

Adaptation of the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) for work in elderly care and care for people with disabilities

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Part 1

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Description and guidance

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ArbetSam

Overview of the project

Project ArbetSam is an EU project developed and delivered by the city of Lidingö in collaboration with the Stockholm Gerontology Research Center. Other partners include the local authorities¹ of Botkyrka, Järfälla Norrtälje, Tyresö, Stockholm, Sundbyberg and Solna and the private sector care providers² Temabo AB, Legevisitten AB, Inblasa AB, Silver Homes Residential Care AB and United Care AB. The project ran from February 2011 to December 2013.

The project developed workplace learning in elderly care and care for people with disabilities. This was done by bringing teachers into the workplace to work closely with care managers and staff, and by developing some care workers to act as workplace language advocates and reflective discussion leaders. ArbetSam's target learners were health and social care staff with less than 900 credits in the national health and care programme, and also any staff who could usefully improve their Swedish to cope better at work. The project aimed to foster relations between adult education and care providers. Approximately 600 staff attended classes in or close to the workplaces involved in the project. The learning programme was delivered jointly by care teachers and teachers of Swedish as a second language. Teachers planned instruction based partly on the needs of the workplace and individual participants for competence development, and partly on specified course objectives from the national health and social care programme and from Swedish for immigrants (Sfi) and / or Swedish as an additional language (SVA) programmes.

Development work in ArbetSam

In the course of the project, ArbetSam adapted the Council of Europe's language scale³ for the health and social care context. This work built on experience gained in the previous project, SpråkSam.⁴ The project's teachers of Swedish as an additional language and its care teachers worked with Ingrid Skeppstedt, one of ArbetSam's consultants, to adapt and contextualise the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for the work in the care sector. The result of this work is a resource consisting of four parts.

This booklet, Part 1, outlines the background to the resource and describes the development process. In addition, it presents the various elements of the resource.

Part 1 also supplies a fairly comprehensive user guide for teachers of Swedish as an additional language, health and social care teachers and care managers working in elderly care and care for people with disabilities.

¹ Translator's note: Local authorities in Sweden are responsible for providing adult social care, while central government enacts laws, regulates and inspects and contributes some supplementary funding.

² Translator's note: These organisations provide care services commissioned by the local authorities.

³ *Gemensam europeisk referensram för språk lärande, undervisning och bedömning* (GERS) [*Common European Framework of Reference for Languages Learning, Teaching and Assessment (CEFR)*]: 2007 www.skolverket.se/publikationer?id=2144 Translation from English. (The original English edition was published in 2001). Translator's note: For the official English-language version of the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, see http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/CADRE1_EN.asp

⁴ <http://www.aldrecentrum.se/Utbildning1/SprakSam/SprakSam-in-English/>

Background

Introduction

Changes in recent years to elderly care and care for people with disabilities have transformed the demands care work places on staff. Where, once upon time, those demands related to mostly practical tasks, such as cleaning, shopping and helping with personal care, now they relate increasingly to complex tasks led by staff with professional qualifications.

Today, support workers need both a firm grasp of the underpinning knowledge associated with modern care work and effective communication skills, both spoken and written.⁵ National health and social care qualifications emphasise the importance of developing these spoken and written communications skills. Care roles and care work now make extensive and varied communicative demands and the communication skills required should also serve as a tool for reflection and learning.

The communicative demands of the workplace mean that support staff need the skills to interact with people at different levels within the organization, including care recipients, relatives, managers, colleagues and other professionals. In work settings, staff must be able to encourage and initiate conversation with the care recipient, be responsive and attentive to what is said, to receive information and pass it on. They should, according to the Social Services Act and national regulations⁶ to document their work, for example in care recipient's social documentation⁷. Further examples of tasks that require communicative competence include contacting other health care providers, booking appointments and ordering transportation.

A large proportion of staff in elderly care and care for people with disabilities in Stockholm speak Swedish as an additional language – which represents a great cultural asset for care work and for the working group. Many of these migrant workers have a good command of Swedish but there are also a significant number who need to develop their Swedish in order to function adequately at work. Limited Swedish also makes it much harder to assimilate any workplace training. In this way, limited Swedish serves to limit the individual's ability to participate and contribute at work – which represents a loss both to the individual and the employer-organisation.

