

C R O M O

Intercultural Crossborder Module –
a supplement to ELP 15+

Teacher's guide



MPI

*Agenzia Nazionale per lo Sviluppo
dell'Autonomia Scolastica
Friuli Venezia Giulia*



Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo

CROMO: Intercultural Crossborder Module – a supplement to ELP 15+

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INTRODUCTORY THEORETICAL REFERENCES

The EUROPEAN LANGUAGE PORTFOLIO (ELP)

Gunther Abuja

The ELP has an obligatory three-part structure and is based on the *Common European Framework of reference (CEFR)*¹. In order to ensure international comparability, language skills are defined in terms of skills and the six reference levels in the *Common European Framework* (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2).

All ELPs in Europe are based on the *Common European Framework of reference*, irrespective of where, for which purpose or target group they were developed.

The ELP and its modular approach: Three parts forming a whole

The *European Language Portfolio* consists of three parts. It is the property of the learner and all the work done by the learners is recorded independently by them.

Language Passport

The language passport gives a summary overview of the learner's linguistic identity and language learning experience. It lists all the languages used by the learner at home and at school and describes the learner's language skills with reference to the six levels of proficiency described in the *Common European Framework*. It also lists all certificates and diplomas obtained by the learner as well as stays abroad and important intercultural experiences.

Language Biography

The Language Biography includes checklists which allow learners to evaluate and assess their proficiency in each of their languages. It also encourages them to define new learning goals and objectives.

In some Language Portfolios the Language Biography serves a wider pedagogic function and includes useful suggestions for learning strategies as well as tips for effective learning.

Dossier

Samples of the learner's work are collected in the Dossier. These can be written texts, reports, email messages, diary entries, texts recorded on audio or videotape, collages or language games.

The Dossier can also be used to provide evidence of the learner's language skills and constitutes a good basis for self-reflection.

¹ Council of Europe. *Gemeinsamer europäischer Referenzrahmen für Sprachen: lernen, lehren, beurteilen*. Berlin: Langenscheidt, 2001. S. 14. Download: www.goethe.de/referenzrahmen. [English version: Council of Europe. *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment*. Cambridge: CUP, 2001. Italian version: Consiglio d'Europa, *Quadro Comune Europeo di Riferimento per le Lingue: Apprendimento, Insegnamento, Valutazione*, La Nuova Italia Oxford, 2002]

Functions and aims of the ELP

The **pedagogical function** of the *European Language Portfolio* involves several different aspects: The ELP encourages learners to critically reflect on and assess their language skills and competences and to make language learning a life-long journey. It also facilitates international comparison and recognition of learners' language skills and cultural knowledge by placing greater emphasis on the acquisition of intercultural competence through personal contacts, reading, the use of media, visits and international projects.

Furthermore, the ELP encourages learners to take charge of their own learning, be it inside or outside the framework of formal education, at an early or at an advanced age. It allows learners to record partial competences (e.g. good listening skills), as well as languages of which they have only limited knowledge and languages learnt outside school. All language knowledge can be recorded in the *European Language Portfolio* and all competence is equally valid and appreciated.

Another advantage of the ELP is that it encourages learners to assess their own performance in relation to the reference levels of the *Common European Framework*, to plan their learning, set themselves new learning goals, reflect on the efficiency of the learning process and of their learning strategies.

With assessment criteria firmly based on the *Common European Framework of Reference*, the ELP describes learners' skills in a transparent and internationally comparable manner. It also records and documents learners' language and intercultural experiences.

As a record of the learner's personal learning experiences and linguistic achievement, the ELP is a valuable tool which can be presented when learners transfer to another school, plan a stay abroad or apply for a job.

One of the **main aims** of the ELP is to put learners in charge of their own learning. Learners decide what they want to learn and which skills they need to improve; they autonomously plan, observe, reflect on, assess and describe their language learning achievements.

Another positive outcome of using the ELP is that it can highlight innovative trends in teaching and learning and support reforms which aim to introduce a learner-centred communicative and intercultural approach. Intercultural learning, improving the status of migrant languages, new forms of learning, learning in informal educational contexts, cooperation with teachers of other subjects, multilingual subject-based learning, learning counselling and language awareness are all in line with recent efforts to promote a multilingual society and develop a holistic approach to language teaching and learning. All these objectives are supported by the ELP.

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE – to what end

Mirko Zorman

A definition of culture

When speaking about intercultural competence or intercultural education the existence of different cultures is taken for granted. But to be able to discuss the issues of intercultural education a useful definition or at least a description understood by all in more or less the same way is needed.

The Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia² says

The word culture, from the Latin *colo*, -ere, with its root meaning "to cultivate", generally refers to patterns of human activity and the symbolic structures that give such activity significance. Different definitions of "culture" reflect different theoretical bases for understanding, or criteria for evaluating, human activity."

On the occasion of the International Mother Language 21st February 2002 the General Conference of UNESCO – The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization defined culture in its Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, which says

... culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs ...³

Probably one of the most quoted researchers of (organizational) culture Edgar H. Schein (1992, p. 8) finds "commonly used words relating to culture emphasize one of its critical aspects – the idea that certain things in groups are *shared or held in common*. The major categories of such overt phenomena that are associated with culture in this sense are the following⁴:

1. *Observed behavioural regularities when people interact*: the *language* they use, the *customs and traditions* that evolve, and the *rituals* they employ in a wide variety of situations.
2. *Group norms*: the implicit standards and values that evolve in working groups, such as the particular norm of "a fair day's work for a fair day's pay" that evolved among workers in the Bank Wiring Room in the Hawthorne studies.
3. *Espoused values*: the articulated, publicly announced principles and values that the group claims to be trying to achieve, such as "product quality" or "price leadership".
4. *Formal philosophy*: the broad policies and ideological principles that guide a group's actions towards stakeholders, such as the highly publicized "HP Way" of Hewlet-Packard.
5. *Rules of the game*: the implicit rules for getting along in the organization, "the ropes" that a newcomer must learn to become an accepted member, "the way we do things around here"
6. *Climate*: the feeling that is conveyed in a group by the physical layout and the way in which members of the organization interact with each other, with customers, or with other outsiders.
7. *Embedded skills*: the special competencies group members display in accomplishing certain tasks, the ability to make certain things that gets passed on from generation to generation without necessarily being articulated in writing.
8. *Habits of thinking, mental models, and/or linguistic paradigms*: the shared cognitive frames that guide the perceptions, thought, and language used by the members of a group and are taught to new members in the early socialization process.

² <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture>

³ http://www.unesco.org/education/imld_2002/universal_decla.shtml

⁴ I omit reference to sources

9. *Shared meanings*: the emergent understandings that are created by group members as they interact with each other.
10. *"Root metaphors" or integrating symbols*: the ideas, feelings, and images groups develop to characterize themselves, that may or may not be appreciated consciously but that become embodied in buildings, office layout, and other material artefacts of the group. This level of the culture reflects group members' emotional and aesthetic responses as contrasted with their cognitive or evaluative response. "

As a matter of fact, the examples provided in the categories above refer to social groups that evolve in organizations, but quite easily they could also be applied to larger groups, even whole nations, and the examples replaced with those referring to them.

Further on Schein (p.10) points out

... culture implies some level of *structural stability* in the group. When we say that something is "cultural" we imply that it is not only shared, but deep and stable. ... The other element that lends stability is *patterning or integration* of the elements into a larger paradigm or gestalt that ties together the various elements and that lies at a deeper level. Culture somehow implies that rituals, climate, values and behaviours bind together into a coherent whole. This patterning or integration is the *essence* of what we mean by "culture".

Before giving the definition of "culture" Schein introduces another crucial element, which is accumulated shared learning of a given group, covering behavioural, emotional, and cognitive elements of the group's total psychological functioning. Also an important feature of culture is shared assumptions (p.12) derive their power from the fact that they begin to operate outside awareness ... once taken for granted, they become a defining property of the group to differentiate itself from other groups.

