

CONSULTANCY FINAL REPORT URUGUAY

Reports I II & III Support for the formulation and implementation of learning progressions in the domain of foreign languages Uruguay

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CONSULTANCY TO SUPPORT THE PROCESS OF DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF LEARNING PROGRESSIONS IN THE LANGUAGE DOMAIN (FOREIGN LANGUAGES) ASSOCIATED WITH THE NATIONAL REFERENCE FRAMEWORK (MCRN) (UR-T1144)

CONSULTANCY FINAL REPORT. URUGUAY

REPORT I

Report on the first draft document of learning progressions in the domain of foreign language learning. Analysis and Recommendations

REPORT II

Embedding foreign language learning progressions within the framework of the MCRN. Analysis, Guidelines and Recommendations

REPORT III

Suggestions for the implementation of learning progression for foreign languages in the Uruguayan educational system

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACARA	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
ANEP	Administración Nacional de Educación Pública (National Board of Public Education)
CODICEN	Consejo Directivo Central (Uruguay)
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
DfE	Department for Education (England and Wales)
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
FL	Foreign Language
IDB	Inter-Americas Development Bank
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
LP (FL)	Learning Progressions for Foreign Languages
MCRN	Marco Curricular de Referencia Nacional (National Reference Curriculum Framework)
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment

CONSULTANCY REPORT I
URUGUAY

Report on the first draft document of learning progressions in
the domain of foreign language learning
Analysis and Recommendations

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1 Background. Foreign language policy in Uruguay

Globally, there is a perceived need for all citizens to have access to learning foreign languages as a part of the compulsory public education system. From the start of the 21st century policy makers worldwide have been engaged in intensive processes of policy development and revision, preparing the way for the introduction of additional languages to both the primary and secondary school curricula. For an account of recent developments in South America see Kamhi-Stein, Diaz Maggioli & de Oliveira (2017).

Within this context Uruguay has engaged in a radical process for the reform of national languages policy since the publication of the General Education Law. No. 18,437 (MEC, 2008), where references were made to Uruguayan Spanish, Uruguayan Portuguese, Uruguayan Sign Language and the teaching of foreign languages (FL) in schools. Subsequent policy planning initiatives have led to the formation of a plan to provide compulsory FL learning from Year 4 of elementary public schooling (Primaria) (age 10 years) to year 6 of upper secondary public schooling (Media) (age 18 years).

2. Developing a national curriculum framework for foreign languages

The publication of the Uruguayan National Curriculum Framework (MCRN) (ANEP, 2017) established the principles under which an implementation strategy for the compulsory introduction of FLs can be established by 2020. It positions education as a human right emphasizing both the need for inclusiveness and an acknowledgement of diversity within the system. The document proposes that phases of the education cycle should provide for continuity and cohesion, recognising that defining outcomes for each phase may prove challenging from an equity perspective. It is suggested that questions of equity should be addressed in the development of local curricula which can take full account of the cultural specificity of the context.

The MCRN sets out to provide a broad framework for education rather than addressing questions related to individual subject areas. Scant reference is made to the subject of foreign languages, with brief mentions on pages 58 and 62, signaling its importance, from the

primary school years through to the end of compulsory schooling, as a vehicle for gaining knowledge and communicating at personal, local and global levels.

It should be noted that the MRCN references only the so-called ‘mother tongue’ (more generally described a first language or L1 today), and foreign languages. The progressions that are currently under development for FLs in Uruguay cannot be considered as equally applicable for Uruguayan Spanish, Uruguayan Portuguese or Uruguayan Sign Language since these languages are not held to be compulsory throughout the school system. Similarly, non-compulsory FLs which may be introduced in a later stage of the education cycle may not follow an identical pathway. Nonetheless, the FL progressions may provide a basis for adaptation in the design of progressions relevant to non-compulsory FLs (e.g. French, German, Italian, Chinese) introduced in some sectors of the Uruguayan education system. Progressions related to Uruguayan Spanish, Uruguayan Portuguese and Uruguayan Sign Language may require a different treatment, possibly more closely related to progressions for L1 (mother tongue).

In Section 3 below I provide an outline of how the ANEP team have approached the design and development of FL learning progressions, paying due regard to the criteria set out in the MCRN (ANEP, 2017). Following this, Section 4 reviews the process, discussing issues arising and suggesting ways forward in the shaping and refining of the progressions prior to a pilot phase of implementation.

3. Development of progressions for foreign language learning

Initial planning meeting: October 2017

Under the guidance of Prof Laura Motta an initial meeting was held to formulate a working document which would facilitate a national consultation process for gathering data which would reflect the actual achievements of FL learners in all regions of Uruguay. The week-long series of meetings was attended by the national representatives of all phases of public education, coordinated by Prof Aldo Rodriguez (Políticas Linguísticas).

The team conducted a critical review of FL curriculum documents from a range of countries. This facilitated the identification a structure designed to provide an accessible presentation of

aims and objectives, as a starting point from which to construct the learning progressions. Figures 1 and 2 set out the general aims and objectives for the FL programme, confirming the importance of developing learner abilities in both oral and written communication, with a strong emphasis placed on oracy in the early phases.

The National Curriculum for languages aims to ensure that all students:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are considered and respected in all their ways of learning • Can learn foreign languages for a range of purposes • Understand and respond to spoken and written language from a variety of authentic sources • Speak with increasing confidence, fluency and spontaneity • Can write at varying length, for different purposes and audiences • Discover and develop an appreciation of a variety of spoken and written texts in the language studied

Figure 1. General aims for learning foreign languages

The objectives to be reached by all learners in 2020 are in line with those set by many countries in both Latin America and Europe, with the aim that all learners should reach these *as a minimum*. Given the difficulties in providing qualified teachers for schools in rural regions and areas of social deprivation, this may prove to be a challenging target to achieve. It will be important to prioritise improvement to teacher supply in these regions if the MCRN (ANEP, 2017) aims of equity and inclusion are to be met.

<p>The objectives for foreign language learning refer to outcomes at the end of each sub-division of the schooling system where learning an additional language is compulsory:</p> <p>By the end of primary school education all students are expected to have achieved a minimum of A1 according to the CEFR descriptors;</p> <p>By the end of middle school education all students are expected to have achieved a minimum of A2 according to the CEFR descriptors;</p> <p>By the end of high school education all students are expected to have achieved a minimum of B1 according to the CEFR descriptors.</p>

Figure 2. Uruguay 2020 Foreign Languages Objectives

Having established the main aims and outcomes to be achieved at the end of each schooling phase (primary, middle and high school), the team worked with a set of descriptors for

increasing levels of expertise in searching for information on the Internet (Figure 3). The clearly worded example illustrated in Figure 3 acted as a valuable guide to formulating progressions in all areas of FL learning.

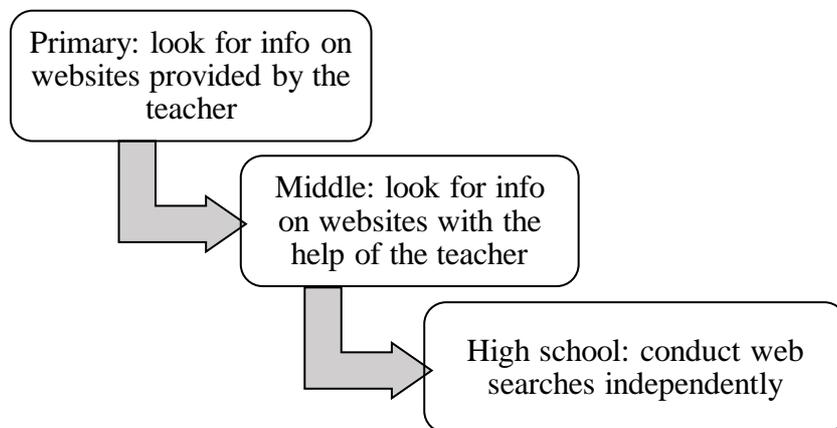


Figure 3. Illustrative sample of progression in Internet searches

National consultation procedure November 2017 – May 2018

A central principle in the establishment of outcomes in the domain of FL learning for Uruguay has been an expectation that all decisions would be made following democratic principles of consultation, revision and refinement, ensuring that the final document represented a shared understanding of culturally appropriate and achievable outcomes for all FL learners in Uruguay.

Following the initial definition of a progressions framework, as described above, an extensive national consultation process was undertaken from November 2017 to May 2018. All teachers from around the country were invited to contribute, with over 2500 teachers attending from schools, colleges of teacher education, IPA and CERP. Meetings were held in all 19 regions (departments) of the country, with teachers reporting on many aspects of FL learner achievements and challenges throughout the education system. Figure 4 provides an illustration of the framework which served as a starting point for discussion with teachers and subsequent re-elaboration of expected outcomes. In addition to teachers’ contributions at the meetings, they were also invited to send in comments and suggestions via email as a further contribution to establishing a fully representative framework for the definition of progressions that could provide descriptions of expected outcomes for learners in all contexts.

Meetings were conducted by Prof. Aldo Rodriguez (Políticas Linguísticas) with the assistance of members of the ANEP / Políticas Linguísticas advisory team: Alicia Correa, Isabel Longres, Florencia Pérez, and Virginia Frade. The advisory team participated in discussions with teacher focus groups at a number of meetings, contributing valuable insider/outsider validity to the process of data collection.

