

**PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT
FORUM**



**Linguistic mediation
for higher education
language instructors
and students**

The Forum is hosted and co-organised by the **Faculty of Linguistics, National Technical University of Ukraine “Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute”**

**Developing mediation skills
at university language centres**

**Johann Fischer
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Programme:

- The action-oriented approach and the learner as a social agent
- Mediation in university contexts
- Intralinguistic and cross-linguistic mediation
- The role of scenarios
- Resources for professional development purposes

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The action-oriented approach

Council of Europe (2020: 28):

“The CEFR’s action-oriented approach represents a shift away from syllabuses based on a linear progression through language structures, or a pre-determined set of notions and functions, towards syllabuses based on needs analysis, oriented towards **real-life tasks** and constructed around **purposefully selected notions and functions**. This promotes a “**proficiency**” **perspective** guided by “**can do**” **descriptors** rather than a “deficiency” perspective focusing on what the learners have not yet acquired. The idea is to design curricula and courses based on **real-world communicative needs**, organised around **real-life tasks** and accompanied by “can do” descriptors that communicate aims to learners. Fundamentally, the CEFR is a tool to assist the planning of curricula, courses and examinations by working backwards from what the users/learners need to be able to do in the language.”

The action-oriented approach

Key aspects of this quote:

- real-life tasks
- a “proficiency” perspective
- purposefully selected notions and functions and
- real-world communicative needs

The action-oriented approach

The new role of the learner as a social agent:

- learners simulate a real-life situation,
- complete purposeful / meaningful tasks and
- show what they are capable to do