SpråkSam

ArbetSam builds on work undertaken by the SpråkSam project. SpråkSam, which ran for approximately two years (2009 - 2011), was managed by the Stockholm Gerontology Research Center and funded by the European Social Fund. Six municipalities in Stockholm County participated in the project, which focused on integrating language development into the everyday operations of care providers and also into vocational training in the care workplace. The workplaces involved in the project were offered workplace training delivered by Swedish language and care teachers from municipal adult education. Uniquely, SpråkSam set out to involve the entire workplace – including non-participating work colleagues and care managers – in the learning. A central idea of the project

⁵ See also official regulations: SOSFS 2011:12, Grundläggande kunskaper hos personal som arbetar i socialtjänstens omsorg om äldre [*Basic knowledge of staff working in social services care for the elderly*]; SOSFS 2012:3, Värdegrund i socialtjänstens omsorg om äldre [*Values in social services care for the elderly*]. www.socialstyrelsen.se

⁶ Socialtjänstlagen och Socialstyrelsens föreskrifter (SOSFS) 2008:35

⁷ Translator's note: The Swedish system of mandatory record-keeping in social care is referred to as 'social documentation'.

was that the language development and learning would become a part of everyday activities at work.⁸

Use of the CEFR in SpråkSam

SpråkSam used the CEFR to highlight the participants' language development during the project. The CEFR was chosen as an internationally-proven and standardised resource for assessment, offering care managers, language advocates, teachers and students a common tool for discussing language skills.

A working group within project SpråkSam was commissioned by the project to map the communicative demands of care work to the CEFR levels of language proficiency.⁹ To meet these demands satisfactorily, the support worker needs to be at CEFR level B1/B2. According to the working group, this means that:

By assessing their own language skills, the learner can become more aware of the language skills different care situations require

C1-C2: These are advanced levels. Speakers at these levels should be able to communicate effectively in most situations in everyday social and working life.

B2: Speakers at this level should be able to function in most care work situations.

B1: Speakers at this level can function in many - but not all – care work situations.

A1-A2: Speakers at these levels, according to the working group, lack the language skills to function effectively in care work situations.

At the start of the SpråkSam learning programme, both teachers and participants themselves used the CEFR's self-assessment tool (see Appendix 2) to estimate participants' language skills. A similar self-assessment and teacher assessment was carried out at two subsequent points during the programme.

The initial self-assessment and the initial teacher assessment provided a picture of participants' strengths and weaknesses in Swedish. Although subsequent assessments also gave a relatively good description of participants' language development over the programme period, there were many participants and teachers who raised questions about the CEFR self-assessment tool. The tool describes language skills in a relatively general way. Participants often found it difficult relate the skills descriptors both to their own language skills and to the language requirements of their workplace. Many of the programme's teachers also had difficulty using the CEFR tool to assess participants' language competence in relation to the needs of the workplace. They felt that it would have worked better if the self-assessment materials were clearer and more specifically related to care work.¹⁰

SpråkSam also revealed the need to clarify and firmly establish the relevance of course objectives in the care learning programme to practical care work. A group of teachers at one of the larger workplaces therefore developed during the project a resource that described and clarified both the

⁸ <http://www.aldrecentrum.se/Utbildning1/SprakSam/SprakSam-in-English/>

⁹ The working group was led by Karin Mattson. The resource does not claim scientific validity – it is subject to interpretation and cannot provide any basis for certification or similar. The resource is intended only to support formative assessment and discussion of language competence.

¹⁰ *Evaluation of SpråkSam learning programme* (2011) <http://www.aldrecentrum.se/Utbildning1/SprakSam/Utvardering/>

professional knowledge and the language competence required to complete social documentation¹¹ and related these to the CEFR language competence levels.¹²

Adapting the CEFR for care work in project ArbetSam

Based on the experience of SpråkSam, ArbetSam's project leaders decided to continue work on the CEFR. For an overview of the CEFR and its self-assessment tool, see appendices 1 and 2.

Aims and objectives

While the adapted CEFR was developed for immediate use in ArbetSam, the aim was also to produce a tool that could be used by similar projects and by teachers and learners studying through the Sfi and national health and social care programmes. In addition, the resource is also intended as a workplace tool for the care sector, in people management areas, for example, such as recruitment and performance appraisal.