	6th form primary (A1+)	3rd form Secondary & Technical school	6th form Secondary and technical school
Communicates and communication	Understands texts with teacher mediation (visual and paralinguistic information is provided by teacher)	Understands texts and incorporates previous knowledge using different strategies independently or with some help of the teacher	Understand texts, incorporates previous knowledge and uses metacognition
Lives and participates in the complexity of the world	Identifies foreign language as different from first language. Finds differences between his own cultural universe and other contexts	Identifies foreign language as different from first language, values his own and considers cultural differences	Identifies foreign language as different from first language, values his own and considers cultural differences and takes position about his own culture
Participates socially in a relevant way using first language and other languages	Communicates simple ideas and thoughts about his context. Writes simple sentences	Communicates more elaborated ideas and thoughts and can interact with others	Communicates even more abstract things and develops complex discourse
Uses technology in an informed and responsible manner	Searches for information on web pages provided by the teacher and carries out internet searches with support.	Accesses and analyses information on web pages suggested by the teacher. Expands the personal search field.	Searches, analyses, investigates, produces information and interacts autonomously with web pages.

Figure 4. Uruguay- Preliminary framework for foreign language progressions

Data analysis procedure May 2018 – October 2018

The starting point provided by the four themes of language and technology skills together with intercultural development listed in Figure 4 proved valuable in prompting many detailed responses and elaborations from teachers. For example, some teachers proposed the expansion of progression themes to include both oral and written production as specific sub-sections; others commented on various aspects of digital technology usage that might also be included.

Following data collection, Prof Rodriguez conducted an initial qualitative analysis using NVivo software to transcribe the data and sort into themes using an open coding procedure. Themes were identified through a combination of content analysis whereby an initial list of themes is prepared (deductive analysis), together with a grounded theory approach, where themes emerge from the data itself (inductive analysis) (Dörnyei, 2007). Figure 5 provides a sample of data coded under the initial descriptive theme of oral production (author’s translation).

	ORAL PRODUCTION Sample extracts from NVivo first level analysis
1	Primary – Year 6
1.1	Reference 7 Communicates ideas related to their immediate environment with the production of simple statements of literal understanding.
1.2	Reference 11 Strengthen oral and written production in primary school.
1.3	Reference 14 Produce sentences and simple texts; Interaction with their peers
2	Media – Year 3
2.1	Reference 4 Even with the help of the teacher or a partner, the majority do not achieve it autonomously.
2.2	Reference 13 Communicate also the feelings and not only ideas and thoughts since if it is possible to improve the way of communicating what they feel it can improve the class climate, making it more favourable.
2.3	Reference 23 Interactive communication is only achieved through the help and guidance of the teacher. You can lose spontaneity because students always resort to memorization and constant help from the teacher.
3	High school – Year 6
3.1	Reference 1 Often we find that students do not have enough tools to debate, discuss or argue their opinion, because they do not have them in their mother tongue either.
3.2	Reference 2 We consider the B1 level as very ambitious for our baccalaureate, since the student in general does not manage to argue at a discursive level. Our students are not "trained" for dissent, to discuss opposing ideas.
3.3	Reference 19 This goal will be achieved if all the macro-skills are addressed in the form of "process", from Primary to Bachillerato, providing oral spaces, in which the students feel at ease and confident enough to communicate.

Figure 5. Sample data: NVivo coding for Oral Production (author’s translation)

In addition to teacher proposals for the language progressions, a number of respondents commented on points not directly related to progressions, but informative for the team to take into account during the further development of the programme for implementation. For example, some teachers commented that they were unfamiliar with the terminology used in describing some aspects of progression. It was suggested that the development of a glossary could provide a useful reference point for teachers.

4. Construction of first draft framework for foreign language progressions

Following the analysis of teachers' data, Prof. Rodriguez prepared an initial framework for progressions, informed by both the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001) and the submitted data. At this stage the Framework focused on four themes of progression: oral production, written production, listening comprehension and reading comprehension. During a series of meetings with the ANEP / Políticas Linguísticas team descriptors for inclusion in each of the progression levels were critically examined, resulting in both alterations and additions to the document. This draft was then discussed again in consultation with the international consultant.

Consultancy contribution to foreign language progressions

During a four-day period in October 2018 the international consultant was able to work with the ANEP / Políticas Linguísticas team of experts to review and further develop the FL progressions. A critical examination of the progressions so far completed was conducted collaboratively with the team, robustly examining each descriptor for its relevance and suitability for inclusion in guidelines intended to provide a *minimum level* of achievement at the end of each educational phase. Detailed consideration was given to descriptors included in the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001), acknowledged as the most extensive reference point for FLs currently existing globally. Reference to this publication was particularly relevant, given the extensive citing of CEFR levels in many ANEP documents. Some reference was also made to the draft Australian Curriculum development of specific curricula for eleven languages (ACARA, 2016) and to the foreign languages programmes of study developed for England (DfE, 2013 a/b). However, since neither document has followed the progressions framework approach set out in Uruguay, these were not found to be sufficiently relevant. Further attention was given to the recent additions to the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2018)

with discussions centering on the possible inclusion of additional sections on progression in Interaction and Mediation, new sections included in the CEFR in recognition of their omission from the original publication.

A final draft framework for progression in FLs was agreed with the team, acknowledging that further modifications should be considered in response to reviews conducted with teachers at the next drafting stage. The six main areas in which progressions were defined are illustrated in Figure 6, with the full set of progression descriptors available in Appendix 1.

	PRIMERIA 4-6	MEDIA 1-3	MEDIA 4-6
Oral Comprehension			
Oral Production			
Written Comprehension			
Written Production			
Interaction			
Mediation			

Figure 6. Draft outline for Foreign Languages Progressions

The difficulty in reaching decisions on the number and detail of descriptors to be included in each section proved to be a particularly challenging task for the team. Achieving a balance between an extensive and an intensive approach to the inclusion of descriptors was a major concern. However, with due regard to the central aim of providing descriptors which could offer guidance for teachers in the design of curricula, teaching materials and assessment tools, it was agreed that descriptors should serve to provide a framework, rather than a detailed set of all outcomes that might be achieved. This decision was particularly pertinent in view of the development phase for FLs provision that Uruguay is currently engaged in. Publicly funded FL provision at all levels includes remote teachers (Ceibal en inglés), qualified English teachers, unqualified English teachers and qualified generalist teachers with some knowledge of English (this may range from elementary to advanced, A2-C1). In addition, a small number of remote rural schools have no current access to FL provision. With the proviso that progressions should be designed to meet the *current* needs of all FL

teachers, the agreed descriptors offer guidance on an expected *minimum* level of achievement for all students at each school phase.

Consultancy meetings

A briefing meeting was held with the team responsible for developing literacy progressions for the national language (Spanish). Comparisons across subject progressions proved difficult given the very different student starting points and anticipated outcomes. While literacy in Spanish is fundamental to a student's ability to learn at school and to their productive engagement in society, the same cannot be said for FLs. As such, literacy progressions for Spanish are designed to provide a comprehensive view of literacy learning and how it develops over time, while FL progressions are designed to provide a subject-appropriate view of how learning develops over time, with a final outcome at an approximately intermediate level of proficiency by the end of compulsory schooling. For both subject progressions the common purpose can be identified as aiming to provide a framework of progression appropriate to the subject area.

Two further meetings were held during the annual National Languages Forum meeting (12-13 October 2018): a briefing meeting with Gabrielle Kaplan (Coordinator, Ceibal en inglés) and with Valentina Dubini (coordinator for Rural Classroom teachers of English, English Project). A short summary of relevant points is included here, for further discussion in section 4 of this Report.

Ceibal en inglés. Currently some 94 percent of all urban primary schools receive English lessons in years 4,5 & 6. Of these, 70 percent are taught through video conferencing (Ceibal en inglés) and 30 percent through face-to-face teaching (known as *Second languages programme*). In November 2017 just over half of these students took an English language test (known as Adaptive test), with results indicating almost identical outcomes across both programmes (Plan Ceibal, 2017). Significantly, no oral comprehension, production or interaction tasks were included in the test – a very common tendency given the complexity and time demands involved in administering such tests. Future plans however, include the possibility of a pilot phase for the introduction of an oral test in 2019.

According to the Ceibal en inglés coordinator, teachers report that the remote nature of the system may encourage mediation and can also contribute to raising intercultural awareness (e.g. a remote teacher from South Africa demonstrated a so-called ‘Click language’ – to the fascination of the Uruguay-based class). Collaboration between the class teacher and the remote teacher provides a model for students to gain understanding of the fact that knowledge may also exist and be available to them beyond the classroom.

At secondary school level (Media) Ceibal en inglés is working towards providing conversation classes with a remote teacher, designed to complement the weekly lessons provided by the face-to-face English teaching. The possibility for interaction with a teacher whose L1 is English also offers opportunities for further intercultural development.