Having discussed all the elements Schein (p.12) defines the culture of a group as

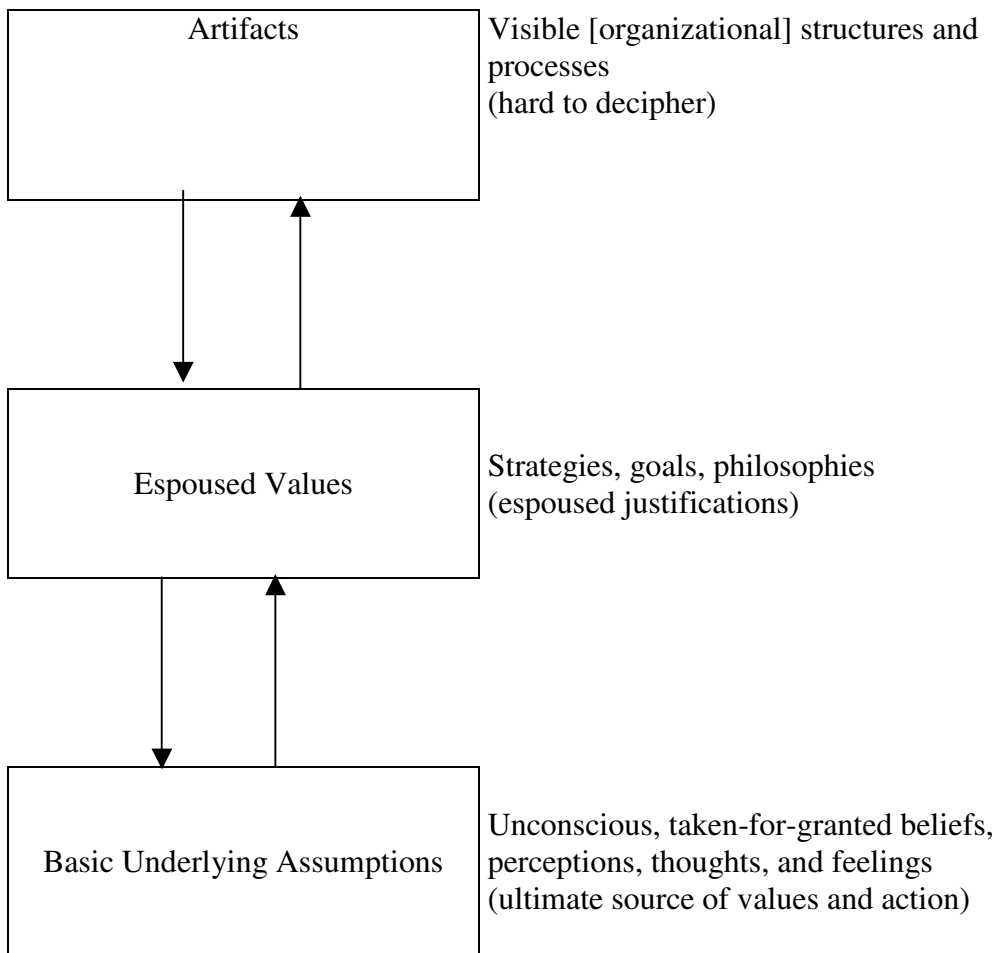
A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems.

The levels of culture

As much relevant as for researchers of organizational culture also for the purpose of getting acquainted with other cultures in education is the fact "culture can be analyzed at several different levels, where the term level refers to the degree to which the cultural phenomenon is visible to the observer (Schein, p. 16).

The levels Schein refers to are represented in the following figure:

Figure 1: Levels of culture (Schein, p. 17)



Intercultural competence – a key competence for the modern world

The function of the stability of a culture is to provide a certain degree of security to the members of a group, yet on the other hand, the unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs can represent an obstacle in contacts between people belonging to different cultures, wrong reading of artefacts or ways of behaviour can provoke conflicts and headstrong persistence on own assumptions about the other to worst conflicts as has so often been proved in history. Enormous responsibility for peaceful coexistence of future generations, something that looks entirely impossible to be reached by the most powerful leaders of today, is placed on the education systems around the world.

Intercultural education has a special position in a region where different cultures meet, where armed conflict has claimed enormous sacrifice in the past and that for the future has the ambition to become a place of prosperity and growth, an example for others.

The function of culture in a social system is to reduce the complexity of the world its members are faced with. As has been pointed out the members learn what has worked in the past and acquire a set of beliefs that govern their behaviour. The problem is a change in the circumstances can make old beliefs and basic assumptions obsolete and useless or even harmful in new situations. Or in other words: in lack of knowledge/competencies people act on the basis of their beliefs and assumptions, so in the globalized and ever faster changing world of today intercultural competencies are needed to ensure the peaceful prosperity of societies. OECD – The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development finds

"A competency is more than just knowledge and skills. It involves the ability to meet complex demands, by drawing on and mobilising psychosocial resources (including skills and attitudes) in a particular context.

In the OECD conception the key competencies "for a successful life and a well-functioning society" cover three broad categories:

- Use tools interactively (e.g. language, technology)
- Act autonomously
- Interact in heterogeneous groups

First, individuals need to be able to use a wide range of tools for interacting effectively with the environment: both physical ones such as information technology and socio-cultural ones such as the use of language. They need to understand such tools well enough to adapt them for their own purposes – to use tools interactively. Second, in an increasingly interdependent world, individuals need to be able to engage with others, and since they will encounter people from a range of backgrounds, it is important that they are able to interact in heterogeneous groups. Third, individuals need to be able to take responsibility for managing their own lives, situate their lives in the broader social context and act autonomously. These categories, each with a specific focus, are interrelated, and collectively form a basis for identifying and mapping key competencies. The need for individuals to think and act reflectively is central to this framework of competencies. Reflectiveness involves not just the ability to apply routinely a formula or method for confronting a situation, but also the ability to deal with change, learn from experience and think and act with a critical stance.

Similarly the working group established by the European Commission to define and select key competences in the framework of the concrete future objectives for education and training as part of the Lisbon strategy emphasizes the complex nature of competencies and defines key competences as follows:

Key competences represent a transferable, multifunctional package of knowledge, skills and attitudes that all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, inclusion and employment. These should have been developed by the end of compulsory school or training, and should act as a foundation for further learning as part of Lifelong Learning.

The definition stresses that key competences should be **transferable** and therefore applicable in many situations and contexts; **multifunctional**, in that they can be used to achieve several objectives; to solve different kinds of problems; and to accomplish different kinds of tasks. Key competences are a **prerequisite** for adequate personal performance in life, work and subsequent learning.

In its most recent version (Council of the European Union) the proposal for defining the eight key competences reads:

1. Communication in the mother tongue or, where relevant, first language;
2. Communication in second and subsequent languages;
3. Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology;
4. Digital competence;
5. Learning to learn;
6. Interpersonal, intercultural and social competences and civic competence;
7. Entrepreneurship; and
8. Cultural expression.

The definition of a key competence relevant to the purpose of this paper is the one of interpersonal, intercultural and social competences and civic competence, which is the following:

These competences - *interpersonal, intercultural, social and civic* - cover all forms of behaviour that equip individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life, and particularly in increasingly diverse societies, and to resolve conflict where necessary. Civic competence equips individuals to fully participate in civic life, based on knowledge of social and political concepts and structures and a commitment to active and democratic participation.

By the definition of the working group all competencies consist of knowledge, skills and attitudes. The following might help consider what knowledge, skills and attitudes are crucial to effective intercultural competence:

A. Personal and social well-being requires an understanding of how individuals can ensure optimum physical and mental health, including as a resource for oneself and one's family, and **knowledge** of how a healthy lifestyle can contribute to this. For successful interpersonal and social participation it is essential to understand the codes of conduct and manners generally accepted in different societies and environments (e.g. at work), and to be aware of basic concepts relating to individuals, groups, work organisations, *racial and* gender equality, society and culture. Understanding the multi-cultural and socio-economic dimensions of European societies and how national cultural identity interacts with the European identity is essential.

Skills to communicate constructively in different environments, express and understand different viewpoints negotiate with the ability to create confidence, and feel empathy are the core of this competence. Individuals should be able to cope with stress and frustration and to express it in a constructive way and should also distinguish between the personal and professional spheres.

As regards **attitudes**, the competence is based on collaboration, assertiveness and integrity. Individuals should have an interest in socio-economic development, intercultural communication, value diversity and respect others, and be prepared both to overcome *personal* prejudices and to compromise.

B. **Civic competence** is based on **knowledge** of the concepts of democracy, citizenship, and civil rights, including how they are expressed in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and international declarations and applied by various institutions at the local, regional, national, European and international levels. Knowledge of main events, trends and agents of change in national, European and world history and present, with a specific view on European diversity *and cultural identity*, is essential, as is knowledge of the aims, values and policies of social and political movements.

Skills relate to the ability to engage effectively with others in the public domain, display solidarity and interest in solving problems affecting the local and wider community. It involves critical and creative reflection and constructive participation in community/neighbourhood activities as well as decision-making at all levels from local to national and European level, in particular by voting.

Full respect for human rights including equality as a basis for democracy, appreciation and understanding of differences between value systems of different religious or ethnic groups lay the foundations for a positive **attitude**. It *means displaying both* a sense of belonging to one's locality, country, EU and Europe in general and (one's part of) the world, and *a* willingness to participate in democratic decision making at all levels. *It also includes demonstrating a sense of responsibility, as well as showing understanding and respect for the shared values that are necessary to ensure community cohesion, such as respect for the law.* Constructive participation also involves civic

activities, support for social diversity and cohesion and sustainable development, and a readiness to respect the values and privacy of others.

Implications for learning and teaching

A carefully chosen mix of activities and techniques is needed to gradually develop the intercultural competence. The ten categories and the three levels of culture as defined by Schein could serve as a starting point for planning the confrontation of 15 – 19 years old students with cultural phenomena. To this end I subscribe to the principles presented by Rudiger Teutsch at the spring meeting of the Cromo project team in Graz, April 2006, the way I understand them:

First of all intercultural education cannot be the responsibility of a single school subject, let alone of a single teacher – it must be a **cross-curricular** task deeply inbedded in the **school plan**, the goals being a shared responsibility of a number of actors, including parents and the **local community**.