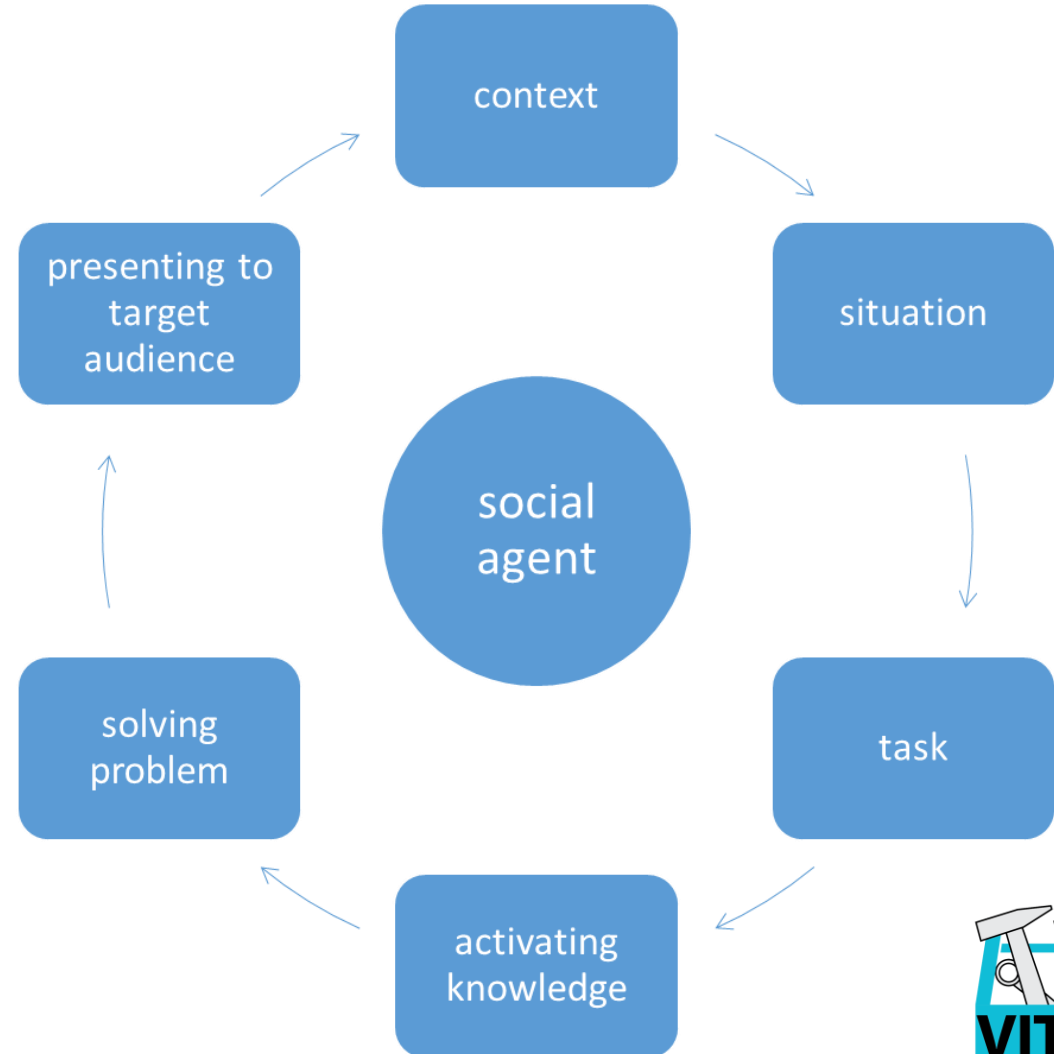
The learner as a social agent

- All activities focus on the learner with their individual skills, knowledge, interests...