Rural classroom teachers of English project. An initial pilot phase of E-coaching was introduced for 10 teachers based in rural primary schools in 2016. All teachers are required to have a minimum B1 level of proficiency in English (intermediate level). The E-coaching comprises a weekly video meeting (using laptops with JABAR software) with pedagogical input including guided lesson planning. Initial outcomes have been very positively received by teachers and learners. In 2017 a further 10 schools were included, with the expectation that numbers would continue to grow, at least for schools where teachers have sufficient English proficiency. Some 980 rural primary school teachers have yet to be reached.

5. Review of design and development for foreign language progressions

This section discusses the strengths and weaknesses of the process of development for FL progressions, highlighting issues which would benefit from further attention prior to the launch of a pilot phase of implementation.

Preliminary progressions framework

The first stage in developing a FL progressions framework included four themes of language and technology skills, together with intercultural development (Figure 4). An oversight resulted in the omission of both listening comprehension and written production (two important FL skills), causing some confusion during consultations with teachers and perhaps limiting the responses which might have been obtained on these topics.

Data collection

Despite the above-mentioned difficulties, the consultation process followed an impressively comprehensive and democratic procedure, enabling a substantial proportion of the national body of teachers to contribute their personal views on the priorities to be included in the progressions document. Teachers raised a number of issues that were not directly related to the progressions but would nonetheless have an impact on how feasible full implementation might prove. Concerns raised included such issues as multilevel classes (vertical grouping), which frequently occur in rural primary schools where pupil numbers are too small to justify classes for each age group. Teachers also discussed the importance of curriculum coherence across the schooling system – ensuring that transfer from primary to lower secondary school and beyond would not result in unnecessary repetition of language topics. In some instances teacher responses lacked focus, making it difficult to categorise and interpret. These difficulties can be partly attributed to the limitations of the preliminary progressions and partly due to the limited experience of such consultations for many teachers.

A significant concern was the teachers' unfamiliarity with some of the technical terms used in the preliminary draft. It is important to note that terms commonly used in the academic field of applied linguistics and policy documentation need clarification for a non-specialist readership. This might be overcome in the future by the development of an accompanying Glossary for use with the final draft progressions document. Nonetheless, comments on such aspects as available teaching materials, technological difficulties, etc. also provided valuable information regarding the classroom challenges often experienced by teachers in delivering a good quality educational programme.

Data analysis

The procedure for data analysis using NVivo software is very appropriate for ease of sorting and categorising large quantities of qualitative data. However, since the coding procedure was carried out by Prof Rodriguez alone, it should be acknowledged that reliability may be somewhat weakened in the absence of a second person able to repeat the process to independently confirm inter-rater reliability.

At present, the data is in the form of listings of related comments from teachers, grouped under a range of themes. A second stage of analysis could be valuable, allocating a progression level to each statement and providing summaries of data contained in each theme. Through this procedure a clearer picture of key themes for each progression level should emerge.

Short extracts from NVivo thematic grouping of oral production shown in Figure 5 (page 9) provide an illustration of teacher commentaries at the three progression points. Item 1.2 ‘Strengthen oral and written production in primary school’ for example, is in the form of a generally desirable aim. In contrast, Item 1.3 ‘Produce sentences and simple texts; Interaction with their peers’ offers a descriptor which could clearly lead to the design a number of learning activities and assessment tasks. Similarly, Items 2.3 ‘Interactive communication is only achieved through the help and guidance of the teacher. You can lose spontaneity because students always resort to memorization and constant help from the teacher’ and Item 3.1 ‘Often we find that students do not have enough tools to debate, discuss or argue their opinion, because they do not have them in their mother tongue either’, are more general reflections on student abilities. While such reflections are not, in themselves, suitable as progression outcomes, this input provided valuable information for the ANEP / Políticas Linguísticas team in preparing the draft progressions framework.

Formation of first draft progressions framework

Given the limitations of the initial progressions used for the consultation process, the brief period available to fully analyse the resultant data and the pressing need to complete a first draft set of progressions, the decision to draw substantially on relevant aspects of the CEFR framework is appropriate. Principled selection of key descriptors is informed by the ANEP / Políticas Linguísticas team’s extensive knowledge of outcomes achieved in Uruguayan classrooms and differing modes of FL provision available in the country, together with their knowledge of local, national and international assessment procedures.

The data collection period with teachers has provided clarification of the main themes to be included, while also emphasising the importance of providing a framework suitable for both more and less experienced teachers to work with. With this in mind, the ANEP / Políticas Linguísticas team were selective in their choice of both the number and range of descriptors

from the CEFR that were finally included in the framework. This has resulted in a progressions framework for FLs likely to be well-received by teachers, albeit that a few descriptors may need to be added, adapted or even deleted following a pilot phase of implementation.

Following further discussion with the ANEP / Politicas Linguisticas team and the external consultant it was agreed that the Progressions Framework should include descriptors for Interaction and Mediation, in addition to the more commonly documented descriptors relating to the four language skills (oral production / comprehension; written production / reading comprehension). The recently published Companion Volume to the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2018) has added these two new sections to the original CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001) in recognition of their importance and acknowledgement of the gap in the original CEFR guidance. While individual descriptors relating to these two themes might well have simply been included as descriptors within listings for the four skills, it was agreed that by separating them out as discrete aspects for development, teachers might be encouraged to place greater emphasis on their development. This is particularly significant for the theme of interaction – an aspect of language development which teachers often find difficult to include in classroom contexts. For some teachers this difficulty may be related to concerns about loss of control as student pairwork inevitably results in increased noise volume.

In similar fashion, the emphasis placed on mediation may also help teachers to fully recognise its importance, identified in the Companion Volume as a procedure where: ‘the user/learner acts as a social agent who creates bridges and helps to construct or convey meaning, sometimes within the same language, sometimes from one language to another (cross-linguistic mediation).’ (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 103). This emphasis implies that a skilled language learner is someone able to focus on the co-construction of meaning and is likely to be particularly relevant in connection with small group collaborative tasks in activity-focused learning environments.

Further consideration was given to the possibility of also including a set of progressions specifically related to the development of *Strategies*. It was agreed, however, that this would not be included since such development should be viewed as a broad educational aim rather than related uniquely to FL learning.

The question of including a set of progressions specifically related to the development of *Intercultural Competence* was also briefly discussed. Given the importance of developing the capacity to deal with the concept of ‘otherness’ in today’s world, this theme deserves further consideration with a view to including some initial descriptors, at least. According to Driscoll (2017, p.25), the focus for the FL teacher relates to ‘three interconnected tasks: 1) to provide opportunities for learners to reflect upon and analyse their own cultural reference points which inform their identity; 2) to learn about the cultural characteristics, social practices and attitudes of another country; and 3) to adapt their behaviour and attitude when in the target culture.’ (see Council of Europe, 2018, p. 159 for suggestions of possible descriptors).

As a final point in this review section, Figure 7 provides a numerical summary of descriptors across all progressions, indicating that Written Comprehension appears to have received greater attention than other language skills (six descriptors), while written production has far fewer (two descriptors). Some re-adjustment might be achieved in the area of written production by including descriptors relating to creative writing and planning writing (see Council of Europe, 2018, p.159).

	PRIMERIA 4-6	MEDIA 1-3	MEDIA 4-6
Oral Comprehension	3	3	3
Oral Production	5	5	5
Written Comprehension	6	6	6
Written Production	2	2	2
Interaction	3	3	3
Mediation	2	3	3

Figure 7. Numerical Representation of descriptors for Draft Progressions Framework

The full Draft Framework for FL Progressions (English version) is provided in Appendix I. It should be noted here that some slight wording changes have been made by the external consultant following the final drafting with the ANEP / Politicas Linguisticas team, to ensure clarity of meaning. It will be important for the final version to be subjected to a procedure for back translation to confirm that both the Spanish and English version accurately convey

identical meanings, since direct (word for word) translation may otherwise cause confusion in future if these documents are used for international purposes.

6 Recommendations and Conclusion

In the formation of progressions for FL learning for Uruguay it has been important to pay attention to the cultural context in the design of achievable outcomes. Underlying concepts that have informed construction of foreign languages progressions for Uruguay can be summarised as follows:

1. Progressions Framework limited to a focus on FLs only. Impractical to include second languages (L2) given their very different starting points and expected outcomes.
2. Majority of FL learners regarded as zero beginners in year 4 (primary)
3. Exposure to FL in school limited to 3 x 45 minutes per week.
4. Exposure to FL outside school, extremely limited / non-existent.
5. Motivation limited for some students as perceptions of benefits for learning FLs unclear.
6. Modes of delivery very varied across country. Resultant decision to set moderate outcomes which all students are expected to achieve.

It is recognised that the relatively modest outcomes may be exceeded by those students able to access English more frequently (e.g. social media, online films and gaming). As access to teacher professional development improves it is likely that teachers will also be able to contribute to extending students' awareness of out-of-school opportunities for students to engage in using English for social purposes in the process of becoming autonomous learners.

This report includes a number of suggestions for further development of the Progressions Framework which should be considered. These include:

1. Complete second stage analysis of Nvivo themes to provide summaries of key themes emerging. Check against draft document to ensure all points are fully included.
2. Consider inclusion of set of progressions for Intercultural Competence.
3. Consider reducing number of descriptors for Written Comprehension.
4. Consider increasing number of descriptors for Written Production.
5. Prepare Glossary of key terms for use by non-specialist readership.

