

# Overview of steps involved in developing CEFR-aligned tests for signed languages

Prof. Dr. Claudia Harsch, University of Bremen, Germany

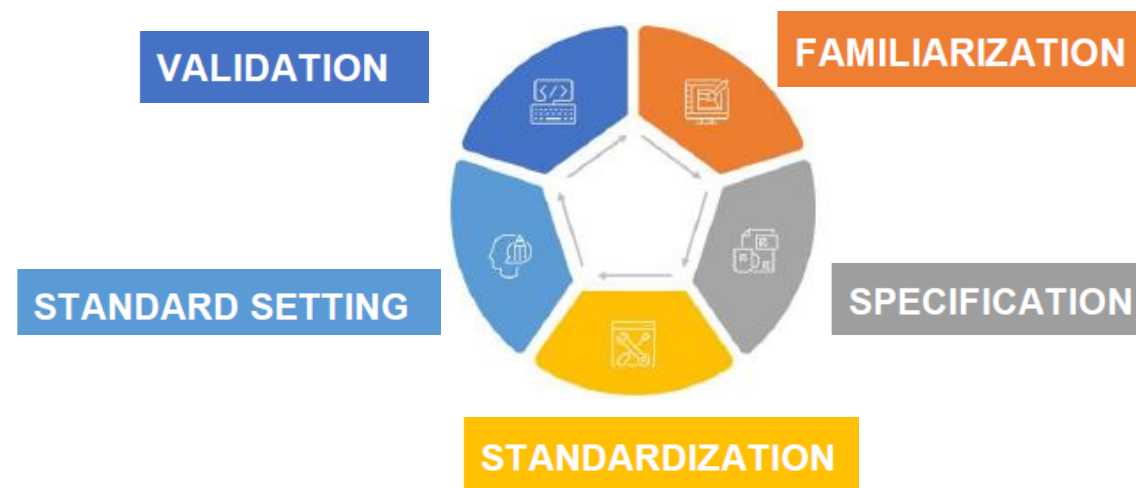
# Overview

## Testing cycle

In the testing cycle core concepts related to test development are presented. Click on a specific concept and see concrete steps on how to develop tests for signed languages aligned/related to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR).



## Alignment Cycle



# Test alignment



- The **test, items, tasks**? Their cognitive demands, topics, the communicative activities and linguistic competences they elicit?
  - develop local test specifications, adapt CEFR
  - *specify* tests with the help of the CEFR/CV
  - requires a good level of *familiarity* with the descriptive system and relevant scales of the CEFR

# CEFR scheme for signed languages

## CEFR Reference levels of the ProSign Project:

On this page you will find descriptors for sign languages for all language levels (from A1 to C2) with examples. Click onto one of the CEFR levels for sign languages and/or one of the competences to see the corresponding descriptor(s). All descriptors are presented in videos in sign language. [Back to the ProSign website](#)

### Levels

A1	A2
B1	B2
C1	C2

### Competences

Production
Comprehension
Signed Interaction
Interaction Strategies
Processing Text
Pragmatic competencies
Thematic Development
Qualitative factors

General linguistic range  
Grammatical accuracy  
Phonological control  
Sociolinguistic appropriateness  
Vocabulary control  
Vocabulary range

### Vocabulary range



**A1**  
Has a basic established vocabulary repertoire of isolated words and phrases related to particular concrete situations.

related to particular concrete situations

<https://tools.ecml.at/prosign/index.html>

# Adapting the CEFR for local test development

## CEFR, scales and descriptors

common framework  
common language  
common  
reference levels  
unspecific  
not directly usable in  
teaching or  
assessment  
no rating scales

## Analysis of local context

local needs  
specific learning  
context  
specific target  
language use  
specific  
assessment  
needs

