

European Language Council Forum

A 'Framework' for Business Language? The Business Platform for Multilingualism and beyond

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ELC/CEL Forum - Brussels 2-3 December 2010



Fondazione Aldini Valeriani

Institute of vocational education and training in Bologna
developing projects and delivering courses in a broad range
of technical disciplines, including specific, sector-oriented
foreign language training both in-house and ad hoc for local
business and industry

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The elp-DESK Project

Promotion and dissemination of the Europass Language Passport (www.elp-desk.eu)

- Applications in training
- Applications in business
- Dedicated tools and services

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The elp-DESK Project

Issues and Outcomes:

- Limited awareness of language passport
- Continuing tendency to privilege formal qualifications
- Recognition of informal and non-formal experience developing slowly
- Diffidence regarding self-assessment remains



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The Business Platform for Multilingualism

A European Commission sponsored initiative bringing together over 20 European organisations from the worlds of business, training and education, professional associations, trade unions, etc. to raise awareness, assess, advise and suggest policy options regarding the promotion and maintenance of multilingualism within business environments

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The Business Platform for Multilingualism

The Celan Project:

What are the language needs of business users?

- Definition of a specific framework to assess needs
- A business-driven analysis through the network provided by the Business Platform
- Highlighting of geographic, size or sector specific characteristics

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The Business Platform for Multilingualism

The Celan Project:

What resources does the language market offer business users?

- Training and assessment systems
- Technology tools and services
- Reference support: terminology databases, aggregators, etc.
- Language strategies and policies

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The Business Platform for Multilingualism

The Celan Project:

Matching needs and resources

- A decision-tree model to identify significant solutions to specific problems/needs
- A searchable framework to showcase best practice
- A management tool-kit to develop corporate language strategies
- Interactive instruction modules

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The Business Platform for Multilingualism

The Celan Project: Exploitation

- A vademecum for business users highlighting successful responses to the development of corporate linguistic expertise
- Advice and recommendations to institutions and policy makers
- A long-term business plan to sustain project outcomes

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A Framework for Business Language?

- How can business language training be defined, delivered and assessed?
- Can the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages be used in a business context?
- What alternative frameworks are available?

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A Framework for Business Language?

- European Vocational Qualifications Framework
- Open Sesame - Language skills in the workplace

- Are the functional, notional, situational approaches still relevant?

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A Framework for Business Language?

- Should we try to define new descriptors for business language competence and performance?
- Should we look at what the learner 'has to do' (not only can do)?
- Should the framework take account of how expertise is gained (experienced-based)?

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A Framework for Business Language?

The role of Education and Research in defining this framework:

- Define the criteria and constructs of the model
- Support business in abstracting and defining needs (including in terms of 'have to do')
- Draw attention to the distinction between short-term solutions and life-long learning

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A Framework for Business Language?

The input from business:

- Clearly defined needs based on standardised and reproducible parameters and what staff 'have to do'
- More sophisticated language strategies and policies
- Greater recognition of all means of demonstrating linguistic expertise

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A Framework for Business Language?

The impact on learners:

- Learning for purpose and learning with purpose
- Integration of relevant linguistic skills within the professional skill set
- Realising and understanding what they have to do

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