

**The European Language Portfolio:
a guide for teachers and teacher trainers**

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Foreword

This guide is intended for teachers, teacher trainers and teachers in training who are interested in familiarizing themselves with the European Language Portfolio (ELP) and exploring its pedagogical function. The guide is designed as a support for formal courses that focus on the ELP but also as a handbook for individual teachers who are using the ELP in their classroom. It is our belief – and one of the central implications of the ELP – that the best learning comes from discussion with others that is informed by and leads back into individual reflection. Accordingly, we believe that our guide will most benefit those who use it in the reflective and self-evaluative spirit that underlies the ELP. We suggest that individual users keep a systematic written record of their reaction to our discussion points and their learners’ reaction to any of the suggested classroom activities that they use. Many of the latter can readily be adapted for use in teacher training courses.

In planning and writing the guide we have drawn freely on our own experience of working with the ELP – Radka Perclová with primary and lower secondary teachers of English, German and French in the Czech Republic; David Little with university learners of French and German and adult refugee learners of English in Ireland. We have also drawn on the regular seminars at which the coordinators of ELP pilot projects have come together over the past three years – in Monte Nerità, Tampere, Soest, Enschede, Budapest, Radovljica, and Sèvres. We take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the organizers of the seminars and the many colleagues who have made them such stimulating events.

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- Michaela Čejková for allowing us to reproduce “The six thinking hats” in Chapter 5.

We are also grateful for permission to reproduce illustrative scales from the *Common European Framework* in Appendix 1 and the self-assessment checklists from the Swiss ELP (developed by Günther Schneider and Brian North in a project funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation) in Appendix 2. Other debts are acknowledged in the guide in the usual way, though we are aware that

our discussion points and classroom activities have been influenced by seminars, workshops and informal conversations whose detail we have long since forgotten.

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Dublin

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Contents

1	Introducing the European Language Portfolio	1
	What is the European Language Portfolio?	1
	What is the ELP's function?	3
	The pilot projects (1997–2000)	17
	Points for individual reflection and/or discussion with colleagues	20
	Some classroom activities that can be used to introduce work with the ELP	22
	And finally ...	23
2	Making time and making space: integrating the ELP in your language teaching	25
	Making time	25
	“How often should I work with the ELP?”	26
	Making space: the curriculum, the textbook and the ELP	28
	Points for individual reflection and/or discussion with colleagues	28
	Some classroom activities that fulfil the ELP's pedagogical function	31
	Two final points for individual reflection and/or discussion with colleagues	33
3	Understanding and using the common reference levels and descriptors	35
	Some problems that have arisen and how to deal with them	35
	How one teacher worked with descriptors	38
	Points for individual reflection and/or discussion with colleagues	39
	Some classroom activities working with descriptors	41
	A final point for individual reflection and/or discussion with colleagues	42
4	Motivation, reflection and learning how to learn	43
	Motivation and learning how to learn	43
	Some reflections on reflection	45

The language of reflection	46
Points for individual reflection and/or discussion with colleagues	47
Some classroom activities that require reflection	49
A final point for individual reflection and/or discussion with colleagues	52
5 Coming to terms with self-assessment	53
Two contrasting approaches to assessment	54
Two kinds of assessment	55
Three focuses for self-assessment	55
The relation between self-assessment and assessment by traditional forms of examination	57
Points for individual reflection and/or discussion with colleagues	58
Some classroom activities that include self-assessment	62
Three final points for individual reflection and/or discussion with colleagues	63
6 Responding to the wider challenge of the ELP	65
Points for individual reflection and/or discussion with colleagues	66
Some classroom activities that involve the wider community of language learners/users	67
A final point for individual reflection and/or discussion with colleagues	68
Some advice from teachers involved in one pilot project	68
Drawing up a concluding balance sheet	68
References and further reading	70
Appendix 1: Illustrative scales from the Common European Framework	72
Appendix 2: Self-assessment checklists from the Swiss ELP	91

Chapter 1

Introducing the European Language Portfolio

What is the European Language Portfolio?

Most of us probably associate the word “portfolio” with the world of art and design: it evokes the samples of work, sometimes presented in a large folder, that artists and designers use to introduce their skills to potential patrons and clients. Part of the European Language Portfolio (ELP) is similar to this, but it has two other components that do not usually form part of an artist’s portfolio.

The *Principles and Guidelines* approved by the Council of Europe (DGIV/EDU/LANG (2000) 3) define the three components of the ELP as follows:

- *The Language Passport section provides an overview of the individual’s proficiency in different languages at a given point in time; the overview is defined in terms of skills and the common reference levels in the Common European Framework; it records formal qualifications and describes language competencies and significant language and intercultural learning experiences; it includes information on partial and specific competence; it allows for self-assessment, teacher assessment and assessment by educational institutions and examinations boards; it requires that information entered in the Passport states on what basis, when and by whom the assessment was carried out. To facilitate pan-European recognition and mobility a standard presentation of a Passport Summary is promoted by the Council of Europe for ELPs for adults.*
- *The Language Biography facilitates the learner’s involvement in planning, reflecting upon and assessing his or her learning process and progress; it encourages the learner to state what he/she can do in each language and to include information on linguistic and cultural experiences gained in and outside formal educational contexts; it is organized to promote plurilingualism, i.e. the development of competencies in a number of languages.*
- *The Dossier offers the learner the opportunity to select materials to document and illustrate achievements or experiences recorded in the Language Biography or Passport.*

For our present purposes it is worth expanding briefly on each part of this

definition:

- The skills referred to in the *language passport* are UNDERSTANDING (LISTENING and READING), SPEAKING (SPOKEN INTERACTION and SPOKEN PRODUCTION), and WRITING; while the levels, derived from the Council of Europe's *Common European Framework*, are BASIC USER (A1: BREAKTHROUGH and A2: WAYSTAGE), INDEPENDENT USER (B1: THRESHOLD and B2: VANTAGE), and PROFICIENT USER (C1: EFFECTIVE OPERATIONAL PROFICIENCY and C2: MASTERY). Note that the inclusion of self-assessment in the passport emphasizes that the ELP belongs to the individual learner, not to the issuing body or institution.
- From a pedagogical point of view the *language biography* plays a pivotal role, providing a focus for the reflective processes that mediate between the language passport and the dossier.
- The *dossier* is the part of the ELP that most closely corresponds to the artist's portfolio. For younger learners it may be rather like a scrap book in which target language materials are collected to complement or "decorate" the textbook and provide a focus for ownership of the foreign language learning process and the language itself. Older school learners may fill their dossier with the outcomes of project work related more or less closely to the skills in which they will be tested in public exams. Adult learners will probably want to present evidence of their ability to perform real-life tasks in their target language(s), so their dossier is likely to contain sample letters, memoranda, brief reports and the like. Of course, ELP owners may want to demonstrate their speaking as well as their writing skills, and they can do this by including an audio or video cassette in their dossier.

Over the past three years versions of the ELP have been developed for use with learners of different ages who are learning languages in many different contexts for a variety of different purposes. Not surprisingly, then, there are already many different passports, biographies and dossiers. The Council of Europe has no wish to stifle this natural diversity. However, any version of the ELP must be approved by the Council of Europe's Validation Committee if it is to bear the Council of Europe logo; and the Council of Europe recommends that all versions of the ELP designed for use with adults should use the standard adult version of the passport (cf. the *Principles and Guidelines*, quoted above).

Pages 4–15 provide a necessarily limited idea of what ELPs look like in practice. Figure 1.1 shows the front cover of the standard adult passport, while Figure 1.2 shows part of the profile of language skills. Figures 1.3 and 1.4 show the grids for self-assessment, respectively in English and French. Figure

1.5 shows two pages from the ELP biography of a Swiss university learner of French, and Figures 1.6 and 1.7 show two pages from the ELP biography of a refugee learner of English in Ireland. Figures 1.8–12 show materials collected in the dossiers of language learners at lower secondary level in the Czech Republic and university level in Ireland.

What is the ELP's function?

The ELP has two functions:

- *Reporting.* Like the artist's portfolio, the ELP displays the owner's capabilities, but in relation to foreign languages. Its purpose is not to replace the certificates and diplomas that are awarded on the basis of formal examinations, but to supplement them by presenting additional information about the owner's experience and concrete evidence of his or her foreign language achievements. This function coincides with the Council of Europe's interest in (i) facilitating individual mobility and (ii) relating regional and national qualifications to internationally agreed standards (cf. the common reference levels that are central to the *Common European Framework*). Clearly, the importance of the ELP's reporting function will vary according to the age of the owner. It will usually be much less important for learners in the earlier stages of schooling than for those approaching the end of formal education or already in employment. That explains why the Council of Europe has introduced a standard passport for adults only. It is particularly important to adult learners that the ELP should be accepted internationally, and this is more likely to happen if the first of its components is the same everywhere.
- *Pedagogical.* The ELP is also intended to be used as a means of making the language learning process more transparent to learners, helping them to develop their capacity for reflection and self-assessment, and thus enabling them gradually to assume more and more responsibility for their own learning. This function coincides with the Council of Europe's interest in fostering the development of learner autonomy and promoting lifelong learning; and it is with this function we are chiefly concerned in this guide.

In its reporting and pedagogical functions, the ELP is designed to support four of the Council of Europe's key political aims: the preservation of linguistic and cultural diversity, the promotion of linguistic and cultural tolerance, the promotion of plurilingualism, and education for democratic citizenship.

Figures 1.13 and 1.14 show just two ways of implementing the ELP in pedagogical practice. In Figure 1.13 the teacher starts with the dossier, in

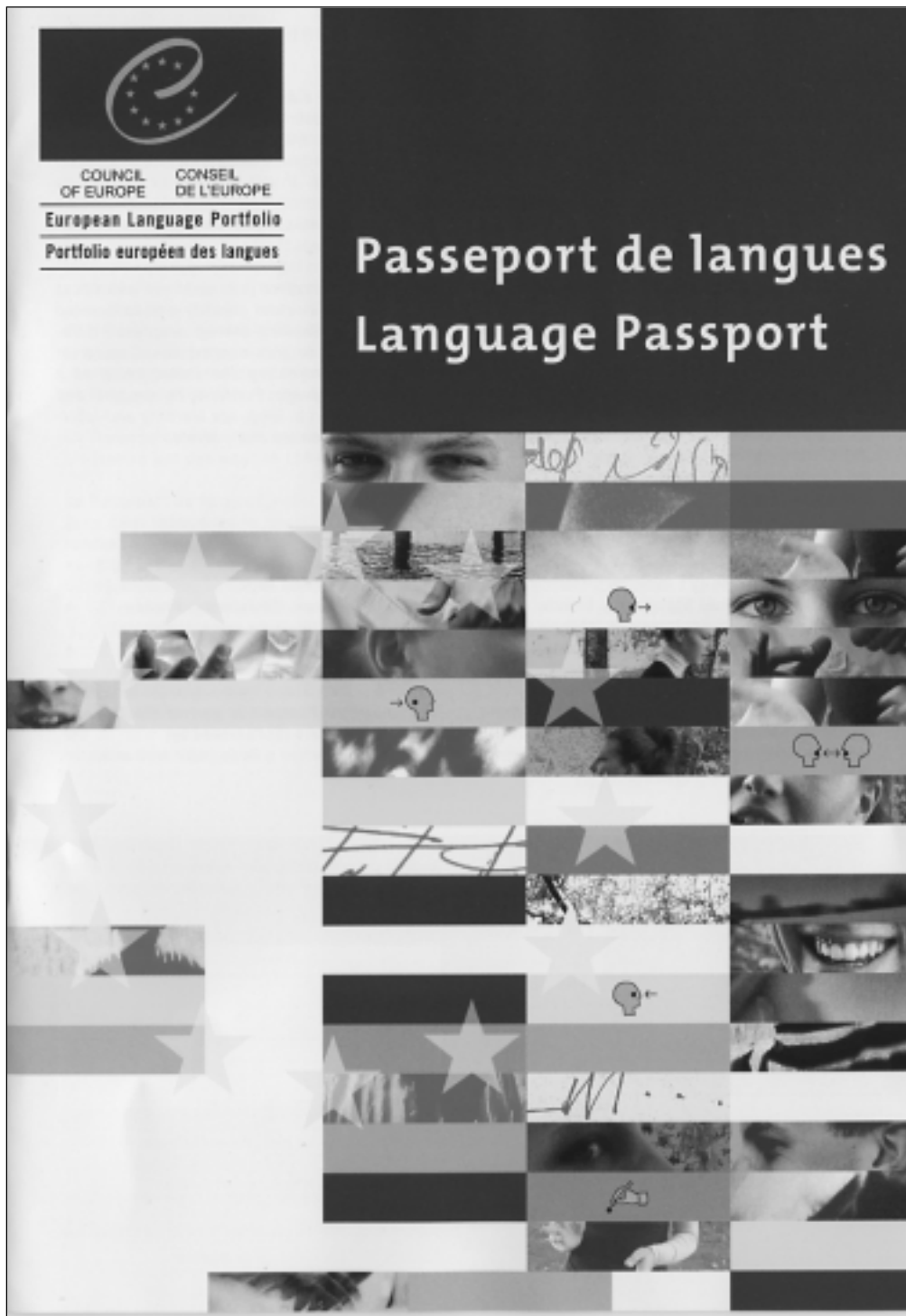


Figure 1.1
Cover of standard adult passport

Profil linguistique
Profile of Language Skills

Langue(s) maternelle(s)
Mother-tongue(s)

Autres langues
Other languages

Auto-évaluation
Self-assessment

Écouter
Listening

Prendre part à une conversation
Spoken interaction

Écrire
Writing

Lire
Reading

S'exprimer oralement en continu
Spoken production

Langue Language

langue language

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Écouter	shaded	shaded	shaded			
Prendre part à une conversation	shaded	shaded	shaded	shaded		
Écrire	shaded	shaded	shaded			
Lire	shaded	shaded	shaded			
S'exprimer oralement en continu	shaded	shaded	shaded			

Exemple Exemple

Langue Language

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Écouter						
Prendre part à une conversation						
Écrire						
Lire						
S'exprimer oralement en continu						

Langue Language

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Écouter						
Prendre part à une conversation						
Écrire						
Lire						
S'exprimer oralement en continu						

Figure 1.2
Standard adult passport: part of the profile of language skills

		A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
U N D E R S T A N D I N G	Listening	I can recognise 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 geography, 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 stances 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.
S P E A K I N G	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 events).	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 those of other speakers.	I can take part effortlessly in any conversation of 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 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 sub-themes, 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.
W R I T I N G	Writing	I can write a short, simple postcard, for examples 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 relating to matters in areas of immediate need. 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 detailed expositions of complex subjects in a letter, an essay or a report, underlining what I consider to be the salient issues. I can write different kinds of texts in an assured, personal 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.

