

# Doing old things in new ways or new things in old ways? - Mediation activities in EAP and ESP

**2<sup>nd</sup> ESAP Conference**  
**Bochum, Germany**  
**11 May 2019**

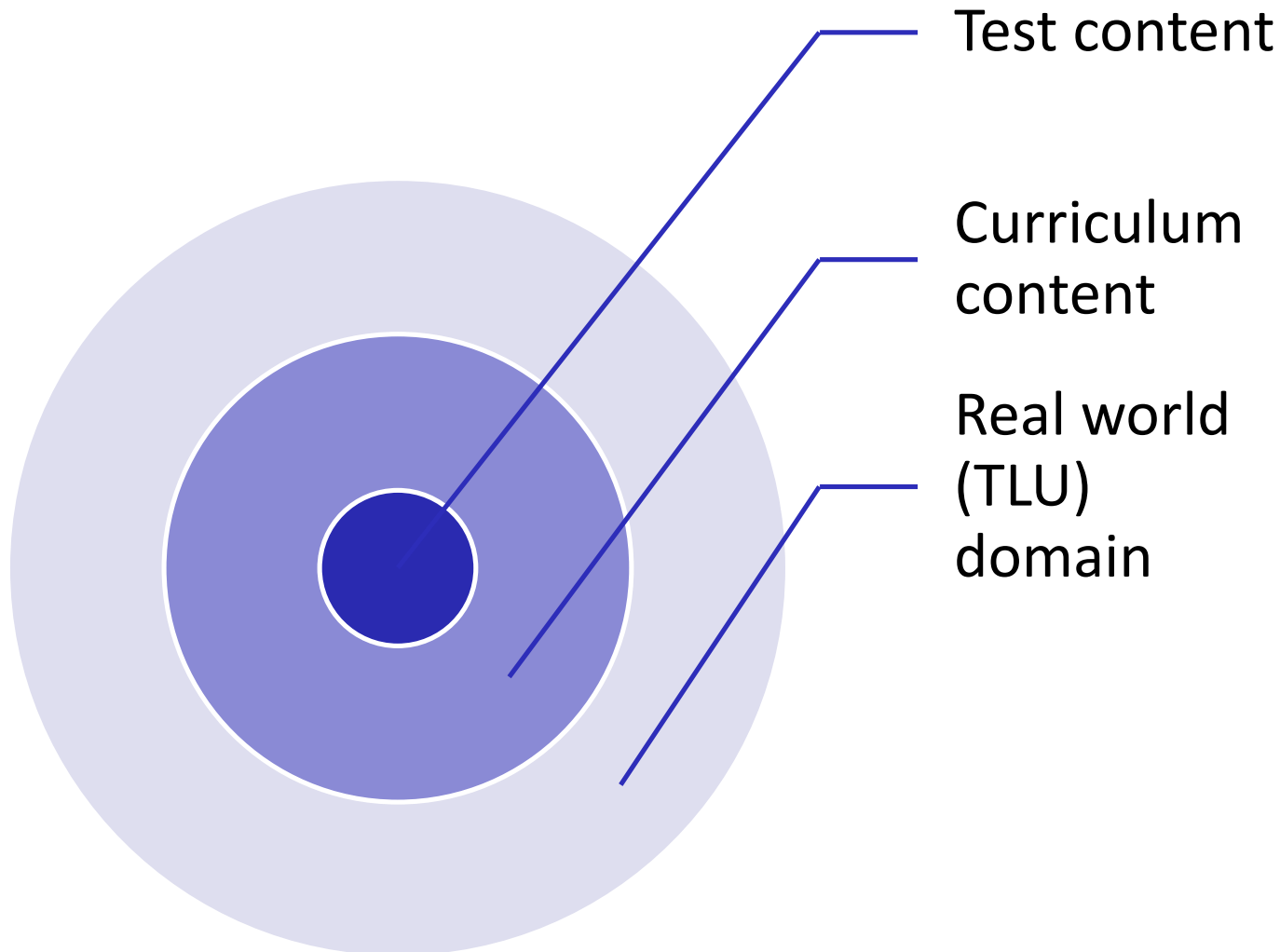
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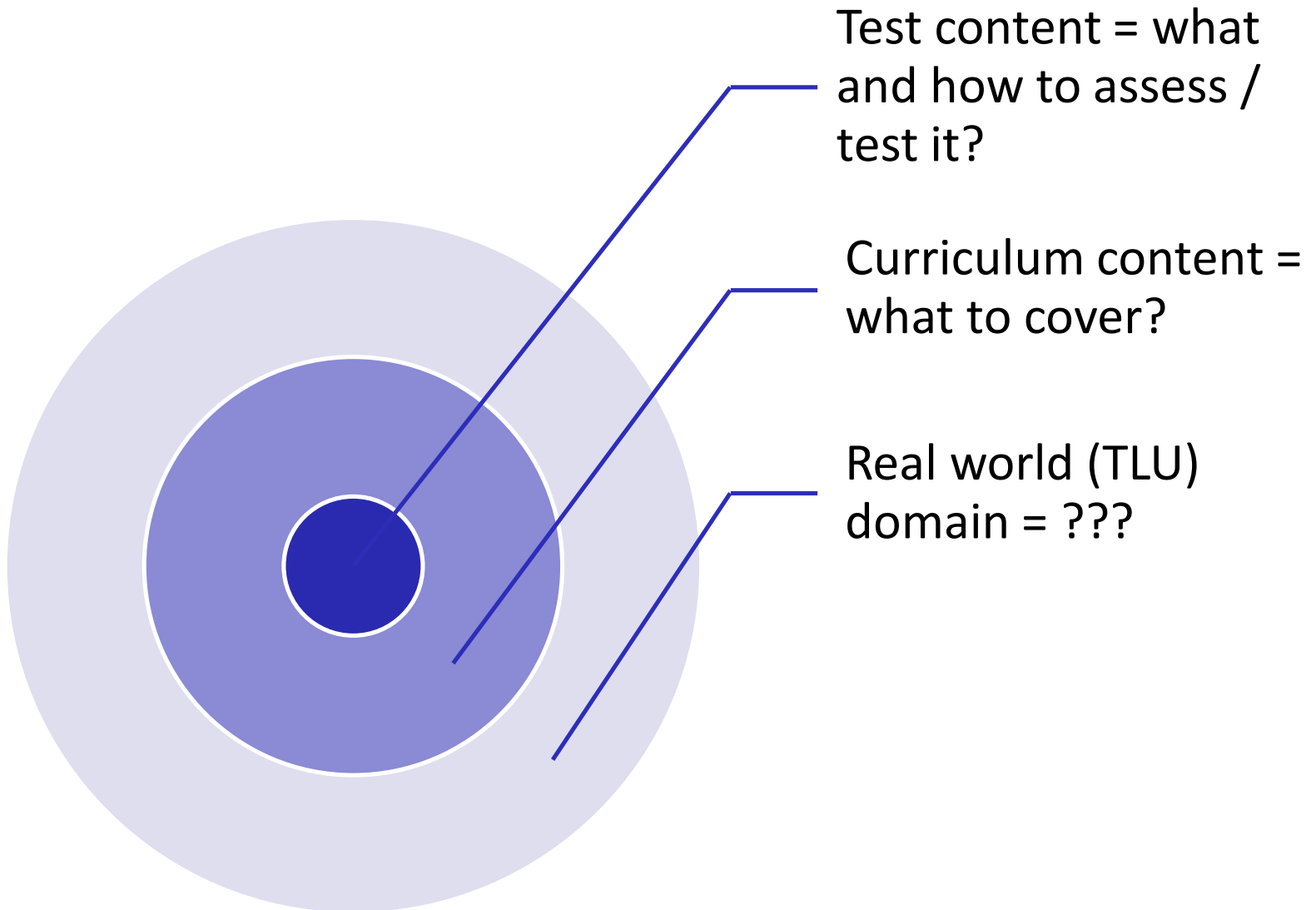
# Outline

- The Target Language Use Domain
- Examples of tasks for new Mediation descriptors
- Implications for language teaching and assessment

# The Target Language Use (TLU) Domain (Bachman and Palmer, 1996)



# Challenges



# E(S)AP - Needs analysis

- What do students of different subjects need to *produce in writing or in speech* in their studies?
  - Essays
  - Business reports
  - Laboratory reports
  - Write technical docs / describe processes
  - Presentations
  - Discussions in seminars / group work, etc.
  - Interact with (admin) staff
  - Respond to lectures / reading in writing or speech