Project work on carefully chosen **themes** seems to be the most suitable way to bring the expertise of various disciplines to a common result. Carefully designed progression from simple facts to more complex knowledge, skills and attitudes is required, so this cannot be the matter of a one-off activity, but a **long term process** ranging from the first day in school to the matura exam. Learners themselves are the most important stakeholders in the process, so it is necessary for them to have a voice, **to participate** in all stages of the learning process – from planning the goals and methods to evaluation. The most straight-forward facts can be learnt in the class-room, at home or by observing the cultural phenomena in various settings, yet the deeper layers of cultures can only be studied in direct confrontation with other cultures and in other cultural settings. **Partnership** with those who feel the same need – to learn from others and in communication with others are therefore a necessary condition for efficient intercultural learning. Learning and **using languages** in this context has a multiple function: as a means of communication and as such a goal to itself, as a vehicle of information and as an important category of a culture on all the three levels that present themselves to the observer.

Using Schein's model it seems intercultural learning could start with the obvious level of artefacts and the observable manners of behaviour, conveying the deeper meaning to both and studying the underlying assumptions and beliefs (simultaneously reflecting on one's own culture) requires a wider range of more complex knowledge and skills and would therefore be more appropriate for senior classes. Bringing the knowledge, the skills acquired throughout secondary schools and the attitudes reflected upon would finally result in an interculturally competent European citizen.

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CROMO: ENHANCING METACOGNITION IN THE ELP

Luciano Mariani

Introduction

Both the European Language Portfolio (ELP) and the CROMO module, which is conceived as a supplement to the ELP, are *metacognitive tools*, i.e. they invite students to *reflect* on their language learning experiences as well as on their intercultural encounters:

- the *Language Passport* invites students to use self-assessment checklists in order to show at a glance “the level reached in different languages, the levels for which certificates and diplomas have been obtained, and the extra-curricular experiences gained in the process”
- the *Language Biography* contains “a very brief summary of one’s personal language learning history, self-assessment checklists for the different languages, statements about aims and plans for future learning, and information about the objectives of courses already taken”;
- the *Dossier* is a collection of documents which are selected as evidence of one’s competences, together with a list which describes the essential features of these materials and the reasons for their choice.

Through this strong focus on *reflection* students are prompted to

- *plan* their learning aims and clarify their objectives;
- *monitor* their learning while it is taking place;
- *evaluate* the outcome of their learning and plan future steps to take.

Metacognition in CROMO: Why?

The CROMO module shares the same principles but provides an even stronger focus on areas which are worth asking students to consider in more depth, i.e.

- their intercultural experiences;
- their reactions to intercultural encounters in terms of opinions and feelings;
- their changing beliefs and attitudes;
- their skills and strategies in coping with intercultural issues.

Thus students are invited to go *beyond* experience to make sense of it both in terms of their results (the *product* of learning) and in terms of the *process* of learning (Fig. 1).

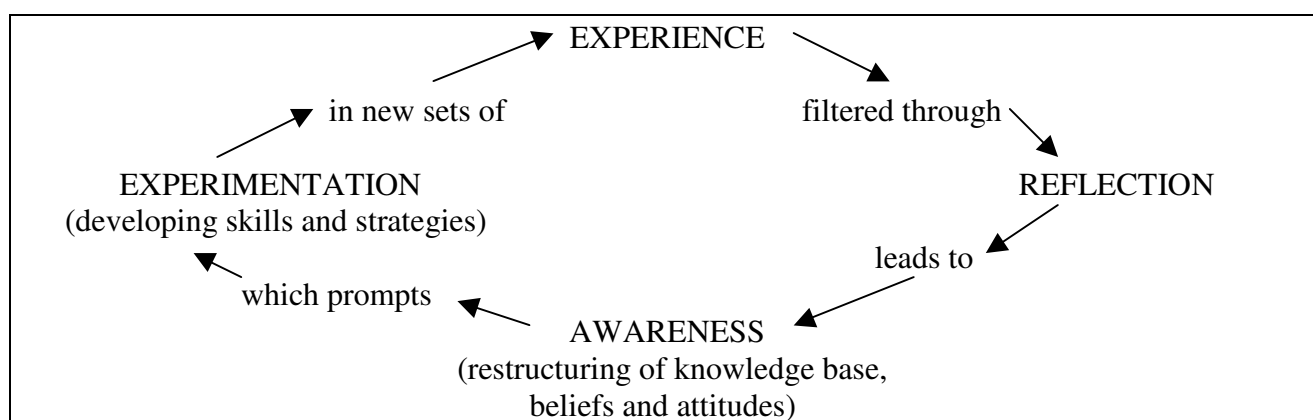


Fig. 1 – The experiential-reflective cycle

The metacognitive focus in CROMO is meant to raise students' awareness of the resources they can activate, the problems they meet, the strategies they use, the beliefs and attitudes they develop, and to prompt students to consider and self-assess how all these elements change while they progress as language learners and intercultural agents. This increased awareness can make an important contribution to the development of students' intercultural communicative competence, since it provides them with a sense of direction and the ways and means to take more responsibility for their own learning, and thus become more independent learners.

Metacognition in CROMO: What and how?

Thus *metacognition* can be seen as *the process of becoming more aware, through reflection, of aspects of one's own learning experience* (language and communication; culture; oneself as a language learner; and the learning process itself), in terms of

- *knowledge*: concepts (declarative knowledge) and procedures (procedural knowledge);
- *beliefs* (mental representations) and *attitudes* (related affective response);
- *skills* (ability to use knowledge, supported by appropriate beliefs and attitudes, in tasks)

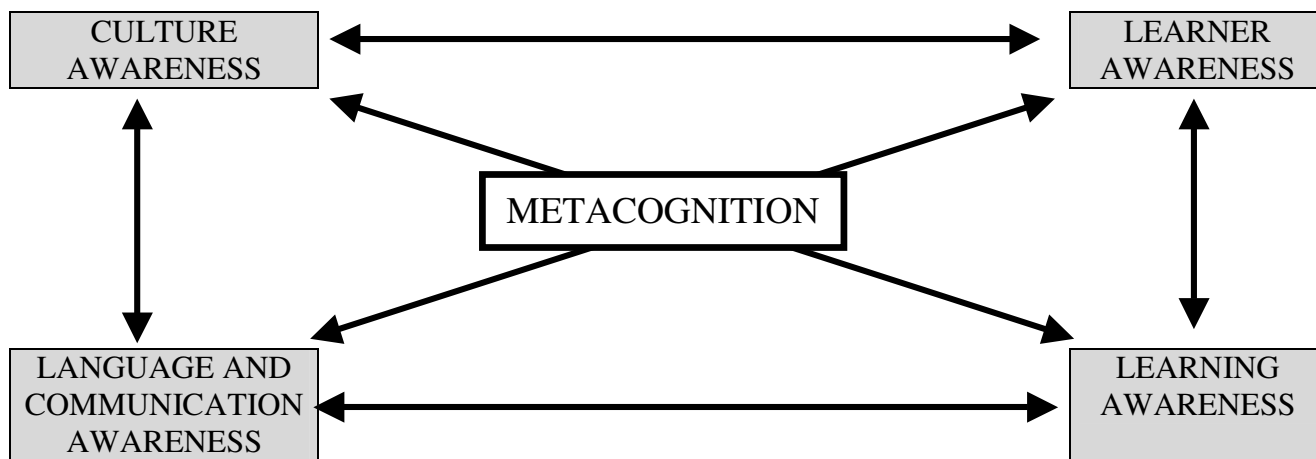


Fig. 2– Areas of metacognitive work

As Fig. 2 shows, the aspects of learning experiences which students can profitably be invited to investigate can be arranged into four interrelated areas.

Culture awareness

If an American should ask an Italian how much s/he earns in her/his job, the Italian would probably feel surprised, embarrassed and maybe even a bit upset. S/he might go as far as thinking, “How rude this person is ...” (*experience, reactions*). Then, on reflection, s/he may start thinking about this incident and ask a friend who often travels to America about it (*reflection, inquiry*). Then s/he would probably discover that some conversation topics are acceptable in one culture but not in others – e.g. talking about salaries is not uncommon in the US culture (*awareness*). As a result, the next time the Italian is asked a similar question s/he won't feel surprised and perhaps will be better able to cope with this sort of situation (*new skills, new experience*). This is an example of the kind of work that students are asked to do in the first part of CROMO (*Section 1: Intercultural experiences*) (Fig. 3).

<i>My Intercultural Experiences</i>	
Short description of the experience:	Did you try to find out more later?
What was your first reaction?	Has your opinion or attitude changed?
Did you talk to anyone about this?	If in a similar situation, would you react in the same way?

Fig. 3 – Example of culture awareness in CROMO

Language and communication awareness

As I learn more languages and as I use them at school and in real contexts, I also start learning more *about* languages: for example, I may notice differences between my L1 and the L2(s), and between the L2(s) I am learning and using (*experience*). By discussing my observations with my teacher and my friends, I may gain new knowledge about languages and how they work (*reflection, inquiry*), and perhaps start changing my beliefs and attitudes about the roles languages play for their speakers (*awareness*). In turn, I may gradually become better able to recognise and describe differences between languages (*new skills, new experience*). This exemplifies the kind of work that students are asked to do in the second part of CROMO (*Section 2: Language and communication awareness*), by assessing how their beliefs and strategies change over time (Fig. 4).