## One possible interpretation

specific local constructs,  
operationalizations,  
tasks, approaches,  
criteria, descriptors  
  
differences to CEFR in  
wording of descriptors,  
assessment criteria

# Test Specifications

- Describe / define what a test tests and how it sets out to do so
- Different specifications for different audiences (e.g. developers, test takers, school inspectors, test users etc.)
- They serve three main purposes:
  - guide the test development – ‘blueprint’
  - form the basis for validation research
  - inform potential test users
- Main aspects to be considered:
  - the test’s purpose, target group, the areas and content covered
  - **the targeted skills, competences, abilities (construct)**
  - the approaches, tasks and formats employed
  - aspects of administering and scoring
  - interpretation and reporting aspects, intended washback effects

Example

[ProSign-Test-specifications-vocabulary-size-test-DSGS.pdf](#)

# Specifying tasks / items

What CEFR descriptor best matches what a learner has to do / needs to know to solve this items?

Yes/No Vocabulary Test DE

Kennen Sie die Bedeutung dieser DSGS-Gebärde (Zusammenspiel von den Aktivitäten der Hände und dem Mundbild...)

Ja Nein

Ansehen auf YouTube

<https://www.ecml.at/Thematicareas/SignedLangmplesofAssessment/tabid/4285/language/en-GB>

Levels		Competences	
A1	A2	Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>General linguistic range</li><li>Grammatical accuracy</li><li>Phonological control</li><li>Sociolinguistic appropriateness</li><li>Vocabulary control</li><li>Vocabulary range</li></ul>
B1	B2	Comprehension	
C1	C2	Signed Interaction	
		Interaction Strategies	
		Processing Text	
		Pragmatic competencies	
		Thematic Development	
		Qualitative factors	
Vocabulary range			

P S 32 A1 vocabulary range

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# Test alignment



- The **test, items, tasks**? Their cognitive demands, topics, the communicative activities and linguistic competences they elicit?
  - develop test specifications, make use of CEFR
  - *specify* tests with the help of the CEFR/CV
  - requires a good level of *familiarity* with the descriptive system and relevant scales of the CEFR
- The **rating scales / checklists** used for interactive/productive tasks?
  - align the descriptors used in the scale – adapt CEFR descriptors
  - reliable valid use requires *benchmarking*



# Rating scale ProSign, Asse

Which CEFR descriptors form the basis for the rating scale descriptors?  
What is the intended relation between rating scale points and CEFR levels?