Figure 1.3
Standard adult passport: grid for self-assessment (English)

		A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
C O M P R E N D R E	Écouter	Je peux comprendre des mots familiers et des expressions très courantes au sujet de moi-même, de ma famille et de l'environnement concret et immédiat, si les gens parlent lentement et distinctement.	Je peux comprendre des expressions et un vocabulaire très fréquent relatifs à ce qui me concerne de très près (par ex. moi-même, ma famille, les achats, l'environnement proche, le travail). Je peux saisir l'essentiel d'annonces et de messages simples et clairs.	Je peux comprendre les points essentiels quand un langage clair et standard est utilisé et s'il s'agit de sujets familiers concernant le travail, l'école, les loisirs, etc. Je peux comprendre l'essentiel de nombreuses émissions de radio ou de télévision sur l'actualité ou sur des sujets qui m'intéressent à titre personnel ou professionnel si l'on parle d'une façon relativement lente et distincte.	Je peux comprendre des conférences et des discours assez longs et même suivre une argumentation complexe si le sujet m'en est relativement familier. Je peux comprendre la plupart des émissions de télévision sur l'actualité et les informations. Je peux comprendre la plupart des films en langue standard.	Je peux comprendre un long discours même s'il n'est pas clairement structuré et que les articulations sont seulement implicites. Je peux comprendre les émissions de télévision et les films sans trop d'effort.	Je n'ai aucune difficulté à comprendre le langage oral, que ce soit dans les conditions du direct ou dans les médias et quand on parle vite, à condition d'avoir du temps pour me familiariser avec un accent particulier.
	Lire	Je peux comprendre des noms familiers, des mots ainsi que des phrases très simples, par exemple dans des annonces, des affiches ou des catalogues.	Je peux lire des textes courts très simples. Je peux trouver une information particulière prévisible dans des documents courants comme les petites publicités, les prospectus, les menus et les horaires et je peux comprendre des lettres personnelles courtes et simples.	Je peux comprendre des textes rédigés essentiellement dans une langue courante ou relative à mon travail. Je peux comprendre la description d'événements, l'expression de sentiments et de souhaits dans des lettres personnelles.	Je peux lire des articles et des rapports sur des questions contemporaines dans lesquels les auteurs adoptent une attitude particulière ou un certain point de vue. Je peux comprendre un texte littéraire contemporain en prose.	Je peux comprendre des textes factuels ou littéraires longs et complexes et en apprécier les différences de style. Je peux comprendre des articles spécialisés et de longues instructions techniques même lorsqu'ils ne sont pas en relation avec mon domaine.	Je peux lire sans effort tout type de texte, même abstrait ou complexe quant au fond ou à la forme, par exemple un manuel, un article spécialisé ou une oeuvre littéraire.
P A R L E R	Prendre part à une conversation	Je peux communiquer, de façon simple, à condition que l'interlocuteur soit disposé à répéter ou à reformuler ses phrases plus lentement et à m'aider à formuler ce que j'essaie de dire. Je peux poser des questions simples sur des sujets familiers ou sur ce dont j'ai immédiatement besoin, ainsi que répondre à de telles questions.	Je peux communiquer lors de tâches simples et habituelles ne demandant qu'un échange d'informations simple et direct sur des sujets et des activités familiers. Je peux avoir des échanges très brefs même si, en règle générale, je ne comprends pas assez pour poursuivre une conversation.	Je peux faire face à la majorité des situations que l'on peut rencontrer au cours d'un voyage dans un pays où la langue est parlée. Je peux prendre part sans préparation à une conversation sur des sujets familiers ou d'intérêt personnel qui concernent la vie quotidienne (par exemple famille, loisirs, travail, voyage et actualité).	Je peux communiquer avec un degré de spontanéité et d'aisance qui rende possible une interaction normale avec un locuteur natif. Je peux participer activement à une conversation dans des situations familières, présenter et défendre mes opinions.	Je peux m'exprimer spontanément et couramment sans trop apparemment devoir chercher mes mots. Je peux utiliser la langue de manière souple et efficace pour des relations sociales ou professionnelles. Je peux exprimer mes idées et opinions et lier mes interventions à celles de mes interlocuteurs.	Je peux participer sans effort à toute conversation ou discussion et je suis aussi très à l'aise avec les expressions idiomatiques et les tournures courantes. Je peux m'exprimer couramment et exprimer avec précision de fines nuances de sens. En cas de difficulté, je peux faire marche arrière pour y remédier avec assez d'habileté et pour qu'elle passe presque inaperçue.
	S'exprimer oralement en continu	Je peux utiliser des expressions et des phrases simples pour décrire mon lieu d'habitation et les gens que je connais.	Je peux utiliser une série de phrases ou d'expressions pour décrire en termes simples ma famille et d'autres gens, mes conditions de vie, ma formation et mon activité professionnelle actuelle ou récente.	Je peux articuler des expressions de manière simple afin de raconter des expériences et des événements, mes rêves, mes espoirs ou mes buts. Je peux brièvement donner les raisons et explications de mes opinions ou projets. Je peux raconter une histoire ou l'intrigue d'un livre ou d'un film et exprimer mes réactions.	Je peux m'exprimer de façon claire et détaillée sur une grande gamme de sujets relatifs à mes centres d'intérêt. Je peux développer un point de vue sur un sujet d'actualité et expliquer les avantages et les inconvénients de différentes possibilités.	Je peux présenter des descriptions claires et détaillées de sujets complexes, en intégrant des thèmes qui leur sont liés, en développant certains points et en terminant mon intervention de façon appropriée.	Je peux présenter une description ou une argumentation claire et fluide dans un style adapté au contexte, construire une présentation de façon logique et aider mon auditeur à remarquer et à se rappeler les points importants.
É C R I R E	Écrire	Je peux écrire une courte carte postale simple, par exemple de vacances. Je peux porter des détails personnels dans un questionnaire, inscrire par exemple mon nom, ma nationalité et mon adresse sur une fiche d'hôtel.	Je peux écrire des notes et messages simples et courts. Je peux écrire une lettre personnelle très simple, par ex. de remerciements.	Je peux écrire un texte simple et cohérent sur des sujets familiers ou qui m'intéressent personnellement. Je peux écrire des lettres personnelles pour décrire expériences et impressions.	Je peux écrire des textes clairs et détaillés sur une grande gamme de sujets relatifs à mes intérêts. Je peux écrire un essai ou un rapport en transmettant une information ou en exposant des raisons pour ou contre une opinion donnée. Je peux écrire des lettres qui mettent en valeur le sens que j'attribue personnellement aux événements et aux expériences.	Je peux m'exprimer dans un texte clair et bien structuré et développer mon point de vue. Je peux écrire sur des sujets complexes dans une lettre, un essai ou un rapport, en soulignant les points que je juge importants. Je peux adopter un style adapté au destinataire.	Je peux écrire un texte clair, fluide et stylistiquement adapté aux circonstances. Je peux rédiger des lettres, rapports ou articles complexes, avec une construction claire permettant au lecteur d'en saisir et de mémoriser les points importants. Je peux résumer et critiquer par écrit un ouvrage professionnel ou une oeuvre littéraire.

Figure 1.4
Standard adult passport: grid for self-assessment (French)

Meine persönliche Sprachlernbiografie

2

2

begonnen am: _____

Chronologische Übersicht über meine Sprachlernerfahrungen. Französisch

Jahr evtl. Datum	Schule / Kurse (mit Angabe von Dauer, Stundenzahl, Intensität). Sprachen, mit denen ich aufgewachsen bin. Sprachregionen, in denen ich gelebt habe. Sprachgebrauch bei der Arbeit, in der Ausbildung, im Bekanntenkreis, auf Reisen. Lernerfahrungen, Lernfortschritte.
<i>1969-1976</i>	<i>Französisch am Gymnasium - 3 Stunden pro Woche. (mathemat. naturwissenschaftlicher Zug)</i>
<i>1976</i>	<i>Abitur : schriftliche Prüfung - Diktat, Übersetzung, Aufsatz</i>
<i>1977/78</i>	<i>Universität Graz - Übersetzerstudium</i>
<i>1978</i>	<i>2 1/2 Monate - Au-pair Aufenthalt in der franz. CH.</i>
<i>1978/79</i>	<i>3. 11. Semester - Übersetzerstudium</i>
<i>1979</i>	<i>2 1/2 Monate - Au-pair Aufenthalt in der franz. CH.</i>
<i>1980/82</i>	<i>Aufenthalt und Studium (Ecole de Français Moderne) in Lausanne - Diplom f. Französisch als Fremd- sprache</i>
<i>1982/96</i>	<i>Aufenthalt, Arbeit, Familiengründung i. Lausanne</i>
<i>1996/99</i>	<i>Studium der Psychologie (als Nebenfach) an der Uni Lausanne - Abschlußprüfung</i>

Meine Ziele

2

6.2

Die Ziele und Pläne, die man für das Sprachenlernen hat, formulieren: Die Blätter können individuell gestaltet und hier eingeordnet werden.

Was will ich lernen, wie will ich lernen?
Warum und wozu will ich eine Sprache lernen, was ist mir dabei wichtig und wie möchte ich vorgehen? Lerne ich für den Beruf, fürs Reisen, fürs Studium? Will ich vor allem verstehen, Literatur lesen, schreiben können? Will ich einen Kurs besuchen, im Tandem lernen, einen Austausch machen?


Französisch

*Mein Ziel ist akademisches Französisch schreiben zu können.
Ich möchte versuchen, meine typisch deutschen Strukturen, den
Satzbau aus meinem Französisch eliminieren.
Ich plane deshalb einen Kurs zu machen, der es mir erlaubt,
Stellungnahmen, Zusammenfassungen, Berichte, Seminararbeiten
auszuarbeiten. Um mich zu verbessern, muß ich viele Beispiele
selbst schreiben und ein Lernprotokoll führen.*

Figure 1.5

Extracts from the ELP biography of a Swiss university student

Language overview




Language	Where learned (Country, home, school, etc...)	How learned (School, language classes, etc...)	Length of learning experience	Why learned (Work study, general interest)	Qualifications (including exams taken)	Validating body
FRENCH	School Algeria	School	12 years	Study	BAC. (leaving Cert) BAC. (Junior Cert)	
ARABIC	School. Algeria	School. language classes.	12 years.	Study		
Spanish	Spain. School.	Language classes.	3 years.	general interest.	language certificate.	
ENGLISH	Algeria. Country. School	School.	1 year	Study	-	-
BERBER	Home Algeria.	-	-	-	-	-

Self Assessment of language ability

Language	Spoken production	Written production	Reading comprehension	Listening comprehension	Interaction
25th of February ENGLISH	B1	B1	B1	B1	B1
7th of July	B1	B2	B2	B2	B2

Figure 1.6
Extract from the ELP biography of a refugee learning English in Ireland



Language : ENGLISH

Learning and experiences

Where I started learning this language	Algeria. at School
Why I started learn this language	English was part of school curriculum in Algeria.
How I learned this language	Classes.
Significant work in or through this language	—
Contact with the country where the language is spoken	IRELAND
Contact with people who speak the language] Live in Ireland - College (Lecluse) - FAS
Media experiences	.TELEVISION .NEWSPAPERS
Other experiences	—

Current progress and objectives

Time scale	28th of February 1 month from now.	May 11th 2000. 1 month from NOW.	June 30th 2000. 1 Month from now.
Objectives	Improve my writing. Writing	Improve my writing. - Speaking.	Improve my writing - Speaking.
Progress	yes	yes.	