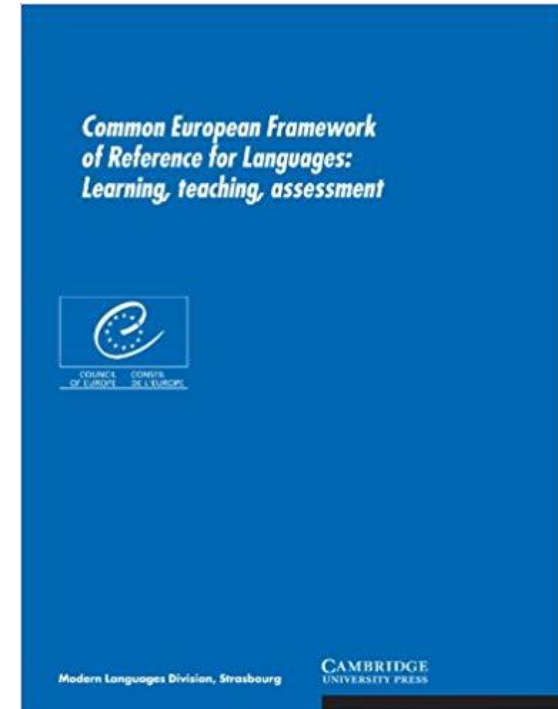
(Westbrook, 2011)

# E(S)AP - Needs analysis

- Source of content?
  - Visual information
  - Oral information
  - Written information
  - Information in L1 or L2

# The CEFR and the Companion Volume

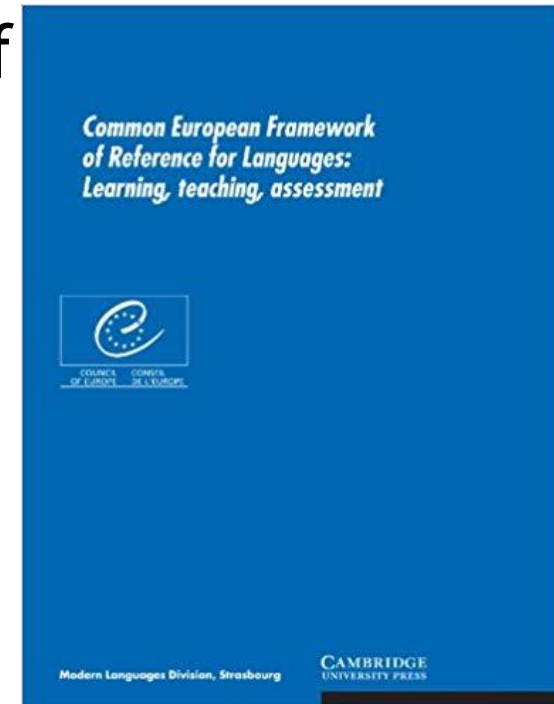
- The CEFR:
  - ‘a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe’ (CoE, 2001: 1)
  - ‘can do’ statements (CoE, 2018: 26)



[https://rm.coe.int/  
16802fc1bf](https://rm.coe.int/16802fc1bf)

# The CEFR and the Companion Volume

- The CEFR:
  - task-based, sociocultural and socio-constructivist theories of language learning (CoE, 2018: 28-29)
  - modes of communication:
    - reception (discrete skills)
    - production (discrete skills)
    - interaction (integrated skills)
    - mediation (integrated skills)
      - more reflective of TLU domain (CoE, 2018: 30)





# The CEFR and the Companion Volume

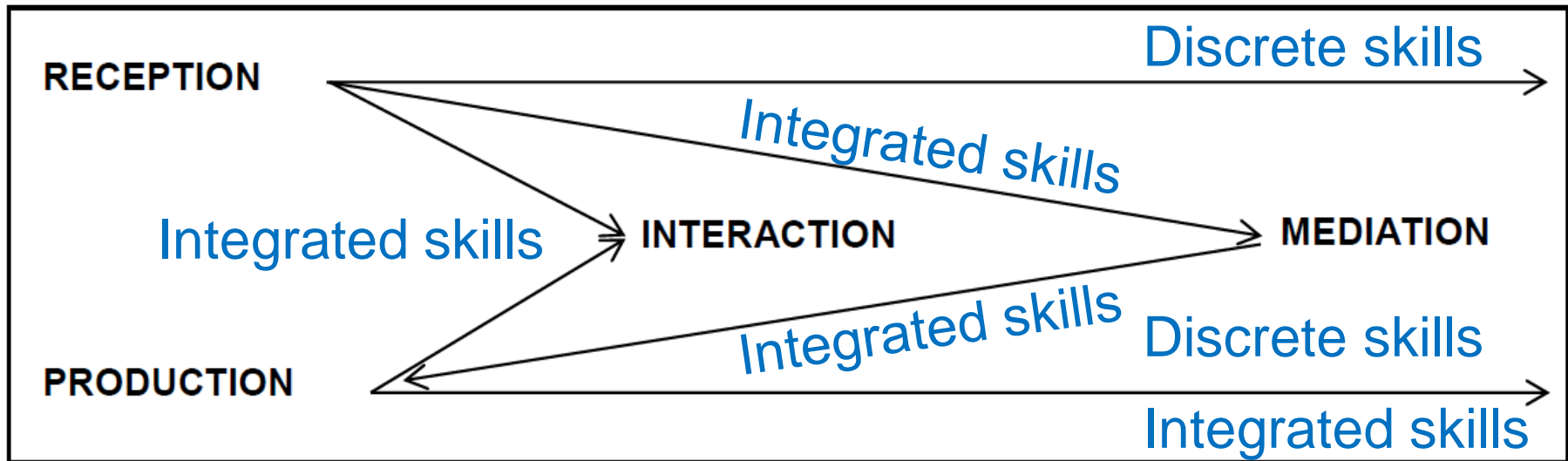


Figure 2 – The relationship between reception, production, interaction and mediation.

# The CEFR and the Companion Volume

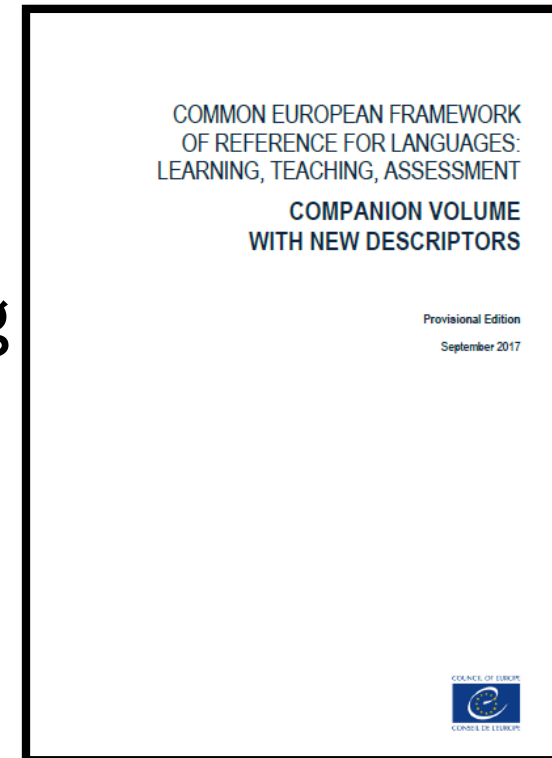
The CEFR introduces the concept of mediation as follows:

‘In both the receptive and productive modes, the written and/or oral activities of **mediation** make communication possible between persons who are unable, for whatever reason to communicate with each other directly. Translation or interpretation, a paraphrase, summary or record, which provides for a third party a (re)formulation of a source text to which this third party does not have direct access. Mediation language activities, (re)processing an existing text, occupy an important place in the normal linguistic functioning of our societies.’

(CEFR Section 2.1.3, in CoE, 2018: 32)

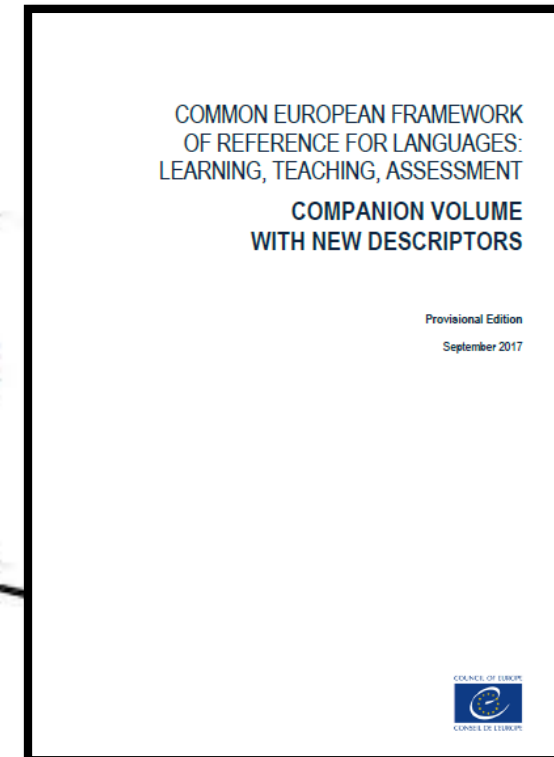
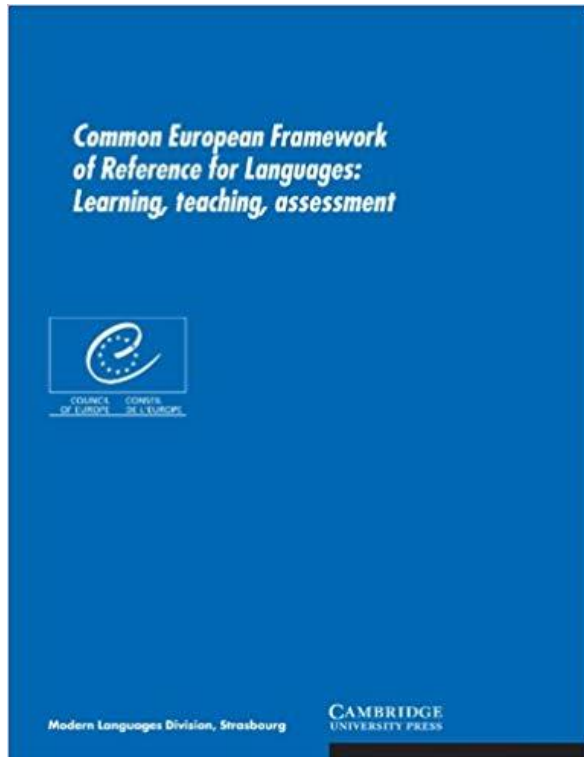
# The CEFR and the Companion Volume