Effective workplace learning and language development depends on being able to talk about language use and language development in an open and natural way. This also applies to formal workplace learning programmes. The adapted CEFR will support conversations about language competence related to the language requirements that care work entails. The tool can give second language speakers a greater awareness of their language level and the skills they may need to develop. Discussion of language competence can easily be perceived by the second language speaker as a questioning or an appraisal of themselves as a person. A tool that provides specific examples of workplace language requirements can help employee and manager, as well as teachers and learners on health and social care programmes, to get beyond these issues.

This piece of work adapted levels A1, A2, B1 and B2 of the CEFR for the health and social care context. Many of the second language speakers working in social care are able to communicate at level B2 or higher. We determined that for these employees there is no need for an adapted self-assessment resource, as those who wish to assess their own language skills can use the CEFR self-assessment grid.

How the CEFR was adapted

The ArbetSam teachers, together with the consultant, Ingrid Skeppstedt, developed the adapted CEFR between autumn 2011 and spring 2012. They started with the work undertaken during the SpråkSam project and the CEFR's self-assessment materials.

For the first step of the process, the Swedish language teachers worked with the care teachers to simplify the language of the CEFR self-assessment tool and to provide concrete work-related examples, in order to facilitate understanding. The Swedish language teachers then undertook a thorough review of the CEFR language analysis and level descriptors and adjusted the adapted self-assessment descriptors to ensure they could be safely related to the CEFR levels.

¹¹ Translator's note: As per footnote 7 above, the Swedish system of mandatory record-keeping.

¹² *Occupational and language skills for social documentation, An experimental resource linked to the Common European Framework of Reference* (2011). <http://www.aldrecentrum.se/Utbildning1/SprakSam/Utvardering/> [see Övriga rapporter/Other reports]

The first version of the adapted self-assessment tool was tested in late spring 2012 by some 160 ArbetSam participants who spoke Swedish as an additional language. Both participants and teachers responded positively to the resource. Based on trialling feedback, the teachers together with the consultant Ingrid Skeppstedt revised the resource. The revised version was then further tested by care managers and teachers of Swedish as an additional language and final revisions were made.

The different parts of the resource

Language competence is multifaceted and complex. There are no generally agreed workplace language standards setting out what someone needs to be able to do in order to function effectively at work – and, of course, the language skills needed for work vary according to the type of work and the individual workplace. The adapted CEFR resource provides an overview of the language skills needed for health and social care work.

The resource will, we hope, raise awareness and provide a tool for talking about language and language development, in both the classroom and the workplace. We also hope that it will help workplaces become more communicative and supportive of language development. We would emphasise though that the resource is not designed for use as a test of language competence.

Part 1: Description and guidance

Target audience This part is for those planning to use the resource (e.g. teachers, care managers).

Part 1 describes why and how the resource was created and piloted. It outlines the purpose of the resource and what its various parts contain. It also offers guidance on using the resource.

Part 2: Description of levels: Basic user (A1, A2) and Independent user (B1, B2)

Target audience Teachers in Swedish as an additional language, social care teachers and managers who do not have prior experience of language scale and the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching and Assessment*

In Part 2, we present the adapted CEFR levels A1 to B2. The levels C1 and C2 have not been adapted and are therefore not included in the resource (see page 6).

Each level begins with a short summary of the abilities that, according to CEFR, characterise speakers at that level.¹³ The level is then specified through statements that describe what the speaker can do with the language. The descriptors as compared to the CEFR self-assessment grid¹⁴ are more extensive and are also specifically linked to the practical care work. Each level is colour-coded in Part 2 of the resource and this colour-coding is also used in Parts 3 and 4 of the resource.

Part 3a: Self-check and assessment material at levels A1, A2, B1, B2

Target Audience Teachers and participants in workplace learning programmes in elderly care and care for people with disabilities, and teachers and participants on adult education health and social care courses and courses in Swedish as an additional language

¹³ This general description is an abbreviated version of CEFR level summaries drawn mainly from *Content coherence in Common Reference Levels*. Chapter 3.6, P 33-37

¹⁴ CEFR self-assessment grid. p 26-26

The resource is based on CEFR self-assessment grid, but the project has chosen to describe the resource as a set of self-checking and assessment materials. This is to indicate that the material is intended for formative assessment and should not be used purely for testing purposes. So for example, it might be useful for participants and their teachers to estimate language levels before or at the beginning of a learning programme. The resource will support this and can then be used again during the learning programme to help measure language development.

