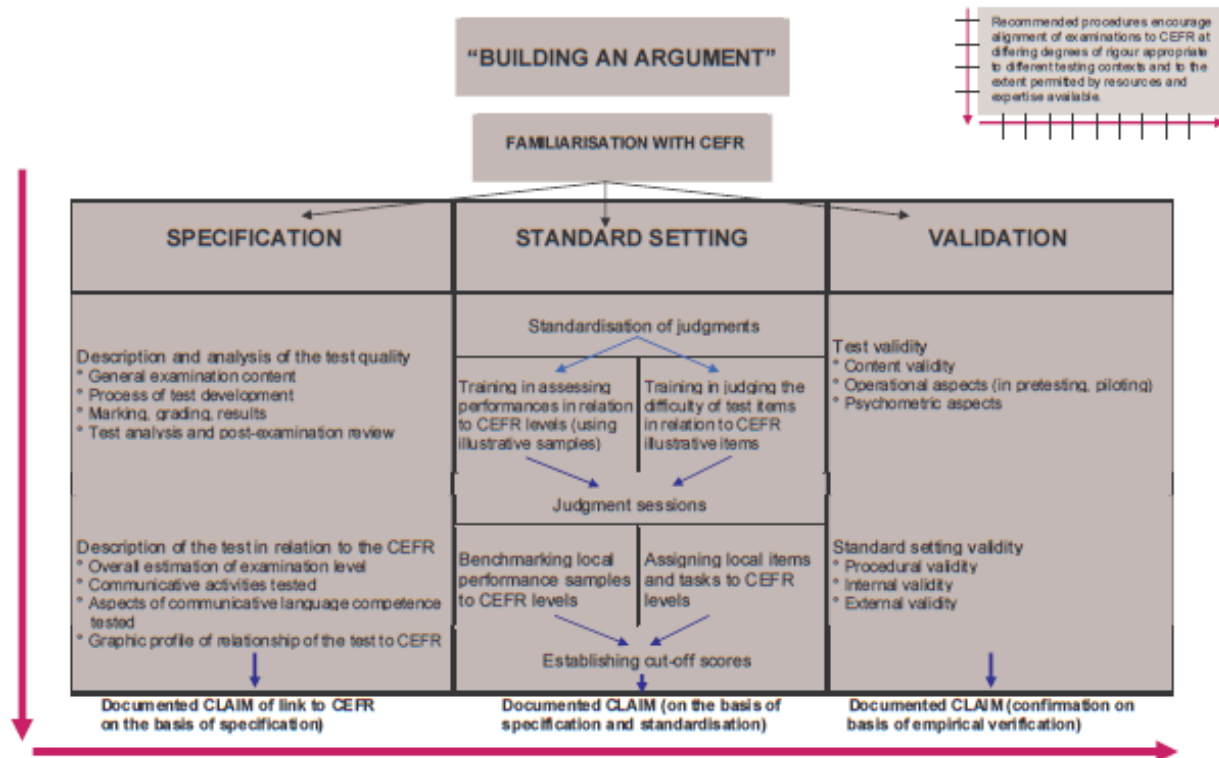
A Manual

Language Policy Division, Strasbourg
www.coe.int/lang

Stages in the Linking Process



Figure 2.2: Visual Representation of Procedures to Relate Examinations to the CEFR



24 forms for detailed analysis of tests

Manual for relating Language Examinations to the CEFR

Elements from Appendix A

Section A2: Forms for Describing the Examination (Chapter 4)

GENERAL EXAMINATION DESCRIPTION		
1. General Information		
Name of examination		
Language tested		
Examining institution		
Version analysed (date)		
Type of examination	<input type="checkbox"/> International <input type="checkbox"/> National <input type="checkbox"/> Regional <input type="checkbox"/> Institutional	
Purpose		
Target population	<input type="checkbox"/> Lower Sec <input type="checkbox"/> Upper Sec <input type="checkbox"/> Uni/College Students <input type="checkbox"/> Adult	
No. of test takers per year		
2. What is the overall aim?		
3. What are the more specific objectives? If available describe the needs of the intended users on which this examination is based.		
4. What is/are principal domain(s)?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Personal <input type="checkbox"/> Occupational <input type="checkbox"/> Educational		
5. Which communicative activities are tested?	Name of Subtest(s)	Duration
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Listening comprehension <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Reading comprehension <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Spoken interaction <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Written interaction <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Spoken production <input type="checkbox"/> 6 Written production <input type="checkbox"/> 7 Integrated skills <input type="checkbox"/> 8 Spoken mediation of text <input type="checkbox"/> 9 Written mediation of text <input type="checkbox"/> 10 Test structure validity		