- Companion Volume (Council of Europe, 2018):
  - New scales (e.g. mediation)
  - ***Supplements*** / amends existing scales
  - Goes beyond language proficiency (includes interpersonal / intercultural skills)
  - Wider view of mediation



<https://rm.coe.int/cefr-companion-volume-with-new-descriptors-2018/1680787989>

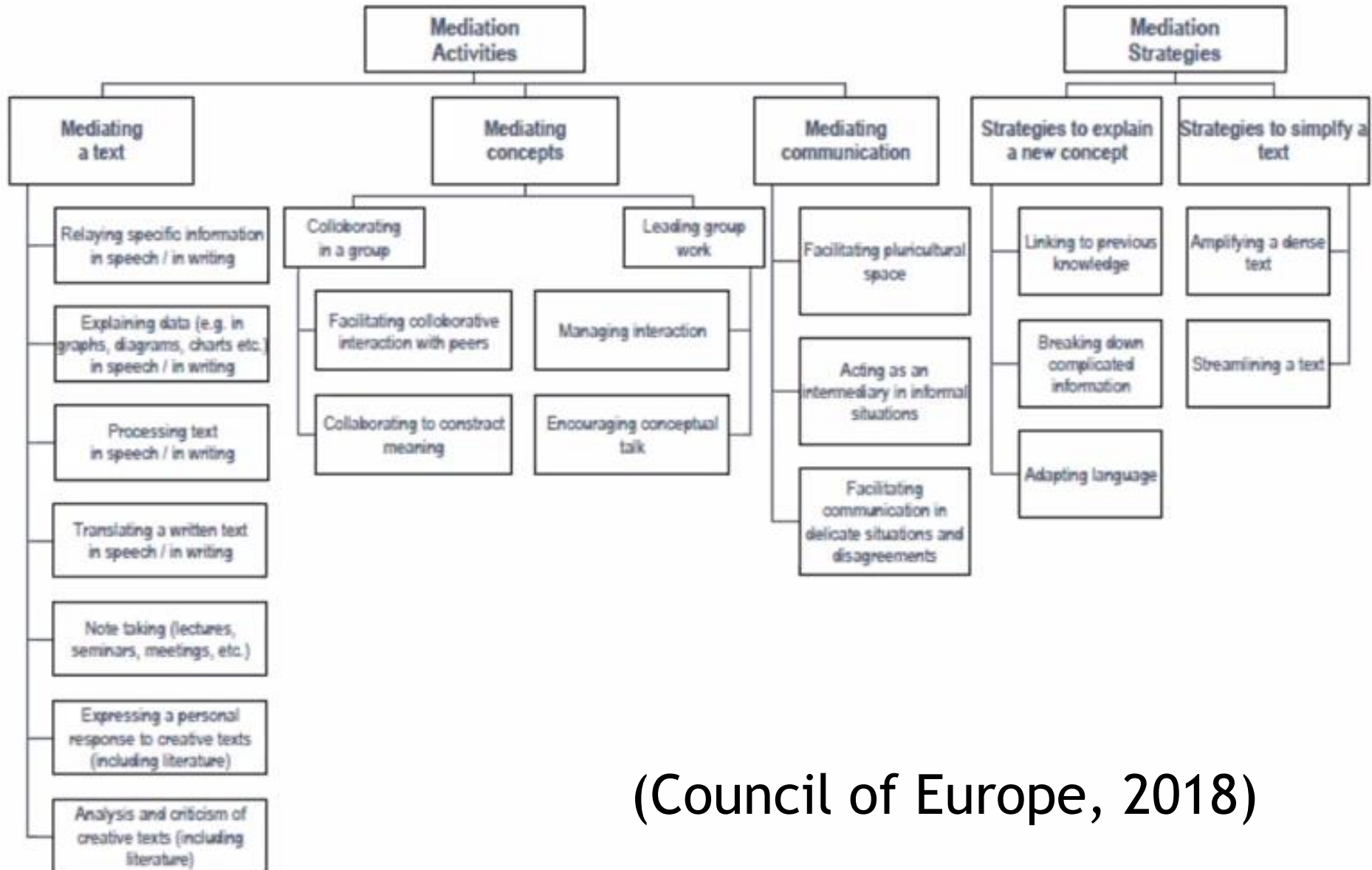
# The CEFR and the Companion Volume



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# Mediation



(Council of Europe, 2018)

# Mediation

- Mediation activities
  - Mediating a text (7 scales)
  - Mediating concepts (4 scales)
  - Mediating communication (3 scales)
- Mediation strategies
  - Strategies to explain a new concept (3 scales)
  - Strategies to simplify a text (2 scales)

(CoE, 2018)



# Mediation

- Mediating a text (CoE, 2018: 106)
  - Relaying specific information - in speech and writing
  - Explaining data (e.g. in graphs, diagrams, charts, etc.) - in speech and in writing
  - Processing text - in speech and in writing
  - Translating a written text - in speech and in writing
  - Note-taking (lectures, seminars, meetings, etc.)
  - Expressing a personal response to creative texts (e.g. literature)
  - Analysis and criticism of creative texts (including literature)
  -

# Mediation

## OCCUPATIONAL

when dealing with everyday negative interactions between employees

## EDUCATIONAL

when dealing with everyday negative interactions between classmates

### EDUCATIONAL

when dealing with everyday negative interactions between classmates



# Mediation descriptors in teaching EAP

**IMPORTANT**

In the two scales, *Language A* and *Language B* may be two different languages, two varieties of the same language, two registers of the same variety, or any combination of the above. However, they may also be identical. In the former case, users should specify the languages / varieties concerned; in the latter case, users should simply remove the parts in brackets.

(CoE, 2018: 111-112)

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# Mediation descriptors in teaching EAP

- Processing text - in speech or in writing
  - *C1.2: Can summarise in writing in (Language B) long, complex texts (written in Language A), interpreting the content appropriately, provided that he/she can occasionally check the precise meaning of unusual, technical terms. (My emphasis)*
  - *C1.1: Can summarise in writing a long and complex text (in Language A) (e.g. academic or political analysis article, novel extract, editorial, literary review, report, or extract from a scientific book) for a specific audience, respecting the style and register of the original. (My emphasis)*

(CoE, 2018: 111-112)

# Mediation descriptors in teaching EAP

- Processing text - in speech or in writing

At the end of this unit, you will write an expository essay. Look at this unit's writing task in the box below.

What is creative thinking? Explain the current understanding of this concept by synthesizing information from different sources.

## Synthesizing information from more than one text

SKILLS

When you synthesize ideas from more than one text, you draw ideas from both (or all of them), evaluating each text. If the texts make similar claims about a point, you can report where they converge. If the texts contain contradictory claims, you may need to acknowledge that as well. When you do this, make sure the texts are addressing the same information. Annotating the original texts can help you prepare a synthesis. Synthesizing information from more than one text is an important skill because it shows your understanding of texts beyond a simple summary.

- Review Reading 1 and Reading 2. As you read, review your annotations. Then summarize the topics that are discussed and the main points the writer is making about them. Compare your summaries with a partner.