<i>Awareness areas</i>	<i>I believe that ...</i>	<i>I can ...</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> different languages use different numbers of words to express the same meaning, and word order can be different <i>e.g. Italian codice della strada = German Straßenverkehrsordnung; English Highway Code</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> each language has rules of its own, which are as “natural” and “obvious” for its speakers as the rules of my native language are to me 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognise and describe features of a foreign language by using different categories than those I use in my native language <i>e.g. compound words in German and English</i>
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Fig. 4 – Example of language and communication awareness in CROMO

Learning and learner awareness

Sometimes I cannot find the words I need to express what I actually want to say or write in an L2 (and even in my L1!) (*experience*). Should I simply give up? What can help me to solve my problem? I can find out what others do in the same situation; I can ask my teacher for advice; I can look at the textbook I am using at school ... (*reflection, inquiry*) ... and maybe I realise that I can use a variety of strategies to make the most of what I already know and cope with the problems that can arise in intercultural communication (*awareness*). I can then put these strategies to use, and find a moment to evaluate how effective they have been – and I may even invent new strategies which become *my own personal* ones, the ones which actually work *for me* as a unique language learner (*new skills, new experience*). Students are asked to follow this sort of route in CROMO (*Part 2, Section 3: Communication strategies*). (Fig. 5)

My communication strategies	Language used	Context of use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I use a more general word if I don't know the exact word (e.g. <i>flower</i> instead of <i>geranium</i>) • I use a synonym or the opposite of a word (e.g. <i>very small</i> instead of <i>tiny</i>; <i>not deep</i> instead of <i>shallow</i>) • I use definitions or descriptions (e.g. <i>it's the thing you use to open a wine bottle</i> instead of <i>corkscrew</i>; <i>it's like a very tall building</i> instead of <i>skyscraper</i>) • I use examples instead of the general category (e.g. <i>shirts, jeans, skirts, jackets ...</i> instead of <i>clothing</i>) <p>My personal strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • try to gain time – I need to think! • ask how you say something – I believe people can help me! 		

Fig. 5 – Example of learning and learner awareness in CROMO

Metacognition and beyond: towards learner autonomy

Metacognition is not an end in itself. It is a powerful tool in the hands of students and teachers, which provides them with the ways and means to observe, monitor and (self-)assess the various aspects of learning that, taken together and working in a synergy, make up the profile of an independent language learner, language user, and intercultural communicator. Following the *action-oriented* approach adopted by the Common European Framework, language learners and users are viewed as *social agents*, i.e. people engaged in doing things and achieving goals in a given context. Students, and young people generally, are developing both as learners and as social agents, and, as such, they need to activate a number of cognitive, affective and social factors within and without themselves, which, taken together, help to develop their intercultural communicative competence. *Acting* with language does not just mean being able to do things with language (*skills* and *strategies*): it also implies the *knowledge* of the concepts and procedures on which ability rests; as well as the development of appropriate *beliefs* and *attitudes*, i.e. the personal constructs which guide and inform the whole approach. It is precisely the *interplay* between these different dimensions of intercultural communicative competence that sets in motion its most ambitious process, i.e. learning to learn, the fuel that young people will need to progress as autonomous lifelong learners (Fig. 6).

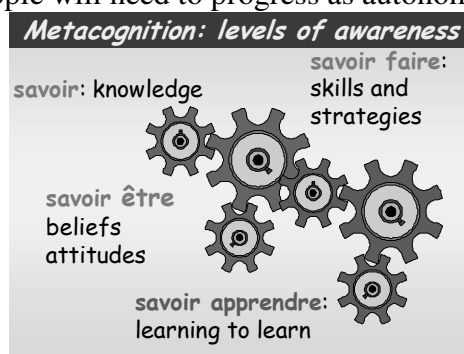


Fig. 6 – Aspects of the competence of a lifelong learner

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR USE

CROMO and ELP: suggested links

Marilena Nalesso

Introduction

As specified in the presentation of CROMO, the module as a classroom tool “is meant to enhance the value of existing national ELPs” by strengthening in particular their intercultural and metacognitive components.

Hence the need for students to be able to integrate correctly their ELP and the activities proposed by CROMO and for teachers to make their students aware of the support offered by the supplement to help them in their communicative and intercultural needs.

Aims of CROMO as a supplement to ELP

- To strengthen intercultural sensitivity in learners taking into consideration their personal experiences and crossborder educational activities (PART 1)
- To increase culture, language and communication awareness through reflection on similarities/differences between cultures and between languages (PART 2)
- To assist students in monitoring their intercultural competence by helping them to develop new *skills* and *strategies* to cope with the demands of communication between cultures, thus promoting their autonomy as language learners and as intercultural agents (PART 3)

The three basic aims of CROMO are implicit in the ELPs as pedagogical tools, yet students are not always aware of what to take into consideration in their intercultural experiences and how to judge their level of competence.

Teachers using the ELP have often complained that they have difficulties in understanding if their students are really aware of the meaning and level of descriptors, as well as of the relevance of descriptors to their priorities and objectives (e.g. when they simply “tick” items in lists and tables). Hence to give students more opportunities for reflection and self-assessment in intercultural competence, CROMO offers a series of activities based on grids, checklists and questionnaires, to help teachers lead students to self-awareness of their skills, attitudes, beliefs towards other languages and cultures.

The different parts of CROMO are mainly intended to integrate the *Language Biography* in existing ELPs, and to support teachers in helping students to fill in this part with increasing levels of awareness.

ELP Language Biography	<i>CROMO</i>
<i>The story of my learning</i>	<u>PART 1-Section 1</u> : to encourage students to keep track of intercultural encounters and to find out more about the ‘other’, thus increasing their knowledge by getting “background information and strategies” to cope with new situations.
<i>My linguistic and intercultural experiences</i>	<u>PART 1-Section 1</u> : to help students think about particular personal intercultural experiences, reflect on their reactions and opinions, and monitor how these may change over time.
<i>My linguistic and intercultural experiences</i>	<u>PART 1-Section 2</u> : a <i>checklist</i> of relevant aspects of the other’s culture (habits, traditions, values...) to be used both as suggestions , in view of upcoming intercultural encounters, and/or as reminders after such encounters, in order to enhance “intercultural awareness”.
<i>My linguistic and intercultural experiences</i>	<u>PART 2-Section 1</u> : a <i>questionnaire</i> to be used as a stimulus for reflection and discussion on basic intercultural issues, such as similarities and differences between cultures, individual perceptions, prejudices and stereotypes.
<i>Language objectives and priorities</i>	<u>PART 2-Section 2</u> : can be useful to increase students’ knowledge of the deep link between language and culture, thus stimulating reflection on attitudes/beliefs about different languages. It can also be of use to help students assess their “can do” skills and strategies.
<i>Language objectives and priorities</i>	<u>PART 2-Section3</u> : to help students overcome problems/difficulties in reaching their objectives by monitoring and reflecting on appropriate communication strategies .
<i>Self-evaluation of competencies</i>	<u>PART 3</u> supports students’ awareness and self-assessment of ongoing developments in their intercultural competence and its many components.

PART I: IN MY EXPERIENCE ...

SECTION 1: INTERCULTURAL EXPERIENCES. A FEW DETAILS, AND SOME LATER THOUGHTS

Ferdinand Stefan

<p>AIMS OF THIS SECTION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To encourage students to reflect on their intercultural experiences. • To provide a structured grid which should help them to deal both with cognitive and emotional aspects of these experiences. • To suggest strategies and approaches that they might not have tried out so far when confronted with such a situation (e.g. finding information in books, talking to other people). • To prepare them for future intercultural experiences and possibly help them to react more adequately.
<p>BACKGROUND INFORMATION</p>	<p>Most of us have experienced some sort of “culture shock”, a situation in which we felt confused about people’s reactions to what we did or said, or anxious because we did not know how to behave in a cultural situation we had not experienced before. Our reactions to such situations could be feelings of surprise, uncertainty, pleasure, embarrassment, or mixed feelings. We, the authors of CROMO, thought that reflecting on these “gut-reactions”, talking to someone about them or finding factual background information about the social or cultural context of these situations can prepare us to react more adequately in a similar situation in the future. Even if this future situation is quite different from previous experiences, we might be more willing to simply accept “strange reactions” for the time being, to postpone immediate “judgments” and to find out more about the situation and the patterns and rules behind it.</p>
<p>STRUCTURE OF THIS SECTION</p>	<p>Even though the grid in this section is a reflection grid and is not meant to be a prescriptive list of tasks to go through, the order of the reflection questions is intentional and, in a way, meant as a sort of “hidden curriculum”. For instance, if the answer to the second question is NO, we hope that in a similar situation the students using this grid might pick up the idea and actually go to someone and talk to them about their intercultural experience. So, for the reflection process the following steps are being suggested:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describing the experience. In order to remember things more clearly, students should describe the experience in detail. Describing things in detail and looking at an experience from some distance can already help us to see a situation slightly differently or to see things we did not realize in the situation itself. 2. Reflecting on ones first (emotional) reaction. Like in other emotional situations in life, consciously reflecting on how one feels or felt and putting words to ones emotional reactions can already help to better cope with them and to get a clearer picture of what has happened.