Council of Europe (2009). *Relating Language Examinations to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment: A Manual*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe. p. 15

GEPT-CEFR Linking Studies

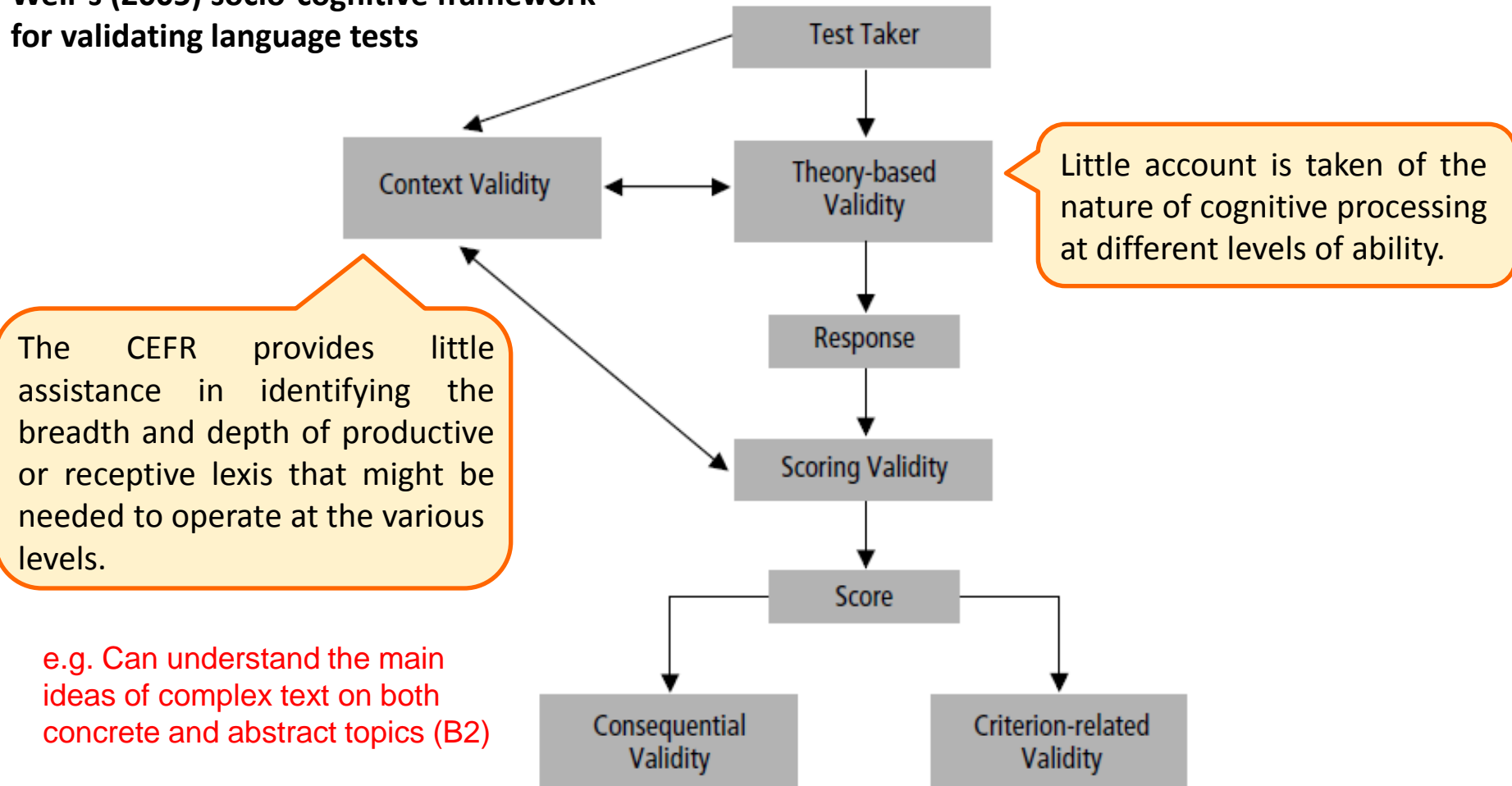
guided by the recommended procedures set out in the Manual (Council of Europe, 2003 & 2009)