ANALYZE



# How does the CEFR help?

Test content = Explain a concept synthesising info from other sources

Assessment criteria

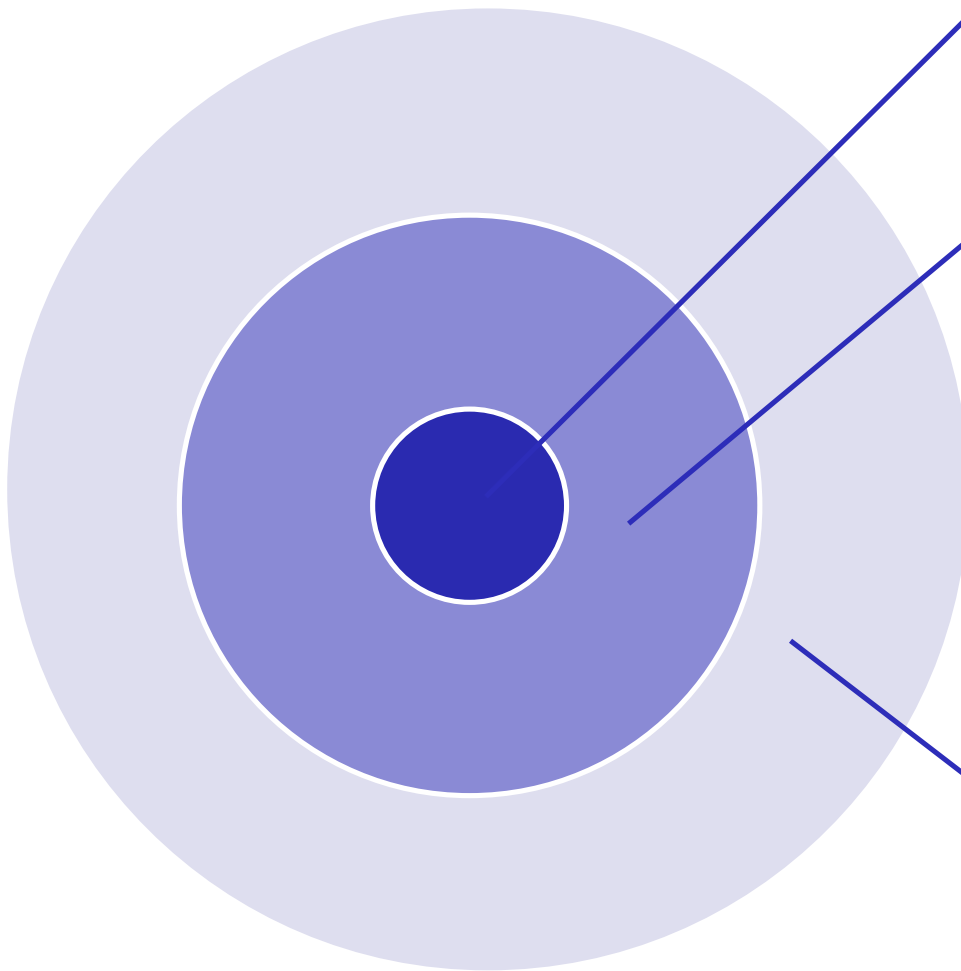
Curriculum content = Overall aim - summarise info from written texts

Cognitive skills: ability to synthesise information

Comparing & contrasting

Function: signposting language for similarities /differences

Real world (TLU) domain = summarising and synthesising



# Mediation descriptors in teaching EAP

- Explaining data (e.g. in graphs, diagrams, charts, etc.) - in speech and in writing

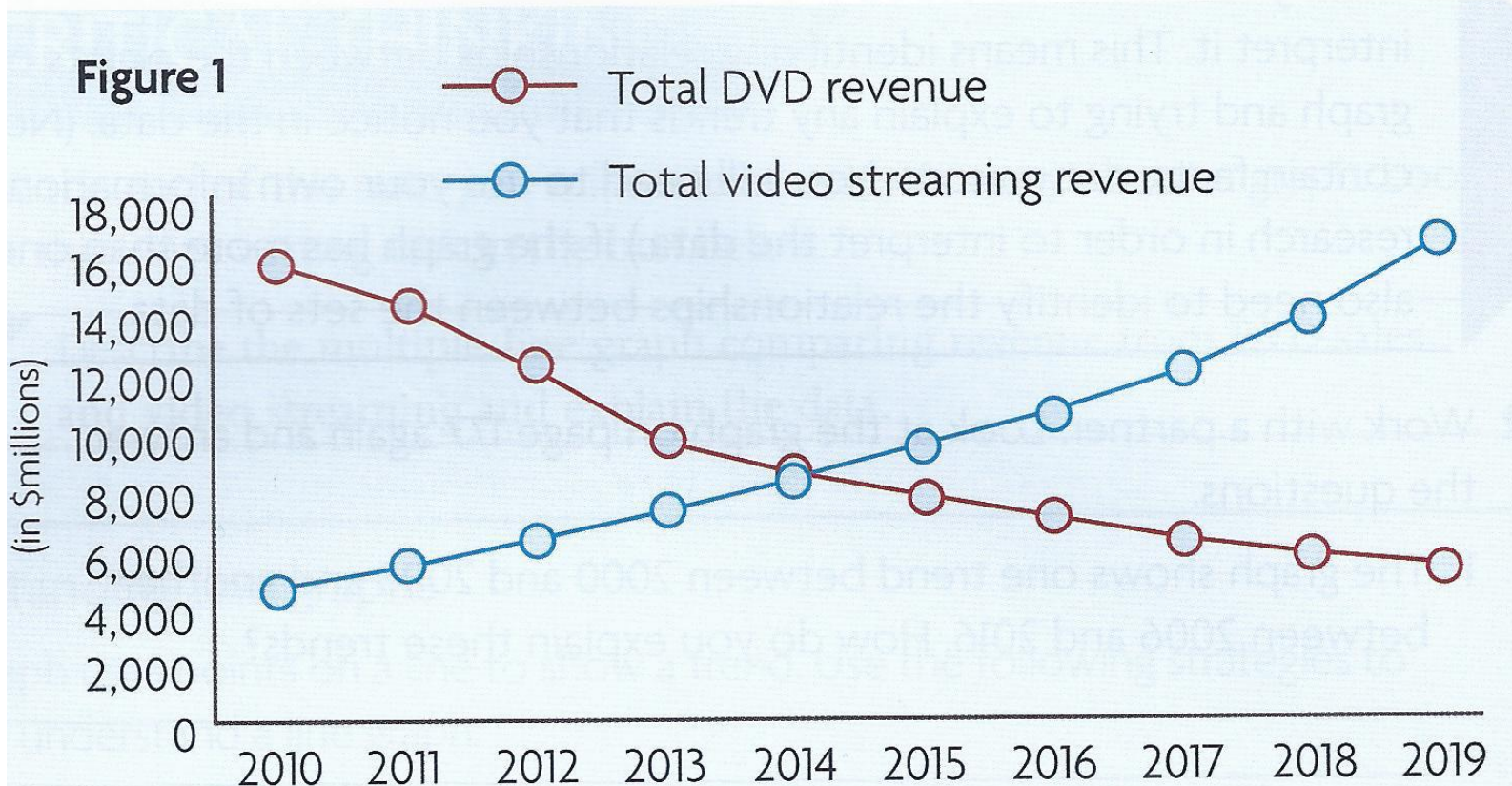
- *B1.2: Can interpret and describe (in Language B) detailed information in diagrams in his/her fields of interest (with text in Language A), even though lexical gaps may cause hesitation or imprecise formulation. (my emphasis)*
- *B1.1: Can interpret and describe (in Language B) overall trends shown in simple diagrams (e.g. graphs, bar charts (with text in Language A), even though lexical limitations cause difficulty with formulation at times. (my emphasis)*

(CoE, 2018: 196)

# Mediation descriptors in teaching EAP

Explaining data (e.g. in graphs, diagrams, charts, etc.)

Work with a partner. Look at the graph below. Answer the questions to help you read and understand the graph.



B1 level

(Westbrook *et al.*, 2019)