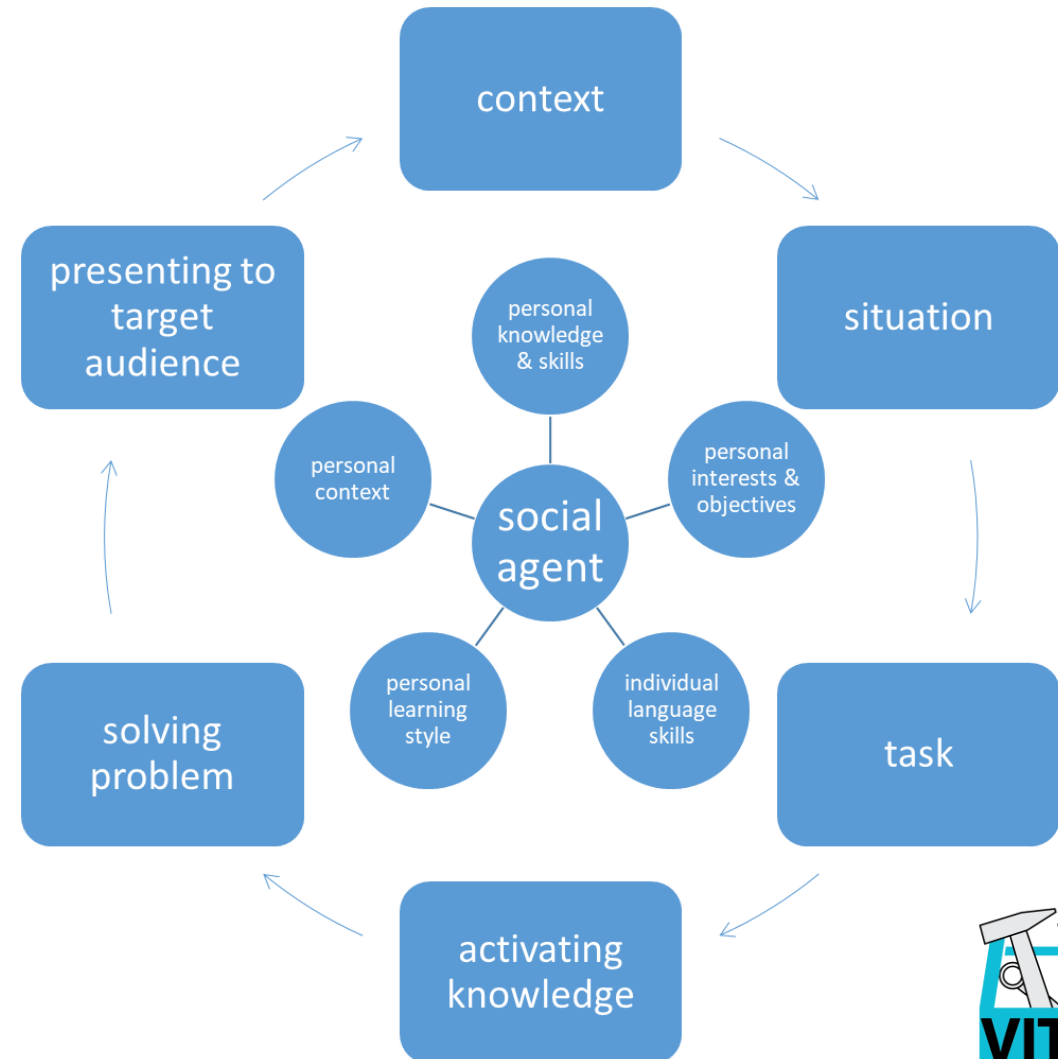
The learner as a social agent

- All activities focus on the learner with their individual skills, knowledge, interests...
- This concept puts the learner at the centre of the learning process.