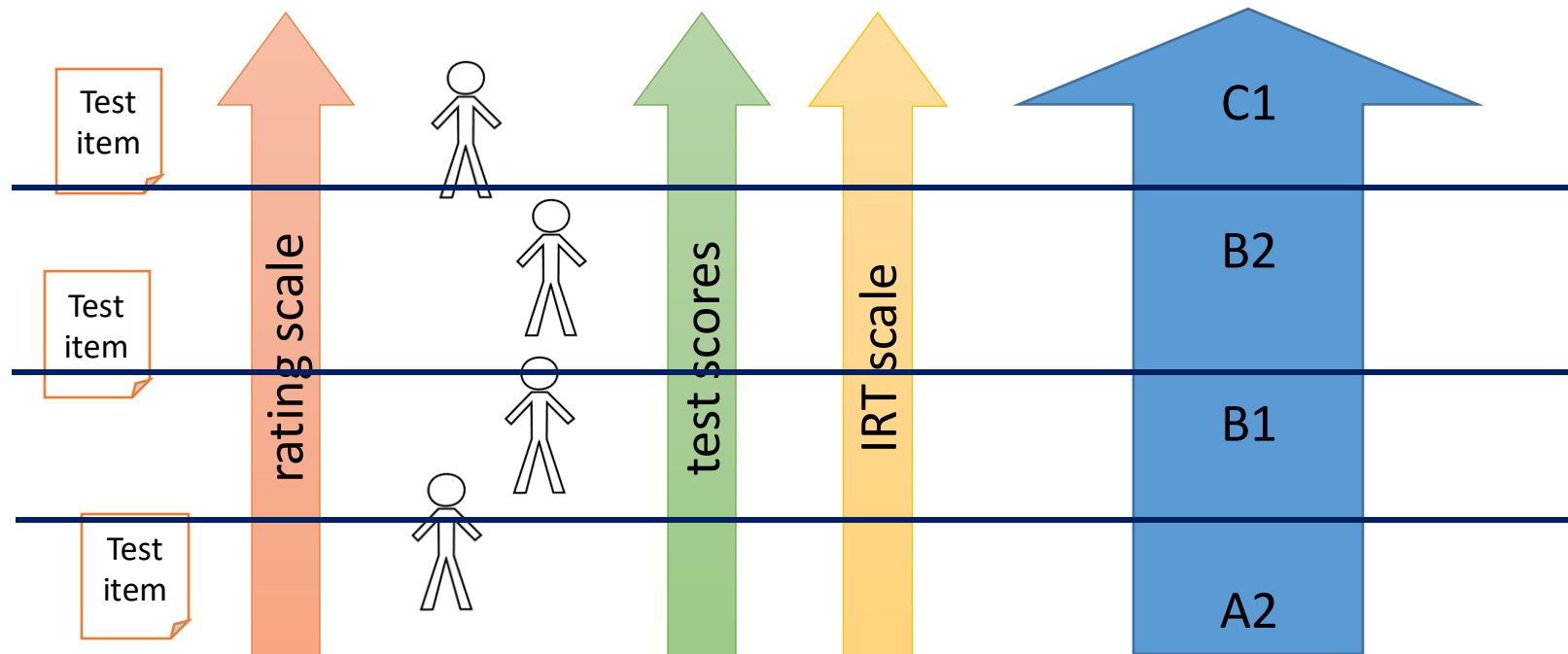
Criteria	1 point	2 points		
<b>Size/mastery sign vocabulary</b>	Limited size of sign vocabulary, which leads to incomplete performance. Not always clear what is meant.	Shows enough signs to handle the situation. Little y u	chunks / fixed phrases	
<b>Grammatical correctness</b>	Systematic and frequent mistakes in basic grammar. Use of separate signs, no conjugations	Systematic mistakes in the basic grammar, that do not really interfere with communication	Fairly correct use of simple constructions, but elementary mistakes do occur occasionally.	sentences. Fairly correct use of conjugations. Correct sign order. No mistakes that interfere with communication.

# Test alignment



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  - reliable valid use requires *benchmarking*
- The **scores or results**? Align the scores, ratings to CEFR levels
  - requires a large enough sample and statistical knowledge (e.g. IRT scaling)
  - formal *standard setting*

# Standard Setting

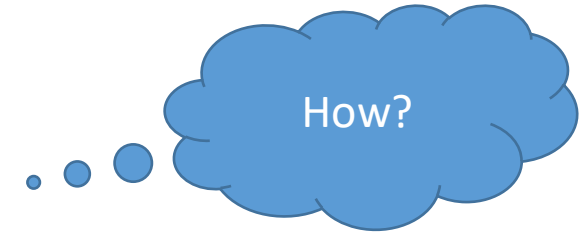


# Test alignment



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# Formal Alignment Process



## VALIDATION

Collecting and presenting appropriate evidence in support of alignment claims

## FAMILIARIZATION

Ensuring that all participants in the alignment process have a sufficient knowledge of the CEFR, its levels and descriptors



## STANDARD SETTING

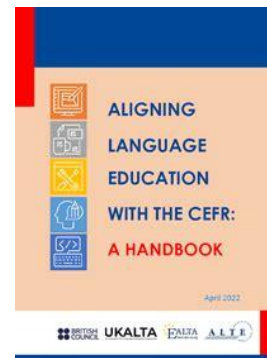
Determining valid cut scores or decision judgments for assessment purposes

## STANDARDIZATION

Ensuring, through training, a common understanding of the CEFR levels and the accurate benchmarking of local performance samples to relevant CEFR levels

## SPECIFICATION

Describing/profiling the content of a language syllabus/textbook/test in relation to the categories of the CEFR



# Test Development process

When?