# How does the CEFR help?

Test content =

Describe a graph

Assessment criteria

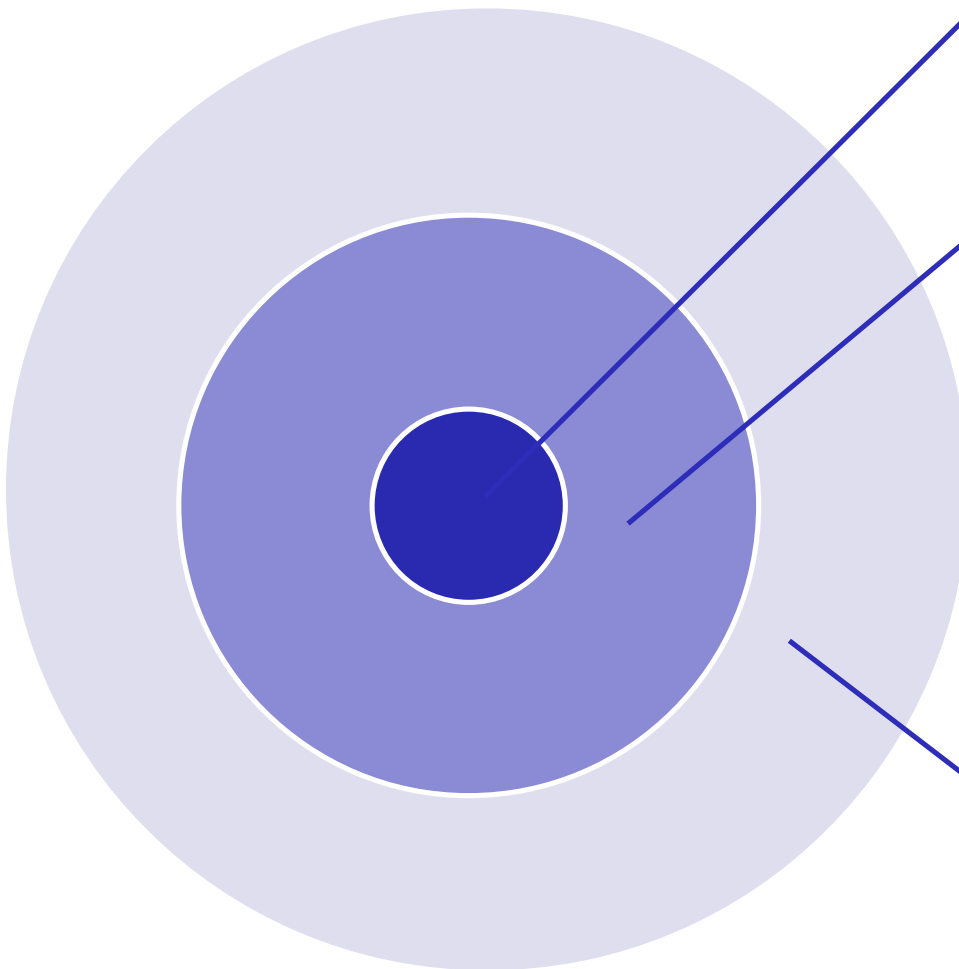
Curriculum content =  
Overall aim - describe  
simple graphs

Cognitive skills: ability to  
understand, describe and  
interpret graphs

Vocabulary/tenses for  
describing trends

Function: suggesting

Real world (TLU) domain  
= describing a graph in a  
presentation or in a  
report



# Mediation

- Mediating concepts (CoE, 2018: 106)
  - Collaborating in a group
    - Facilitating collaborative interaction with peers
    - Collaborating to construct meaning
  - Leading group work
    - Managing interaction
    - Encouraging conceptual talk



# Mediation descriptors in teaching EAP

- Managing interaction
  - *B2.2: Can organise and manage collaborative group work efficiently.*
  - *Can intervene supportively in order to focus people's attention on aspects of the task by asking targeted questions and inviting suggestions.*
  - *B2.1: Can explain ground rules in collaborative discussions in small groups that involves problem solving or the evaluation of alternative proposals.*
  - *Can intervene when necessary to set a group back on task with new instructions or to encourage more even participation.*

(CoE, 2018: 121)

# Mediation

- Managing interaction

**SKILLS**

**Asking for input, summarizing and keeping a discussion moving**

In some discussions, such as meetings in a committee or in an office, someone usually manages the meeting and leads the discussion points and is called the 'chair'. The chair usually asks participants to provide input on the discussion, summarizes main points and keeps the discussion moving. There are certain words and phrases a chair might use to ask for input, summarize or keep a discussion moving.

<b>asking for input</b>	<b>keeping a discussion moving</b>
What do you think?	We'd better move on to the next point.
Does anyone have anything to add?	Let's finish this point and then move on.
<b>summarizing</b>	
To summarize the key points ...	Do we all agree that ... ?

- Match the speaker's sentences (1–3) to the functions (a–c).
  - Sorry, but that's not really what we're discussing right now. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Does anyone have anything to say about this idea? \_\_\_\_\_
  - I'd just like to recap the key points so far. \_\_\_\_\_
  - asking for input
  - keeping the discussion moving / on topic
  - summarizing



# How does the CEFR help?

Test content =

Run a meeting with your group for the group assessment

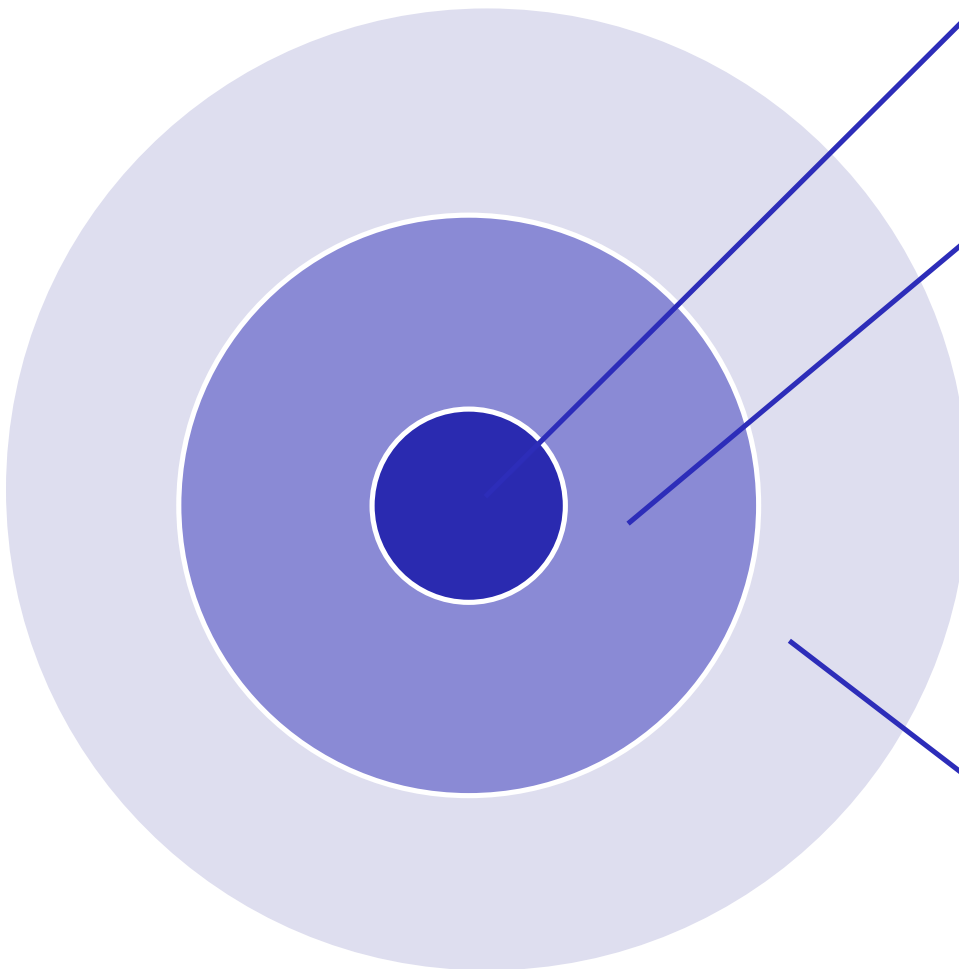
Assessment criteria

Curriculum content =  
Overall aim - managing interaction

Involve all speakers

Function: asking for opinions, keeping discussion going, summarising

Real world (TLU) domain  
= running a project meeting



# Mediation

- Mediating communication (CoE, 2018: 106)
  - Facilitating pluricultural space
  - Acting as an intermediary in informal situations (with friends and colleagues)
  - Facilitating communication in delicate situations and disagreements

# Mediation descriptors in teaching ESAP

- Facilitating communication in delicate situations and disagreements
  - *C1.3: Can demonstrate sensitivity to different viewpoints, using repetition and paraphrase to demonstrate detailed understanding of each party's requirements for an agreement.*
  - *C1.2: Can formulate a diplomatic request to each side in a disagreement to determine what is central to their position, and what they may be willing to give up under certain circumstances.*
  - *C1.1: Can use persuasive language to suggest that parties in disagreement shift towards a new position.*



## WHO NEEDS UNIONS?

Manual and service industry workers are often organized in labour unions, which attempt to ensure fair wages, reasonable working hours and safe working conditions for their members. British unions are known as trade unions because, as in Germany, they are largely organized according to trade or skill: there is an engineers' union, an electricians' union, a train-drivers' union, and so on. In other countries, including France and Italy, unions are largely political: workers in different industries join unions with a particular political position.

Industrial relations tend to be better in countries, industries and companies where communications are good, i.e. where management consults workers on matters that will concern them, where neither side treats the other as an adversary, and when unions do not insist upon the preservation of completely uneconomic jobs and working practices. Although some employers and managers (and political parties) oppose the very existence of unions – even though, like doctors, lawyers, accountants, and so on, they might themselves belong to a professional association with similar basic aims – many management theorists stress the necessity of unions. In the 1970s, Peter Drucker wrote that 'Management is and has to be a power. Any power needs restraint and control – or else it becomes tyranny. The union serves an essential function in industrial society.'<sup>\*</sup> Yet one of the chief objectives of right-wing governments in the 1980s (e.g. in Britain and the USA) was to diminish the power of trade unions, and to deregulate labour markets in accordance with the ideal of free markets.