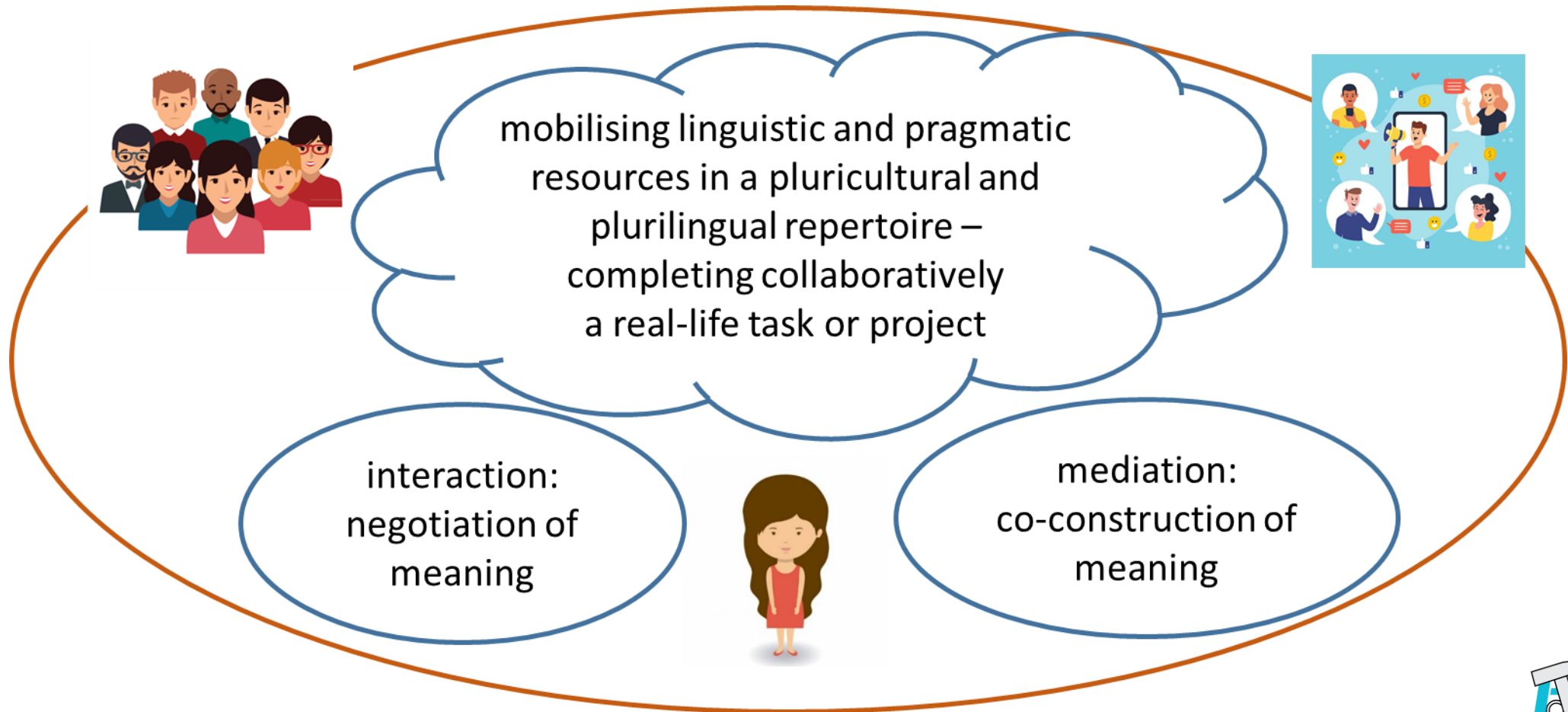


The learner as a social agent

- All activities focus on the learner with their individual skills, knowledge, interests...
- This concept puts the learner at the centre of the learning process.
- The activities carried out in class are influenced by the different skills, background knowledge and interests of the learners.



The learner as a social agent



The action-oriented approach

Learners:

- analyse a specific situation in a given context
 - are given a scenario
 - have to complete a task with a specific aim
 - draw upon their individual knowledge, cultures, skills and interests,
 - interact with their partner(s) or group
 - co-construct meaning and concepts
 - and then present their outcomes to a specific target group
- In this way, they act as social agents.

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Mediation at university language centres

Learners:

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 - have to complete a task with a specific aim
 - draw upon their individual knowledge, cultures, skills and interests,
 - **interact** with their partner(s) or group
 - **co-construct meaning and concepts**
 - and then **present their outcomes to a specific target group**
- The learners mediate texts, concepts, communication.
They explain new concepts and e.g. simplify texts.

Mediation at university language centres

Examples:

- carry out a project in your field of study
- carry out an interdisciplinary project
- present research at international conferences
- present research findings to lay target group
- service learning activities
- work with specific social groups
- apply for funding (scholarships, projects etc.)

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Intralinguistic and cross-linguistic mediation

Examples:

- Intralinguistic:
 - relaying information to lay audience
 - working on interdisciplinary projects
 - suitable for ESP / LSP classes
- Crosslinguistic:
 - service learning projects e.g. with migrants
 - case study work e.g. on globalisation issues (different perspectives from different countries)

Examples intralinguistic mediation

- CEFR level A1: Erasmus students looking for accommodation at host university
- CEFR level CI – English: “Explaining science to kids” → strategies to simplify a text: amplifying a dense text
- CEFR level CI – English: “Energy Case Study” →
 - mediating a text: explaining data in speech / in writing
 - mediating concepts: facilitating collaborative interaction with peers / collaborating to construct meaning
- CEFR level CI – Italian: “Waste problem in the city of Bologna” →
 - interdisciplinary project: mediating concepts, strategies to explain a new concept, strategies to simplify a text, mediating communication

Examples crosslinguistic mediation

- CEFR level B1+ / B2 – French: « Le démantèlement de la jungle de Calais »
 - input material in language of schooling
 - task: summarise and discuss relevant aspects to fellow students in France to explain how the situation is presented in one's own country
- CEFR level B2: “Sustainable campus”
 - project based on examples from different partner universities
 - mediation: mediating a text, mediating concepts, mediating communication
- CEFR level B2 – Spanish and Italian: « La basura plástica y sus secuelas en Italia y Centroamérica » (intercomprehension project)
 - mediation: plurilingual comprehension; building on plurilingual repertoire

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The role of scenarios

Key elements of task development in an action-oriented approach:

- Learners are given a **scenario** explaining the issue to develop or the problem to solve.
- Learners complete a **realistic task** of a **certain complexity** in their field of study or their future profession, or of their societal setting.
- The tasks require the learners to **activate their individual knowledge, culture, skills and interests** and develop individual solutions to a given challenge or problem.
- The tasks have to be **relevant** and **meaningful** to the learner.