Figure 1.7

Extract from the ELP biography of a refugee learning English in Ireland

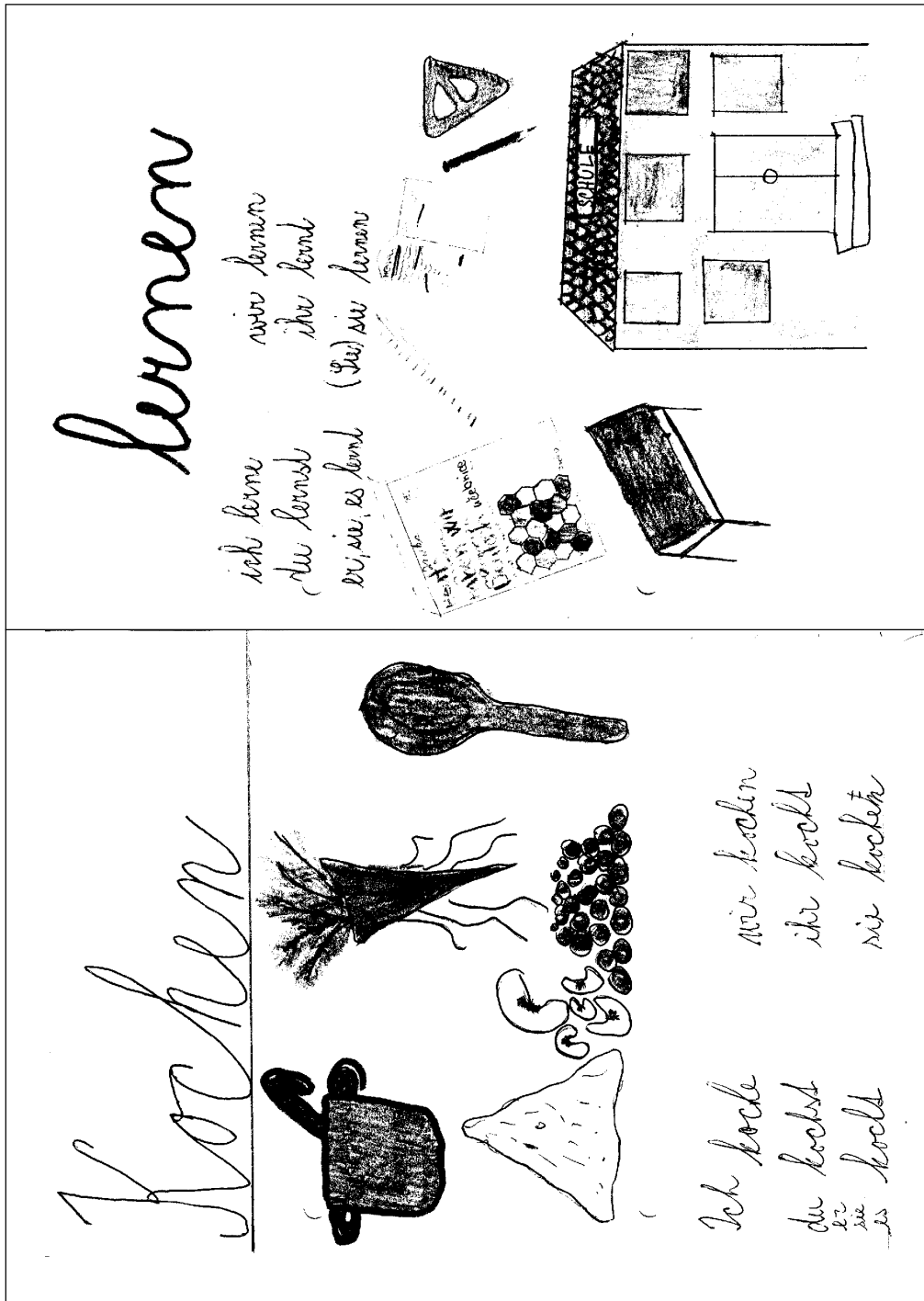



Figure 1.8
Two pages from the ELP dossier of a Czech learner of German
at lower secondary level

„Wohin sollen wir gehen?“

Aufgaben
Gebt dem Foto einen Titel, beschreibt es kurz und füllt die Sprechblasen aus!



Sehr glaube, dass wir mit diese Hauptbahn fahren sollen.

Schnell, wir müssen dort um acht Uhr sein!

Sehr hoffe, dass wir hier sind!

Das können wir nicht schaffen!

Sehr weiß schon nicht!

Wo ist die Munchener U-Bahn 18?

Die Gruppe die jugendlichen ^{sind} ~~haben~~ in der Stadt geboren. Was sollen sie machen? Diese Gruppe sucht die Sporthalle, wo sie schwimmen sollen, weil sie eine Schwimmergruppe aus Wien sind. Finden sie diesen Platz? Welchen Weg sollen sie auswählen? Welcher von ihnen hat recht?

Figure 1.9

A page from the ELP dossier of a Czech learner of German at lower secondary level

Let's interview a young hockey player!

His name is
player for a junior
Vítkovice hockey



Richard Matzke and he is a
team in Ostrava. He plays of
club. He is 18 years old.

I: Hello Richard. How are you?

R: I'm fine, thanks!

I: I'm sorry to interview you when you are so busy.

R: Well yes, you're right. I'm busy but I want to do this interview.

I: So, Richard, my first question for you is:

When did you begin to play ice- hockey?

R: I began to play it when I was 4 years old with my father.

I: That's nice. Does your father play or has he ever played hockey?

R: No, my father has never played ice- hockey but he wanted me to play it. He used to go with me to the ice-hockey hall every day.

I: And what about your mother? Did she agree with your fastidious hobby?

R: My mother likes hockey. And she always was and still is a fan of me.

I: Well, Richard, do you
future?

R: Yes, of course! I want to
seriously, I want to play better
in the Czech Republic called
like to play for HC Vítkovice. I
I like them!



already have plans for the

play ice-hockey (laughing). But
and go to the best competition
Extraleague. One day I would
know they aren't good now but

I: Richard, we do not have a lot of time. Your training will begin soon. So, quick!
Do you have any brothers or sisters?

R: Yes, I have one brother; Boris is his name. He plays football. And I have four
sisters. If you would like to know their names here they are: Veronika, Adriana, Simona
and Iveta. Simona and Adriana play basketball. Iveta lives with her boyfriend in
Litvínov and Veronika likes boys and discos.

Figure 1.10

A page from the ELP dossier of a Czech learner of English
at lower secondary level

Anna Lavina
G. class
28 Strz
Dvřřkova 1/2
Czech republic

MOZART

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) was born in Salzburg. His father, Leopold, was musician big meaning. From Wolfgang letter it is possible, that he was careful and favourable father.

First success

Mozart career started in his 7 year, when father his take on to Europe. He visited interesting people as was J.C. Bach. His late tour to Paris in year 1776 not was successful. He ~~is~~ not found work. At the time his mother, dead. Set end his miraclous career, and start destitute years ripe composer.

On difference from other big composers Mozart wasn't never revolutionary nor pioneer new musical technology

First ripe

Mozart had already long list of operas, symphonies, & concert bits on him conto. He started create master works, which him brings to his ^{own} permanent glory. In year 1779 was made the big concert symphony for fiddle, viola and orchestra. He obtained order for Munichs court theatre. Result was opera "lomeno", on libretto Verrees. Her first conception compared to old opera conceptions brought big success. Contention among ^{arised} composer and archbishop lead in Mozart let. He went there fore find luck to a Vienna. In year 1782 ~~he~~ he got married towards his displeasure his father with Konstancie Webera. His first Viennas opera, "Jack from Serail", from year 1782 him brought big glory.

Four big operas

Mozart part work evidence intelligent style. It was evident in Figaro wedding (1786), it was comic opera, which was

Figure 1.11

A page from the ELP dossier of a Czech learner of English at lower secondary level

<p><u>ANNE LENNON - 9856554101</u> <u>ACHTE AUF DEN ABFALL- ES IST DEINER!!</u></p> <p>Der blaue Planet erstickt im Dreck! Täglich hören und sehen wir Schlagzeilen wie „ Ozonloch immer größer“, „ Gift im Essen“, „Klimakatastrophe droht“, und „ Hautkrebs aus der Spraydose“. Aber machen wir keine Sorgen??</p> <p>Die <u>W</u>unde unsere Erde sind in Gefahr. Hier gibt es ein Paar Fakten.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Das Klima röchelt wegen Qualm aus Schloten, Auspuffrohren und Kraftwerken. <p>Die Folge- Ozonloch (Hautkrebs).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Das Wasser fault. Müllkippe Nordsee muß jährlich 150 Mio. Tonnen schlucken. - Tankerkatastrophen versuchen Wasser, töten Tiere und Pflanzen. - Jeder 3. Baum ist tot wegen der Folgen des Sauren Regens. Jedes Jahr gibt es 17 Mio. Hektar Wald weniger (so groß wie Österreich.). - Alle 3 std. Stirbt eine Tierart wegen der Industrieabfälle. Folglich sind Tiere wie Wale, Schmetterlinge und Pandabären bedroht. <p>Wie Sie es auch ausdrücken, ist unsere Welt in Gefahr. Der Zustand des Planet finde ich unerhört. Ich glaube es wichtig durch Aktionen vor Ort immer wieder auf die Folgen der Verschmutzung aufmerksam oder Lösungsvorschläge im kleinen zu machen.</p>	<p>Weitweit gibt es Tausende von Organisationen, die gewaltige Arbeit für das Umwelt gemacht hat. z.B. „Greenpeace“, „ENFO“, „Meine Stadt 2010“, „Globe Deutschland“, und „Rettet die Wälder“.</p> <p>Aber auf dem Internet habe ich ein Organisation, das sehr interessant ist gefunden.....</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>DUALES SYSTEM DEUTSCHLAND</u></p> <p>Jährlich erzeugt jeder Bundesbürger rund 400 Kilo Müll – die Hälfte davon sind Verpackungen. Würde man diesen Müll in Güterwaggons laden, so hätte der Zug die Länge der vierzigfachen Strecke Hamburg-München. Jedes Jahr wird in der Bundesrepublik eine Fläche in der Größenordnung von etwa 600 Fußballfeldern zur Mülldeponie!!</p> <p>Es gibt nur eine Lösung.....Abfall vermeiden und das Unvermeidbaren Müll wiederverwerten.....So wird das Duales System Deutschland gegründet.</p> <p><i>Was ist das Duales System Deutschland?</i></p> <p>Duales System Deutschland ist ein Privatwirtschaftliches Unternehmen. Es wird am 28. September 1990 gegründet. Die Hauptabsicht des Unternehmens ist Vermeidung und stoffliche Verwertung von Verkaufsverpackungen. Der Geschäftssitz befindet sich in Köln-Porz. Es gibt eine Menge Aktionäre z.B. 600 Unternehmen aus Handel, Konsumgüterindustrie und Vormateriallieferanten. Der Chef heißt Karl-Josef Baum und heutzutage gibt es gegen 370 Mitarbeiter.</p>
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Figure 1.12
Two pages from the ELP dossier of an Irish university student learning German

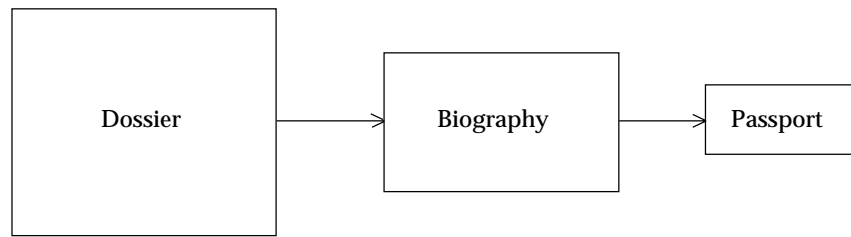


Figure 1.13

which she encourages learners to keep the best examples of their work. At a somewhat later stage she introduces the biography component and helps her learners to start setting their own learning targets and reviewing their learning progress. Later still, she introduces the passport and shows her learners how to come to terms with their developing linguistic identity by engaging in self-assessment based on the Council of Europe's common reference levels. Doing things in this order has worked well with some learners at primary and lower secondary level. In Figure 1.14 the process is reversed. The language passport is introduced at the beginning as a means of challenging learners to reflect on their linguistic identity and the degree of proficiency they have already achieved in their target language(s). From there they proceed to the biography and the setting of individual learning targets. Learning outcomes are collected in the dossier and evaluated in the biography, and this provides the basis for setting new goals. The process is repeated until the end of the course, when learners return to the passport and update their self-assessment. This approach has proved successful with adult refugees following an intensive five-month English course in Ireland.

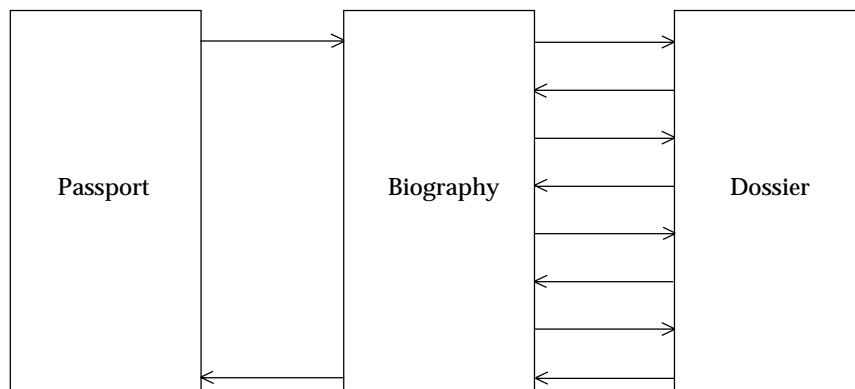


Figure 1.14

The pilot projects (1997–2000)

Over the past three years versions of the ELP have been piloted in fifteen member states of the Council of Europe: Austria, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom; also in private language schools under the auspices of EAQUALS (European Association for Quality Language Services) and in universities in various countries under the auspices of CERCLES (Confédération Européenne des Centres de Langues de l'Éducation Supérieure) and the European Language Council. Pilot projects have been undertaken at all educational levels – primary, lower secondary, upper secondary, vocational, university, adult – on the basis of a variety of pedagogical assumptions. In some cases projects have been associated with particular issues, for example, the introduction of foreign languages into the lower grades of primary school, the need to integrate large numbers of immigrant children in mainstream schooling, the use of a “portfolio” approach to language learning as a tool for whole-school curriculum development, or the particular language problems and needs that arise in the border areas of nation states.

Feedback from individual teachers confirms that the ELP can exert a strong positive influence on language learning. Two teachers in the Czech Republic, for example, reported that it helped to make their job easier:

I was helped by the Portfolio's clear statements about the aims of teaching and the transparency of teaching and learning results. The descriptors encouraged me to reflect more deeply on my objectives as a teacher.