6. Back translate final document (Spanish version) to ensure English / Spanish versions convey identical meanings.

In conclusion, with attention to the above recommendations, the First Draft Framework for FL Progressions will be ready for a pilot phase of implementation. As with any innovation, it is to be expected that there will be many critiques – both positive and negative. It will be important to thoroughly prepare teachers involved in the pilot phase, to provide support and clarify underlying principles so they are able to provide constructive feedback for the finalisation of the FL Progressions Framework. With this in mind, the ANEP / Políticas Linguísticas team might be well advised to consider preparing one or two YouTube-type explanatory presentations (eg. see online presentation for Mexico (Televisión Educativa, 2018)).

CONSULTANCY REPORT II
URUGUAY

Embedding foreign language learning progressions within the
framework of the MCRN
Analysis, Guidelines and Recommendations

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Report submitted to: ANEP Uruguay
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1 Introductory discussion of MCRN priorities

The provision of high-quality education for all young people is a high priority in most jurisdictions worldwide today, including Uruguay. Two particular threads of concern in addressing this target run throughout the MCRN document – that of so-called *universalisation* or provision of education for all and *inclusion* or ensuring provision is designed to meet the individual needs of every learner, whatever their background. In essence, these themes address not only the expectations of equality of opportunity but also an expectation of equity in education.

These challenging and complex priorities deserve some further discussion in this introductory section of the Report, particularly given the difficulties in translating specific terminology that can sometimes cause meanings to be lost where there is no exact equivalent in both languages. In this discussion I aim to establish a baseline for the critical examination of further themes included in the MCRN which may be of particular relevance to the foreign language progressions.

In a discussion of contemporary education policy and globalisation, Rizvi & Lingard (2010, p.76) propose that equity in education is concerned with ‘who gets what, when and how?’ Elaborating on this definition they argue that education systems today are shaped by a very narrow definition of equity, principally concerned with issues of access to educational opportunities and failing to ‘address the broader historical and political contexts that produce disadvantage in the first place’ (p.157). They propose that through a focus on the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) (UN, 2015) contemporary definitions of equality have been framed in terms of universal access to primary schooling, gender equality in education, and ensuring access to information technology in education, with the aim of overcoming ‘the digital divide’ (p.153). However, in establishing these timebound, measurable targets there is an assumption that access alone will produce social justice. This position ignores the historical conditions which continue to define quality of provision and fail to seriously address what conditions might actually contribute to success. They conclude that, as such, the MDG adopts ‘a very weak definition of the concept of justice’ (p.157).

Rizvi and Lingard's (2010) account confirms the importance of drawing a distinction between the terms *equality* and *equity* – terms which are often used interchangeably. The following front cover illustration from the Handbook on Measuring Equity in Education (UNESCO, 2018) clarifies the distinction by emphasizing that equality may offer equal access to education, but a prerequisite for facilitating equity in terms of educational outcomes is to ensure an equal starting point for all learners (figure 8). Thus, young people who may experience lack of equity by reason of such factors as family socioeconomic status, minority language status, specific individual needs (both physical and cognitive), lack of access to qualified teacher expertise, geographical remoteness and familial negative socio-historical perceptions of education will be in need of targeted support if social justice is to be fully achieved.



Figure 8. Equity and the potential for equal outcomes (adapted from cover illustration, Handbook on measuring equity in education, UNESCO, 2018).

This viewpoint is addressed in some detail in the MCRN's Appendix 1 which provides a discussion of both the importance and the challenges of overcoming socio-historical patterns of disadvantage that have resulted in a lack of equity for educational provision in Uruguay. However, a stronger acknowledgement of the need to pay attention to the wider aspects of social disadvantage, some of which do not lend themselves well to the global trend in measurement and accountability, will also need to be addressed in the future, if Uruguay is to fully achieve a position of equity across all education phases. In the following sections of the Report this theme will be further elaborated with reference to specific aspects of foreign language (FL) provision.

2. Democracy and the formation of Learning Progressions (FLs)

Report I (Enever, 2018), submitted to ANEP in November 2018 included a detailed account of the democratic procedure adopted for the design and formation of the Learning Progressions for FLs. At each stage of the process a rigorous procedure of consultation with a range of actors was undertaken, aiming to ensure that the final document would facilitate educational inclusion for all. A guiding principle in the selection of outcomes to be achieved at the end of each phase of compulsory schooling was that these should be set at a *minimum* level, to be achieved by all. With this principle in mind, it was important to consider learning contexts where the access to quality FL provision was limited by the challenges of geographical remoteness and associated difficulties in the supply of qualified FL teachers and / or the provision of remote online teaching. In this sense, the Learning Progressions (FLs) have adopted a strong notion of equity, one which pays ‘attention to the historical conditions that define people’s capacity to benefit from state provisions – not simply to issues of access, but also to outcomes’ (Rizvi & Lingard (2010, p.76).

The following six sections will address each of the so called ‘guiding forces’ of the MRCN, reviewing the ways in which the Learning Progressions are linked to these. This is followed by a final section drawing attention to FL-specific factors that may also need to be more fully addressed with regard to question of equity, despite their lack of inclusion in the MCRN.

3. Guiding principles

3.1 Education as a human right

The principle of *Education as a human right* can be traced back to a UN Declaration formulated in the aftermath of World War II (UN, 1948) with the aim of establishing peace and stability for the future. Article 26 of 30 articles states the following:

- (1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
- (2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
- (3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

(UN, 1948, p.7)

As an aside, it is perhaps pertinent to note here the contribution made by the Uruguayan representative, Senator Isabel Pinto de Vidal, who was instrumental in contributing to the full acknowledgement of women's rights during the negotiation of wording for the Declaration. From the date of this initial Declaration many further elaborations have been constructed with regard to education, both by the UN and by individual nation states. However, even after more than 70 years, it cannot yet be claimed that the right to education has been fulfilled in the majority of jurisdictions worldwide.

With reference specifically to the inclusion of foreign languages in the Uruguayan curriculum, this places a requirement for the State and for individual schools to ensure opportunities for all school students to learn a FL are provided. In the case of Uruguay a decision has been taken to provide English as a compulsory subject from primary year 4 to the end of compulsory schooling (Media 6) in all schools. This is a particularly demanding remit in the more remote regions of the country where some 980 primary schools reportedly were still without an English teacher or access to remote learning opportunities in 2018 (Enever, 2018, p.13)

In the regions close to the Brazilian border, where Uruguayan Portuguese is commonly the regional language, Uruguayan Spanish will inevitably be positioned as a second language and English as a third. In these contexts learners are likely to experience some cross-linguistic benefits gained from classroom exposure and increased metacognitive awareness as a result of their plurilingual experience. However, it will be important to pay particular attention to quality provision of all three languages in these regions if the minimum required levels of proficiency are to be achieved and the right to education in the regional language (minority language /L1), L2 (Uruguayan Spanish) and the FL (English) is to be fully realised. Currently, no Learning Progressions for Uruguayan Portuguese or for Spanish as L2 have yet been designed. These will need attention in the future to ensure that school students right to an education which acknowledges their cultural and linguistic identity is fully realized.

3.2 Student-centred learning

The MCRN emphasizes the importance of placing the student at the centre of learning, reflecting a model of teaching and learning where students have the opportunity to work at

their own pace in engaging and challenging classroom tasks. According to O'Neill and McMahon (2005) the use of the term *student-centred learning* can be traced back to the seminal work of Jean Piaget (see Piaget, 1960) and even John Dewey (see Dewey, 1916), both of whom perceived learning and education as a democratic entitlement.

Broadly speaking, the concept of student-centred learning is understood today as indicating a shift away from a model of the teacher as instructor, towards the teacher as facilitator or guide to student learning. A useful summary of what this might mean in practice is provided by Lea, Stephenson and Troy (2003, p.322):

- [R]eliance upon active rather than passive learning,
- an emphasis on deep learning and understanding,
- increased responsibility and accountability on the part of the student,
- an increased sense of autonomy in the learner,
- an interdependence between teacher and learner (as opposed to complete learner dependence or independence),
- mutual respect within the learner–teacher relationship,
- a reflexive approach to the learning and teaching process on the part of both teacher and learner.

Relating the summary by Lea et al (2003) to the context of FL learning, the principles of a constructivist view of learning are evident. The emphasis here is on learners constructing their own meanings through an active process of discovery. In facilitating this the teacher acts as a more knowledgeable other, supporting the learner in becoming more independent over time (Vygotsky, 1978, p.86). This epistemological position can also be related to the *usage-based* model of FL learning identified by Tomasello (2003), emphasizing the importance for learners of having a language-rich learning environment with lots of opportunities to practice the language and create their own meanings.

The structure of the Learning Progressions (FLs) has been designed to provide learners with a framework, enabling them to identify which FL outcomes they wish to achieve and to plan their own learning with an increasing sense of autonomy. Given the skill-based nature of FL learning the necessity for developing an increasing sense of autonomy is axiomatic to progress. The extracts from the Learning Progressions shown in Figure 9 illustrate the nature of progression embedded in each set of descriptors – moving from limited oral production towards an increasing ability to communicate independently of support from a teacher or more able other (for example, fellow student).