The role of scenarios

Key elements of a scenario:

- Context
- Situation
- Role(s)
- Task(s): overall task and build-up tasks
- Target group
- Objectives & expected outcomes / outputs

The role of scenarios

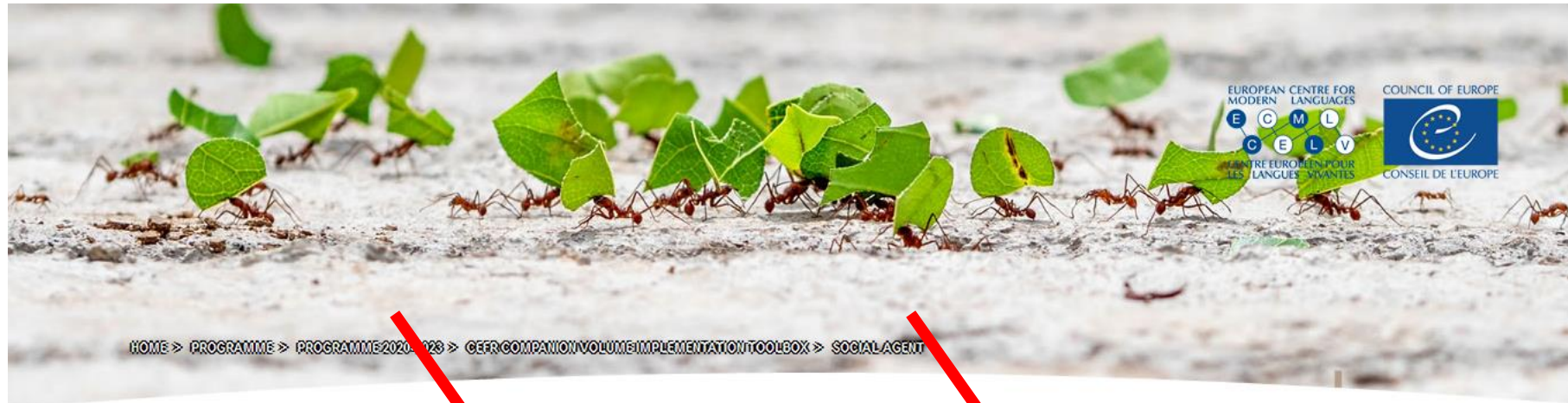
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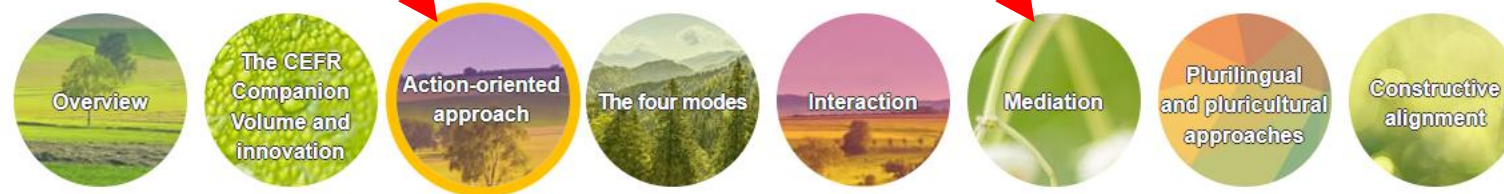
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VITbox Resources at www.ecml.at/companionvolumetoolbox