The level descriptors are the same as in Part 2, but are offered here in the form of "I can" statements. Self-assessment options are provided for each statement (the options include *Yes*, *Sometimes not always*, *Yes with support/Yes, with a little support* and *No*).

In this part, the descriptors are grouped by skill – i.e. level A1 listening descriptors are followed by the listening descriptors for A2, then B1 and B2 – in contrast to Part 2, where the descriptors are grouped by level (i.e. the A1 listening descriptors are followed by the A1 descriptors for reading and then spoken interaction etc).

Part 3b: Self-check and assessment material at levels A2, B1

Target Audience This part is meant to be used in training or in connection with employee performance, so, while it can be used by teachers and participants on vocational and/or language programmes, it has been designed with managers and staff particularly in mind.

Part 3b contains only two levels: A2 and B1. This is to make the resource easier to use in time-limited situations, such as performance reviews. This part of the resource will help manager and employee discuss the language skills required for different tasks. They can agree the employee's strengths and weaknesses and then discuss the value of language development (see pages 11-13).

Part 4: Guidance notes for the adapted CEFR levels A1, A2, B1, B2

This part offers clarification and further explanation of items in parts 2, 3a and 3b where the resource's working group leader, Ingrid Skeppstedt, suggested further guidance would be helpful to users. It explains, for example, what is meant by terms such as *common words* or *simple signs*. There are also examples of how to facilitate writing tasks and support understanding of written texts in the workplace.

Guide to the adapted version of the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

Teachers in workplace learning programmes

Teachers who do not have experience working with language levels and the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: learning, teaching and assessment* should first read Part 1, 2 and 4 and also gain an understanding of the framework. We recommend starting with chapters 2 and 3 (*Approach adopted* and *Common reference levels*) and then briefly read chapters 4 and 5 (*Language use and the language user/learner* and *The user/learner's competences*). It may prove useful to refer back to these chapters, for example, when focusing on or discussing assessment of language level.

Knowledge development and language development are interlinked and all teachers work with language in their teaching. If a care instructor and a Swedish language teacher are working together, it makes sense that the Swedish language teacher takes responsibility for the language assessment process (Parts 3a and b of this resource), but it is important that both teachers are involved in applying the results.

Initial auditing of participant language levels

It is suggested that participants make a self-assessment at the very start of the learning programme. The teacher should defer this self-assessment until they know something of the participants' educational background and study habits. By then the teacher will have an indication of the participant language levels, which will help the teacher support the individual participants with concrete examples of their existing language skills.

The self-assessment material can be presented in different ways depending on the participants' background.

- Participants with limited experience of formal learning and low levels of language should be supported by the teacher, such as going through the words and concepts, reading aloud the statements and / or clarifying the content.
- For participants with more experience of formal learning, the teacher can usefully go through any words and concepts that might be difficult and also provide examples of how to fill in the answer choices. Participants can then ask for further clarification if there is anything that is unclear or that they do not understand.
- Participants with higher-level study skills and better language can start immediately at a higher level, such as A2 or B1.

Given the amount of material, it may be better not to ask lower level participants to work through all of the skills at the same time.

Alongside the participant's self-assessment, the teacher should make their own assessment of the participant's language skills and then compare the two assessments and discuss the reasons for any divergence of views. This process will provide the basis for an individual learning plan setting out the participant's language learning objective for the programme.

Monitoring and assessing progress

During the learning programme, the resource can be a point of constant reference. The teacher might, for example, discuss with participants the language competences needed to work with different types of learning activities. It is also helpful for the teacher to discuss with participants the language skills required to put care theory (as presented in the learning programme) into practice at work.

The participant should assess their language skills on at least two further occasions during the learning programme. We recommend at least two further occasions partly because when participants reassess their skills on the first of these two further occasions, it is not unusual for them to arrive at a lower self-estimate than their first, pre-course self-assessment. This should not

necessarily be perceived as a negative. It may instead indicate increased awareness on the part of the participant about their own language competence and the language demands of the workplace.

Self-assessments should not be undertaken too close together in time. Language development takes time and the difference between levels is significant and increases progressively.

On each occasion that participants conduct a self-assessment, the teacher should also make a corresponding assessment of the participants (for comparison). The results can then be reviewed and discussed at, for example, a tutorial or progress review.

