

Marjatta Huhta

3. Summary of Guidelines describing the Use of the CEF Professional Profiles

TAILORING LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION COURSES FOR PROFESSIONAL PURPOSES (LCPP)

- guidelines on how to use the CEF professional profiles

CEF Professional profile is an **LCPP teacher's working tool** for

- designing a tailored course for learners in a specific field, profession or occupation
- planning realistic, authentic activities for the classroom
- creating material for the field, profession or occupation

The trainer can **use** the CEF Professional Profile to find out

- a quick overview of the language and communication used in the field
- an inventory of communication situations typical in the field
- terminology central in the field
- search words for further searches in the Internet and other sources.

Who are the LCPP professionals?

- teachers of language centres in universities, higher education and vocational training
- teacher training institutions and teacher trainers
- teacher trainees in vocational training
- private language schools and language training consultancies
- language and communication skills teachers' associations and organizations
- language and communication skills teachers and trainers
- newly recruited language teachers

A **blank Profile** is a template of items that have been found significant by LSP practitioners for gaining an overview of the professional communication needs in the workplace. The selection of Profile items is well established as it combines the results of the needs analysis results from workplaces with concepts familiar from the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The Profile concept has been developed over a number of years. It was first experimented in 2004 and has been improved since then. The version introduced here represents the third generation of CEF Professional Profiles.

A completed CEF Professional Profile is produced by collecting field-specific data using some of the following **methods**:

- interviewing professionals in companies and at other workplaces
- studying the needs analysis results of employees and HR personnel conducted at workplaces

- examining results of needs analysis with part-time adult students (who work full-time) or trainees who return from traineeship
- interviewing lecturers and specialists in universities, educational institutions and their alumni
- examining documents collected by language practitioners from workplaces for case studies and simulations
- conducting document analyses of workplaces through workplace sites, intranets, the Internet
- studying information by employer and employee organizations.

The unabridged Profiles on the CEF Professional website (www.cefpro.org) indicate which methods have been used in each Profile.

A **completed CEF Professional Profile** is an inventory of typical communication events in a specific field. The completed profile has many layers of information collected for different purposes. The potential purpose of each part is written in brackets, as "self talk" of a language practitioner.

A. Background information specifies the **target profession**, field, relevant education, degrees and specializations gained and the source of this information

(Does this Profile match my group of students? Partially? What extra information will I need to have of this specific group? Perhaps I also need to make a quick needs analysis to check whether I'm on the right track with this particular group.)

B. **Occupational information** provides examples of relevant job titles, typical organizations that employ such professionals and some typical job descriptions. *(Which jobs are/could be relevant for my students? Whom could I ask?)*

C. **Context information** gives an inventory of typical communication situations and background information of where these events take place. The persons involved in the communication are mentioned as well as the category of the community or institution where the communication event takes place. *(My course is only 40 hours. Which of these situations could be accommodated? Shall I ask students to choose or select myself? Or perhaps the HR manager can decide?)*

D. The category of **most frequent situations** goes deeper into 3-5 situations by describing the situation, their location, persons present, and gives an assessment of what is essential for this communication to be successful. *(I will make them simulate situation 1 for phone calls, situation 2 for emails. Perhaps I'll put situation 3 (meeting) in as an exam question?)*

E. The category of **most demanding situations** goes into 3-5 situations more deeply and describes the participants, the location, the stages of the event and what makes the situation demanding in the interviewee's point of view. (*I will use situation 1 and 2 for negotiation cases, but situation 3 is too specific. I need to find one that relates more closely to their own jobs. Perhaps students can be asked to brainstorm about a third case?*)

F. The **snapshot gives** a story (or many stories) of the working life of a professional. It may be a story of a working day from beginning to end or stories of events where the foreign language is needed. (*I can make a role play out of snapshot 1 – change it a little, add some of my previous teaching points. Snapshot 2 goes to the exam as a terminology control task. My students need to practise imperatives.*)

How to Use existing CEF Professional Profiles

1. Check if a Profile already exists in your field or similar field at:
www.cefpro.org (Technology, Law, Business, Health Care) or
www.artemisland.fi (Frameworks of reference in Culture and Services) or
www.stadia.fi (Health Care, Technology)
2. Become familiar with the sociocultural communicative events that professionals in the field encounter by reading the profile and perhaps searching the Internet using the search words of the Profile. This should put you on contact with the domain, relevant organizations, tasks performed by professionals in this field
3. Match the Profile information with:
 - the requirements of your educational institution: what is required in your (possible) curriculum? Content requirements? Output requirements by your institution? (Perhaps a B1 level of CEF? Request to integrate with a professional subject?)
 - the resources available (number of contact classes, material, single/team teaching facilities, time constraints)
 - the learner group (needs analysis of the group)
4. Design the course:
 - select communication events and texts based on learner needs and school requirements
 - consult the learners. Show some listings of a Profile (e.g. context information sheet B) and select learning tasks with them. Allow learners to prioritize
 - produce a plan with a variety of communication events, subject matter and activities
5. Design learning activities:
 - use the Frequent situations section, Demanding situations section and Snapshots to create authentic and realistic tasks
 - vary the degree of difficulty to match your learner group
6. Create material:
 - use existing material for general purposes

- tailor variations to them using the Profile information and learners' own experiences, specifically those described in Frequent Situations D, Demanding Situations E and Snapshot F
7. Organize an exam:
 - the Profile sections D, E and F give several examples for oral situations
 - search the internet and find from employees sample material (letters, instructions, and manuals) to be used as authentic material for exam questions
 - use overview questions, where the learner needs to apply the Profile knowledge. For example XY is a nurse at a regional hospital. Describe her daily program on a busy day
 8. Build up the learner's professional communication identity:
 - peer evaluation and peer feedback are powerful tools for making a life-long learner reflect on the construction of a professional's language and communication skills development. The more reflection and analysis of communication events, the more LC can contribute to building professional self awareness and improved communication skills.