	No of Panelists	Method	Results			
			Elementary	Intermediate	High-Intermediate	Advanced
Reading (Wu & Wu, 2010)	15	modified Angoff	A2+	B1	B2-	C1
Listening (Brunfaut & Harding, 2014)	Twin-panel 6+6	modified Angoff + modified Basket	A2	B1	B2	B2+
Writing (Knoch, 2016)	Twin-panel 8+7	Contrasting + Borderline	A2/A2+	B1/B1+	B2/B2+	C1/C1+
Speaking (Green, et al., forthcoming)	Twin-panel 12+3	---	A2/A2+	B1/B1+	B2	B2+/C1

Limitations of the CEFR

(e.g. Alderson (Ed) 2002, Figueras and Noijons 2009, Kecker and Eckes 2010, Khalifa et al 2010, Martyniuk and Noijons 2007, Morrow 2004, Wu and Wu 2010)

Weir's (2005) socio-cognitive framework for validating language tests



e.g. Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics (B2)

Weir, C. (2005). Limitations of the Common European Framework for development comparable examinations and tests. *Language Testing*, 22(3), 281-300.

Comparing the GEPT and Cambridge reading test scores at an equivalent level (Wu, 2014)

Participants:

-268 target test takers at the GEPT Intermediate and High-Intermediate levels

Instruments:

-GEPT and Cambridge reading tests at B1 and B2 levels,
Cognitive processing questionnaire, automated textual analysis tools (Coh-Metrix, VocabProfile, and WordSmith), and contextual parameter checklist (expert judgement)

Results:

-The GEPT is equivalent to CEFR B1 level in terms of contextual features and cognitive operations.

CEFR in Taiwan – What adopted & What not?



The planning of language certification

(overtly used in testing and assessment)

– Introducing **negative impact!!!**



The planning of language learning program

(promoting transparency and coherence in language teaching)