Three-way discussions

The resource can provide a starting point for discussions between managers and teachers on workplace needs for organising teaching. Similarly, completed self-assessments can provide a starting point for three-way discussions between manager, participant and teacher regarding both the individual learning plan and, during training, the participant's language development. The only prerequisite for using the resource in this way is that all parties concerned are familiar with it.

Care teachers working in vocational education and training for adults

Care teachers without previous experience of language standards and the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: learning, teaching and assessment* should first read Parts 1, 2 and 4. Language and subject development go together. Many of the teachers who worked in SpråkSam and ArbetSam with the cooperation of care teachers and Swedish language teachers. Experience from the projects also clearly shows the benefits of similar collaboration within regular adult education.

Care teachers working in vocational adult education can use the resource to support discussion of how to apply theoretical knowledge and the language skills required for practical work. The resource can also help facilitate conversations between learners, supervisors and teachers in the context of workplace-based learning in care.

In theory at least, second-language speakers who take courses at upper-secondary level have reached level B1. If a learner has difficulty following the course and the care teacher suspects it is because their

Swedish language skills are not sufficient, support should be triggered. In this situation, a Swedish language teacher might go through the self-assessment resource to determine the learner's level and where they need support.

Teachers of mainstream Swedish for immigrants courses

The resource can be a support for teachers and learners on Sfi courses, such as before and/or after a period of learning or in the so-called vocational Sfi (for care).

Managers in elderly care and care of the disabled

The purpose of the resource is to support discussions about language competence related to care work, including at recruitment. The manager's role includes a continuous focus on service development. An important feature of this work is that much of it takes place in dialogue with

employees, for example, at staff appraisals. One of the purposes of such discussions is to give the employee opportunity to voice their views on tasks, their current work situation and training needs. For some employees, there is need to address language competence at appraisal. As a manager, one needs to be aware that this is a sensitive issue for many people.

Language and identity are linked

Identity is formed but also changes through interaction with others.¹⁵ The language and how well we are able to interact with others is very important for our understanding of ourselves and our place in society. How we are treated affects our self-image, especially when speaking a language we do not fully understand.¹⁶ Failing to master the language of the majority population can be interpreted by those around one as an indication of gaps in knowledge and skills in areas other than language. One study (Carlson 2002) described how a group of second language speaking young women felt drained of past experience. Those around them seemed to believe that they had no knowledge at all when they could not express themselves well in Swedish. They felt themselves to be treated and judged as people, parents and professionals purely on the basis of how well they spoke Swedish.

One of the aims of this resource is to offer a tool for discussing language skills objectively. The resource enables manager and employee to discuss the language skills required for different tasks within the service. As noted above, to function satisfactorily across the range of care work situations, second language speakers need language competences at levels B1/B2 (see page 5):

At level B2 the second language speaker should be able to cope well linguistically in almost all care work situations.

At level B1 the second language speaker should be able to cope well linguistically in many care work situations, but not all.

Another aim is for the employee, after being shown how to use the resource, should be able to estimate their own language skills. The estimate may lead to an increased awareness of language demands at work and of their own language skills. This in turn can lead to an increased awareness of the potential need for development and training that they have.

If the employee's estimate is at a lower level, such as A2, in some of the skill areas, it is important to clarify that they can probably handle more tasks if they receive appropriate support from the workplace. That same support will also help the employee develop their language competence.

All workplaces have different conditions, procedures, and work cultures. We still want to give some advice on what a manager might consider both prior to and during a conversation with an employee about language skills. Our hope is that this resource will help inspire managers and also stimulate them to strengthen language development at each workplace.

¹⁵ Lindberg, I. (2009) *Andraspråksresan [Second language journey]*. Folkuniversitet, Stockholm. Ahlgren, K. (2003) *Främling i paradiset - några vuxna andraspråksinlärares reflektioner kring språk och identitet [Stranger in Paradise - some adult second language learners' reflections on language and identity]*. Master's thesis. Centre for Research on Bilingualism, Stockholm University.; Hyltenstam, K (1989) Att återerövra sin mänsklighet [Reclaiming his humanity]. *Tidskrift Invandrare och minoriteter* Vol. 4-5.

¹⁶ Ahlgren, K. (2003) *Främling i paradiset - några vuxna andraspråksinlärares reflektioner kring språk och identitet [Stranger in Paradise - some adult second language learners' reflections on language and identity]*. Master's thesis. Centre for Research on Bilingualism, Stockholm University.