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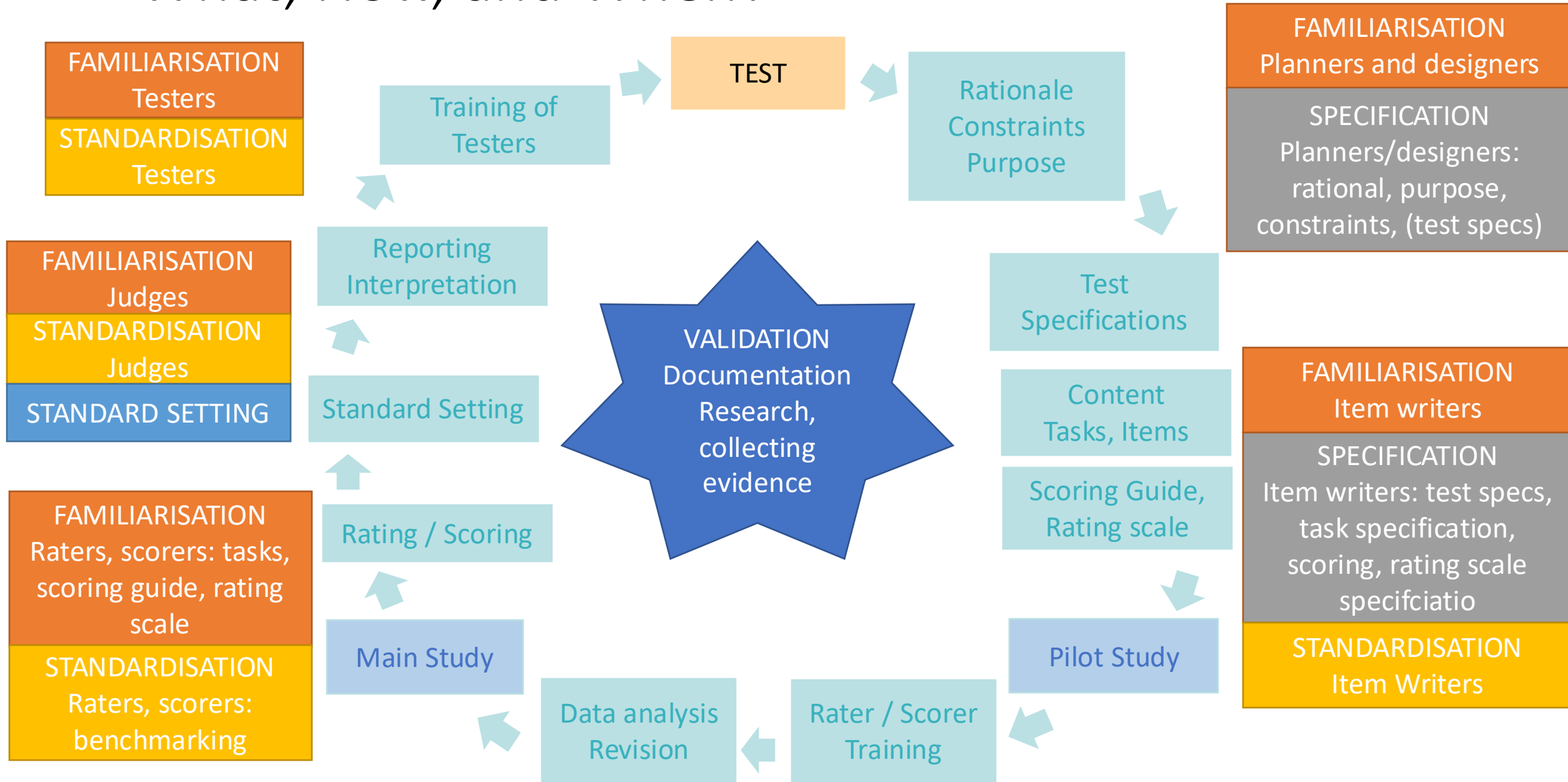
## Test specification