It's easy to work with the Portfolio. Children enjoy working with it and it has a much better approach than many textbooks. Children can easily see their progress.

- Motivation of all the learners, even the slower ones
- Increases their self-confidence when they have a list of their actual abilities
- Learners spend more time thinking about their language abilities and knowledge
- Voluntary work makes them more active
- Improved relations between learners and between learners and teacher

Figure 1.15

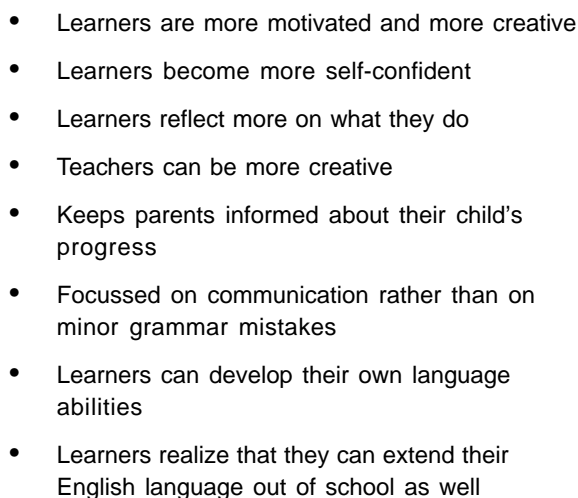
-
- 
- Learners are more motivated and more creative
 - Learners become more self-confident
 - Learners reflect more on what they do
 - Teachers can be more creative
 - Keeps parents informed about their child's progress
 - Focussed on communication rather than on minor grammar mistakes
 - Learners can develop their own language abilities
 - Learners realize that they can extend their English language out of school as well

Figure 1.16

Figures 1.15 and 1.16 reproduce the posters in which two groups of Czech teachers of English and German summarized their experience of working with the ELP. Two things are particularly interesting: the common finding that the ELP enhanced learners' motivation and made them more self-confident, and the recognition that the growth of learners' capacity to take their own initiatives and reflect on their language learning is fundamental to the development of their foreign language proficiency.

Some teachers reported that the ELP was particularly effective with weaker learners:

Contrary to what I expected, some weaker learners were motivated by the Portfolio. I think this may be because the Portfolio is not connected with a grading system and does not require learners to memorize rules and new vocabulary. (Czech teacher of English at lower secondary level)

Some weaker learners rewrite their corrected work at home on the computer and put this version in their dossier. This helps to boost their confidence and motivation. (Czech teacher of English at lower secondary level)

Others noted that it helped learners, but also teachers, to reflect on language and language learning and made learners more aware of what they knew:

The Portfolio helps me and my learners to reflect on the language and on how and why we learn it. (Teacher of French at a Moscow lycée)

Some of my learners were surprised by how much they knew, and this knowledge was only made available to them via the Portfolio. Even children as young as 8 or 9 were able to say what they could and could not do in languages. (Czech teacher of English at primary level)

Self-knowledge and a growing capacity for reflective thinking are, of course, fundamental to the development of learner autonomy, and this too was one of the reported outcomes of working with the ELP:

The Portfolio encourages learners to be independent, to think about themselves and to assess themselves. It is something totally different from everything they have met so far. (Czech teacher of English to primary children of 8 and 9)

The Portfolio gives learners the space to be absolutely independent: "I am going to choose this learning activity, I will work on it and put my work in the dossier. Then I can plan something new. ... I am going to do what I want." (Czech teacher of English to primary children of 8 and 9)

The Portfolio makes possible an approach to learning that takes account of each individual learner's tempo and ability. Every pupil can be successful. I am no longer the only person in the classroom who is responsible for evaluation. My pupils are learning to be more responsible for the results of their work. My task is to help them to learn. (Czech teacher of English to secondary pupils of 13–14)

Some teachers referred positively to the reporting function, but clearly in relation to successful pedagogical implementation, as in this example:

The Portfolio helps the learners to understand what they are supposed to master in the foreign language. It also gives them an opportunity to show people outside school what they do in school, and it helps them to work systematically. (Czech teacher of English to secondary pupils of 13–14)

In general, the enthusiasm expressed in the following report from a teacher in Germany seems to have been shared by many of the teachers who participated in the pilot projects:

My initial reservations have changed into joy after appreciating that the Portfolio supports my wider and global goals of foreign language teaching. (Teacher at a Gesamtschule in Germany)

Taken together, these reports from teachers suggest that the ELP can serve as an instrument of renewal, not just in individual foreign language classrooms but within national systems. It can improve learners' motivation, develop their reflective capacities, and encourage them to take their own learning initiatives; but in doing this, it can also help them to carry their foreign language learning (and foreign language use) beyond the confines of the classroom. In a paper presented to the pilot projects at a seminar held in Slovenia in May 2000, Francis Goullier put the matter thus:

Trials in France have shown that, under favourable circumstances [...], the Portfolio can make language learners and teachers aware that modern language learning goes beyond the classroom. The learner becomes a protagonist, takes the initiative and puts forward demands, which the educational establishment must meet. *A new vision of language teaching/learning comes into focus.*

Of course, the pilot projects were not all plain sailing and not all teachers

responded as positively to the ELP as those we have quoted. Among the most frequently asked questions (no doubt indicating the most frequently experienced practical difficulties), were these:

- How should I integrate the ELP in my teaching?
- How exactly does the ELP relate to the curriculum and the textbook?
- How often should I use the ELP?
- How can I make time for the ELP in my already crowded schedule?
- Can I really make use of the Council of Europe's common reference levels and descriptors in my classroom?
- How can I use the ELP to help my learners to reflect on language and language learning?
- Why should I get my learners to assess themselves?
- Can learners really be trusted to assess themselves honestly?
- How can I help them to develop their capacity for self-assessment?

We shall address these questions in the chapters that follow. But first we invite you to reflect more fully on what you have learned so far of the ELP and its pedagogical function.

Points for individual reflection and/or discussion with colleagues

(We recommend that you keep a written record of your reflections: as you work through the guide you will find it useful to be able to refer back to your earlier thoughts and reactions.)

Think about yourself as a language learner

Have you ever kept a learner's journal or log? If yes, what did you write in it? If no, in what ways do you think keeping a journal or log could have assisted your language learning?

How did you achieve your present level of proficiency in foreign languages? What techniques do you remember making use of? And what role was played by language learning opportunities that presented themselves outside the classroom?

What would you put into your own dossier as evidence of your foreign language proficiency? Consider also the languages in which you have achieved limited or partial competence.

Look back at the grids for self-assessment in Figures 1.3 and 1.4. What general *I can do* statements can you make about your proficiency in the various foreign languages you know?

Now repeat the process with reference to the illustrative scales in Appendix 1 and the self-assessment checklists in Appendix 2.

Think about your aims as a language teacher

Try to define your main aims as a language teacher in terms of the skills you want your learners to develop. What would you want them to put in their dossiers as evidence that they had achieved these aims? Make a simple table like this:

AIMS/SKILLS	DOSSIER
.....
.....

Look again at the illustrative scales in Appendix 1 and the self-assessment checklists in Appendix 2. What *I can do* statements would you like your learners to be able to make at the end of this school/academic year?

Compare your aims with those of teachers who piloted the ELP

Teachers who piloted the ELP said that they wanted to

- support their learners’ thinking about their language learning
- help their learners to understand the central aim of language learning
- teach their learners how to assess themselves
- increase their learners’ motivation
- help their learners to understand what they can already do and decide for themselves what they want to achieve
- set achievable short-term learning targets
- help their learners to take their own initiatives
- use European standards of proficiency (the Council of Europe’s common reference levels)
- explore different ways of evaluating their learners’ progress
- help their learners to overcome their fear of speaking in a foreign language
- show their learners how they can collect and display evidence of what they have learnt
- support the development of their learners’ autonomy
- learn something new and increase their professional skills

Tick the aims that you share and put them in order of priority. Make notes explaining your order of priority.

How would you introduce the ELP to your learners?

Teachers involved in pilot projects introduced the ELP to their learners by

- explaining the reporting function, which opens the door to Europe for them
- emphasizing the value of common European scales of proficiency
- presenting the pilot project results
- talking about their own language learning experience
- showing them a sample ELP in progress
- showing them a journal kept by a good language learner
- eliciting their learners' ideas on how to use the ELP in the classroom

Which of these techniques would you use? How effective would you expect them to be? Think of at least three other techniques (make a note for future reference).

How might your learners use their ELP?

Some of your learners are looking for jobs. They would like to present their ELP to potential employers in order to show their foreign language abilities, experience and qualifications. What would you like to find in the ELP if you were an employer? What qualities would you particularly appreciate in an applicant? How do you think these qualities could best be expressed in the ELP?

Make a note of at least three situations in which your learners could present their ELP.

Some classroom activities that can be used to introduce work with the ELP***Raising your learners' self-esteem***

Initiate a discussion with your learners about *I can do* statements. Emphasize the need to think positively. Ask your learners to imagine that they are among native speakers of the target language. Help them to recognize what they are able to do in the target language. Elicit from them as many *I can do* statements as possible (e.g. *I can introduce myself; I can ask people how they are and react to their response; I can understand simple directions; I can understand short, simple messages on postcards*). Provide them with the target language expressions they need in order to perform this task; alternatively, allow them to use their mother tongue. (Again you may find it useful to refer to the illustrative scales in Appendix 1 and the self-assessment checklists in Appendix 2.)

What are the qualities of a good dossier?

Discuss with your learners what a good dossier should look like. Ask them what evidence of their language proficiency they can show (e.g., postcards they have written, letters, essays, projects, audio or video recordings, lists of books they have read, certificates, diplomas, etc.). What are the learners going to put into their dossier? Encourage them to suggest guidelines for selecting material.

Introducing one of the functions of the ELP's biography component

Discuss with your learners ways in which they can improve their foreign language proficiency. What intercultural learning experiences have they had? Where could they encounter the foreign language outside the classroom? How could they learn from such encounters? Explain that they can record the encounters in the biography component of the ELP, where they can also record events that they find especially important for their language learning.

Carrying language learning beyond the classroom

Arrange for your learners to meet and interview a native speaker of their target language and then make his/her coat of arms. Tell them to divide the coat of arms into four fields: e.g. family, school, hobbies, ambitions. Then ask them to use the coat of arms to talk about the native speaker to the rest of the class. Learners can add the coat of arms they produced to their dossier, together with any notes they made when interviewing the native speaker and/or preparing their presentation.

A homework task: thinking about learning with the ELP

Ask your learners to go through the ELP at home and think of ways in which they can use it to support their language learning. Encourage an exchange of ideas in class. Be open to learners' suggestions. Make a poster displaying good suggestions.

And finally ...***How can the ELP support your teaching?***

Based on your reading of Chapter 1, but also on your experience, how do you think the ELP can support your teaching? We suggest that you make brief notes under the following headings:

HOW I ORGANIZE MY TEACHING

HOW I PREPARE MY TEACHING

HOW I USE THE TEXTBOOK

HOW I ASSESS MY LEARNERS

You may like to add other headings that correspond to your particular interests.

Keep your notes for future reference: we shall ask you a similar question at the end of the guide.

Chapter 2

Making time and making space: integrating the ELP in your language teaching

Making time

Teachers are busy people who come under pressure from many directions. At any one time they may be responsible for several different classes; for each class they have official learning targets to meet, which in practice may mean one or more textbooks to work through; they must keep records of attendance and records of their learners' progress; they must set and mark tests. In addition they may have to attend regular staff meetings to review policy and discuss problem cases. If they are teaching in a primary or secondary school they may also have to meet their learners' parents several times a year. In some systems they may be required to write regular reports of one kind or another. With all these different demands to cope with – and our list is not exhaustive – there is all too little time for the kind of reflection that leads to experimentation and innovation in the classroom. It is thus hardly surprising that teachers who participated in the pilot projects often expressed concern that working with the ELP made additional demands on their time. Here are two examples:

I lack time to devote to the Portfolio. I have a feeling that I am staying on the surface of the whole project. It takes a lot of time to teach children to assess themselves. (Czech teacher of English to secondary pupils of 12–15)

I learnt a lot about my students, their motivation and their potential, but I also needed more time to prepare my lessons, to cope with a new experience, to give feedback and to discuss with individual students. I think the effort was worthwhile, but I am not sure that I can maintain the additional effort needed unless it becomes part of my normal work load. (Teacher of French in a Russian Lycée)

We cannot pretend that introducing the ELP will not make additional demands on teachers' time in the short run. Any change or innovation requires extra effort to begin with, and that means extra time. But we are confident that if the pedagogical function of the ELP takes root, it will quickly bring about a reorientation in learners that is very beneficial to teachers. In Chapter 1 we described the ELP's pedagogical function as *making the language learning process more transparent to learners, helping them to develop*

their capacity for reflection and self-assessment, and thus enabling them gradually to assume more and more responsibility for their own learning. When these things happen, teachers do not become less busy, but life becomes easier and teaching more enjoyable because their learners understand that they too are responsible for what goes on in the classroom.

“How often should I work with the ELP?”

Teachers participating in the pilot projects often asked, “How often should I work with the ELP?” There is no simple answer to this question, partly because it can have two rather different though complementary meanings. On the one hand it can mean “How often should my learners write in their language passport or language biography, and how often should they add material to their dossier?” This is likely to be a matter of particular concern when teachers are using a version of the ELP that has a lot of *I can do* statements to tick or boxes to fill in. On the other hand the question can mean “How often should I explicitly devote teaching time to the pedagogical functions of the ELP, for example, setting learning targets, reflecting on learning outcomes, or getting my learners to assess themselves?”