Things to consider before discussing language skills with employees (for example at staff appraisal)

The link between language and identity means that people take any questioning of their language skills very personally. Such questioning may affect their self-esteem negatively. Notwithstanding, with the right support and engagement from colleagues and managers, an awareness of the language requirements of the workplace can help second language speakers to develop their communicative competence.

It is important:

- For a manager to have a view on how the employee manages communication in daily tasks. Examples of this might be how the employee converses with care recipients, relatives and colleagues, how they take in information and instructions and how they complete social documentation.¹⁷
- That the manager has a good understanding of the language skills necessary to cope with the different tasks that are included in the employee's job role.
- That the manager has a good understanding of the resource and how the different skills are specified at each level. For a manager unfamiliar with the terminology of the scale, the summaries and descriptions in Part 2 and the clarifying comments in Part 4 are a good starting point.
- That the manager and employee are agreed on the purpose of talking about language competence in relation to the employee's job role.
- That there is a clear plan in place regarding what language learning and/or language support is available in the workplace, if there is a need for it.

Stress has a negative effect on language performance so it is important to bear in mind:

- That one cause of stress may be the employee's perception that they are at a disadvantage, both in relation to their manager and in relation to their language competence.
- That many migrant workers fear that they could lose their job if their language skills do not meet their employer's expectations.
- Breakdowns in communication due to language problems often lead to stress, frustration and/or anger.

Before the discussion

Ahead of staff appraisal, the manager and employee should have a preliminary meeting to inform the employee of the purpose of the conversation and ask the employee to prepare:

"Before we talk, I'd like you to think about your job, what works well but also what does not work so well both in terms of practical results and communication, for example anything difficult in your work."

It is important that the manager is well-prepared and able to explain why they are discussing language competence in staff appraisal.

¹⁷ Translator's note: As per footnote 7 above, the Swedish system of mandatory record-keeping.

Holding the discussion

- Begin the discussion by explaining the purpose of addressing language competence at staff appraisal. Explain this in a clear and practical way and say what it will lead to, i.e. what outcomes are possible. It is important that employees understand these things and that you both agree on the purpose of the discussion.
- Refer back to the short preliminary conversation and ask the employee to tell you what they think works well and what they consider difficult, in terms of both practical results and communication.
- Go through the self-assessment materials in part 3b of the resource, for levels A2 and B1. Let the employee themselves read and tell you what level they think they are.
- If you (as manager) and the employee do not agree regarding the employee's language competence, go through some workplace items and discuss how the employee thinks they can handle, for example:
 - Minutes from staff meetings
 - Care recipient social documentation¹⁸
 - Care plans
 - Information / instruction from a physiotherapist
 - Examples of situations from everyday work – such as talking to relatives or supporting a care recipient who declined to eat.
- It is of course important to also address what the employee is good at.
- For employees with lower level language skills, it is important to clarify that it is possible to handle more of the tasks if they get the right support from the workplace.

With the employee, agree a personal development plan (PDP) that includes the language competencies and skills that the employee needs to develop. Also note what support the employee needs and/or what the appropriate learning would look like and how it will happen.

Example:¹⁹

Activity:

Learning programme in Swedish for speakers of other languages

Support from language advocate for social documentation

Who is responsible:

Manager to contact training providers to plan learning in Swedish for speakers of other languages at basic or secondary level in municipal adult education

Manager to contact language advocate to describe the issue and plan support

Employee to contact language advocate to schedule support and discuss support needs

¹⁸ Translator's note: As per footnote 7 above, the Swedish system of mandatory record-keeping.

¹⁹ The headings are taken from Stockholm City's guide on performance appraisal.

When:

Language advocate support: October to December. Language learning: spring 2013.

To be reviewed:

Times for feedback on language learning to be determined. Some follow-up in December 2012 and April 2013.

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Appendix 1. Overview of the CEFR

The Council of Europe's language scale, the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching and Assessment* (CEFR)²⁰, is a result of the Council of Europe's longstanding work on language and language learning. The Framework sets out characteristics of language use and language users and the implications for learning and teaching. The aim is to give language teachers, assessors, learners, commissioners of learning and employers a common language scale to refer to.