As a result of deregulation, working conditions in many industries in many countries have worsened, leading to the creation of a great many casual, part-time, unskilled jobs done by non-unionized workers. France, for example, has the lowest number of workers in trade unions in the industrialized world. The unions now represent less than 10% of the French work force, and most of those are in the public sector. The vast majority of French workers seem to have rejected the confrontational politics of the main unions, notably the communist-controlled CGT. Consequently, when the largely non-unionized French lorry drivers blocked all the motorways in the summer of 1992,

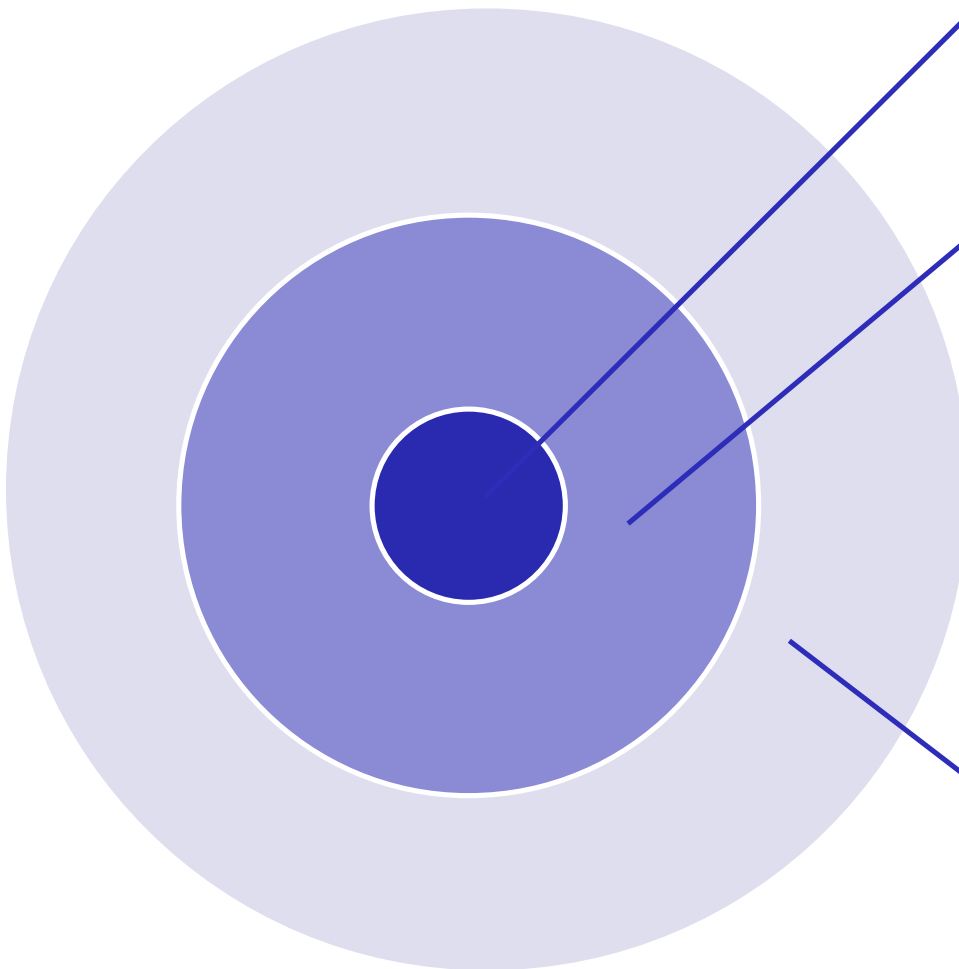
(MacKenzie, 1997)

# How does the CEFR help?

Test content =  
Mediate a dispute  
between an employee  
and an employer  
Assessment criteria

Curriculum content =  
Overall aim - facilitating  
communication in  
delicate situations  
Show sensitivity  
Functions: repetition,  
paraphrase, diplomatic  
requests, persuasive  
language

Real world (TLU) domain  
= workplace (or  
university) disputes



# Mediation

- Strategies to explain a new concept (CoE, 2018: 106)
  - Linking to previous knowledge
  - Adapting language
  - Breaking down complicated information



# Mediation descriptors in teaching ESAP

- Breaking down complicated information
  - *C1: Can facilitate understanding of a complex issues by highlighting and categorising the main points, presenting them in a logically connected pattern and reinforcing the message by repeating the key aspects in different ways.*
  - *B2: Can make a complicated issue easier to understand by presenting the components of the argument separately.*

(CoE, 2018: 128)

## Spendwise graduate recruitment: A model of good practice?

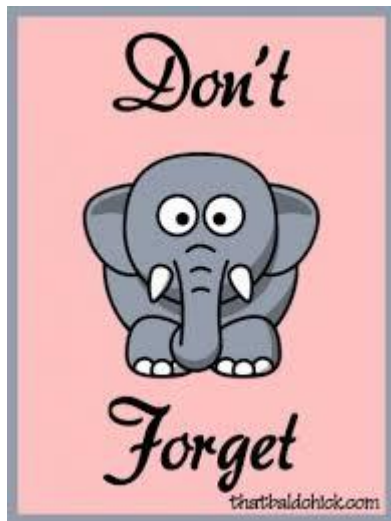
Spendwise is a low-end supermarket chain established in 1995 and it is now one of the top four supermarkets in the country. Its success is put down to a marriage between a cheap, no-frills service for the bottom end of the market and aggressive recruitment of young management talent. Spendwise claims to have the lowest prices and best customer service for price in the country. 2008 was a good year for Spendwise. Revenue is at an all-time high, and customer checkout throughput times were significantly shorter than its rivals. Spendwise has started a web-based shopping service aggressively targeting pensioners and the physically disabled. Housebound shoppers who order their goods online are guaranteed delivery within 24 hours. (Source: Spendwise Press Release)



A dissatisfied customer says:

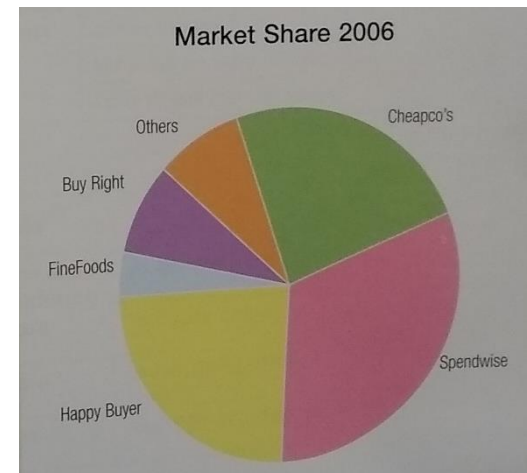
## Spendwise staff exploited

Under the guise of a policy centred on flexibility, Spendwise has recently cut many of its permanently contracted staff and filled the positions with staff employed under a range of insecure arrangements. 'Head office doesn't want to invest in people,' says John Brown, a 21-year-old cashier. 'I wanted a permanent contract as a management trainee. Now I'm here on the checkout, never sure on a Monday morning whether there's still a job for me.' He works a 15-hour week on a weekly renewed contract in a job-share arrangement with a friend, and receives a wage of 20p above the minimum hourly wage. Sally Dickison, Senior HR Director, told us, 'We have had to make some hard decisions to keep our competitive edge in the market.'



B2-C2 (Corballis and Jennings, 2009)

L1-L1 mediation is also possible!



# How does the CEFR help?

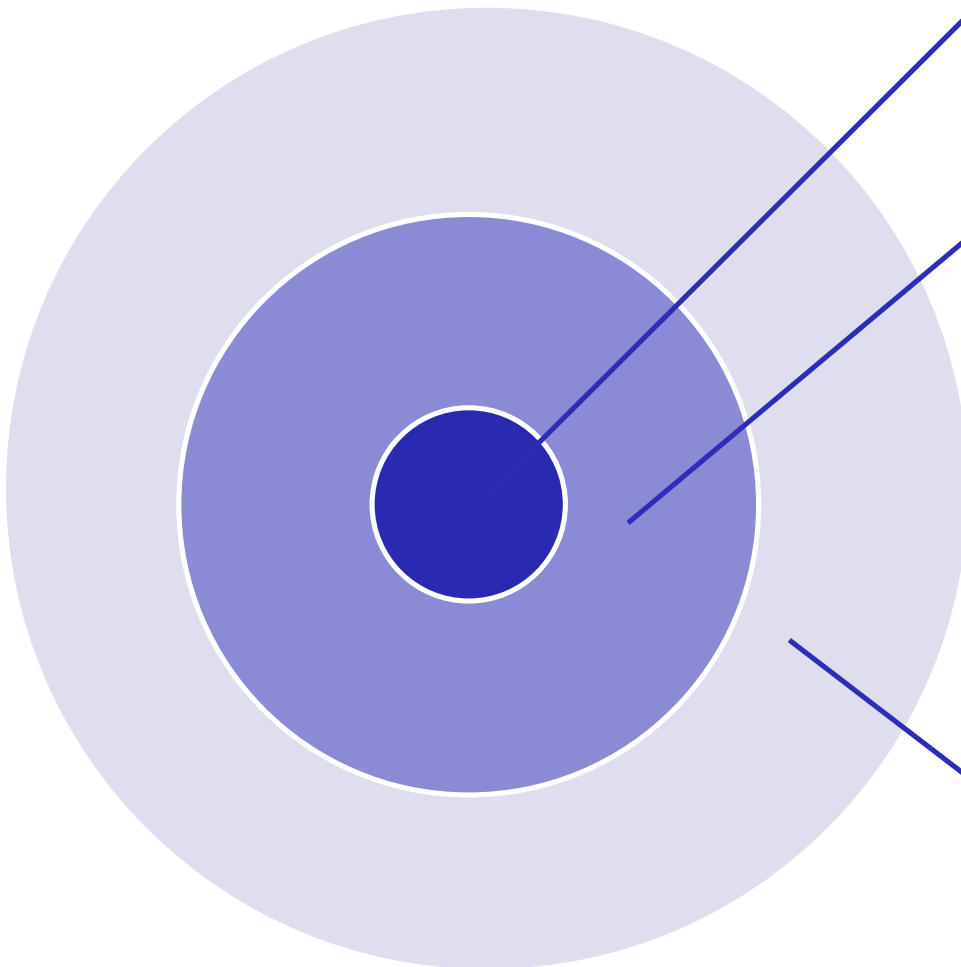
Test content =  
Explaining technical  
documentation  
Assessment criteria