How we answer the first of these questions necessarily depends on our particular circumstances. Consider these three examples:

- A teacher working with the ELP at lower secondary level (within Council of Europe level A2) gets her learners to choose three short-term and easily achievable *I can do* objectives – *I can understand simple directions relating to how to get from X to Y, by foot or public transport; I can explain what I like and dislike about something; I can write very short, basic descriptions of events, past activities and personal experiences.* These objectives will be the focus of their learning for the next few weeks. Working in pairs and individually, learners evaluate their progress and compare their evaluation with the teacher’s. If appropriate, they put evidence of their achievement in the dossier. They also write the date beside each objective in the biography when they think they have achieved it. They set new targets continually, each learner working at his or her own pace, reflecting on *I can do* objectives as often as necessary and choosing new objectives until they have achieved everything that belongs to a particular skill. They then write the date in the appropriate box of the profile of language skills in the passport.
 - A teacher working with the ELP at upper secondary level decides to begin the school year by getting her learners to fill in the passport, including the profile of language skills. Self-assessment provides an obvious basis for a
-

class discussion of learning targets for the school year in terms of *I can do* statements. Objectives for the whole class are agreed, categorized by skill, and written on posters that are displayed on the classroom wall. Learners then write learning targets for the first term in the biography component of the ELP. As the term progresses, learning activities generate materials for inclusion in the dossier, which is reviewed at the end of the first term. At that point learners return to the biography and review their term's work by referring to the learning targets they set themselves at the beginning of the term. The second and third terms follow the same pattern as the first, and at the end of the school year the learners return to the passport and update their self-assessment.

- Refugees recently arrived in their host country are admitted to a five-month course designed to prepare them for mainstream vocational training and/or employment. Their teacher uses the ELP in much the same way as the teacher in our first example, but according to a different rhythm. Learners establish their individual learning agenda at the beginning of the course, taking account of their present level of proficiency and their longer-term goals. Individual language learning targets are set for four weeks at a time, which means that once a month the dossier is reviewed, progress is assessed, and new learning targets are arrived at. The profile of language skills in the passport is updated at the end of the course.

The teachers in these three classrooms make much the same use of the ELP to plan, monitor and evaluate learning, but the lower secondary learners write in their ELP more often than the adult refugee learners, who write in their ELP more often than the upper secondary learners. In all three classrooms the ELP works because all three teachers give the same answer to the question "How often should I explicitly devote teaching time to the pedagogical functions of the ELP?" That answer is "As often as possible". Whether or not it is explicitly focussed on the ELP as a physical object, all their teaching seeks to fulfil the pedagogical function of the ELP. In every class they remind their learners of the agreed learning targets, and they never miss an opportunity to encourage them to reflect on their learning. Thus when their learners return to the passport to re-assess their own proficiency, they are concluding a process that has underpinned all their learning and has been formalized by their regular work on the language biography. Reflection and self-assessment are the very core of the ELP's pedagogical function, and we return to them in Chapters 4 and 5.

Making space: the curriculum, the textbook and the ELP

Teachers involved in the pilot projects often wondered how to make space for the ELP in their teaching. Their concern was usually expressed in two questions: “Does the ELP require me to go beyond the curriculum?” and “How can I work with the ELP and also get through the textbook?”

The answer to the first of these questions is that the ELP supports any foreign language curriculum that aims to develop learners’ communicative proficiency. As a matter of principle the aims of all communicative curricula can be restated in terms of the *I can do* statements that provide the basis for learner self-assessment in the passport. What is more, the pedagogical function of the ELP as we summarized it above – *making the language learning process more transparent to learners, helping them to develop their capacity for reflection and self-assessment, and thus enabling them gradually to assume more and more responsibility for their own learning* – coincides with the emphasis on learning how to learn and developing critical thinking skills that is found in more and more national and regional curricula.

There is likewise no contradiction between the ELP and the textbook, though the ELP’s pedagogical function has unmistakable implications for the way in which we use the textbook. If we are to engage our learners in reflection and self-assessment and thus enable them to assume responsibility for their own learning, we cannot use the textbook as a series of lesson scripts. For to do so would be to impose on our learners the textbook author’s learning targets and implied learning process. By working with the ELP we commit ourselves to an ongoing process of discussion and negotiation with our learners to which the textbook must always remain subordinate. This means that we must use the textbook flexibly and imaginatively. Sometimes it may be appropriate to allow our learners to choose which parts of the textbook they want to work with.

Points for individual reflection and/or discussion with colleagues

The ELP and the curriculum: becoming more familiar with the common reference levels and descriptors

As we saw in Chapter 1, the ELP uses the six levels of language proficiency elaborated in the *Common European Framework*: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2. The following paragraphs describe individual skills (LISTENING, READING, SPOKEN INTERACTION, SPOKEN PRODUCTION and WRITING) at different levels. Try to fit each paragraph into one of the blanks in the table on page 30. You can check your answers by turning back to Figure 1.3 in Chapter 1.

-
- *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 recognise familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.*
 - *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 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.*
 - *I can express myself in clear, well-structured text, expressing points of view at some length. I can write detailed expositions of complex subjects in a letter, an essay or a report, underlining what I consider to be the salient issues. I can write different kinds of texts in an assured, personal style, appropriate to the reader in mind.*
 - *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 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 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.*
-

		A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
U N D E R S T A N D I N G	Listening		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 geography, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.		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 stances or viewpoints. I can understand contemporary literary prose.		
S P E A K I N G	Spoken Interaction			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 events).		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 those of other speakers.	I can take part effortlessly in any conversation of 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 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 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 sub-themes, 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.
W R I T I N G	Writing	I can write a short, simple postcard, for examples 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 relating to matters in areas of immediate need. 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, 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.

-
- *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.*

Matching the ELP to your curriculum

Look at your official curriculum. Are the communicative objectives expressed as *I can do* statements like *I can give short, basic descriptions of events and activities*? If so, compare these statements to the descriptors contained in the self-assessment grid (Figure 1.3 in Chapter 1), the illustrative scales (Appendix 1), and the self-assessment checklists (Appendix 2). Assign the *I can do* statements in your curriculum to the Council of Europe's common reference levels.

If your curriculum's communicative objectives are expressed in some other way, try to restate some of them (e.g., those related to SPEAKING) as a series of *I can do* statements.

Some classroom activities that fulfil the ELP's pedagogical function

Reflecting on effective learning activities

Prepare for this activity by making a list of the teaching activities you particularly like using. Which of them are most successful in involving your learners in their own learning?

Ask your learners which learning activities they like best, which they consider most effective, and which make them work hard. Then ask them which learning activities they could do on their own. Consider the following possibilities:

CHECKING THEIR OWN AND ONE ANOTHER'S HOMEWORK

READING IN PAIRS OR SMALL GROUPS

CHOOSING THEIR OWN HOMEWORK TASKS

SETTING THEIR OWN LEARNING GOALS

HELPING WEAKER STUDENTS

MARKING/EVALUATING THEIR OWN WORK

Make a poster of the activities the class comes up with. Refer to it regularly.

Focus on learning together

Ask your learners to form pairs to practise a brief monologue (e.g., A1 – *I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know*). Set a time limit for the activity, e.g., one minute. Explain to the learners that one partner will perform the monologue while the other will take the role of the teacher, checking the time and listening carefully in order to be able to give constructive feedback. Then the partners will exchange roles.

Alternatively, you can get your learners to form groups of four and use the same method to practise a simple dialogue (e.g., A2 – *can discuss what to do in the evening, at the weekend*).

Before your learners embark on this task, help them to draw up a list of criteria by which to judge one another's performance and draw their attention to specific things they should practise.

Get your learners to create their own teaching materials

From the illustrative scales (Appendix 1) or the self-assessment checklists (Appendix 2), select an *I can do* objective appropriate to your learners' present level of proficiency. Get them to form pairs and give each pair the task of preparing an exercise for their classmates. For example, if your learners are at level A2, you might choose as the objective *I can identify important information in news summaries or simple newspaper articles in which numbers and names play an important role and which are clearly structured and illustrated* (self-assessment checklists, A2, reading); and you might ask each pair of learners to write five true/false sentences or five comprehension questions based on a text that the whole class has read. Each pair of learners can then exchange exercises with the pair nearest to them.

Note that this activity can be used with learners at any level of proficiency. The example we have chosen combines reading and writing with a focus on linguistic form. Emphasize to your learners that their exercises should contain as few errors as possible. Encourage them to help one another to identify and correct errors and to consult you in cases of doubt.

Get your learners to create a bank of learning activities

If your learners regularly create exercises for one another in this way, you can gradually build up a bank of home-made learning activities. Exercises devised in class can be written out neatly at home, and where appropriate a key or solution can be added. Exercises can be categorized according to skill and level and stored in such a way that they are easily accessible to learners. Make sure that all learners regularly add something to the bank. Once a

fortnight or once a month, encourage them to do an exercise from the bank for homework.

Interviewing a native speaker

The ELP emphasizes that language learning can take place outside as well as inside classrooms. Arranging for your learners to interview a native speaker of their target language is one way of helping them to understand this. Divide your class into groups of four or five and give each group the task of drawing up (in the target language) a list of questions to ask the native speaker. Each group should be given a different focus, e.g., one group might ask the native speaker about his or her childhood, another might ask about his or her job, while a third might ask about customs in the native speaker's home country. When the interviews have taken place, each group can write a report and share it with the rest of the class.

This task involves learners in intensive use of the target language: speaking, listening and writing (making notes as well as composing their report). It should help them to overcome their reluctance to speak the target language. Note that because the learners are in control throughout this task, the teacher is relieved of the need to take decisions.

An activity that helps to prepare your learners for an exam and shows them that they are responsible for their own learning

Before your learners sit an exam, discuss with them what they need to do in order to pass the exam. Get them to work in groups to plan their work, decide on suitable activities, and work out the criteria by which their performance should be judged. Help them to relate their learning targets and activities to the common reference levels, illustrative scales and self-assessment checklists.

This activity should remind teachers and learners of two things. First, learning is unlikely to be maximally effective if initiative and responsibility lie exclusively with the teacher; and secondly, even when preparing for exams we should never lose sight of our communicative objectives.

Two final points for individual reflection and/or discussion with colleagues

Analysing the impact of learning activities

Look again at the six learning activities presented above. Which activities do you think would be most likely to

- motivate *your* learners?
-

- help them to understand the purpose of their learning?
- create an atmosphere conducive to deeper, more effective learning?
- support the development of learner autonomy?

Note down reasons for your answers.

Making more effective use of the textbook

Choose any unit in your textbook. In terms of the arguments and examples presented in this chapter, how could you use the unit to support the pedagogical function of the ELP and help your learners to become more autonomous?

Chapter 3

Understanding and using the common reference levels and descriptors

The Council of Europe's common reference levels are fundamental to the ELP. As we have seen, they provide the basis for learner self-assessment in the language passport, and they serve as a point of reference for the learning targets that learners record and the further self-assessment they undertake in the language biography. Inevitably skills, levels and descriptors have figured prominently in Chapters 1 and 2, and by now you are probably beginning to feel familiar with them and the concepts they embody. But they are so central to the structure and function of the ELP that we must now devote a chapter exclusively to them.

Some problems that have arisen and how to deal with them

Feedback from teachers participating in the pilot projects shows that the summary of the common reference levels provided by the self-assessment grid in the language passport has given rise to three kinds of problem. First, some teachers have found it difficult to relate the general terms in which the descriptors are couched to the specific situation of their learners, as in the following three reports:

I've got problems identifying particular levels.

The descriptors are not specific enough for small children.

It would help if the range of knowledge in individual levels was specified more precisely.

This problem can be solved by recognizing that each of the general descriptors in the language passport must be expanded in a way appropriate to the age, needs and interests of the learners in question. The illustrative scales in Appendix 1 and the self-assessment checklists in Appendix 2 provide invaluable help here, but it is also worth bearing in mind that the learners themselves can contribute to the process (as some of the classroom activities included in Chapters 1 and 2 already imply). The expansion should produce lists of precise communicative goals that can be used to generate learning tasks.

Take, for example, READING at the lowest level, A1: *I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.* This descriptor summarizes the most basic communicative use that

it is possible to make of the reading skill. But the communicative behaviour in which such use is embedded will vary from one learner group to another. For instance, it will seem natural to most adult learners that they should develop this foundational reading skill by working with notices, posters and catalogues drawn from the real world; whereas in a primary classroom it may make a lot more sense for the teacher and learners to devise their own posters and notices naming classroom objects and reminding learners of frequently used phrases and classroom instructions. Similarly, the descriptor for WRITING at level B1 – *I can write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions* – will necessarily yield different topics and a different range of experiences and impressions from one learner group to another.

The second problem was that some teachers found the descriptors too general for learners to be able to identify their progress even over an extended period of time:

The levels in the *Common European Framework* are so broad that they do not allow the great majority of learners to appreciate the progress they have made over a considerable period, e.g., a whole school year. This demotivates the learners and they quickly lose interest in the Portfolio.

The first point to make in response to this problem is that the summary of skills and levels included in the ELP language passport covers the whole range of possible foreign language proficiency, from beginner to near-native speaker. Only a very small percentage of learners achieve levels C1 and C2, and they do so only after many years of learning. It is thus hardly surprising that learners remain at the same Council of Europe level for months, or in some cases years, even though there may be plenty of evidence that they are making progress. If they are using the ELP in the way outlined in Chapter 2, the biography rather than the passport will be the chief focus for setting and reviewing learning targets, and the profile of language skills in the passport will be revisited only occasionally. Note, incidentally, that there are several ways of filling in the profile of language skills. One is by ticking the boxes for the different skills and levels when those skills and levels have been achieved; another is by shading in the boxes gradually, as progress is made towards total mastery of each level. This latter technique harmonizes with the pedagogical approach presented in Chapter 2.