Oral production	
Primaria 4-6	Asks for help, when needed, to produce a message and keep the flow of communication.
Media 1-3	Conveys the message autonomously although the teacher or interlocutor helps them to facilitate communication at times.
Media 4-6	Monitors the flow of communication and is able to correct mistakes that may interfere with communication or uses circumlocution to transmit the message.

Figure 9. First draft Foreign Language Learning Progressions. Oral production. Appendix I extract. (Enever, 2018, p.22)

3.3 Learning as a personal and collective construction

Reference to Vygotskian theory in the section above focuses on developing autonomy, relating this to individual language learning. Equally important in the understanding of Vygotskian theory however, is the stress laid on the social construction of meanings, where Vygotsky proposes that all language learning occurs within a social context and is, to a greater or lesser extent, co-constructed by the participants engaged in the act of meaning making. This theme is elaborated throughout the MCRN, drawing on the work of Jerome Bruner (1991) whose work has provided valuable further insights to the sometimes incomplete collected works of Vygotsky published by colleagues, following his early death. Bruner was particularly interested in how language developed, arguing that the human mind is shaped by culture rather than by biological inheritance. He proposed that the process of *shaping* occurs through culture’s ‘symbolic systems – language and discourse modes, the forms of logical and narrative explication, and the patterns of mutually dependent communal life’ (Bruner, 1991, p.34).

It is today accepted that Bruner’s strong response to the so-called *cognitive turn* in the field of second language acquisition, led by Chomsky (1988), is now moderated by an acknowledgement that language learning is both a cognitive and a social process. Nonetheless, Bruner’s work has been important in providing further insights to the work of Vygotsky, particularly with reference to the operation of the zone of proximal development

(zpd). In this process Bruner identifies the role of *scaffolding*, a procedure which, with the aid of the intervention of a tutor (teacher or fellow student), ‘enables a child or novice to solve a problem, carry out a task or achieve a goal which would be beyond his unassisted efforts’ (Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976, p.90). However, Wood et al note that ‘comprehension of the solution must precede production’ (p.90), indicating the necessity for the learner to have a prior grasp of the goal or outcome in order to be able to target their efforts accordingly.

Interaction	
Primaria 4-6	Interacts with another speaker slowly, uses strategies of repetition, rephrasing and repair.
Media 1-3	Interacts fairly easily in structured situations and short conversations, provided the other person helps if necessary.
Media 4-6	Uses a wide range of simple language to engage in unprepared conversations on topics that are familiar or of personal interest

Figure 10. First draft Foreign Language Learning Progressions. Interaction. Appendix I extract. (Enever, 2018, p.25)

The first draft Learning Progressions (FLs) have not set out to provide explicit guidance to teachers on ways of working in the classroom. However, the inclusion of a set of outcomes specifically focused on Interaction (see Figure 10 for an example) by implication, does provide guidance on expected modes of classroom organization and task design. At each level of task difficulty in the descriptors relate to informal interactions or conversations, in which the focus is on communicating meaning rather than on achieving accuracy. As such, opportunities for peer scaffolding are more likely to arise during the natural flow in the clarification of meaning, than might otherwise occur when a learner is expected to engage in a prepared (rehearsed) production task. This refocusing in the nature of classroom language tasks requires a move away from the traditions of careful monitoring of each learner’s production, towards an approach where learners’ are engaged in communicative activities which provide opportunities for shared construction of meaning through informal, often unmonitored interaction.

The inclusion of interaction as a new strand in Companion Volume to the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2018) marks an important acknowledgement of the role of collaborative learning, not fully acknowledged in the original CEFR publication (Council of Europe, 2001). The inclusion of a separate strand focusing specifically on interaction outcomes in the Learning Progressions (FLs) aims to reflect the importance of providing learners with frequent classroom opportunities to build their skills in simulated ‘authentic’ interaction activities as a preparation for similar ‘real world’ interactions.

3.4 Teaching as an intentional activity

In this section of the MCRN the right to education is re-visited, placing an emphasis on the role of the teacher in providing both access and clarity regarding the programme of learning and expected outcomes, together with creating suitable conditions for active learning to occur. This perspective draws on the work of Paulo Freire and philosophies of education related to humanism and critical pedagogy. The work of Freire had a major impact on debates around classroom pedagogies, promoting an educational approach based on problem-posing and dialogue. To clarify what this might mean in practice he used a *banking* concept of education to describe a perspective whereby ‘knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing’ (Freire, 2005: 72). His critical response to this authoritarian and somewhat paternalistic view of education was to propose a model of *co-intentional education* involving the rejection of hierarchal forms of education and the prioritization of egalitarian and collaborative approaches. The following extract (Freire, 2005, p.80) illustrates the role of the teacher in this process:

Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teachers. The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow. In this process, arguments based on "authority" are no longer valid; in order to function, authority must be *on the side of freedom*, not *against* it.

In practice, this re-positioning of the teacher as co-constructor of knowledge may not be fully achievable in every educational context today, particularly under contemporary conditions where pre-determined outcomes are perceived as a requirement by national education authorities – often driven by societal expectations, patterns of international comparison and global rankings (for example, PISA). In a climate of 21st century digital connectivity such factors will inevitably influence curriculum design. Nonetheless, much can be achieved in

terms of learner agency in the field of FL learning in Uruguay, given the skill-based nature of outcomes framed in the Learning Progressions (FL).

In the process of curriculum planning at the national, regional and local levels, it will be important to write into the outlines a range of possible task types which might enable learners to achieve the learning outcomes relevant to their age range, allowing for both diversity of learning needs and inclusion. At individual classroom levels it would then be possible for learners themselves to become agents in defining their choice of task types through which they could progress in their FL learning. Through such an approach a framework could be established in which the teacher might intentionally collaborate with learners, supporting and guiding them in the process of becoming autonomous learners. This approach is particularly relevant to FL learning where specifically individualized language learning strategies are necessary ‘to facilitate the comprehension, retention, retrieval and application of information in the second or foreign language’ (Oxford, 1990)

Written production	
Primaria 4-6	Uses simple words and phrases to describe everyday objects. e.g. size, colour.
Media 1-3	Writes short simple imaginary biographies and simple poems about people.
Media 4-6	Narrates a story, Writes a report. Summarises the main points in a text.

Figure 11. First draft Foreign Language Learning Progressions. Written production: Appendix I extract. (Enever, 2018, p.24)

Figure 11 provides an illustrative example of the flexibility embodied in the learning outcomes defined for written production. It is immediately apparent, for example, that the choices for descriptions of everyday objects (primaria 4-6) is extensive and would certainly lend itself to a process of negotiation regarding which items would constitute a useful body of knowledge for everyday purposes within specific, culturally defined local contexts. In similar vein, the open-ended nature of the media 4-6 outcome for narrating a story and writing a report could be adjusted to meet any of the preferred focuses as defined by the learners themselves.

In the preparation of curriculum guidance at national level it will be important to emphasise the priority of indicating the range of interpretations for task types available for each and every descriptor. By foregrounding this perspective teachers and learners may be encouraged to take ownership of the curriculum and jointly negotiate pathways to learning which are culturally relevant to their present and future needs.

3.5 Learning environments as spaces of cultural circulation and construction

Through much of the 20th century the school has been perceived as a central site for learning within communities, organised along traditional lines comprised of individual classrooms for each age group, a general meeting hall, possible additional facilities such as a library, science laboratories, music and art facilities, provision for a midday meal, sports and recreational facilities. Today however, within contexts of heightened digital interconnectivity, learning is increasingly taking place beyond classroom walls. In the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) this is particularly significant, given the position of English as a global lingua franca. For example, research is now showing that children in northern Europe as young as 10 years are regularly engaging in online gaming activities, in English (Lindgren & Enever, 2017). In this process of using English for social purposes, learning trajectories beyond the outcomes expected for children of this age group are now being recorded.

Evidence such as this illustrates the significant contribution that the wider cultural context beyond the school environment makes to students' learning. In line with this perspective, Duarte (2003) claims that the formative and socialising functions of education in Latin America frequently occur today in other environments such as the city and on computer networks, thus escaping 'the rationalist discourse of the teacher and the book, cultural vehicle par excellence since the Enlightenment' (Duarte, 2003 p.98) [author's translation].

Despite such claims however, it seems likely that the school will continue to be a significant site for learning in the foreseeable future. As such, it is important to plan for a learning environment which supports cultural circulation and construction, facilitating the inclusion of digital learning as an essential part of that environment – recognising also that the school students' learning environments reach beyond school walls to encompass the family and wider societal environment as sites for learning. Conceptualising this extended learning space poses substantial demands for rethinking the physical classroom design with reference to

flexible furniture, working spaces and display areas, together with the positioning of tablets / mobile phones / computers to provide easy access for working electronically as a regular part of daily routines. Similarly, it brings new challenges to teachers to consider how to validate learning beyond school, creating seamless links for learning across different learning spaces. In this Report it is not appropriate to engage in a detailed discussion of how this might be achieved. Rather, I will focus here on the question of creating spaces of cultural circulation and construction, with reference particularly to intercultural and intracultural spaces, of particular relevance to FL learning.