CEFR Companion Volume implementation toolbox



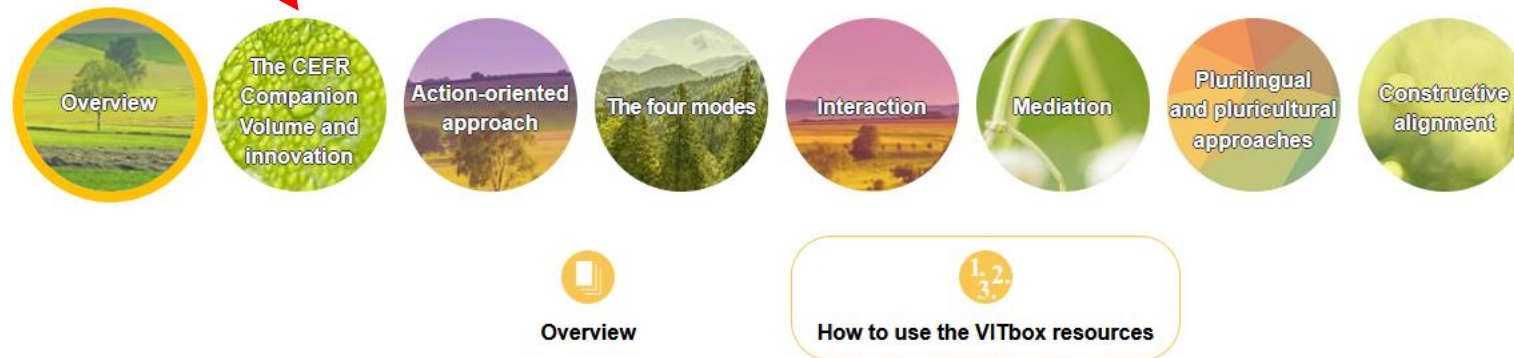
The Action-oriented approach and the learner as a social agent

This module addresses the change of paradigm started by the CEFR and continued and reinforced by the Companion Volume. It addresses how the role of the learner changes and how the learner takes centre stage, which is particularly relevant in vocational training and at university. Furthermore, it provides teachers and teacher educators with templates and materials for reflection to help the construct tasks that encourage the action-oriented approach.

Task template



CEFR Companion Volume implementation toolbox



How to use the VITbox resources

All VITbox modules provide videos, corresponding PowerPoint presentations and recorded PowerPoints describing the VITbox resources, with a focus on specific key concepts of the CEFR Companion Volume. Teacher educators can use these files in their professional development workshops or in teacher education seminars. They can use the documents as they are or adapt them to their individual needs. Furthermore, teachers and teacher educators can use them for self-study purposes.

Task template



Template for presenting a task using the CEFR descriptors

Example 1: [add title]

Title:	[add title of the task or activity]
Language:	[add target language]
CEFR Level:	[add CEFR descriptor, e.g. B2]
Teaching or assessment:	[select the purpose of this task, i.e. "teaching" or "assessment"]
Author:	[add name of author(s)]

Introduction to the task

[add a short description of the task to serve as an introduction]

Task presentation

[add here a detailed description of the task]

Additional information (e.g. concerning methodology or experience in using this task in the classroom)

[add here any relevant additional information, e.g. concerning the methodology or feedback given by learners after piloting the task]

Descriptor(s):

Please use the online database of descriptors to select the modes of communication, scale and descriptors targeted when using this task: <https://rm.coe.int/cefr-descriptors-2020-1680ged2c7>

**Mode of communication /
Activity, strategy or competence:**

[choose the mode of communication and the activity / strategy / competence from the descriptors database, e.g. "mediation / strategies to explain a new concept"]

Scale:

[choose the scale, e.g. "breaking down complicated information"]

Descriptor(s):

[choose the descriptor(s) that are addressed by this task / activity, e.g. "Can make a complicated process easier to understand by breaking it down into a series of smaller steps."]