It is appropriate at this point to draw attention to the fact that the levels and scales that underpin the ELP are not a linear measurement scale like a ruler, as the *Common European Framework* (section 2.2) explains:

No existing scale or set of levels can claim to be linear in this way. Talking in terms of the series of Council of Europe content specifications, even if *Waystage* [A2] is situated

halfway to *Threshold Level* [B1] on a scale of levels, and *Threshold* half way to *Vantage Level* [B2], experience with existing scales suggests that many learners will take more than twice as long to reach *Threshold* from *Waystage* than they needed to reach *Waystage*. They will then probably need more than twice as long to reach *Vantage* from *Threshold* than they needed to reach *Threshold* from *Waystage* – even if the levels appear to be equidistant on the scale. This is because of the necessary broadening of the range of activities, skills and language involved. This fact of life is reflected in the frequent presentation of a scale of levels with a diagram like an ice cream cornet, a three-dimensional cone which broadens towards the top. Extreme caution should be exercised in using any scale of levels to calculate the “mean seat time” necessary to meet particular objectives.

The same kind of point can be made in relation to the number of words that learners need in order to be able to perform adequately at the different levels. A vocabulary of about 850 words is required for A2, and about 1,500 for B1 (*The Threshold Level* [van Ek 1976], which corresponds to B1, contains approximately 1,500 words). But it has been calculated that in order to pass the Cambridge First Certificate Examination in English, which corresponds to B2, learners need a vocabulary of 4,500 words, with over 8,000 semantic values (Gairns and Redman 1986, p.58). These facts are encapsulated in Figure 3.1.

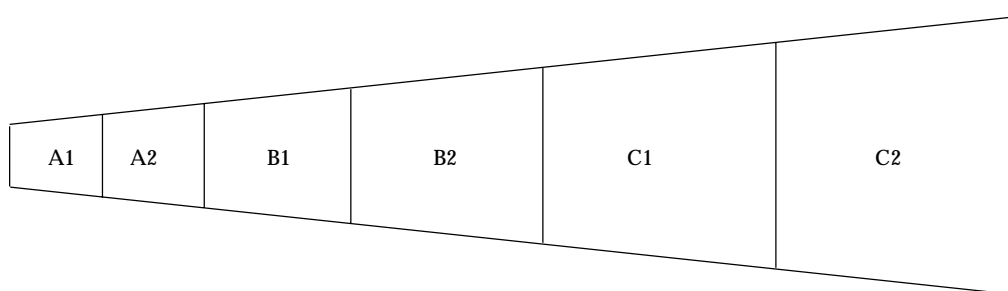


Figure 3.1

The third problem some teachers reported had to do with judging when their learners could meet the requirements of a particular level:

I don't know when I could confirm that the learner has mastered a particular level.

This problem probably arose partly from the fact that we are used to working with norm-referenced tests that rank-order our learners, which makes it difficult for us to accept that even weak learners may meet the criteria embodied in the descriptors, however inadequately. The Council of Europe's levels and descriptors and the ELP require that we think of learners not negatively (the extent to which they fail to achieve perfection) but positively (what they can actually do in the target language). If our norm-referenced traditions of assessment make this difficult to come to terms with, it may be useful to compare achieving one of the levels to passing a driving test: everyone who holds a permanent driving licence can drive a car, but it is

evident that some drivers are more proficient than others. No doubt examinations at all levels will continue to rank-order learners according to their proficiency. But when they work with the ELP learners can gradually develop their own norm as they learn to compare their proficiency now with their proficiency last month, last term or last year.

How one teacher worked with descriptors

Many teachers who participated in the pilot projects found that the Council of Europe's proficiency scales, levels and descriptors helped them to reflect more deeply on what teaching a language is really about. And many teachers used the descriptors to set learning targets and plan learning activities. What one Czech primary teacher did is worth describing in some detail because it provides a model that can be adapted for learners of any age or proficiency level.

The teacher (Jana Hindlsová) began by talking about the descriptors with the whole class. She wrote all the A1 descriptors on five posters, one for each skill, and displayed them on the classroom wall. She encouraged the class to consider which descriptors were difficult and why, and to discuss what they would need to do in their lessons in order to achieve them. When her learners thought they had achieved a particular descriptor they wrote their name next to it on the poster. Jana then required them to show that their self-assessment was accurate, for example by engaging in appropriate pair work.

After some time the whole class attained the objectives in listening, spoken interaction and spoken production, but reading and writing seemed to be very difficult for some learners. Jana made the class aware of this problem and asked what should be done. Some learners decided to prepare additional practice activities to help their friends. One girl devised an exercise in reading comprehension that took the form of a treasure hunt. These are her (uncorrected) instructions for the task:

1. Open the door and go out from classroom.
2. Go to the left to the table with ceramics.
3. Find the glass and write on your paper what is in the glass.
4. Turn and go down. Stop under the steps. Turn right and find the glass. Write what is in the glass.
5. Go to the box with the school's magazine and take the paper with colour of grass.
6. Come quickly to your classroom.

Members of the class took turns to perform this task, each of them being timed by the girl who had devised it. (When they were not performing the task, learners were kept busy working on replies to letters they had received from

another class.)

Reflecting on her experience, Jana said that she realized her learners would need help in understanding how to work with the ELP. The posters in particular helped them to orient themselves. She estimated that it took six months for them to become really independent. As time went on Jana pinned additional texts and learning activities to the various descriptors on the posters and encouraged her learners to take whatever they thought they needed in order to practise at home. Sometimes two classes, fourth and fifth grades, were brought together so that the learners from fifth grade could work with learners from fourth grade on a one-to-one basis. Sometimes the fifth-grade learners prepared materials for the fourth-grade learners to work with, e.g., crosswords and riddles. Jana explained:

We wanted the pupils to achieve A1 before leaving the school, and that's why we brought the two classes together. Learners of unequal ability were paired, and the more proficient learners gave leading questions to the less proficient. This seemed to benefit both parties. The children chose words and questions that were simpler than the teacher would use, which made the dialogue task easier. When designing such tasks I encouraged the learners to consider what their classmates needed to be helped with. Frankly, I myself wasn't quite sure how to use the Portfolio without interfering with what I am supposed to teach. But then I found that the easiest way is to give the responsibility to the children. A prestige atmosphere was created in the classroom. We didn't assign particular lessons to work with the Portfolio. We used it whenever the learners themselves said they needed to work on something. The Portfolio certainly motivated them to do things they wouldn't have done otherwise. For example, some boys translated the computer keyboard and computer games into Czech. For me the Portfolio is more than just the dossier: we need the other components to help us set learning objectives.

Points for individual reflection and/or discussion with colleagues

Focus on listening comprehension

The following six paragraphs comprise the descriptors for the six levels of LISTENING, from A1 to C2. Which descriptors belong to which level? Check your answer by referring to Figure 1.3 in Chapter 1.

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 recognise familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.

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.

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 geography, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.

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 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.

What is your level of LISTENING in the language you teach? Look again at the self-assessment grid (Figure 1.3 in Chapter 1); look also at the relevant illustrative scales in Appendix 1 and the self-assessment checklists in Appendix 2.

Use the self-assessment grid, the illustrative scales, and the self-assessment checklists to rate your competence in the other language skills. Have you achieved the same level in each skill?

Now consider the self-assessment grid, the illustrative scales, and the self-assessment checklists from your learners' point of view. What is their average level of competence in each of the skills? How do you expect it to develop during the time that you teach them?

Focus on reading

Here are four descriptors from the illustrative scale READING FOR ORIENTATION, but with phrases missing. Put one of the phrases numbered 1–4 below into each of the gaps:

B2 *Can scan quickly through*

B1 *Can find and understand*, *such as letters, brochures and short official documents.*

A2 *Can find specific*, *such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus, reference lists and timetables.*

A1 *Can recognise* *on simple notices in the most common everyday situations.*

-
1. relevant information in everyday material
 2. long and complex texts, locating relevant details
 3. familiar names, words and very basic phrases
 4. predictable information in simple everyday material

Check your answers with Appendix 1.

Applying the descriptors to your learners

Try to summarize what your learners can do in the target language as a series of *I can do* statements arranged under five headings: LISTENING, READING, SPOKEN INTERACTION, SPOKEN PRODUCTION, WRITING.

Applying the descriptors to the textbook

Make a table with five rows (for LISTENING, READING, SPOKEN INTERACTION, SPOKEN PRODUCTION, WRITING) and one column for each of the proficiency levels relevant to your learners (for primary learners you may need only one column, for A1; for adult beginners two columns, for A1 and A2; for lower secondary learners two columns, for A2 and B1; and for upper secondary learners, two columns, for B1 and B2). Before starting each unit of the textbook, go through it and map the communicative skills, linguistic knowledge and vocabulary covered on to the grid. This will help you to link the textbook more closely to your learners' communicative purposes and authentic target language use. It will also help to integrate the ELP with your teaching.

Some classroom activities working with descriptors

Using descriptors to set whole-class goals

At the beginning of the course/term/academic year, discuss with your learners what they should be able to do by the end of the course/term/academic year. Help them to express these objectives as *I can do* statements and get them to summarize them on posters that can be displayed on the classroom wall and copy them into their biography. Discuss what steps must be taken in order to attain the objectives and remind your learners of them at regular intervals. Learners can sign their name beside the various objectives as they achieve them.

Using descriptors to review progress and set individual learning goals

Get your learners to form pairs. Ask them to look closely at the descriptors for one particular skill at the level they are currently working towards (e.g., A1

READING, B2 SPOKEN INTERACTION) and to consider (i) what they can already do relative to those descriptors and (ii) what they have still to work on. Get learners each to set a goal that they would like to achieve within the next month and discuss it with their partner. Ask them to write it down in their biography. What must they do to achieve the goal? After a month get your learners to work in pairs again to assess whether or not they have achieved their goal. (By making your learners responsible for decision-making at this level you encourage a deeper approach to learning. Your objective should be not to feel exhausted at the end of the class but to find ways of getting your learners to work hard!)

Helping your learners to relate levels and descriptors to the course book

Before starting a new chapter in the textbook, briefly go through it with your learners. Get them to identify the main aim of the chapter and express this as one or more *I can do* objectives. When the chapter has been completed, get your learners to work in pairs to assess how far they have attained the objective(s).

A final point for individual reflection and/or discussion with colleagues

What impact could using the Council of Europe's scales of proficiency and descriptors have on your teaching and your learners? Consider in particular the following areas:

TEACHING AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

LEARNERS' MOTIVATION

ASSESSMENT

Chapter 4

Motivation, reflection and learning how to learn

In Chapter 1 we reproduced the posters in which two groups of Czech teachers summarized their experience of working with the ELP (Figures 1.15 and 1.16 on pages 17 and 18). The first thing that both groups mentioned was the ELP's positive impact on learners' motivation, but both posters also noted that the ELP helped to make their learners reflect more about their learning:

Learners spend more time thinking about their language abilities and knowledge.

Learners reflect more on what they do.

Clearly, reflection is central to the ELP's pedagogical function as defined in Chapter 1 – *making the language learning process more transparent to learners, helping them to develop their capacity for reflection and self-assessment, and thus enabling them gradually to assume more responsibility for their own learning*. That explains why classroom activities designed to introduce the ELP (Chapter 1), integrate it with the curriculum and textbook (Chapter 2), and work explicitly with the Council of Europe's scales and descriptors (Chapter 3) all require learners to think.

In this chapter we want to say more about the relation between reflection, motivation and learning how to learn; to offer some thoughts on the different roles that reflection can play in language learning and language use; and to discuss two issues that in our view are crucial – the use of writing to stimulate and capture reflection, and the importance of gradually developing learners' capacity to reflect in the target language.

Motivation and learning how to learn

Of all the problems that language teachers face, learners' lack of motivation is probably the one they talk about most often. Some teachers tackle the problem by doing their best to make their teaching lively and interesting, selecting stimulating learning activities and attractive materials. But the trouble with this approach is that it brings only short-term relief, until the activities have been completed and the materials exhausted. An alternative is to challenge the learners to say what they find interesting and make them share the responsibility for ensuring that what goes on in the classroom is interesting and

useful to them. This was the approach adopted by Leni Dam, a teacher of English at lower secondary level in Denmark. She writes as follows (Dam 1995, p.2):

In the mid 1970s I started for the first time to work with pupils of 14–16 years in unstreamed language classes. I was up against the tired-of-school attitude that this age group often displays, as well as a general lack of interest in English as a school subject. In order to survive I felt I had to change my usual teacher role. I tried to involve the pupils – or rather I forced them to be involved – in the decisions concerning, for example, the choice of classroom activities and learning materials.

By changing her role, Leni Dam ensured that her learners could no longer sit passively in the classroom waiting for her next initiative. They had to take their own learning initiatives, which meant that they had to think, which in turn meant that they could not help becoming involved. In this way the motivational problem gradually diminished. This is how Leni Dam (*ibid.*) describes the effect of shifting responsibility to her learners:

I soon realized that giving the learners a share of responsibility for planning and conducting teaching–learning activities caused them to be actively involved and led to better learning. It also increased their capacity to evaluate the learning process. In this way a virtuous circle was created: awareness of HOW to learn facilitates and influences WHAT is being learned and gives an improved insight into HOW to learn.

It is important to note that although Leni Dam's role changed it did not become less important. She necessarily remained responsible for creating and maintaining the dynamic of the classroom: had she not done so, very little learning would have taken place. As time went on she found that she could hand over more and more responsibility and control to her learners, but she still had to make sure that what went on in her classroom coincided with the requirements of the curriculum.