The unique contribution that FLs make to the school curriculum is their potential for raising awareness of other cultures. This experience challenges learners to become more aware of their own culture and those of neighbouring regions and countries, in addition to those more distant countries in which the FL might be spoken. Through such experiences learners expand their intercultural awareness, their appreciation of *otherness* and, in so doing, may construct an expanded cultural identity or self-image. The significance of establishing a positive self-image as a successful FL learner is elaborated in Dörnyei's recent work on motivation theory - an extract is included here for a full explanation of the concept:

1. Ideal L2 Self, which concerns the L2-specific facet of one's ideal self: if the person we would like to become speaks an L2 (e.g., the person we would like to become is associated with traveling or doing business internationally), the ideal L2 self is a powerful motivator to learn the L2 because we would like to reduce the discrepancy between our actual and ideal selves.
2. Ought-to L2 Self, which concerns the attributes that individuals believe they ought to possess to avoid possible negative outcomes; such perceived duties, external expectations, and obligations may therefore bear little resemblance to the individual's own desires or wishes.
3. L2 Learning Experience, which concerns situation-specific motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience (e.g., the positive impact of success or the enjoyable quality of a language course).

(Dörnyei & Chan, 2013, p.438)

The association that Dörnyei & Chan make with travel and operating internationally, using the medium of a L2, reflects the learner's future potential for cultural circulation and increased intercultural understanding as a positive outcome of being equipped with a plurilingual identity.

At present, the MCRN makes little reference to the concept of intercultural competence, placing emphasis on a *shared national culture* instead (MCRN 2017, p.23). However, the inclusion of FLs in the curriculum is recognized as a discrete subject area (pp.61/62)

indicating the potential for knowledge of FLs to facilitate engagement in social practices, to communicate and to build knowledge. Given the stated intention that the MCRN should be regarded as ‘an open document’, with an expectation that it will be further modified, as the need arises, in the future, consideration should be given to making a stronger statement on regarding the importance of developing intercultural awareness as a part of the school curriculum. Similarly, consideration might be given to including this theme as a discrete learning strand in the Learning Progressions (See Enever 2018, p.17 for further reference to this).

3.6 Assessment as a dimension of the teaching and learning process

The Learning Progressions (FLs) have set out to provide guidance for teachers and learners regarding the expected *minimum* outcomes at the end of each phase of schooling, They are expected to serve as a base for the further development of the curriculum and any associated teaching and learning materials. In addition, they offer a comprehensive reference for the construction of assessment tasks – both formative and summative.

In the development of the Learning Progressions (FLs) careful attention was given to consultation with teachers and teacher educators around the country, helping to determine the design of a cohesive set of descriptors which all students could be expected to achieve. In line with the objective of ‘ensuring educational continuity’ (MCRN 2017, p.15) connections between each level of achievement are clearly evident. Figure 12 provides an illustration of

Reading comprehension	
Primaria 4-6	Follows the narrative sequence of a text with visual support as long as it is presented chronologically.
Media 1-3	Follows the narrative sequence of a text with no visual support as long as it is presented chronologically.
Media 4-6	Interrogates a text to reveal its logical sequence.

Figure 12. First draft Foreign Language Learning Progressions. Reading comprehension: Appendix I extract. (Enever, 2018, p.23)

how this is articulated in one of the descriptors for reading comprehension. Here, the descriptor sets a requirement by the end of primary year 6 to be able to read a narrative text, with the support of illustration to aid comprehension; moving to being able to achieve this without the additional support of illustration by the end of media 3 and then being able to understand a text even when the content is not organised chronologically by the end of media 6. It will be evident from these descriptors that no reference is made to the length, content or complexity of the text – this will need to be decided by more local teacher groups, according to what is considered culturally appropriate and achievable.

As indicated above, forms of assessment may include both formative and summative approaches – both of which will provide guidance to learners on progress and future directions for study. With regard to formative assessment, three main approaches are relevant to mention here: assessment *for* learning (AfL, see Black & Wiliam, 1998); diagnostic testing (see Alderson, 2005); peer and self-assessment (see Butler, 2016). Regular use of these on-going forms of classroom assessment enable learners to benefit from support and encouragement in making progress and becoming increasingly autonomous in defining their individualised pathways to proficiency.

Summative assessment is more likely to occur at the end of an academic year and/or the end of a schooling phase (e.g. primaria 6). Assessment formats may include tests designed by teachers for use with their own classes; exams prepared by a regional or national consortium of testing specialists; or exams prepared and administered by international testing businesses with specialist expertise (e.g. Cambridge ESOL, TOEFL). The strength of the locally and nationally designed tests lies in their potential for cultural relevance which takes into account the national Learning Progressions. While internationally designed tests do not respond to specific local circumstances, they do offer a standard of international comparison which may provide useful guidance on national achievements.

A final point to note with reference to FL assessment is the tendency for many assessment procedures to exclude assessment of oral production, often attributed to the time-intensive demands of assessing each individual learner, which may need to be conducted by teachers during school time. This area of testing deserves greater attention in test design, given the increasing importance of oral communication today, both during face-to-face communication and via a range of digital technologies. The priority here will be to achieve a level of fluency

sufficient for communicating meaning in international contexts, rather than a concern with a high level of accuracy – particularly at the elementary stages.

4. Further considerations and conclusions

This Report has set out to review the ways in which the principles of the MCRN are embedded in the Learning Progressions (FLs). In approaching this task I have adopted the six Guiding Principles identified in Section 3 of the MCRN as a framework for discussion of how each principle relates to the work conducted by the ANEP Expert group in the formation of the Learning Principles (FLs). Key threads running throughout this Report are the ethical principles of ensuring universality and inclusivity for all learners of FLs, with due attention to diversity and individual needs.

With reference to recent developments in pedagogical approaches to FL teaching and learning, and particularly to the role of English as a global language One final point is worthy of consideration in relation to the Learning Progressions (FLs). At present, the Learning Progressions (FLs) are strongly focused on linguistic outcomes. This reflects partly the influence that the CEFR has had on FL curricula worldwide over the past 20 years or so, but also relates to an increasing trend towards the commodification of languages (Heller, 2010). This trend has resulted in a shift away from viewing language as intimately connected with cultural identity towards a view of language as a skill closely associated with ‘the work process and work products of the new economy’ (Heller 2010, p.108). One outcome of this trend has been that literary texts published in the FL are often not included in school language curricula today. A possible way of addressing this gap in the Language Progressions (FLs) might be to include a descriptor relating to the inclusion of literary texts in the proposed section on the development of intercultural awareness proposed in Section 3.3 (p.14).

In summing up the issues discussed in this Report it is evident that the Learning Progressions (FLs) have broadly succeeded in responding to the framework established by the MCRN. However, it will be in the detailed elaboration of the FL curriculum framework and subsequent local curriculum developments that the response to the MCRN will be fully detailed. A further influence on the final quality of provision relates to the design of local and national exams. Evidence from high stakes international testing (eg. PISA) has demonstrated the extent to which nation states have revised their curriculum provision in an effort to achieve more highly on these testing systems – often despite the limited cultural reference of

such systems to local and national contexts. This is indeed a challenging time to formulate a national curriculum for FLs which maintains a strong grasp of ethical and democratic principles!

CONSULTANCY REPORT III
URUGUAY

Suggestions for the implementation of learning progressions
for foreign languages in the Uruguayan educational system

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Report submitted to: ANEP Uruguay
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1. Introduction

The aim of this third and final consultancy report is to provide ‘suggestions for the implementation of learning progressions in the Uruguayan educational system, CEIP, CES, CETP’. The suggestions elaborated in this report are based on the contents of the two previous reports and do not include commentary on any further developments which may have occurred since October 2018. Details of the development of the learning progressions (FLs) since October 2018 are available from the ANEP / Políticas Linguísticas team (contact Prof Aldo Rodriguez).

In this introductory section I reflect briefly on the role of the progressions framework in relation to the curriculum, exploring contemporary perceptions regarding the relationship between curriculum, pedagogy and assessment with a particular focus on the decision to formulate the curriculum from a starting point of *outcomes*.

The proposed introduction of an outcomes-based curriculum for FLs in Uruguay follows a global trend that has developed over the past thirty years or so. In a debate on the nature of curriculum theory Young (2015, p.824) notes the controversies that have surrounded the role and nature of the curriculum. With reference to an outcomes-based curriculum he emphasizes that it ‘should not disregard knowledge’. The question, *what counts as knowledge?* is central here. Young & Muller’s (2013, p.230) work in relation to schooling sheds light on the concept of *powerful knowledge* as a curriculum principle, arguing for the importance of distinguishing between different kinds of knowledge – the more and the less specialized. Here they suggest that ‘better ways of knowing are always associated with specialisation, with the intellectual division of labour, and its relationship with the social division of work and occupations. Powerful knowledge therefore is specialised knowledge’.

Relating these issues to the foreign language (FL) curriculum, and specifically to the progressions framework developed by the ANEP / Políticas Linguísticas team, this raises a number of questions, given the choice of English as the compulsory FL. In many respects learning a FL can be regarded as acquiring a skill, with English currently perceived as a skill which may enable the speaker to gain privileged access to higher education, career opportunities and global connections. Thus, it can also be viewed as *powerful knowledge*.