Council of Europe database of descriptors

<https://rm.coe.int/cefr-descriptors-2020-/I6809ed2c7>

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	No	CEFR Descriptor Scheme (updated)	Mode of communication	Activity, strategy or competence	Scale	Level	Descriptor
1049	1048	Communicative language strategies	Mediation	Strategies to explain a new concept	Adapting language	B1	Can paraphrase short passages in a simple fashion, using the original order of the text.
1050	1049	Communicative language strategies	Mediation	Strategies to explain a new concept	Adapting language	A2	Can repeat the main point of a simple message on an everyday subject, using different formulation to help someone else understand it.
1051	1050	Communicative language strategies	Mediation	Strategies to explain a new concept	Adapting language	A1	<i>No descriptors available</i>
1052	1051	Communicative language strategies	Mediation	Strategies to explain a new concept	Adapting language	Pre-A1	<i>No descriptors available</i>
1053	1052	Communicative language strategies	Mediation	Strategies to explain a new concept	Breaking down complicated information	C2	Can facilitate understanding of a complex issue by explaining the relationship of parts to the whole and encourage different ways of approaching it.
1054	1053	Communicative language strategies	Mediation	Strategies to explain a new concept	Breaking down complicated information	C1	Can facilitate understanding of a complex issue by highlighting and categorising the main points, presenting them in a logically connected pattern, and reinforcing the message by repeating the key aspects in different ways.
1055	1054	Communicative language strategies	Mediation	Strategies to explain a new concept	Breaking down complicated information	B2+	Can make a complicated issue easier to understand by presenting the components of the argument separately.
1056	1055	Communicative language strategies	Mediation	Strategies to explain a new concept	Breaking down complicated information	B2	Can make a complicated process easier to understand by breaking it down into a series of smaller steps.
1057	1056	Communicative language strategies	Mediation	Strategies to explain a new concept	Breaking down complicated information	B1+	Can make a short instructional or informational text easier to understand by presenting it as a list of separate points.
1058	1057	Communicative language strategies	Mediation	Strategies to explain a new concept	Breaking down complicated information	B1	Can make a set of instructions easier to understand by repeating them slowly, a few words/signs at a time, employing verbal and non-verbal emphasis to facilitate understanding.
1059	1058	Communicative language strategies	Mediation	Strategies to explain a new concept	Breaking down complicated information	A2	<i>No descriptors available</i>
1060	1059	Communicative language strategies	Mediation	Strategies to explain a new concept	Breaking down complicated information	A1	<i>No descriptors available</i>
1061	1060	Communicative language strategies	Mediation	Strategies to explain a new concept	Breaking down complicated information	Pre-A1	<i>No descriptors available</i>
1062	1061	Communicative language strategies	Mediation	Strategies to simplify a text	Amplifying a dense text	C2	Can elucidate the information given in texts on complex academic or professional topics by elaborating and providing examples.
1063	1062	Communicative language strategies	Mediation	Strategies to simplify a text	Amplifying a dense text	C1	Can make complex, challenging content more accessible by explaining difficult aspects more explicitly and adding helpful detail.
1064	1063	Communicative language strategies	Mediation	Strategies to simplify a text	Amplifying a dense text	C1	Can make the main points contained in a complex text more accessible to the target audience by adding redundancy, explaining, and modifying style and register.

METLA resources

ECML Project
coordinated by
Maria Stathopoulou



Mediation in teaching, learning and assessment

How foreign language teachers in primary and secondary education can include (cross)linguistic mediation in their teaching practices



Mediation at university language centres

- Questions?
- Comments?
- Suggestions?

Resources

- Council of Europe CEFR website:
<https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages>
- Council of Europe (2001): *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge: CUP; English text available at:
<https://rm.coe.int/I680459f97>
- Council of Europe (2020): *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment. Companion Volume*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe; English text available at:
<https://rm.coe.int/common-european-framework-of-reference-for-languages-learning-teaching/I6809ea0d4>.
- Council of Europe (2020): CEFR Descriptors (searchable database of descriptors):
<https://rm.coe.int/cefr-descriptors-2020-/I6809ed2c7>.
- Dendrinos, Bessie (ed.): *Mediation as Negotiation of Meanings, Plurilingualism and Language Education*. London / New York: Routledge.
- Piccardo, Enrica / North, Brian (2019): *The Action-oriented Approach. A Dynamic Vision of Language Education*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Fischer, Johann et al. (2023): CEFR Companion Volume implementation toolbox. Strasbourg / Graz: Council of Europe (European Centre for Modern Languages): www.ecml.at/companionvolumetoolbox.
- Stathopoulou, Maria et al. (2023): *Mediation in teaching, learning and assessment*. Strasbourg / Graz: Council of Europe (European Centre for Modern Languages): www.ecml.at/mediation.

Vielen Dank für Ihre Aufmerksamkeit!
Дякуємо за увагу!

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