	<p>3. Talking to someone. People who have been in a similar situation or who know more about its context might be able to clarify things and to provide useful suggestions.</p> <p>4. Getting additional background information. Apart from talking to people, getting background information from the internet or from books could be the next step in the reflection process.</p> <p>5. Reflection on ones present view. After having gone through the first three steps, the student's opinion or attitude might already have changed. As suggested in the introduction to the students, they should re-read their notes from time to time, and maybe find out that after a while the way they see things has changed.</p> <p>6. Thinking about possible consequences for the future. One idea of the whole reflection process is to widen the students' repertoire of possible reactions in interculturally ambiguous situations and to provide them with additional strategies of how to handle them.</p>
<p>SUGGESTIONS FOR USE</p>	<p>1. Individual intercultural experiences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After a brief introduction and possibly one or two examples from the teacher's own life, students are invited to think of one of their own intercultural experiences they would like to reflect upon. As pointed out in the introduction to the students, this might have been an experience in the course of a holiday trip, visiting relatives abroad or meeting people from abroad in your own country. However, we should not forget that, apart from tourists and migrants, we can also come across people with "cultures different from ours" in our own country. Think of a child growing up in a big city who, for whatever reason, has to move to a farm up in the mountains for some time. He/she will definitely have to get used to different patterns and rules in everyday life and it might take him/her quite some time to "fit in". For a child, even moving to a part of the country where a different dialect is spoken can trigger quite a substantial culture shock. But also different age groups or different social classes within one country can be regarded as different cultures with different rules and different dos and don'ts. • After the students have described one experience in written form (step 1), they swap their notes in pairs and read each others descriptions. They speculate on possible emotional reactions on the part of their colleague and then tell the other how they really felt. Then they go through the next steps together, discuss various aspects and help each other formulate their thoughts. As a last step, they decide on what they would like to share with the whole class and what questions they might want to ask classmates or the teacher. • In the plenary session the students are invited to share some of their experiences, to ask questions and to give advice to others. • In a final meta-reflection phase teacher and students might want to talk about the reflection process and discuss to what degree and for whom it has been interesting, useful, a waste of time, beneficial

2. Collective intercultural experiences

- After a class-trip abroad the grid could be used as one of the reflection tools to look back at intercultural aspects of the common experiences a class or a group have gone through. Naturally, the students will also have made some individual experiences, but there is a common background to refer to. So, the students can either choose a group-experience to work on or an individual experience they might want to go through on their own or in pairs.
- The steps could be similar to those suggested above. However, the plenary session will probably be more intensive, since the experiences took place at more or less the same time and in the same area, so the students' emotional involvement and their wish to comment on things and give their views might be more intensive.

3. Possible homework assignments:

- Students reflect on an individual experience on their own and in written form, bring their notes along to school and share them in class.
- Students take one of the experiences they have discussed in class and try to find out more by talking to their parents or by consulting books or the internet.
- Students interview parents, relatives or friends about their cultural experiences, using the grid as a sort of questionnaire-guideline. The results are reported in class.

PART I: IN MY EXPERIENCE ...

SECTION 2: CHECKLIST OF INTERCULTURAL TOPICS

Ferdinand Stefan

<p>AIMS OF THIS SECTION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To make students' aware of intercultural parallels and differences in everyday life in the CROMO-border-regions. • To focus the students' perceptions on specific details of intercultural experiences. • To show them that, apart from the differences, there are also a lot of similarities between the border regions of the three states. • To help them see that there are different ways of doing things and different ways of being "normal". • To help them realize that their own cultural norms are not "god-given" and that some of them could just as well be modified or replaced by different norms or rules.
<p>BACKGROUND INFORMATION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In this section, we have tried to provide a checklist that might serve as a good starting point for triggering intercultural discussions and enhancing intercultural awareness. Most items in the checklist are of a very clear nature and can be identified quite easily in everyday-life situations. They are specific details, things you can put your finger on. • In selecting the items, we have tried to put a special emphasis on aspects the students might be acquainted with or areas they might be interested in. In addition, we only selected items that we regarded as relevant for the specific "three-border-region" for which CROMO is intended. • By looking at parallels and differences with regard to everyday-life behaviour, habits, customs and regulations students should become aware of the fact that many things we regard as "natural" are actually cultural products. Through realizing this they should become more willing to accept different ways of living and also more willing to change or adapt some of their behaviour if need be. • The checklists are definitely not intended as a task-list to be covered. If the students can only give their views on and find examples for some of the items, the teacher should accept this. Not knowing a lot about intercultural aspects does by no means reflect a lack of essential knowledge or even a lack of intelligence. • Also the teacher using these checklists should not have the feeling that the students ought to know at least a little bit about each item and that he or she should teach them as much as possible about these aspects.
<p>STRUCTURE OF THIS SECTION</p>	<p>After collecting items that we regarded as relevant, we grouped them into the following categories:</p> <p>1. Outward appearance, verbal and non-verbal communication</p> <p>The items in this category are probably relevant for any cross-cultural context and can easily be observed and compared. The last item (language register of different age groups) tries to focus on possible cultural differences within one region or one "culture".</p>

	<p>2. Home, family and working life This section covers aspects of everyday life that we regarded as relevant for the CROMO-regions. Students who have stayed with families in one of the “other” regions should be able to comment on some of these items.</p> <p>3. School life It is clear that students can only really deal with this section if they have had some sort of school-visit or class exchange, or if they have attended school away from home for a while.</p> <p>4. Lives young people lead In spite of the fact that globalisation, the music industry and the world of fashion have made the lives of young people all over Europe very similar, there are still quite a few differences that young people will come across.</p> <p>5. Our neighbours’ languages One specific characteristic that can be found in all the three CROMO-regions is the existence of autochthonous languages, mostly called “minority languages”. It has turned out that students know very little about these languages, even in their own country. Comparing the roles and the presence of these languages in their specific contexts will provide students with interesting new aspects and might help them see “their minority language” in a different light.</p> <p>6. Aspects of social life The two items in this category are of a slightly more abstract kind, and the students (and teachers) are kindly invited to add and to provide their own ideas, based on their intercultural experiences. They are also meant as a kind of transition to the next part:</p> <p>7. IMAGES OF THE THREE REGIONS In this last part the discussion is taken to a more abstract level: students are invited to reflect on clichés and prejudices they have come across and on clichés and stereotypes they might have developed themselves.</p>
<p>SUGGESTIONS FOR USE</p>	<p>We had thought of three possible approaches in working with these checklists:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Starting from the checklists and finding examples <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) In pairs or groups students go through the checklists, discuss them and try to find examples, either from first-hand experience or from things they have come across on TV, in films, in books or on the net. All groups could either go through the same items or choose some of the categories. b) In a plenary session the groups present their findings, compare their results and discuss relevant issues. 2. Starting from a specific experience and looking for relevant items <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) After a trip to one of the other CROMO-regions or a class/school-exchange students systematically go through the categories and see if they can find any relevant items which they have come across during their visit. Again, this could be done in pairs or groups, with a plenary pooling-phase at the end. One could also think of going through the lists before and after the visit.

b) Instead of a trip abroad the “intercultural experience” might consist in watching a film or reading a book. Again, the checklists could be consulted before, while and after watching/reading.

3. Pooling cultural experience and knowledge and modifying the checklists

- a) The teacher invites the students to “attack” the checklists by deleting, modifying, adding or changing as many things as possible. They can expand the lists, add examples, create their own categories and cross out irrelevant items. However, they are only allowed to do this if they find acceptable examples from their own experience, from films, books or information on the net.
- b) Again, they first work in groups or pairs and then pool their findings.
- c) In a “second round” they get together in different groups and, based on the previous exchange of ideas and comments, they try to change some more details.
- d) In a final plenary session the “collectively modified version” is put together and (maybe) sent to the authors of CROMO, so that useful ideas and suggestions could be integrated into a second version of the product.

PART 2: HOW WE REACT...

SECTION 1: DIFFERENT PEOPLE, DIFFERENT CULTURES: WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Sergio Crasnich

<p>AIMS OF THIS SECTION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To encourage students to reflect on their reactions to intercultural experiences. • To provide some issues for class discussions and individual reflection in order to help students to deal both with cognitive and emotional aspects of these experiences. • To allow students to express how they feel when they live an intercultural experience, even if they don't feel at ease. • To encourage students to discuss and compare their opinions and beliefs about relevant issues concerned with intercultural experiences. • To encourage students to go beyond overgeneralizing opinions and beliefs about different cultures. • To encourage students to search for thorough information about different cultures. • To encourage students to see different cultures as a complex whole in which norms and values can be different from the ones of their own culture. • To prepare them for future intercultural experiences and possibly help them react more adequately.
<p>BACKGROUND INFORMATION</p>	<p>Cultures can be considered as a complex whole composed by various elements (e.g. language, habits, traditions, norms, values, models of behaviour, etc.). When we first approach another (and yet unknown) culture, we obviously tend to compare it with our own. As a result of such a comparison, similarities as well as differences can be discovered.</p> <p>When operating these comparisons, it can happen that we consider the elements of our own culture as more reasonable and justifiable (and, hence, also preferable) to the ones shared by the other culture. In social sciences, this is a well-known, thoroughly investigated phenomenon. Indeed, social scientists define as <i>ethnocentrism</i> such inevitable tendency to interpret and judge another culture referring to the one we belong to. Ethnocentrism is somehow similar to <i>cognitive egocentrism</i>, which is probably well known to the readers, especially for its psychological and educational implications. In both cases, in fact, the point of view shared by the individual (or by the group) is considered as the only valid criterion of judgement.</p> <p>The assumptions summarized above induced us to the following considerations.</p> <p>(1) For a teen-ager, the contact with a new, different culture is a crucial experience, which can bring about not only excitement and interest, but also bewilderment, uncertainty and <i>cognitive dissonance</i>. In the latter case, the tendency to use not well-elaborated, rough or reductive representations of social reality can become particularly strong. It's quite known that stereotypes (even though they're wrong) can be very helpful in reducing cognitive dissonance.</p> <p>(2) In the geographical area where CROMO has been developed, both positive relationship and violent conflicts have been experienced in the past.</p>