In order to develop a test, it is necessary to provide procedures (or a "blueprint") which describe what needs to be done (Mann & Haug, 2014, p. 133) in what order. The different steps follow from the purpose, the design, the content of the test as well as the test method, and form the framework for the test properly. Other issues are the familiarity of the test to the test administrators, the location etc., as well as establishing procedures for test archives, and the establishing of the validity and reliability of the test.

A concrete example is to create a Word document which describes every step and "sub-steps" that need to be done to develop the test. For example the following information can be included into the test specifications: (1) people who will be involved in the process, (2) development of test items, (3) materials be used depending on the target group, (4) description of the test procedure, (5) environmental factors such as test administrator, test site, time of the day, (6) psychometric properties, (7) process of test development and (8) pilot and main study (from Haug, 2012), (9) milestones that need to be achieved.

# What, How, and When?



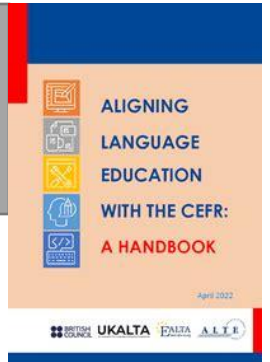
# Familiarisation



- What is the CEFR / CV? => read the documents
- Familiarize yourself with scales for signed languages:  
<https://tools.ecml.at/prosign/index.html>
- What competences are most relevant for your context?
- At which levels are your learners?
  - Select the most relevant descriptors
  - Document outcomes of familiarisation (e.g. [Form 2.1](#) in *Handbook*, Appendix, p.77)



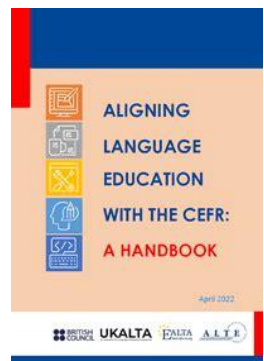
# Specification



- What local learning aims are to be assessed by a task?
  - => Ideally, aims are already contained in the curriculum/ test specifications in the form of (adapted) CEFR descriptors
  - => Develop your tasks with regard to these CEFR-related aims
- Specify your task with relevant (adapted / original) CEFR descriptors
  - => Choose those that best match your task
- Ask your learners and/or colleagues, what competences they need to solve this task, with regard to (selected) CEFR descriptors
  - => part of task validation
- Document the specification e.g. with [Form 3.1](#) in *Handbook* (Appendix p. 83, adapt for your context)

# Implications for developing tests in alignment with the CEFR

- Allow participants to get familiar with the CEFR and materials in their own ways and pace – choose a collaborative approach
- Focus on hands-on activities for familiarisation
- Pre-select relevant scales for certain activities
- Use other sources relevant for the context in a complementary way
- Document all steps transparently
- To ensure constructive alignment: co-develop
  - learning goals, curricula, and assessment goals
  - learning activities, teaching tasks and assessment tasks
- Make use of the *Handbook*, its helpful explanations, activities, tools, guidelines for reporting, and practical suggestions 😊





## Selected References

**ProSign Assessment of signed language proficiency:**

<https://www.ecml.at/Thematicareas/SignedLanguages/ProSign/Assessment/ExamplesofAssessment/tabid/4285/language/en-GB/Default.aspx>

**ProSign CEFR Reference levels:** <https://tools.ecml.at/prosign/index.html>

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<http://www.ealta.eu.org/documents/resources/Developments%20in%20Language%20Education%20A%20Memorial%20Volume%20in%20Honour%20of%20Sauli%20Takala.pdf>.

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