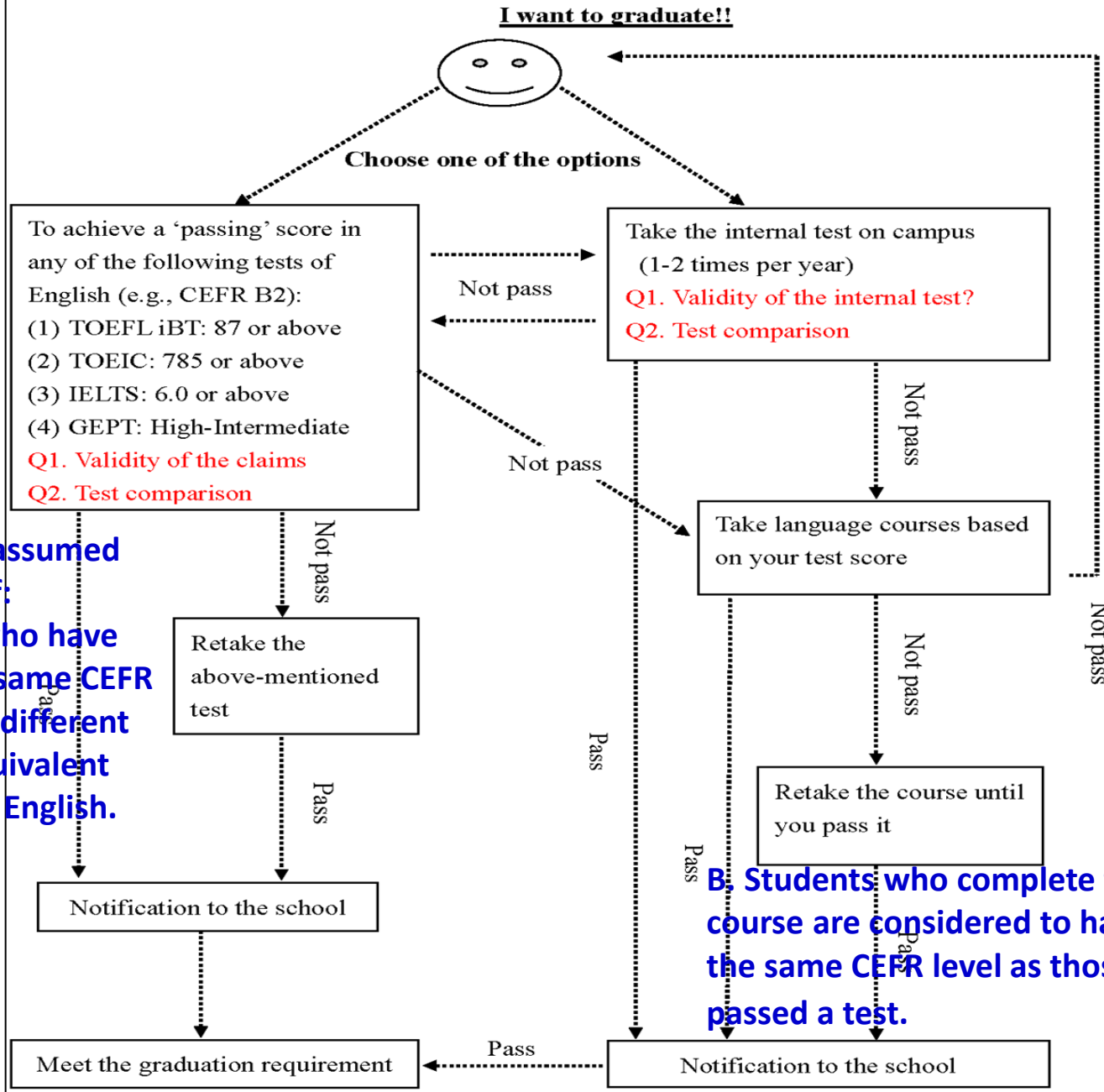
The planning of self-directed learning

(empowering autonomous learning)

Problems & Issues

- CEFR levels as exit benchmarks in tertiary education
 - Test score comparison
 - Validity of the claimed linkage between curriculum and the CEFR





CEFR levels as exit benchmark in tertiary education

Problems in linking external tests, English courses and the CEFR???

What is the relationship among the criteria in classroom assessment, external tests and the CEFR?

.....

Do these three paths lead to the same product of English language ability?

.....

To what extent is the curriculum linked with the CEFR framework?

Findings: Understanding & Perception

(Hsu, 2016)

Have you heard of the term, the “CEFR”?

Teacher respondents (N=293)	Student respondents (N=2940)
Yes (N=204; 70.59%)	Yes (N=337; 15.92%)
No (N= 73; 25.26%)	No (N=1659; 78.37%)
Not sure (N=12; 4.15%)	Not sure (N=121; 5.72%)

Findings: Understanding & Perception

(Hsu, 2016)

Interview results

Teacher

- Teachers' limited understanding of the CEFR
- Concerned about the feasibility of designing a CEFR-based English curriculum due to large class size
- CEFR is simply used as a test score conversion tool
- The mandate benefiting testing companies



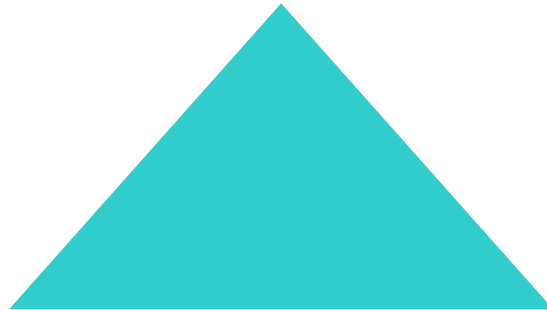
The Way Forward (1)



Bridge the gap between the CEFR and actual learning/teaching practices

- How to bring curriculum, pedagogy and assessment into closer interaction with one another.

Trinity? Trilemma?



The Way Forward (2)



- Improving stakeholders' understanding of the CEFR
- Offer training workshops to language instructors, TAs, educators, university decision-makers and staff about what the mandate is in relation to the CEFR
- Re-think how the CEFR should be adopted and adapted to meet the local learning and teaching needs in Taiwan
- Invite critical dialogues among scholars in Taiwan regarding approaches of CEFR-based English curriculum design
- Invite language instructors to share experience and difficulty in applying the CEFR-related activities
- **More discussion about the roles and limits of using a standard as reference for language teaching and assessment.**

All roads lead to Rome?

- Where are we going to take learners to?
- What kind of impact do we intend to bring?
- Any linkage should be supported empirically (Standard-assessment/curriculum/materials).
- Use the standard/framework as guiding principles or a mandate? Consequences?



Thank you!

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THE LANGUAGE TRAINING & TESTING CENTER