	<p>As a consequence of the latter kind of events, negative attitudes towards the neighbouring people and culture can still be found in some social contexts.</p> <p>(3) Given the students' age and context, it should not be excluded that intercultural experiences provoke not only positive feelings and attitudes, but also undesired and negative reactions in the students – e.g. underesteem, indifference, refusal or hostility toward a foreign (or minority) language and culture.</p> <p>(4) Hence, we thought it should be very important to provide the teachers using CROMO with an instrument for exploring students' opinions about certain issues related to intercultural contacts. Such an instrument should allow the teachers (a) to detect the presence of undesired and negative opinions in the students, and (b) to structure appropriate initiatives in order to promote change in the students' negative opinions.</p>
<p>STRUCTURE OF THIS SECTION</p>	<p>The questionnaire is composed of nine multiple-choice questions concerning "similarities and differences" (questions from 1 to 5), "stereotypes" (questions from 6 to 8) and "managing intercultural contacts" (question 9). For each question, the students can choose one or more of the answers provided. However, the students can also answer by their own, or add any comment or explanation.</p> <p>The students should be allowed to present their different opinions, in order to make them overt and, hence, open to criticism. This implies that the students should be invited not only to answer the questions, but also to explain why they chose or gave a definite answer. Such a task requires the students to clearly put forth the elements which support their opinions.</p>
<p>SUGGESTIONS FOR USE</p>	<p>Why should we manage even provocative opinions?</p> <p>Some of the answers proposed in the questionnaire could seem to reflect undesired and negative reactions towards intercultural contacts, as they imply underesteem, indifference, refusal or hostility toward a foreign (or minority) language and culture. Such a circumstance needs further clarification. In fact, school materials do not usually propose such kind of opinions; accordingly, the teachers could perceive the questionnaire as an interesting but dangerous tool, as its use could give rise to classroom conflicts or other situations not so easy to be managed at school.</p> <p>When we wrote and selected the answers to be inserted in the questionnaire, we tried to take into account a wide variety of opinions concerning the issues at stake. We immediately perceived that some opinions were acceptable, while others were not acceptable as they reflected negative attitudes, rough or reductive representations of social reality, stereotypes and prejudices.</p> <p>We assume that the main aim of an intercultural project should be to promote the acquisition of positive attitudes (curiosity, interest, openness, respect) towards other peoples, languages and cultures. Nevertheless, we would also like to underline that such positive attitudes can only be acquired if previous negative opinions and attitudes are critically examined, confronted with new information, thoroughly elaborated and finally rejected. We think that only a small number of students share negative opinions and attitudes with respect to intercultural contacts. However, we believe that such negative representations</p>

and conceptions can be changed only if they are previously expressed, verbalized, analyzed and criticized in a context of discussion and shared research of a common point of view.

According to us, only in a context in which the students can be free “to say what they really think” without feeling judged it will be possible to activate the openness and willingness to discuss, which are essential elements for any later change.

Some steps for an intercultural educational project

In our opinion, the multiple-choice questionnaire can play an important role in an educational process the steps of which can be summarised as follows.

1) Some students might share unacceptable opinions, but might not be willing to express them openly as they would be blamed or criticized in a school context.

2) The questionnaire, inasmuch as it also refers to such opinions, allows these students to recognize an external source mirroring what they believe. At the same time, however, they are not requested to express their opinions openly and therefore are not exposed to direct criticism and blame: their choice is just one between more possible answers, and is therefore recognized as stateable (even though provocative, exaggerated, reductive, etc.) and, at the same time, criticisable.

3) The explicit request to motivate the reasons for a choice (and, above all, the opportunity to discuss with other people) should encourage the students to undertake a complex activity of reflection and thinking, in order to recognize the reasons and the backing supporting the different opinions expressed.

4) The discovery, through discussion, of presuppositions otherwise hardly to be perceived, should encourage the participants to determine the soundness of the different arguments and opinions proposed: in this further step, teachers and students could plan joint activities based on research of useful information.

5) The final step of this process should be a critical re-examination of the different positions and attitudes held by the students before the discussion and the following activities. The assumption of overgeneralizing or reductive representations of social reality, stereotypes and prejudices is often the consequence of a lack in the available information: accordingly, the acquisition of previously unknown information (together with a thoughtful elaboration) should promote a revision of some weak opinions previously expressed.

For all these reasons, we recommend to use the questionnaire as a self-reflective tool only in order to elicit students’ thinking about intercultural issues. Once the students’ opinions have been elicited by means of individual (self-) reflection, the students should be involved in class discussions and/or intercultural projects involving teachers of languages, history, philosophy, social sciences.

PART II: HOW WE REACT ...

SECTION 2: LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION AWARENESS

Luciano Mariani

<p>AIMS OF THIS SECTION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To make students aware that what they think and feel (i.e. their <i>beliefs</i> and <i>attitudes</i>) about language and its use in intercultural communication can have a strong impact on how they approach language learning. • To make students aware that they can develop <i>strategies</i> to enhance their knowledge of languages and cultures and their language learning process. • To invite students to keep track of how their beliefs/attitudes and their strategies develop and change as they progress in language learning. • To promote a <i>plurilingual, cross-linguistic</i> approach to language learning by making students realise that language and communication awareness can promote positive transfer between different languages.
<p>BACKGROUND INFORMATION</p>	<p>Beliefs about language and communication, and their related strategies, cover a very wide range of areas, and this section can only provide examples of just a few of them, i.e. (in order of appearance in the checklist):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how languages are distributed across countries; • what a language is and what its uses are; • how languages can be described; • how languages can be different and/or similar in various ways; • how non-verbal signals complement verbal language. <p>Most of these areas have important cultural connotations and can therefore be dealt with in connection with intercultural activities: for example, the way a language uses categories of time and space in its grammar is an important indicator of how its speakers organize human experience in their minds.</p>
<p>STRUCTURE OF THIS SECTION</p>	<p>This section of CROMO consists of a checklist arranged into three columns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the first column (<i>Awareness areas</i>) provides a list of basic features of language and communication on which students' attention can usefully be focussed; • the second column (<i>I believe that ...</i>) lists descriptors of beliefs/attitudes for the relevant awareness area; • the third column (<i>I can ...</i>) lists descriptors of skills/strategies for the same area. <p>Examples are suggested to illustrate the content of many descriptors. A line of squares (□ □ □ □ □) appears at the end of each descriptor, corresponding to levels of awareness (ranging from <i>no, not yet</i> to <i>yes, but not so sure</i> to <i>yes, definitely</i>), for students to fill at different times.</p>
<p>SUGGESTIONS FOR USE</p>	<p><i>Classroom tasks</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You may want to find out what students think about language and communication at the start of a course or a school year. This will give you an indication of the present levels of awareness of your class and point to ways of dealing with this issue in your teaching activities. Textbooks often include materials which can be used for this purpose in the early stages of the course. For example, and depending on the level of your class, you can <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • give students different statements and/or metaphors to complete, e.g.

- a language is ... / a language is like ...
- people use language to ... / people use language like they use ...
- languages are different - for example, ...
- languages are similar - for example, ...
- (English) is similar to /different from (German) because, for example, ...

Students can complete these prompts either individually or in small groups before sharing their answers with the whole class.

- give students a few controversial statements which they can discuss in groups. Ask them to provide examples and arguments for their ideas, e.g.
 - a language is basically made up of grammar rules
 - words are what a language consists of
 - some languages are “better” than others
 - some languages have more “rules” than others
 - some languages are more “logical” than others
 - it is useful /useless/confusing to compare different languages
- 2. Ask students to provide examples of the distribution of languages across different countries. You can start from their personal experience (the place where they live, the places they have travelled to, or simply their general background knowledge) and elicit examples of different languages spoken in the same country and, conversely, of the same language spoken in different countries. Students can be helped with maps, statistics, videos, etc., and the discussion can be widened to include the historical, economic and social reasons for the spread of languages in the world.
- 3. At the end of such activities you can refer students to this section of CROMO and start making them familiar with its structure, asking them to read the introductory page and discussing questions about its purpose and use.
- 4. As a more gradual introduction, elicit and/or explain the fact that we all hold certain *beliefs* about language(s), which may or may not correspond to actual facts, and corresponding *attitudes*, i.e. affective reactions. Point to and discuss one or two examples of awareness areas and relevant descriptors in the second column (*I believe that ...*) and see if students can start assessing their assumed level of awareness, allowing them to work in groups for a while if you wish.
- 5. In the same way, introduce students to the *skills/strategies* associated with a particular awareness area. Make it clear that our beliefs and attitudes are important because they affect our level of engagement and motivation as well as our actual behaviour: for example, only if we are convinced of the value of different languages in communication are we ready to spend time and effort to find ways of learning them. Refer them to one or two descriptors in the third column of this section (*I can ...*) and ask them to add their own ideas to the examples provided.
- 6. “Reflection on language” is often included in classroom tasks and coursebook activities, but for the sake of language awareness it is important that such reflection is carried out *in context* (i.e. before, during and after working on actual tasks and texts) and includes, as far as possible, *inductive work*, with students discovering rules, similarities and differences both *within a language* and *between languages*. It is also important to help students realize that by discovering and discussing facts about language they can become *better language learners* thanks to the development of positive beliefs/attitudes and skills/strategies. Referring them at regular intervals to this section of CROMO has precisely this function.

