



# NEWSLETTER #1

March 2021

## What is NGPT?

**Next Generation Placement Tests (NGPT)** is a transnational cooperation project co-funded through Erasmus + KA2 grant, no. 2020-1-HR01-KA204-077724. It is being carried out as a joint project between institutions in Croatia, Spain, Serbia and Italy with aim to develop **adaptive digital placement tests for languages**.

## Do you know what a placement test is?

Statistically speaking – you probably do!

Studies show that most people take a language placement test to determine their language level at some point in their life. And that's exactly what a test is used for: to determine your existing language skill!



## Why should I know my language level?

Everyone is familiar with the CEFR these days and A1 – C2 level system. Knowing your language level is important for many reasons, just to name a few:

- Enrolling a proper course in language school
- Fulfilling a job requirement
- Fulfilling university enrollment requirement
- Listing your competences in a CV



DEVELOPED THROUGH ERASMUS PLUS KA2 PROJECT BY



# A new era of language assessment

by Josip Sobin, CEO of Jantar – International House Split

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) defines six distinct language levels, from A1 to C2. Almost every student is familiar with this information these days since CEFR was adopted by the entire world more than 10 years ago. Therefore, all courses in language schools are aligned with the CEFR, which means we somehow have to match students' existing knowledge with one of these levels. This is where the **placement test** comes into play.

## Outdated testing system

Placement tests have been used in language schools since they started operating on a global scale. The problem is that the technology behind these tests has not changed for decades, and most of the existing tests are based on a linear grading scale. What exactly does that mean? For example, at Jantar, we use an English placement test based on 60 questions, and it takes approximately 45 minutes for an average student to go through the test. Creator's logic is that a specific score, i.e. 30 correct answers, determines the level. The problem is that such a test only utilizes the number of correct questions and doesn't go into any qualitative analysis indicated which types of questions are answered correctly or incorrectly. Although this will give you some useful information, you will often run into situations where the indicated level ends up being wrong.

Most schools have developed their own ways of compensating for these drawbacks. Still, this process can be greatly optimized.

## Time investment

Administering and grading placement tests take up a lot of time, especially during enrollments when time is a commodity. More importantly, they often waste the time of our students who will always go through those 60 questions, regardless of their skill. Taking an A2 student through higher difficulty questions is not only unnecessary but could also negatively affect their motivation for learning because they might feel insecure going through content that is far beyond their understanding.

**To avoid all these problems, placement tests need to be adaptive.**

## Application of IT

NGPT project partners have been at the top of the chart when it comes to IT in language learning for quite some time now. Project coordinator Amber IT Solutions has developed **Amber School Manager**, an innovative school management system used by language schools all over the globe. Project partners have been involved in a range of projects in the field of education innovation, such as **VR4LL**, another project funded through Erasmus plus, aiming to develop innovative Virtual Reality technology for language learning.

## What will our Next-Generation Placement Tests look like?

Tests will be available for English, German, Italian, French, Spanish and Russian languages. All students will start with simpler language tasks and the algorithm will determine the progression of tasks towards higher levels. This will ensure that lower-level students don't spend a lot of time on the test itself, as the algorithm will determine that there is no need for additional testing.

For higher-level students, the test will determine approximate CEFR level based on use-of-language type questions. Additional listening and reading comprehension section will allow determination of student's level with surgical precision. This way we will ensure that each student is placed into the best possible language course in regard to their existing skill. This will not only optimize the testing procedure for our students and staff but will also improve the entire educational strategy for our students.

## When will NGPT tests be available?

Our project officially started on October 1, 2020, with 26 months of planned development and implementation time. However, we expect the first versions of our tests to be available in Q4 of 2021.

## INNOVATE WITH US

Join NGPT as associated partner

Language Schools – would you would like to pilot our tests with your students as soon as they become available?

Learners – would you would like to take one of our tests to check your language level as soon as they become available?



**Visit us at [nextgenplacement.org](https://nextgenplacement.org) and click on the SIGN UP FOR PILOTING button at the bottom of the page.**