The progression outcomes contribute to emphasizing the skills-based nature of FL proficiency with descriptors related to the required degree of proficiency for each school level. In the classroom, however, teachers are concerned with ‘What to teach students? and how to do it?’ (Ruzgar 2018 p.679). From this perspective, the tasks for education authorities are much broader, moving from the statement of outcomes, to the concerns of teachers who confront issues related to the curriculum (what to teach), pedagogy (methods and strategies to encourage learning) and assessment (both *for* learning and *of* learning) (Bruner,1996). In the following sections these themes are explored with reference to the next stages in the implementation process for the learning progressions (FLs).

2. Embedding Learning Progressions for foreign languages

As with any educational change, there will be those who are more or less resistant to the proposed changes. The challenge then is to enlist the support of key promoters of the change, who will act as agents of change, guiding and preparing teachers to understand the purposes of the Learning Progressions (LP) and identify effective ways to embed them in classroom practices. No doubt, many initiatives are already underway for achieving these aims since the preparation of the LP (FL) in October 2018. It is hoped that the following suggestions will contribute to further planning and effective implementation. Given the democratic approach to collaborating with teachers in the process of collecting data for the formulation of the LPs it is likely that the planned implementation will receive an initially positive reception, assuming sufficient guidance and support is given in the processes of implementation. However, the scale of national innovation means that planning for a series of professional development opportunities will be needed over a period of some years, if all teachers are to become fully familiar with the LP (FL) and able to identify ways of relating the guidance to each particular student group.

Suggestion 1: Appoint regional LP (FL) trainers

An efficient procedure for disseminating the concept of the LP (FL) across the country would be to train a team of regional experts, equipped to provide initial information for teachers and subsequent ongoing professional development opportunities for the application of the LP (FL). The team will need clear guidance on the purposes of the LPs and how they might be used.

Suggestion 2: Instruction video

An introductory video would be useful, initially as a guide to the LP (FL), providing a framework for discussion with the training team during video conferencing or face-to-face meetings. At a later stage, this video might be made available for all teachers via a national learning platform.

Suggestion 3: Illustrative examples for LP (FL)

It is likely that teachers will lack experience in selecting learning tasks that might contribute to developing students' ability to meet the required outcomes. Further guidance on this could be developed by the regional trainers as part of their ongoing process of dissemination. For example, the selection of a task from frequently-used teaching materials available in Uruguay could provide an illustration of how a particular LP (FL) might be fulfilled. If this procedure is adopted it will of course be important to emphasise that students' learning experiences should include an extensive range of similar tasks, not just the one example task. The following two samples from materials designed for low level primary aged learners provide examples of how specific LP(FL) descriptors might be represented.

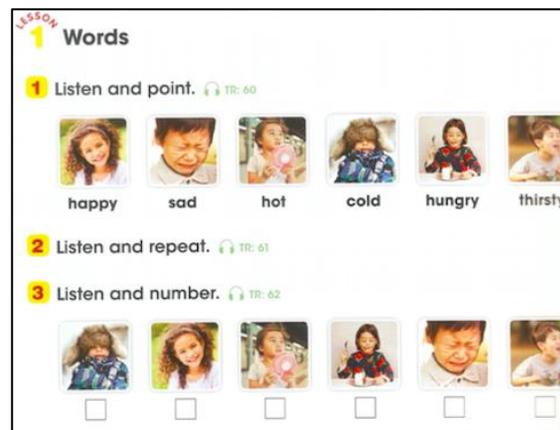


Figure 13. Extract from *Look: Starter* (2018, p.40). Andover, UK: National Geographic Learning.

Figure 1 provides an example of how a short series of tasks can be used to assess individual student's oral comprehension of a particular vocabulary set. The three listening tasks together discretely check knowledge and understanding of vocabulary related to emotions, (Oral comprehension learning progression for Primaria 4-6). 'Understands vocabulary related to their everyday life and experiences.' (see Report 1, p. 21).

Continuing with the theme of Emotions, Figure 2 below provides an example of how a small task may be used to build learners' oral production fluency. The clear illustrations ensure that there are no distractors which might cause misunderstandings for the learner, thus creating difficulties in accurate assessment of LP (FL) fulfillment, (Oral production learning progression for Primaria 4-6). 'Takes part in dialogues based on models or teacher guidance in which turn taking has been previously set'. (see Report 1, p. 22).



Figure 14. Extract from *Look: Starter* (2018, p.75). Published by National Geographic Learning.

Suggestion 4: Glossary of key terms.

As recommended in Report I, a glossary of terms should be prepared for use by a non-specialist audience. This would be particularly helpful for teachers unfamiliar with the technical terms used by linguists. Familiarity with these terms would facilitate a deeper appreciation of the processes involved in foreign language learning, equipping teachers with the tools to articulate their concerns more fully.

Suggestion 5: Alignment of Curriculum Frameworks

Most schools are likely to have already established FL curriculum guidance for teachers (sometimes known as the FL syllabus). These may need further review in the light of the new minimum level requirements. In particular, attention will need to be paid to what constitutes *powerful knowledge* in the context of foreign language learning (Young, 2015), as discussed above. Specifying such knowledge, its sequencing and pacing will need to be properly accommodated in any curriculum documents. Currently in Uruguay a substantial proportion of teachers are not fully qualified and / or have a relatively low level of English. In recognition of this, there may be some value in providing sample frameworks for teachers to select from / adapt according to the needs of their learners, thus avoiding a tendency for a situation of *textbook as curriculum* in contexts where teachers have limited experience or guidance. The important feature which the availability of a range of curriculum frameworks might offer is that they could be carefully designed to ensure alignment with the LP (FL), thus providing a professional development opportunity for teachers engaged in the process of formulating a curriculum framework document specifically designed for their school context. Overall, the purpose of a school curriculum document should be to enable all learners ‘to own, get excited about and extend access to the best knowledge we have’ (Young 2015, p.829).

Suggestion 6: Pedagogical alignment with curriculum and outcomes

Teachers are likely to need support in understanding whether or how their pedagogical approach may need adjustment to ensure the minimum required outcomes of the LP (FL) can be achieved. Anxiety may arise simply as a result of an unfamiliar set of objectives which may include requirements not fully covered in the existing text books. In the longer term it is also likely that course materials for both the face-to-face provision and the remote teaching system will need re-designing to prioritise the LP (FL) as minimum outcomes and to fully clarify the wide range of task types that may be offered to meet these requirements. In the more immediate future, workshops with school clusters in each region are likely to be needed to provide initial support. It is important that pedagogy, curriculum and assessment can be seen as fully aligned with one another. Here, Bruner’s (1996, p. 63) attention to pedagogy offers a relevant comment, reminding us that: ‘A choice of pedagogy inevitably communicates a conception of the learning process and the learner’. With reference to the broad aims of the MCRN the conception of the learning process is particularly significant given the stress placed on the prioritisation of inclusion and diversity. To fulfil this remit

‘teachers need to build knowledge of individual learners as a part of their pedagogic knowledge, separate from the specialist knowledge associated with the curriculum’ (Young 2015, p.830) Evidently, for those teachers who have not yet had an opportunity to complete a teaching qualification it must be a priority to provide comprehensive professional development opportunities which will equip them with appropriate pedagogical expertise. This issue is relevant both for those teachers who are teaching the FL and for those who may be supporting a remote teacher in the provision of the FL.

Suggestion 7. Cross-phase reporting procedure

Research in the field of foreign languages education has consistently revealed a lack of procedures designed to transfer information for individual students across school phases. Given the comprehensive design of the LP (FL) as a ‘right-through’ model, it will be important for teachers in each new level of the education system to be fully informed of the curriculum coverage and outcomes achieved by each individual student in their previous levels. Establishing a system for the transfer of individual profiles will avoid the dangers of unnecessary repetition of the curriculum which can so often lead to disaffection and demotivation with the purposes of education. This may be particularly relevant where children attending primary schools in rural areas transfer to secondary schools in nearby towns. In some instances these children may have experienced little or no opportunity to study foreign languages in the first phase of education and will require additional support on entering secondary school.

3. Establishing a periodic review process

Educational change is inevitably a process rather than an event which occurs at one point in time. Section 2 above has outlined some possible actions which may be taken to effectively embed the LP (FL) in the education system. However, given the complex challenges in designing appropriate *minimum* outcomes for FL learners in a wide range of contexts, it is likely that the initial Framework will need some modifications in both the shorter and longer term to ensure it provides an appropriate framework. Establishing a Review Process from the outset would allow teachers’ expertise to be fully exploited in a collaborative process of revision and refinement of the LP (FL), in line with the democratic principles established by the MCRN. A possible procedure might comprise:

Year 1: Pilot year. Establish an online platform where teachers can post their comments and suggestions for individual outcomes. After a 12-month period, conduct a full review and modification of Outcomes. Circulate to all schools / publish online for the start of the new academic year.

Year 4: Medium term review. Invite teachers to contribute to a new online platform with recommendations for further revisions/ additions. At end of year 4, fully evaluate the LP (FL) in the light of suggested revisions and with due regard to the extent to which the key requirements of universality and diversity embodied in the MCRN are being met.

Year 7: Establishing a continuous periodic review procedure. Further periodic reviews will be required to ensure the LP (FL) are kept up-to-date and in line with current needs. A suggested framework for these might be every 3 to 5 years. In the future this might be initiated and managed by a selected group of the national training team.