7. Features of language(s) which lend themselves particularly well to comparison and contrast include the following: the use of stress and intonation to affect meanings, word order, grammatical gender, agreement (e.g. between noun and adjective), compound nouns, prefixes and suffixes, case, verb conjugation, use of tenses, words with several meanings, “true” and “false” friends – including the cultural features associated with many of these areas.
8. Facts about language and communication are best discovered through active exploration and hypothesis making, using inference as the guiding process. In this way students can, e.g.
- infer general “rules”, i.e. discover regularities in forms starting from examples found in both spoken and written texts;
 - adjust the system of categories used to describe language (e.g. number of genders and cases, number and types of tenses, systems of sounds);
 - make the most of their previous knowledge of languages (including their L1) to infer meanings, at the word, sentence and text level;
 - develop their intercultural sensitivity by discovering how different languages “label” reality (i.e. objects, ideas, time, space, human relationships, etc.) in different ways, so that each language is the mirror of a peculiar world view.
9. When you think that students have had enough experience with a particular area of language and communication awareness, refer them to this section of CROMO and help them to find out in which columns they can most profitably record the progress they have made, e.g. *We’ve seen how time relationships are expressed through different tenses in Italian/Slovene//German/English ... Where do you think you can record this idea?* Encourage them to add their own examples to the ones already provided in the columns. If students don’t find appropriate descriptors for their new beliefs/attitudes and skills/strategies, prompt them to write new ones and add them where they think it fit in the checklist.

Intercultural encounters

1. If students have authentic contacts in an L2 (e.g. through e-mails, chats, forums, etc.), ask them to make a note of unusual items or features of the L2 that they find puzzling or confusing. These notes can be the starting point for useful discussions and/or comparisons with their L1 and other L2s.
2. In preparation for school visits, class exchanges, trips abroad, etc., you can show students texts, photographs, videos, etc. and ask them to infer the meanings of language items mentioned in the materials by comparing and contrasting them with their previous language knowledge.
3. When students use Part 1 – Section 1 of CROMO (*Intercultural experiences*) they can also record their discoveries about language and communication and then refer to this section to update the changes in their beliefs and skills.
4. Language and communication awareness can assist the development of intercultural competence. Help students see this connection when using Part 3 of CROMO (*My intercultural competence*) by referring them to the *I can ...* descriptors which specifically mention language use.

PART II: HOW WE REACT ...

SECTION 3: COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Luciano Mariani

<p>AIMS OF THIS SECTION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To make students aware of the fact that communication <i>can</i> take place even if one's linguistic resources are limited. • To present a range of strategies that can be used in intercultural communication to compensate for the lack of knowledge and skills. • To invite students to try out strategies and monitor their use in different languages.
<p>BACKGROUND INFORMATION</p>	<p>When we communicate we often find that our linguistic and intercultural knowledge and skills are not adequate for the kinds of meanings and intentions that we want to express. This happens even when speaking our L1, but is obviously more of a problem when using an L2. "Stumbling blocks" can occur</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at the <i>word</i> or <i>sentence</i> level, e.g. when we a word or phrase is not (yet) available to us; • at the <i>discourse</i> level, e.g. when we can't follow what is being said or can't express what we would like to say; • at the <i>intercultural</i> level, e.g. when we can't understand or misunderstand what is being said or done because we are not aware of different cultural traditions, values and assumptions. <p>To cope with such situations, we can basically rely on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>interlanguage-based</i> strategies: we try to make the most of our present level of language and skills, e.g. by using synonyms, examples, definitions and descriptions; • <i>cooperative</i> strategies: we try to involve our interlocutor in the negotiation of meaning, e.g. by signalling that we are having problems, by asking for help, by keeping the conversation going; • <i>paralinguistic</i> (e.g. stress, intonation, voice volume) and <i>extra-linguistic</i> (e.g. facial expressions, eye contact, gestures) features; • more specific <i>intercultural</i> strategies, e.g. apologising for having said or done something inappropriate, noticing the behaviour of our interlocutors, adopting such behaviour and noticing their reactions. <p>Communication strategies are best introduced <i>in context</i>, not as discrete items. Students need to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>notice</i> how strategies are used in the context of actual conversations (e.g. class discourse, taped dialogues, films, interactions on the web); • <i>focus</i> their attention on verbal and non verbal clues (e.g. ways to define or describe, expressions to ask for help, ways to check if we have understood) • be given <i>opportunities</i> to use strategies, either through classroom activities (e.g. information gap tasks, role plays, class discussions) and in the context of real-life interactions (e.g. class projects, school visits, web chats).
<p>STRUCTURE OF THIS SECTION</p>	<p>This section of CROMO consists of a list of strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>interlanguage-based</i> (Nos. 1 to 4)); • <i>cooperative</i> (Nos. 5 to 12); • <i>extra- and para-linguistic</i> features (Nos. 13 and 14); • strategies particularly relevant in <i>intercultural</i> encounters (Nos. 15 to 19).

SUGGESTIONS
FOR USE

- The following activities are not meant to be used in sequence – they should be chosen and graded according to the needs of a particular class.
- Especially in the early stages, it is better to concentrate on a particular strategy or group of strategies; advanced students can tackle more complex patterns involving different kinds of strategies.
- At the end of each activity, refer students to the list and ask them to find the strategies they have used, record the relevant language(s) and briefly describe the context of use.
- Whenever possible, encourage them to compare similar strategies in different languages, eliciting both linguistic and cultural similarities and differences.
- Empty spaces are provided at the end of the list for students to record the personal strategies they have found particularly useful.

Classroom tasks

1. Ask students what they can say or do *in their L1* when they don't know the exact word or expression. Ask them how they would convey the meaning of a "difficult" word to a foreigner who has some limited knowledge of their L1: provide a few unusual L1 words for them to try this out. In this way, elicit some simple strategies and highlight some useful L1 language (e.g. *it's the person who .../it's the thing you use to .../it's when/where .../it's a kind of/sort of ...*).
2. In pairs, one student tries to convey the meaning of words and expressions that her/his partner can't see (e.g. a person who cuts your hair – *hairdresser*, an animal which has a very long neck – *giraffe*; a kind of very, very tall building in a city - *skyscraper*). The partner can have a series of pictures to identify the person or thing her/his partner is referring to.
3. In pairs or groups students write definitions or descriptions and exchange them. The definitions/descriptions can be used to make and exchange crossword puzzles. This activity can be turned into a quiz, a game or a group contest.
4. Students try to express the meaning of L1 words in an L2 using different strategies, e.g. synonyms (Italian *distante* = it's the same as *far*), opposites (Italian *soffice* = it's the opposite of *hard*); examples of a category (Italian *mobili* = chairs, tables, cupboards ...).
5. Using gestures and facial expressions in addition to verbal language, students can mime different situations (e.g. feelings, minor illnesses, etc.).
6. More advanced students can try their hand with culturally loaded concepts or situations, e.g. Italian *ferragosto* = the midsummer high time and holiday ...; Italian *un pentito* = a member of a criminal gang who has decided to collaborate with the police ...).
7. You can introduce cooperative strategies by, e.g. speaking faster than usual or using more difficult words, so that students can be prompted to ask you to repeat, speak more slowly, explain, and so on. Build up a list of useful expressions and invite students to use them when interacting orally in pairs or groups.
8. When giving directions or instructions in pairs, prompt students to check that they have been understood (e.g. *Is that clear? Are you with me?*) and to repeat the directions or instructions, asking their partner to confirm (e.g. *So I go straight on and then turn left ... right?*).
9. In pairs, one student describes one of a number of pictures and her/his

partner tries to identify it (or to draw it following the description). Prompt students to use strategies to ask for help, check understanding, etc.

10. When practising dialogues in pairs or taking part in a group discussion, remind students how they can show interest, encourage their partners to talk, and generally keep the conversation open (see the list). You can introduce these strategies even in the students' L1 and then ask them to transfer the strategies to L2 or L3 contexts – but beware of possible cultural differences in the ways conversations are managed.