A pedagogical approach that never requires the learners to take an initiative, and thus to think about their learning, may nevertheless escape the problem of poor learner motivation. This was certainly the experience of Hanne Thomsen, a teacher of English and German at lower secondary level in Denmark:

It is clear to me now – and it was what I expected of myself as a teacher then – that nearly all the initiatives were mine. I was the “owner of the projects”, and through my enthusiasm I succeeded in making the learners take part in “my projects” with enjoyment and good results – or else I talked them into it. (Thomsen 2000, p.72)

But because she did not require them to think for themselves, Hanne Thomsen's learners remained wholly dependent on her, which she found surprising:

If I was away from school for a few days, it would honestly come as a surprise to me to discover how little work my learners had been able to do with their substitute teacher in my absence. After all, as I thought, they knew perfectly well what an English lesson would be like and had been instructed in advance. “But your colleague is not like you,” they

would say. And no doubt you can hear me moralizing then, "It was your own responsibility. I expected you to ..." The point was – as I see it now – that they were never allowed to take any of the initiatives or to have any responsibilities for what was going on in the lessons, let alone for their own learning. (ibid.)

From a pedagogical point of view, the ELP is above all a tool designed to stimulate learners to think about their learning by making it visible, and on this basis to make it easier for them to take their own initiatives.

Some reflections on reflection

Throughout this book we use the word *reflection* to mean *thinking about something in a conscious and focussed way*. As is probably already clear, this deceptively simple definition covers a complex range of mental behaviour. In language learning we can reflect on facts about the target language, the processes by which we seek to learn it, and the processes involved in using it. What is more, we can reflect *before* we engage in a learning activity or communicative task (PLANNING), *while* we are performing the activity or task (MONITORING), and *after* we have completed it (EVALUATION).

The ELP engages learners in each of these three kinds of reflection. For example, recording learning goals in the biography is a form of planning; practising a particular communicative task requires that learners monitor their performance; and when they select materials for inclusion in the dossier, review learning goals in the biography and add to their profile of language skills in the passport, they evaluate themselves. In practice, of course, the objects and processes of reflection often merge with one another. Thus planning a particular learning activity may require reflection on some aspect of the target language as well as on how the activity should be performed; while monitoring the performance of the activity may uncover a problem that can be solved only by further planning.

What this means in pedagogical terms is that we shall probably do better to encourage a generally reflective approach to learning rather than attempt to develop different kinds of reflection separately. The target language and the processes of learning and using it are all involved when we try to answer the five questions that Leni Dam repeatedly puts to her learners (see Dam 1995):

- What are we learning?
- Why are we learning it?
- How are we learning it?
- How successful is our learning?
- What are we going to do next?

Appropriately organized pair and group work plays an essential role in

developing learners' reflective capacity: participants in any collaborative task must make explicit to one another thoughts and plans that might remain unexamined if they were to perform the task on their own. That is why so many of the classroom activities suggested in this guide require learners to work in pairs or small groups. Writing things down is also essential, partly because it provides a focus for discussion, and partly because it helps to clarify what we think and provides a stimulus for further reflection. There is a natural tendency to suppose that we first have thoughts and then we write them down. But Andy Clark has argued that some kinds of thinking become possible only when we write (Clark 1997, pp.207f.). He explains the process by analogy with the way in which a mangrove swamp develops:

If a tree is seen growing on an island, which do you suppose came first? It is natural (and usually correct) to assume that the island provided the fertile soil in which a lucky seed came to rest. Mangrove forests, however, constitute a revealing exception to this general rule. The mangrove grows from a floating seed which establishes itself in the water, rooting in shallow mud flats. The seedling sends complex vertical roots through the surface of the water, culminating in what looks to all intents and purposes like a small tree posing on stilts. The complex system of aerial roots, however, soon traps floating soil, weeds, and debris. After a time, the accumulation of trapped matter forms a small island. As more time passes, the island grows larger and larger. A growing mass of such islands can eventually merge, effectively extending the shoreline out to the trees. Throughout this process, and despite our prior intuitions, it is the land that is progressively built by the trees.

The relevance of the “mangrove effect” to the processes of reflective thinking we are concerned with here should be self-evident, especially when we bear in mind that the object of those processes is a foreign language and how we learn and use it.

The language of reflection

In earlier chapters we have described various learning activities that begin with a discussion of some kind and then require the learners to perform a task that involves reflection. The question inevitably arises, in what language should the discussion and subsequent reflection be conducted? The same question arises in relation to the ELP, especially the biography component: should learners set down their learning objectives and record important intercultural and learning experiences in their target language(s) or in the mother tongue?

The answer to both these questions comes in two parts. First, lack of target language proficiency should not be used as an excuse not to engage in reflection. When working with beginners of any age, it is better to discuss learning goals (for example) in the mother tongue than not at all. Secondly, however, the capacity to express oneself reflectively is an important part of proficiency

in any language. Thus when we use the mother tongue to discuss learning goals with beginners, we should also summarize those goals in the target language and display the summary on a poster for future reference; and as our learners become more proficient, we should ensure that their reflection is conducted increasingly in the target language, for this will stimulate further growth in their proficiency. Just what can be achieved in a relatively short space of time is demonstrated by the following texts, written (in English) by two of Leni Dam's pupils after four years of learning the language (cited by Dam and Little 1999, p.134). They are remarkable for the way in which they combine clear and fluent expression with self-awareness, and they stand as conclusive proof that foreign language learning can contribute much to the personal development that effective education brings:

Most important is probably the way we have worked. That we were expected to and given the chance to decide ourselves what to do. That we worked independently ... And we have learned much more because we have worked with different things. In this way we could help each other because some of us had learned something and others had learned something else. It doesn't mean that we haven't had a teacher to help us. Because we have, and she has helped us. But the day she didn't have the time, we could manage on our own.

I already make use of the fixed procedures from our diaries when trying to get something done at home. Then I make a list of what to do or remember the following day. That makes things much easier. I have also via English learned to start a conversation with a stranger and ask good questions. And I think that our "together" session has helped me to become better at listening to other people and to be interested in them. I feel that I have learned to believe in myself and to be independent.

Texts like this are exactly what one would hope to find in the biography section of an ELP.

Points for individual reflection and/or discussion with colleagues

Two reflective tasks

Reflective learning requires reflective teachers, and good teachers are also good learners. Write two short texts *in the language that you teach*, one in answer to the question "What kind of language learner am I?" and the other in answer to the question "What kind of language teacher am I?" Begin each task by thinking of three adjectives that reflect your most positive characteristics as a language learner/teacher and three adjectives that reflect your most negative characteristics. Say what your preferred learning/teaching techniques/activities are. End each text by describing a successful language learning/teaching experience. The following text, written by a Czech teacher of English at a seminar on how to use the ELP to stimulate reflective learning, may help to get you thinking:

I think I'm not a very good language learner because I've been learning English for about 20 years (with several breaks) and I can't speak very well as I don't know it well. The first years of studying English influenced me very much. The fact we were taught to write before speak meant my best skill (language skill) is writing. This is why I'm a little bit shy to speak. I would say I have my own way of learning new things (in all the languages I've ever studied)! I need to have the lists of words (like in a vocabulary exercise book), to read them aloud, to speak them several times and occasionally write them to remember them. When I learn the whole topic or a text I have to read it aloud again and again. Sometimes it helps me to know where (at which place in the book etc.) the unit is situated – I'm able to remember the place (right and left page, down the page etc.) and then the word itself.

Sometimes I'm not a very practical kind of a learner, I would like to learn more things at the same time as I'm able to do.

Note that when this task is used in teacher training, teachers can work in pairs, exchanging texts and giving each other feedback.

Supporting your learners' work with the ELP

Teachers participating in the pilot projects usually agreed that it is necessary to support learners' use of the ELP in a variety of ways. Below we list some of the things they did (all of them involve reflection). Look at the list and note down which activities your learners would find most motivating and why.

- Class discussion about how to work with the ELP
- Group discussion about how to fulfil the ELP objectives, followed by feedback to the whole class
- Interview with a learner from another class who has been using the ELP
- Class discussion of the criteria that should be used when selecting materials for inclusion in the dossier
- Posters that contain the Council of Europe descriptors
- Posters that contain reminders about different aspects of work with the ELP
- Group discussion about the comparative difficulty of different learning tasks
- Getting learners to consider what descriptor applies to a particular learning task
- Getting learners to find *I can do* objectives in the textbook
- Getting learners to set their personal learning targets with reference to the ELP descriptors
- Getting learners to write a brief evaluative reflection at the end of a phase of learning – or at the end of each lesson
- Getting learners to assess their own work
- Setting goals for the whole course/term/year that are clearly related to the Council of Europe's scales of proficiency

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- Making learners aware of ELP objectives

Based on your reading of Chapters 1–4 and your experience, what other ideas do you have? What means of supporting learners would be particularly appropriate in your situation?

Using the ELP to increase learners' motivation

Learners participating in the pilot projects who felt that their ELP really belonged to them had a positive attitude towards it and enjoyed working with it. Their sense of individual ownership could be increased in various ways. For example, young learners could colour the pages of their ELP and collect interesting pictures, cuttings, songs and poems in their dossier; older learners could make the ELP the focus of project work; and adults tended to find class discussions, self-assessment and personal goal-setting especially stimulating. Learners of all ages came to attach particular importance to managing their own work and having the freedom to express their ideas without being checked by the teacher.

How would you, in your particular situation, get your learners to see the ELP as a way of taking pride in their achievement rather than as an additional burden?

We believe that there is a clear parallel between (i) your learners' ownership of the ELP and their involvement in work with it and (ii) your "ownership" of the approach to language teaching we describe in this book and your involvement in it. How could you personally contribute to better work with the ELP?

Some classroom activities that require reflection

What kind of language learner am I?

Get your learners each to write a short text, if possible in the target language, in answer to the question "What kind of language learner are you?" Suggest that they begin by thinking of three adjectives that reflect their most positive characteristics as a language learner and three adjectives that reflect their most negative characteristics. Suggest that they list at least three language learning techniques/activities that they find useful. Ask them to end their text by briefly describing a successful language learning experience.

You can prepare this task by discussing it with the whole class or getting your learners to discuss it in groups. When they have completed the task, learners can share what they have written with their neighbour. This may encourage them to revise and/or correct their text. Learners can copy their text into the

biography section of their ELP. Additionally, some or all of the texts can be displayed on the classroom wall and/or used to compile a list of preferred learning activities and techniques.

Evaluation of learning by the whole class

At the end of a particular phase of learning (in school it could be at the end of term), engage the whole class in an evaluation of how they have worked and what they have learnt. Use the following chart to stimulate reflection:

	ABOUT MY LEARNING	ABOUT LESSONS
+	I have learned ... I can ... I am good at ...	I like best... The most interesting thing is ...
-	I haven't managed ... I don't understand ... I have difficulty in ...	I don't like ... The most boring thing is ...

Conduct this activity as far as possible in the target language. Record the outcome on a poster and use it as a point of reference for planning learning with the whole class at the beginning of the next phase.

Encouraging reflection on reading strategies

A teacher who was participating in one of the ELP pilot projects wanted to increase her learners' reading fluency. She arranged for them to get a monthly magazine, which she encouraged them to read at home. It soon became evident, however, that many learners were reluctant to read on their own: they found most of the texts in the magazine very difficult, and some of them gave up trying to read as soon as they came across a word or phrase they couldn't understand.

In order to improve their reading and boost their confidence, the teacher discussed scanning strategies with her learners (cf. the descriptors for READING FOR ORIENTATION in Appendix 1) and prepared a short quiz for each issue of the magazine. In order to answer the quiz her learners had to scan the magazine as quickly and efficiently as possible. After four months, nearly all the learners confirmed that their confidence in themselves as readers had increased and that they read much more frequently at home. What made the difference was not the quiz as such but the fact that learners worked in pairs to check and

correct their answers.

How would you have to adapt this activity to make it suitable for your learners?

Select some other skill that your learners need and devise a learning activity that helps to develop their proficiency and at the same time encourages them to reflect.

Reflecting on reading comprehension

For homework give your learners a story to read and ask them to prepare two learning activities based on the story. It is up to them to decide what the two activities should be, but one must be “content-based” (e.g., a poster, a quiz, a game, a dialogue, a playlet) and the other must be “form-focussed” (e.g., a gap-filling exercise, a transformation drill, a vocabulary learning task). Before presenting their activities to the class and/or asking other members of the class to use them, they must explain their choice of tasks and describe how they went about devising them. This activity improves reading comprehension, supports an active approach to learning, shifts responsibility from teacher to learners, and helps the learners to reflect on their learning and assess their progress.

What learning activities are useful?

When asked what learning activities they found most useful in their foreign language lessons, some 12-year-old learners said: “When we talk in English”, “When the teacher writes the sentences on the blackboard and translates them”, “When we work in groups”.

Ask your learners the same question and write their answers on a poster. Are you sure that their preferred learning activities are really the most useful? Or do you need to help them change their preferences?

Getting your learners to prepare a lesson

Divide your class into groups of five or six. Once a month (or once a term), get each group to prepare a lesson. In advance, discuss the content of the lesson with the whole class. The aim of the lesson should be clearly related to the descriptors in the ELP, and the lesson should conclude with reflective evaluation by the whole class.

Reviewing and showing off the dossier

On a regular basis (once a month, twice a term, etc., depending on your

situation) devote a whole lesson to the dossier. Get your learners to prepare for the lesson by reviewing and if necessary rearranging the material in their dossier. During the lesson, get your learners to work in pairs, presenting their dossier to one another and explaining which items are most valuable to them and why. If time permits, pairs can form groups and each group can prepare an overview of its dossiers for presentation to the rest of the class.