In support of the proposal for periodic review it is salutary to note the approach taken by the Council of Europe for the modification of the CEFR. Following its publication in 2001 there was a gap of some 15 years before any revisions were undertaken. In the interim, many inconsistencies and omissions were noted, requiring a substantial review of the whole document when finally agreement to make changes was reached. In particular, the original descriptors focused entirely on descriptors relevant to adult learners of foreign languages. As a result, the new additions to the CEFR for younger learners do not form a coherent part of the scales and are, at best, tokenistic. If attention is given to regular reviews and updates for the LP (FL) document it would be possible for the document to provide an open and dynamic guide for teachers in the construction of local curricula and assessment tools without the need for comprehensive re-writes after extended gaps. The priority of maintaining a dynamic document cannot be over-emphasised. Too many policy documents end up gathering dust on the shelves of school staffrooms – perceived as irrelevant to the realities of teaching and learning. With strenuous efforts to ensure the learning progressions for foreign languages remain relevant, the commitment of the ANEP / Politicas Linguisticas team will have fully met with the CODICEN expectations for learning progressions, ‘[t]o act as a reference for the elaboration of criteria that allow the accreditation of learning.’ (CODICEN (Recital 1) of Minute No. 27, Resolution No. 4, of May 23,2018, as quoted in IDB document, 19.11.2018)

4. Conclusion

The suggestions outlined in this Report are expected to contribute to the initiatives already taken by ANEP / Políticas Linguísticas to firmly embed the LP (FL) in the Uruguayan education system. There are many challenges yet to be overcome however, if universal provision for all is to be provided. In particular, the urgent need to provide access to foreign language education for those primary schools unable to gain digital connectivity who may also be without a qualified English teacher – amounting to some 6 percent of the total school population in 2016 (Rovegno, 2019, p.76). A range of initiatives are underway to provide professional development for these teachers and/or to link individual rural schools with nearby schools that are already able to receive Ceibal en Inglés connectivity. However, it seems unlikely that the national target of achieving universal provision for foreign languages in primary schools by 2020 will be achieved.

Given the current complexity of primary school provision, it will be important to acknowledge substantial variation in the achievement of learning outcomes for some time to come. For those learners studying in well-resourced urban schools the achievements may well be substantially higher. Thus, it is possible that setting the minimum outcomes for learning progression at a relatively low level may risk de-motivation as a result of perceived lack of challenge. Teachers will need substantial support in understanding the purposes of the new learning outcomes and expertise in their application and interpretation with regard to their specific learning contexts. Nonetheless, it is evident that, broadly speaking, the achievements for the provision of English as a foreign language in Uruguay. The introduction of a new PISA test for foreign languages (optional) may provide an informative measure of student achievements, if compared to other similar contexts around the world. As ever with the PISA tests however, it will be important to take full regard of the local conditions when comparing outcomes with other countries.

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Oral Comprehension

F L O r a l C o m p r e h e n s i o n	Primaria 4o. a 6o.	Media 1o. a 3o.	Media 4o. a 6o	
		Understands words, phrases and simple sentences within a slow, clearly articulated speech including pauses, repetition, paraphrasing, visual and paralinguistic support framed within the context of the student.	Understands sentences that can include more than one interconnected idea. The student can follow the sequence of events within a pseudo natural but fluent speech supported by visual and paralinguistic features when talking about familiar or relevant topics.	Understand the main ideas and the purpose of a spoken text (e.g. presentations conversations) about topics related to their personal, educational or work environment as long as the delivery of the speech is clear.
		Notices different sounds in their L1 and L2.	The student makes hypotheses and systematizes his/her knowledge about the sounds and intonation in L2.	Identifies varieties of L2. Understands the most significant differences between sounds that are similar to sounds in their L1. Recognizes the difference in rhythm, intonation and stress between the L2 and L1
		Understands vocabulary related to their everyday life experiences	Understands vocabulary related to topics of wider general interest	Understands vocabulary related to such areas as educational, social and work environments.

Oral Production

F L O r a l P r o d u c t i o n	Primaria 4o. a 6o.	Media 1o. a 3o.	Media 4o. a 6o
	Produces short and simple sentences about familiar everyday topics	Produces sentences connecting two or more ideas about topics that are familiar or part of their personal interest.	Produces a series of connected sentences to communicate ideas effectively, using appropriate language functions.
	Produces the sounds of L2/FL following a model.	Produces sounds of the L2/FL independently, with increased precision for those similar to the L1.	Produces sounds of L2/FL autonomously and with enough clarity to convey the meaning of the message.
	Self-monitors the pronunciation of words and phrases in the classroom.	Self-monitors the pronunciation and stress in the production of sentences.	Self-monitors the pronunciation, intonation and stress of their speech.
	Asks for help when needed to produce a message and keep the flow of communication.	Conveys the message autonomously although the teacher or interlocutor helps them to facilitate communication at times.	Monitors the flow of communication and is able to correct mistakes that may interfere with communication or uses circumlocution to transmit the message.
	Takes part in dialogues based on models or teacher guidance in which turn taking has been previously set.	Takes part in dialogues created from situations the teacher presents and turn-taking is self-regulated.	Takes part in spontaneous conversations about topics of their interest and interacts in a proactive way.

Reading Comprehension

F L R e a d i n g c o m p r e h e n s i o n	Primaria 4o. a 6o.	Media 1o. a 3o.	Media 4o. a 6o
	Independently reads and understands short simple texts as long as they have visual support and refer to familiar topics. Recognizes the main points of a text and finds explicit information if necessary.	Reads and understands longer simple texts resorting to visual support and layout to enhance comprehension. Recognises the main ideas, identifies explicit information and infers implicit information.	Reads and understands extended multimodal texts. Makes connections between the text and their prior knowledge. Summarizes the main ideas. Infers the meaning of unknown words from context.
	Makes connections between the title of the text and the text when there is a direct and clear relation between them.	Makes connections between the title and the text even when the relation between them is not explicit.	Makes basic inferences and predictions about a text with reference to the title, sub-headings and paratextual elements.
	Identifies different types of text by looking at their organisation.	Identifies different types of texts and the characteristics that make their organisation different.	Identifies different text types comparing their characteristics.
	Relates information from the text to previous reading and personal experiences.	Forms opinions about the text, recognising its purpose and distinguishing between facts and opinions. .	Understands cause/effect, problem/solution relationships. Synthesises information from various sources related to a topic.
	Identifies basic discourse markers within a text	Identifies a variety of discourse markers within a text	Recognises discourse markers as constructors of inter-textual relationships.
	Follows the narrative sequence of a text with visual support as long as it is presented chronologically.	Follows the narrative sequence of a text with no visual support as long as it is presented chronologically.	Interrogates a text to reveal its logical sequence.

Writing Production

F L W r i t t e n p r o d u c t i o n	Primaria 4o. a 6o.	Media 1o. a 3o.	Media 4o. a 6o
	Uses simple words and phrases to describe everyday objects. e.g. size, colour.	Writes short simple imaginary biographies and simple poems about people.	Narrates a story, Writes a report. Summarises the main points in a text.
	Writes simple isolated phrases and sentences such as schedules with activities, shopping lists, notes.	Writes a series of simple phrases and sentences about familiar topics, linking them using simple connectors such as 'and', 'but' and 'because'.	Writes straightforward connected texts on a range of familiar subjects within his field of interest, by linking a series of shorter discreet elements into a linear sequence. Expresses ideas, opinions and emotions in different formats, e.g. emails, blogs, Facebook posts, wikis.

Interaction

I n t e r a c t i o n	Primaria 4o. a 6o.	Media 1o. a 3o.	Media 4o. a 6o
	Interacts with another speaker slowly, uses strategies of repetition, rephrasing and repair.	Interacts fairly easily in structured situations and short conversations, provided the other person helps if necessary.	Uses a wide range of simple language to engage in unprepared conversations on topics that are familiar or of personal interest
	Asks and answers simple questions, initiates and responds to simple statements in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	Asks and answers questions, exchanging ideas on familiar topics.	Exchanges ideas with some confidence on familiar routine and non-routine matters related to their interests, educational or work contexts.
	Requests and provides personal written details using online communication when appropriate.	Writes simple structured notes or online posts, responding to comments with thanks, apologies, or by answering questions	Writes notes, personal letters or emails, requesting or providing information with sufficient precision to convey the intended meanings.

Mediation

M e d i a t i o n	Primaria 4o. a 6o.	Media 1o. a 3o.	Media 4o. a 6o
	Shows interest in an idea by using simple words and non-verbal signals.	Asks someone to explain something using simple language	Plays a supportive role in interaction provided that the other participants speak slowly and help to contribute.
	Not applicable at primary level.	Recognises when difficulties occur and indicates the problem using simple language.	Overcomes difficulties in communication by rephrasing to compensate for lexical limitations.
	Uses items such as simple signs, posters, notices, and programmes to convey simple predictable information of immediate interest.	Identifies and uses the main points in a short simple conversation or text on everyday subjects of immediate interest provided they are expressed clearly and in simple language	Conveys the main points made in longer conversations or texts expressed in uncomplicated language on topics of personal interest, provided that they can check the meaning of certain expressions.