Curriculum content =  
Overall aim - breaking  
down complicated  
information

Identifying main points,  
logical ordering

Functions: sequencing,  
rephrasing

Real world (TLU) domain  
= IT engineer explaining  
how to use a new piece  
of software



# Mediation

- Strategies to simplify a text (CoE, 2018: 106)
  - Amplifying a dense text
  - Streamlining a text

# Mediation

- Streamlining a dense text
  - *B2.2: Can edit a source text by deleting the parts that do not add new information that is relevant for a given audience in order to make the significant content more accessible for them.*
  - *B2.1: Can identify related or repeated information in different parts of a text and merge it in order to make the essential message clearer.*
  - *B1: Can identify and mark (e.g. underline, highlight, etc.) the essential information in a straightforward, informational text, in order to pass this information on to someone else.*

(CoF, 2018: 129)

## The medical profession

Doctors generally have the same very high status in Britain that they have throughout the world. Specialist doctors have greater prestige than ordinary GPs, with hospital consultants at the top. These specialists are allowed to work part-time for the NHS and spend the rest of their time earning big fees from private patients. Some have a surgery in Harley Street in London, conventionally the sign that a doctor is of the very highest quality. However, the difference in status between specialists and ordinary GPs is not as marked as it is in most other countries. At medical school, it is not automatically assumed that a brilliant student will become a specialist. GPs are not in any way regarded as second-class. The idea of the family doctor with personal knowledge of the circumstances of his or her patients was established in the days when only rich people could afford to pay for the services of a doctor. But the NHS capitation system has encouraged this idea to spread to the population as a whole.

Most GPs work in a 'group practice'. That is, they work in the same building as several other GPs. This allows them to share facilities such as waiting rooms and receptionists. Each patient is registered with just one doctor in the practice, but this system means that, when his or her doctor is unavailable, the patient can be seen by one of the doctor's colleagues.

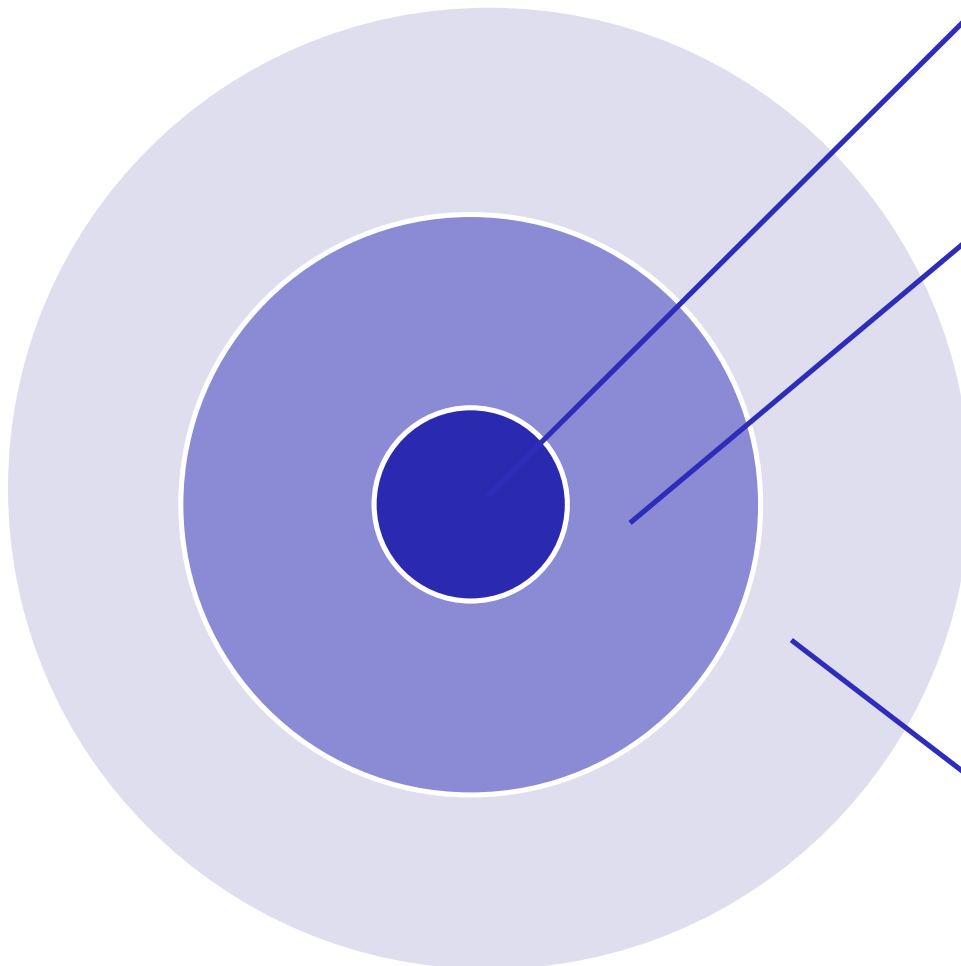
The status of nurses in Britain may be traced to their origins in the nineteenth century. The Victorian reformer Florence Nightingale became a national heroine for her organization of nursing and hospital facilities during the Crimean War in the 1850s. Because of

# How does the CEFR help?

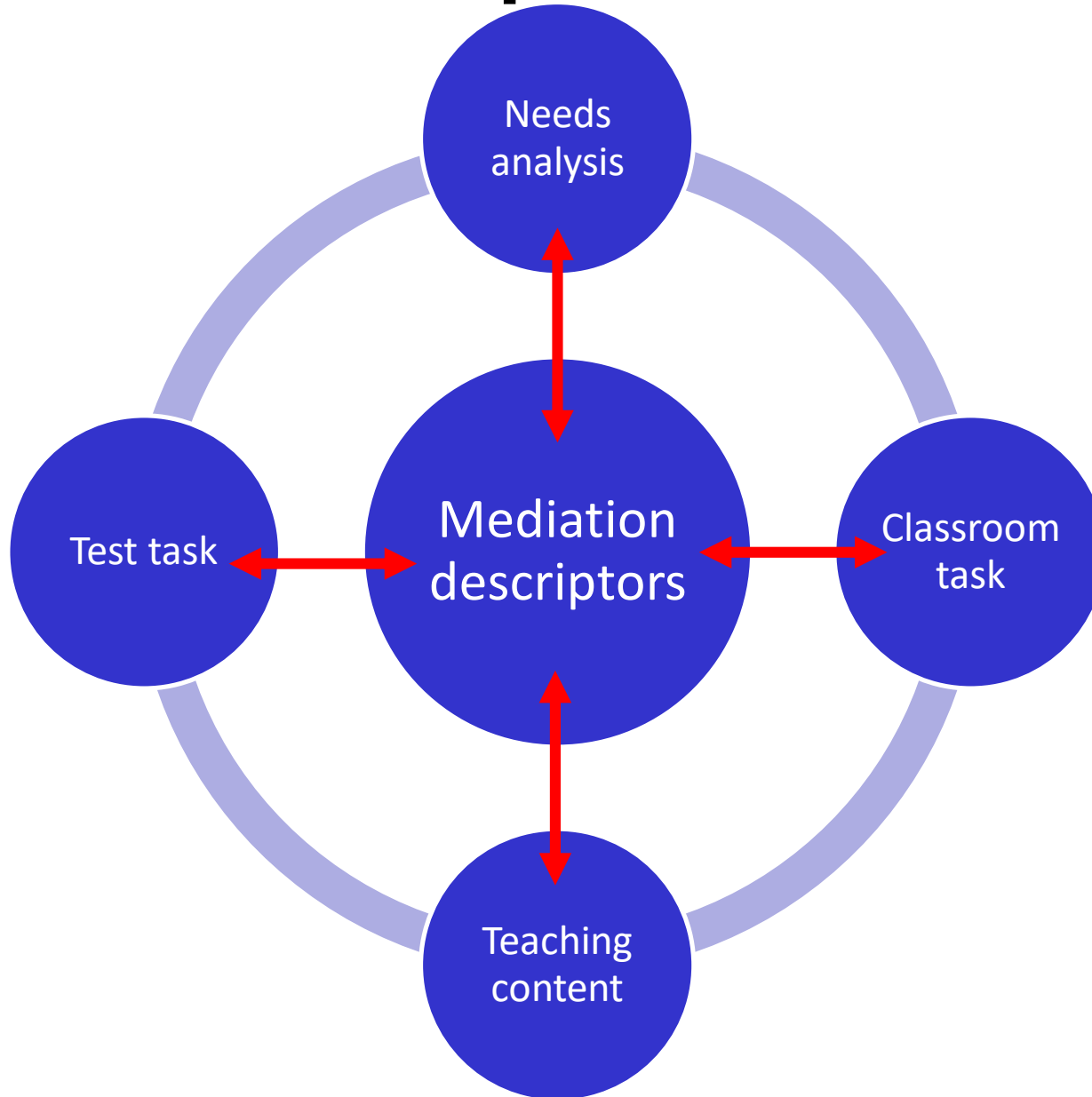
Test content =  
Summarising a complex  
text  
Assessment criteria