Two of the CEFR's main goals are:

1. *To encourage practitioners of all kinds in the language field, including language learners themselves, to reflect on such questions as:*
 - *what do we actually do when we speak (or write) to each other?*
 - *what enables us to act in this way?*
 - *how much of this do we need to learn when we try to use a new language?*
 - *how do we set our objectives and mark our progress along the path from total ignorance to effective mastery?*
 - *how does language learning take place?*
 - *what can we do to help ourselves and other people to learn a language better?*
2. *To make it easier for practitioners to tell each other and their clientèle what they wish to help learners to achieve, and how they attempt to do so.*²¹

The framework is a tool for users to describe the knowledge and skills that the learner, based on their needs and learning goals, must acquire in order to successfully communicate in different situations. It puts language use and language learning into a learning and language policy context and presents a detailed model of how to describe and assess the use of language, language activities and skill levels. The framework helps to create a common ground when we use and talk about language and to obtain objective criteria for describing language proficiency.

The Council of Europe's language scale consists of six specified reference levels:

- A1 and A2 specify the language ability of the 'basic user',
- B1 and B2 specify the language ability of the 'independent user',
- C1 and C2 specify the language ability of the 'advanced user'.

At each level, language ability is described across five skill areas: Listening, Reading, Conversations and Spoken interaction, Spoken production and Writing skills.

²⁰ *Gemensam europeisk referensram för språk lärande, undervisning och bedömning* (GERS) [*Common European Framework of Reference for Languages Learning, Teaching and Assessment (CEFR)*]: 2007 www.skolverket.se/publikationer?id=2144 Translation from English. (The original English edition was published in 2001). Translator's note: For the official English-language version of the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, see http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/CADRE1_EN.asp

²¹ *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages p4: Notes for the user*
http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_en.pdf#page=4

By way of example of how courses in Swedish for immigrants (Sfi) are related to the CEFR: Course D, which is the highest course in the programme, is at level B1+. ²² The qualifying test for non-Swedish speakers who seek to enter college or university, TISUS, ²³ sits across levels B2 and C1.

²² Translator's note: B1+ is an example of a 'plus level' as described in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* section 3.5-6, p31-36: *Establishing cut-off points between levels is always a subjective procedure; some institutions prefer broad levels, others prefer narrow ones.* (p32) In Sweden, B1+ indicates a 'strong' or 'upper' B1 level.

²³ TISUS = Test i svenska för universitets- och högskolestudier. [TISUS = Test in Swedish for university and higher education.]

Appendix 2. CEFR self-assessment grid

EUROPEAN LEVELS - SELF ASSESSMENT GRID							
		A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Understanding	Listening	I can understand familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.	I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local area, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.	I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.	I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.	I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly. I can understand television programmes and films without too much effort.	I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast native speed, provided. I have some time to get familiar with the accent.
	Reading	I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.	I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters.	I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters.	I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular attitudes or viewpoints. I can understand contemporary literary prose.	I can understand long and complex factual and literary texts, appreciating distinctions of style. I can understand specialised articles and longer technical instructions, even when they do not relate to my field.	I can read with ease virtually all forms of the written language, including abstract, structurally or linguistically complex texts such as manuals, specialised articles and literary works.
Speaking	Spoken interaction	I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can't usually understand enough to keep the conversation going myself.	I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current	I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. I can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining my views.	I can express myself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. I can use language flexibly and effectively for social and professional purposes. I can formulate ideas and opinions with precision and relate my contribution skilfully to	I can take part effortlessly in any conversation or discussion and have a good familiarity with idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. I can express myself fluently and convey finer shades of meaning precisely. If I do have a problem I can backtrack and restructure

				events).		those of other speakers.	around the difficulty so smoothly that other people are hardly aware of it.
	Spoken production	I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.	I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job.	I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes and ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating subthemes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.	I can present a clear, smoothly-flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.
Writing	Writing	I can write a short, simple postcard, for example sending holiday greetings. I can fill in forms with personal details, for example entering my name, nationality and address on a hotel registration form.	I can write short, simple notes and messages. I can write a very simple personal letter, for example thanking someone for something.	I can write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions.	I can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests. I can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view. I can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences.	I can express myself in clear, well-structured text, expressing points of view at some length. I can write about complex subjects in a letter, an essay or a report, underlining what I consider to be the salient issues. I can select a style appropriate to the reader in mind.	I can write clear, smoothly-flowing text in an appropriate style. I can write complex letters, reports or articles which present a case with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points. I can write summaries and reviews of professional or literary works.
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