Intercultural encounters

1. If students write e-mails to penfriends, use web chats or have oral or written contacts in an L2 (e.g. in the context of a project), ask them to try and record the problems they have experienced in comprehension or expression, and how they have tried to cope with them. Have them focus on concrete examples rather than general situations. Ask them to share these examples and see if someone can come up with possible solutions. Use the list in this section as a reference tool.
2. Encourage students to *notice* how others (e.g. their penfriends, the foreign students in a class exchange) seem to cope with communication problems, and help them to turn this awareness into concrete strategies they can use.
3. Brainstorm expressions that can be used in interaction for different purposes, e.g. expressing opinions, agreeing and disagreeing, expressing doubts, etc. Have students make a list of such strategies in their notebooks and/or on a poster, and encourage them to refer to this list for quick reference when interacting. From time to time, update the list with more complex language.
4. In preparation for school visits, class exchanges, trips abroad, etc., make a list of possible situations which students will have to face and elicit and/or suggest the language that may “come in handy” to cope with possible or even probable communication problems.
5. Reflecting on intercultural experiences includes recalling communication problems and how one reacted to them (i.e. verbal and non-verbal behaviour). For example, while using Part 1 – Section 1 of CROMO (*In my experience*), students can also record specific examples of the language problems that were part of the experience, what they did at the time, and what strategies they would use in a similar situation in the future.
6. Coping with communication problems by using strategies is part of the development of intercultural competence. Help students see this connection and assess their developing skills when using Part 3 of CROMO (*My intercultural competence*) by referring them to the *I can ...* descriptors which specifically mention language use.

PART III: WHAT WE LEARN ...

MY INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

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<p>AIMS OF THIS SECTION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To make students aware of what they think and feel (i.e. of their <i>beliefs</i> and <i>attitudes</i>) as they experience intercultural communication. • To make students aware that they can develop <i>strategies</i> to enhance their self-efficacy and thus achieve success in intercultural experiences. • To invite students to keep track of how their beliefs/attitudes and their strategies develop and change over time.
<p>BACKGROUND INFORMATION</p>	<p>This final part of CROMO, which focuses on “What we learn” provides a bank of descriptors of <i>culture awareness</i> items. Although no grading of items into “levels” has been attempted, it is recognised that culture awareness goes through stages of development, as learners progress from simpler to more complex <i>patterns</i> of interrelated beliefs/attitudes and skills/strategies. Thus the following stages have been identified and highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sensitivity to culture – perception of difference – acknowledgment of others; • tolerance – acceptance – respect: • flexibility – mediation – empathy: • appreciation – integration. <p>Of course each learner’s individual progress can take place along dimensions which may belong to different stages, not necessarily in the order in which they are listed above.</p> <p>The descriptors in this part do <i>not</i> provide an exhaustive account of intercultural competence. Their function is <i>exclusively pedagogical</i>, i.e. they have been designed in order to help both students and teachers to set clear objectives for culture awareness, monitor its development, and (self-)assess it.</p>
<p>STRUCTURE OF THIS SECTION</p> <p>SUGGESTIONS FOR USE</p>	<p>This part of CROMO consists of checklists for the above-mentioned stages, arranged into two columns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the first column (<i>I believe that ...</i>) lists descriptors of beliefs/attitudes; • the second column (<i>I can ...</i>) lists descriptors of skills/strategies. <p>Examples (which appear <i>in italics</i> in the descriptors) have often been provided to assist learners in understanding the meaning of sometimes difficult concepts. In particular, the descriptors of <i>skills</i> provide examples of more concrete <i>strategies</i>, i.e. lines of action which are of immediate relevance to learning experiences.</p> <p>A line of squares (□ □ □ □ □) appears at the end of each descriptor, corresponding to levels of awareness (ranging from <i>no, not yet</i> to <i>yes, but not so sure</i> to <i>yes, definitely</i>), for students to fill at different times.</p> <p>1. The descriptors in this part of CROMO, like the descriptors of communicative competence in the <i>Language Biography</i> of the ELP, should not be considered simply as checklists to be filled in by students. As the introductory instructions state, “<i>Don’t “do” all these pages in one go, or just once – instead, re-read them from time to time.</i>” This means that students should not be exposed to the complete checklists right from the start. They can rather be invited to consider those descriptors which you, the teacher, consider appropriate on the basis of the amount and quality of intercultural experiences that your students have actually gone through. In other words, students should not consider intercultural issues in abstract terms, but need to <i>experience</i> them before they are asked to reflect on their meaning and on</p>

- how their competence has developed as a result of this “experience + reflection” cycle.
2. Most students will require support from you in using this section. Your help will especially be important in going through the descriptors with them, explaining difficult concepts, providing examples, and having them discuss the relevant issues in groups and as a whole class before asking them to proceed with self-assessment.
 3. This part is meant to be used, in the first place, as the section where students can collect and keep track of their changes as “intercultural communicators” which may have happened as a result of the experiences and discussions documented in the other parts of CROMO. For example,
 - when using Part 1 – Section 1 of CROMO (*Intercultural experiences*), they may find that their *beliefs* and *attitudes* have changed as a result of the experiences, and/or that they would use new *skills* and *strategies* to cope with similar situations. By referring to Part 3 (this part), they can be helped to find the descriptors which best describe the beliefs and strategies they feel they are now more aware of;
 - when using Part 2 – Section 1 of CROMO (*Different people, different cultures*), students may develop new insights into cultural issues by answering (parts of) the questionnaire and discussing it in class. They may find that their new insights are reflected, in more general terms, in one or more descriptors of Part 3, which will allow them to self-assess their growing awareness within a more systematic framework;
 - similarly, when using Part 2 – Sections 2 and 3 of CROMO (*Language and communication awareness* and *Communication strategies*), students should be helped to see that becoming more language conscious, as well as using more strategies in intercultural communication, can change their overall competence as intercultural communicators – and they can record and self-assess these changes by finding the most appropriate descriptors in Part 3.

Examples of descriptors directly associated with the various parts of CROMO

CROMO parts	Students' activities	Examples of descriptors in Part 3	
		I believe that ...	I can ...
Part 1 – Section 1	Reflecting on intercultural experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no one culture is “better” than another ... • I may misinterpret what I see or hear, and others may misinterpret what I do or say ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify and use information sources about another culture ... • “suspend my judgment” on people and situations until I find out more about them ...
Part 1 – Section 2	Comparing intercultural subject areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can start to understand a culture by looking at its most “visible” features, but then I need to discover its “hidden” dimensions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • perceive similarities and differences between my own culture and another culture ...
Part 2 – Section 1	Discussing stereotypes and reactions to diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I need to beware of <i>stereotypes</i> ... • I need to learn to tolerate <i>ambiguity</i> ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make an effort to assume another person’s point of view and to <i>empathise</i> with her/him

Part 2 – Section 2	Reflecting on language and its use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I need to learn how to make and test hypotheses about what is appropriate to say and do ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discover the “rules” appropriate to a situation through experiencing it and reflecting on it
Part 2 – Section 3	Finding and using communication strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I need to become aware of and use <i>strategies</i> to cope with the demands of intercultural encounters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “negotiate” with others the most suitable ways to behave in a situation ... • monitor and evaluate my <i>noticing</i> and <i>negotiation</i> strategies ...

4. The descriptors in this part can also be used to prompt students to self-assess their changing awareness as a result of other intercultural experiences, in addition to the work done with other parts of CROMO. In this case, too, it is important to remember that it is usually much easier for students to observe and assess their *behaviour* rather than their *beliefs* and *strategies*, which are hidden dimensions of competence. It is therefore essential that they are helped to verbalize and socialize what they have done, said, seen, listened to ... only after this concrete observation can they be helped to find the descriptors which best synthesize their underlying beliefs and strategies.
5. Especially in the early stages of using CROMO, instead of directly referring students to the descriptors in the checklist, you may wish to ask them to say and/or write *their own* descriptors to express the beliefs and strategies which may underlie their experiences. After they have described their experience, you may e.g. ask them to complete statements like these:
 - *After this experience I now think / I now feel ...*
 - *As a result of this experience I now think I can ...*
and then gradually lead them to relate their statements to the CROMO descriptors.
6. Younger students often need to observe others before observing their own behaviour. This is why it may be useful to show them films, videos, television programmes, as well as written texts (like excerpts from novels and biographies, magazine articles, etc.) which describe intercultural encounters, and ask them to discuss the behaviour of the people involved and what these people seem to think, feel and be able to do. Then students should be in a better position to observe, describe and interpret *their own* behaviour along the same lines.
7. The descriptors in this part of CROMO can also obviously be used as a springboard for individual and group reflection and discussion, thus complementing the questionnaire in Part 2 – Section 1. Especially at the start of a course, you can ask students to consider one or two descriptors and see how they react, thus using the descriptors themselves as a sort of *diagnostic tool* to get to know your students’ initial beliefs and strategies.

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Sitography - Metacognition, awareness, learning to learn, learner autonomy

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A site for students, teachers and researchers, centred on the value of self-awareness as a crucial part of learning.
- <http://www.carla.umn.edu/strategies/>
Reports and studies on (among other themes) the strategies students report using in learning a second language, how strategies affect the learning process, how teachers can help effective strategy instruction.
- <http://www.cal.org/resources/onlineResources.html>
Assessment instruments, like the Learning Strategies Questionnaire and the Language Self-Efficacy Questionnaire; Research Reports and Studies; and Teacher Resource Guides such as the Learning Strategies Instructional_Resource and Teacher Resource Learning Strategies Cards.
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