Curriculum content =  
Overall aim - streamlining  
a dense text  
Identifying main points  
Functions: sequencing,  
rephrasing

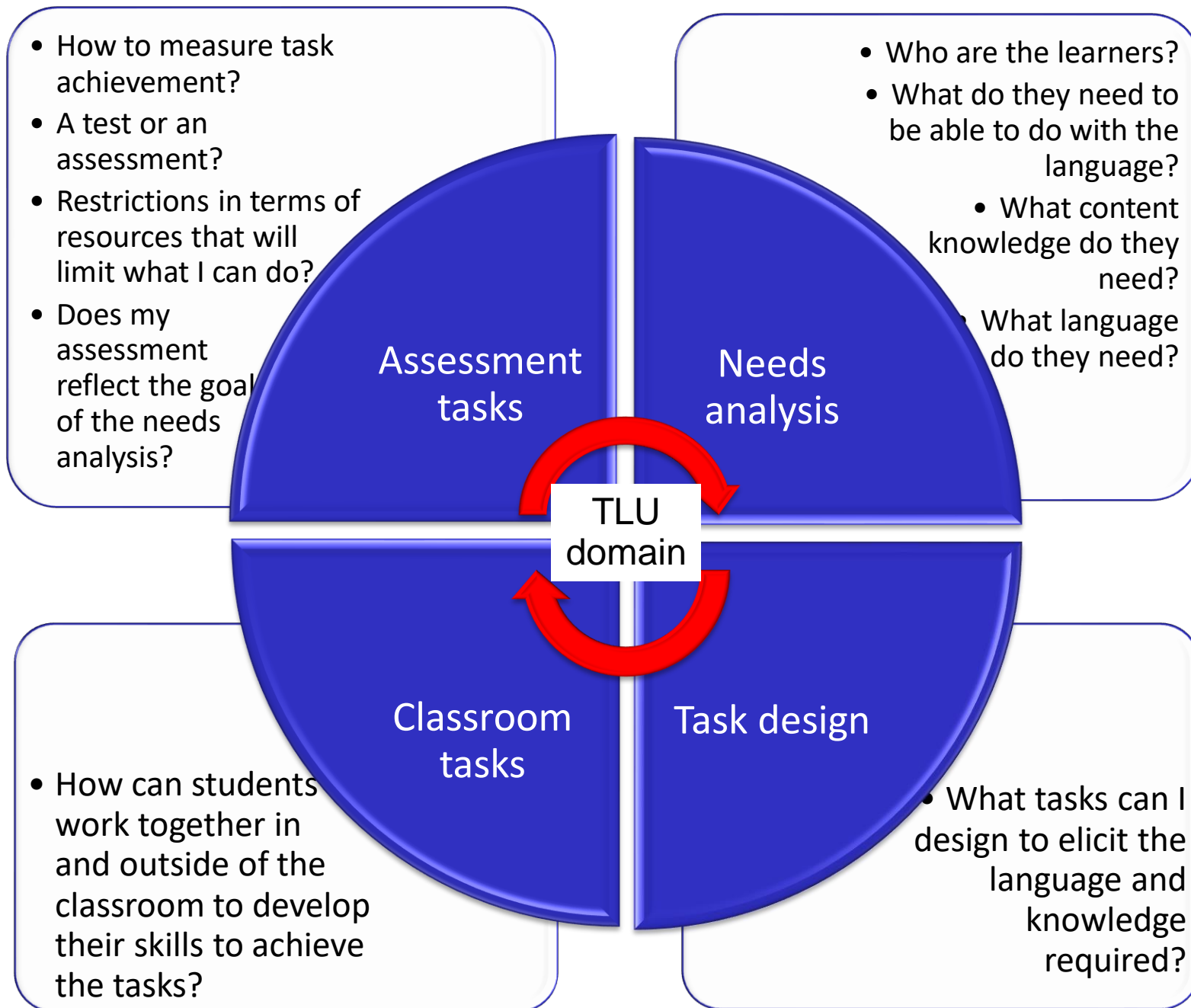
Real world (TLU) domain  
= Summarising a report in  
a business meeting



# Mediation descriptors in EAP and ESAP







# The mediation descriptors as a tool for E(S)AP classes – pros and cons



- Lend themselves to a number of authentic, integrated skills E(S)AP tasks
- Give specific descriptors for evaluating such tasks



- Sometimes go beyond linguistic capabilities requiring interpersonal and intercultural competences
- Don't provide 'traditional' diagnostic information that discrete skills tests do.

# Integrating the mediation descriptors into teaching and assessment

- Implications
  - Interactionist SLA theories - collaborative working, scaffolding
  - Move towards more authentic, integrated assessments
  - Some aspects of mediation require certain interpersonal skills (e.g. emotional intelligence / empathy) -> potential for construct-irrelevant variance

# Integrating the mediation descriptors into teaching and assessment

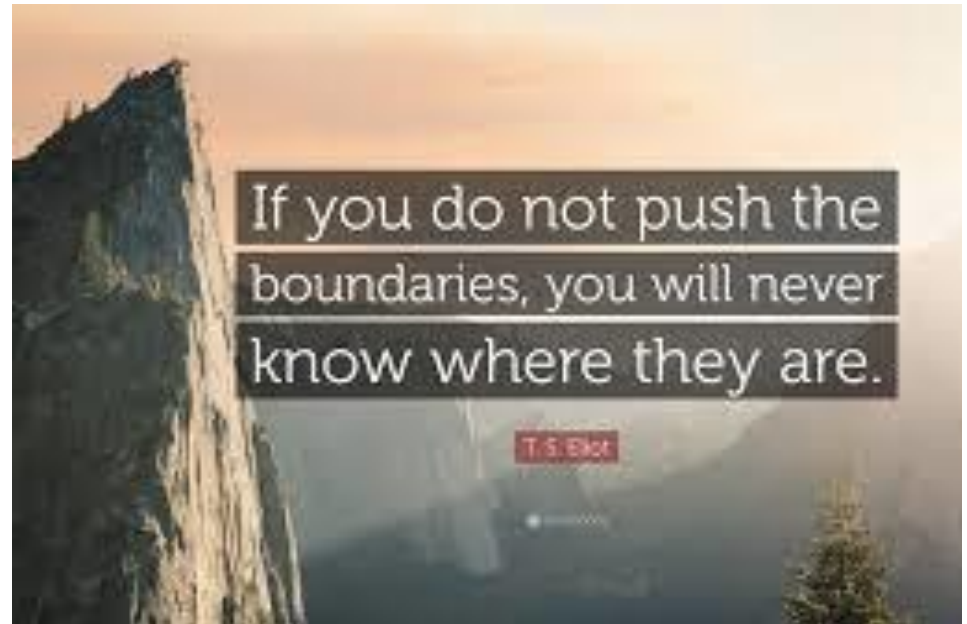
- Implications
  - Reconsider our new constructs (what we are teaching and testing) along with the ‘traditional’ criteria
  - Amend grading criteria accordingly

# Summary and conclusion

- Mediation descriptors: good basis for planning and assessing integrated, authentic E(S)AP tasks (but not the end of discrete skills)
- They complement (not replace) the old CEFR descriptors
- Wider interpretation of mediation (L1:L1, L2:L2 and everything in between!)
- To exploit them fully, we need to teach other (non-linguistic) skills
- Old things in new ways? Or new things in old ways?
-

# Finally ...

- We should push ourselves to experiment with the descriptors!



Thanked  
for listening!

**Vielen Dank für Ihre Aufmerksamkeit!**

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