A final point for individual reflection and/or discussion with colleagues

Here are some of the things that teachers do with their learners in order to help them to assume more responsibility for their own learning. Which of them do you already do? Of the things that you don't do, which would be easy to implement in your situation? What can you add to the list?

- Making learners aware of the aims laid down in the curriculum
 - Working in pairs
 - Getting learners to specify their own learning targets
 - Getting learners to reflect on learning strategies
 - Getting learners to give one another feedback in pairs or groups
 - Reflecting on previous learning
 - Allowing learners to choose who to work with
 - Accumulating and using a bank of home-made learning materials
 - Allowing learners to choose learning activities for themselves
 - Suggesting effective learning activities
 - Planning work in discussion with the class
-

Chapter 5

Coming to terms with self-assessment

By now it will be fully evident that self-assessment is central to the ELP. The passport requires learners to assess their own proficiency using the scales and descriptors derived from the *Common European Framework*; the biography provides for the regular setting of learning goals, which learners can do only if they regularly assess their own progress; and the selection of material for inclusion in (and exclusion from) the dossier likewise requires self-assessment. This emphasis on self-assessment coincides with the Council of Europe's concern to promote autonomous lifelong learning and reminds us that ownership of the ELP always lies with the individual learner.

In the pilot projects the focus on self-assessment was felt to benefit both teachers and learners. Teachers often reported that the introduction of self-assessment led to an open dialogue with learners and gave them a better understanding of learners' problems; while some learners clearly appreciated the sense of control that self-assessment gave them, for example:

We like assessing our own language skills and comparing our view with the teacher's.
(10th grade English class in a Moscow lycée)

It is good to learn to assess one's own competence. (Hungarian learner of French, aged 16)

At the same time, self-assessment was often perceived as the most problematic aspect of the ELP, provoking such questions as: "How can learners possibly assess themselves?", "Do they know enough?", "Can they be objective?", "Can self-assessment be reliable?". One reason for this is that self-assessment does not figure prominently in our mainstream educational traditions, as one secondary school principal pointed out:

Our teachers and learners reported that the Portfolio enhances motivation, but self-assessment is the most critical part because it is not a common tradition in our schools.

Because self-assessment is so fundamental to the concept of the ELP, it has been present, at least in a veiled form, in most of the classroom activities we have proposed in earlier chapters. And it was a central concern of Chapter 4 to the extent that self-assessment is one of the inescapable outcomes of effective reflection. In this chapter we are concerned with self-assessment not as a by-product of reflective thinking, however, but in its own right and in its relation to other forms of assessment. Such a focus seems to us necessary because the successful integration of the ELP with curricula and pedagogy depends partly

on establishing the right kind of relation between self-assessment and the various forms of assessment by others – tests and examinations – to which learners are subject.

Two contrasting approaches to assessment

The Council of Europe's modern languages projects have always emphasized the importance of defining language learning objectives in terms that anyone can understand. In particular, they have been concerned to develop descriptions of foreign language proficiency that are directly related to communicative language use. Since the 1970s the various *Threshold Level* documents have played a central role in reorienting foreign language teaching to communicative goals. In doing so they have also helped to stimulate the development of new theoretical perspectives on the assessment of foreign language proficiency. After all, logic demands that we assess learners according to the same criteria as we use to specify their learning goals. This is the rationale for devising scales, levels and descriptors like those set out in the *Common European Framework* and carried over into the ELP.

The Council of Europe's work in this field has had an enormous impact on the definition of curricular aims and the development of language learning materials. Its impact on the formal assessment of language learners, by contrast, has been much weaker. It is true that in the adult sector, especially the part of it that is served by private language teaching institutions, assessment is now frequently based on the use of descriptors such as we find in the ELP. But it is also true that in schools and universities, forms of assessment have been much slower to change.

In most European countries, public examinations and the marking schemes they employ traditionally embody a norm-referenced approach, which is based on the belief that ability, and thus achievement, is distributed in societies with the statistical regularity of the bell-shaped curve. In other words, in every age group there will be a small number of very good learners, a rather larger number of good learners, a lot of average learners, some weak learners, and a few very weak learners. According to this philosophy some learners always fail. But if (as in the ELP) we describe language learning objectives in behavioural terms – what learners should be able to *do* with their language skills –, it follows that assessment should be a matter of determining the extent to which learners have mastered the behaviour in question; and this approach may allow even the weakest learners to succeed – or meet the criterion – to a limited extent.

The chief difference between these two approaches to assessment has to do

with their attitude to failure. The norm-referenced approach easily encourages a negative attitude. If the ideal distribution of performances in a norm-referenced test is a bell-shaped curve, the taint of failure attaches not only to those who do not achieve a pass mark, but to all those who fall below the mid-point in the distribution of marks – those, in other words, who are below average. The impact that this ethos of failure can have on learner motivation has often been discussed in the relevant literature. By contrast, the criterion-referenced approach encourages a generally positive attitude to learners: provided they meet the criterion they are deemed proficient, even though in some cases proficiency may be less than perfect (it is worth recalling here the metaphor of the driving licence that we used in Chapter 3, pp. 37f.).

Two kinds of assessment

It is usual to distinguish between two kinds of assessment, *summative* and *formative*. Summative assessment is used at the end of a course or phase of learning to determine what has been achieved; end-of-term, end-of-year, school-leaving and degree examinations are obvious examples of this type. Formative assessment, on the other hand, is used during the course of learning as a means of providing learners with feedback on their progress and some indication of the areas they need to give particular attention to. In principle, these two kinds of assessment may require very different instruments; in practice, the washback effect of public examinations often ensures that formative assessment uses the same procedures as summative assessment.

The self-assessment that is central to the ELP is likewise of two kinds. When learners assess themselves in the passport component, they are engaging in a form of summative assessment: a statement of their proficiency at a particular point in their lives. On the other hand, the self-assessment that runs through the biography component and keeps the contents of the dossier under critical review has a formative function; and it is so thoroughly integrated with the pedagogical purpose of the ELP that it is as much a habit of mind as an activity. However, these two kinds of self-assessment depend on the same complex of knowledge, self-knowledge and skills, which means that learners are likely to be more proficient in performing summative self-assessment if formative self-assessment – what one might call reflective self-evaluation – has been an integral part of their learning experience.

Three focuses for self-assessment

In foreign language learning the act of self-assessment can have three distinct focuses. The first is the learning process itself. Learners need to be able to

assess how well they are progressing overall, how well they are learning at a particular stage, and how successful they are in performing individual learning tasks and meeting specific learning goals. Self-assessment with this focus is an integral part of the reflective approach to learning we were concerned with in Chapter 4. In the very early stages of learning, it may be enough to record a rather general judgement, for example: “I found this activity boring”; “I didn’t concentrate well today”; “I have made good progress this term”. Young learners may decorate such judgements with symbols, perhaps a happy face to indicate success and a sad face to indicate the contrary, or a sun and a cloud. But as we argued in Chapter 4, it should be one of our central pedagogical purposes to bring our learners to the point where they can conduct this kind of self-assessment in the target language (look back at the examples we included on page 47 to remind yourself of the kind of thing we should be aiming for). Note that this kind of self-assessment is inescapably subjective, since it is based on the view from inside the learner. We may use other forms of assessment to discover how accurately our learners assess their communicative proficiency or linguistic competence; but there is no objective alternative to self-assessment when it is focussed on the learning process and based on learners’ perceptions and feelings.

The second focus for self-assessment is the learner’s communicative proficiency in terms of the Council of Europe’s scales and descriptors. This was central to the classroom activities we presented in Chapter 3. Of the three focuses, this one may be the easiest to deal with; after all, human beings usually know what they can and cannot do. Of course, we sometimes imagine (or tell other people) that we have a particular skill, only to discover when called upon to exercise it that we were mistaken. Language learners may easily fall into this trap, imagining (for example) that they have a much wider range of oral proficiency than is actually the case. But we deal with this by requiring them to demonstrate that they do indeed possess the skills they lay claim to (cf. Jana Hindlsová’s practice, described in Chapter 3).

The third focus for self-assessment is the learner’s linguistic proficiency – the words he knows, the structures he can deploy, the sounds he can articulate. Learners are likely to find this more difficult than assessing their own communicative proficiency (see Oskarsson 1992, p.32). But if they do not gradually develop a reliable capacity for self-assessment of this kind, how will they ever be able to monitor, correct and refine their linguistic output? One way of helping learners to assess their own linguistic proficiency is to give them tasks that they can correct for themselves. For example, they can correct their own dictation exercises if we give them a copy of the relevant text; and they can correct various kinds of gap-fill exercise in the same way. Another way is to get learners to correct one another’s work. This exploits two facts: it is always

easier to spot an error in someone else's text than in our own (even when the text is written in our mother tongue); and because no two learners ever have exactly the same linguistic knowledge, one will often know what another does not know. When learners are required to correct their own or one another's work, they should use the same scales and marking schemes that are used in the formal examinations they have to take: in this way they gradually develop a fuller understanding of the methods of formal assessment, which may help them to perform better in exams.

The relation between self-assessment and assessment by traditional forms of examination

It is not intended that the self-assessment required by the ELP should in any way replace assessment of learners by teachers, schools, universities or public examination boards: the language passport contains the owner's assessment of his or her foreign language proficiency, but it also provides space in which to record examinations passed and certificates awarded. Ideally, of course, self-assessment and assessment by others should complement each other. Self-assessment is based on the learner's developed capacity to reflect on his or her own knowledge, skills and achievement, while assessment by others provides an external, objective measure of the same knowledge, skills and achievement.

In some cases it may be possible to include an element of self-assessment in formal examination results, but for most teachers self-assessment will be the beginning and end of the reflective processes that underpin learning and will be related to summative assessment only to the extent that it gives learners a better understanding of formal assessment procedures. At the same time, self-assessment can play a fully integrated role in formative assessment. For example, in the Finnish pilot project, co-ordinated by Viljo Kohonen and Ulla Pajukanta, essay writing was handled in such a way that self-correction, peer correction and teacher correction interacted closely with one another. Learners wrote the first draft of their essay, the teacher provided feedback in the form of general comments, and the learners rewrote their essay at home. Learners then worked in pairs, giving a mark to their own and their partner's essays. At this point the essays, each with two suggested marks, were submitted to the teacher, who corrected them and awarded a final mark.

Points for individual reflection and/or discussion with colleagues***Assessing your own foreign language proficiency***

How often do you informally assess your own proficiency in the foreign language(s) that you teach? How do you do it? Do you focus on behavioural skills – what you can *do* with the language(s) – or on linguistic competence? Could you show that your self-assessment is accurate? What effect does self-assessment have on you?

Introducing self-assessment: a gradual approach

Teachers who have successfully introduced self-assessment in their classes have usually done so gradually. Here are some of the steps they have taken. Put them into the order that would be most appropriate in your situation.

- The teacher discusses learning goals with the whole class
- Learners assess their work in pairs and the teacher gives her comments for purposes of comparison
- The teacher negotiates criteria for successful performance with the whole class
- Working in pairs, learners assess each other's work without feedback from the teacher
- The teacher talks to learners individually about their progress
- Learners write individual reflections on how much and how well they have learned
- Learners set their own goals
- The teacher helps learners to see what they must do in order to succeed
- Learners write their self-assessment and the teacher adds her own written comments

What other procedures can you think of?

Integrating learning, peer assessment and self-assessment: an example

On pages 59–61 we reproduce an activity designed for adult language learners by Michaela Čejková. The metaphor of the six hats comes from one of Edward de Bono's thinking tasks presented in the *Arks Keys to Learning*, available at <www.ed.ac.uk/~calarks/arks/indexe.html> (see also de Bono 2000). The activity combines learning with peer assessment and self-assessment. Note that the self-assessment on the last page requires learners to assess their linguistic competence as well as their proficiency in performing communicative tasks.

The six thinking hats

Thinking is a skill that can be learnt and taught to others.

When you are investigating something, it can be helpful to present ideas from different points of view, wearing different kinds of thinking hats. You can wear purple and be pessimistic or red and be full of strong emotions, or white and be neutral, sticking strictly to the facts.

- In this exercise you will be asked to think about a subject while wearing six different thinking hats: 1 white, 2 red, 3 yellow, 4 purple, 5 green, 6 blue.
- You will work in groups of three.
- After 25 minutes each group will present results of their work.
- We shall evaluate the activity after the break.

What do the different hats mean?

White hat:	neutral deals only with facts is like a computer, has no emotions
Red hat:	strong feelings emotional anger/hatred no need to give reasons for feelings
Yellow hat:	positive optimistic hopeful constructive the very best point of view
Purple hat:	negative pessimistic critical gloomy
Green hat:	creative new ideas new way of seeing things making changes easy offer alternatives
Blue hat:	gives an overview of the other hats shows what you need more of shows what you have too much of good for drawing conclusions

Procedure:

- Try on the different hats to discuss *one* of these topics:

marriage
siesta
keeping a diary
interview
computer & me

- Put on each hat for a while and think about your topic from that point of view. Use the distributed A3 posters to write down your ideas.

Here are *sample answers* from a discussion about cats using the Thinking Hats:

- White: **Four legged animals with fur and whiskers, eat mice.**
- Red: **Dirty, selfish animals who are like dictators in families./
Cute loveable fur balls, warm and soft.**
- Yellow: **Really useful in a house for catching mice, good for teaching
children how to care for animals, independent and easy pets.**
- Purple: **May carry diseases, best to avoid when pregnant (because of
diseases), may cause allergy, need to think carefully about the
responsibility of owning a cat**
- Green: **You could open up a new business and run a cat hotel, or
breed cats.**
- Blue: **Some people love cats and others hate them. There's no logical
explanation. It's all down to feelings.**

Presentation:

After 25 minutes each group has to present results of their work according to the two instructions below. You have 10 minutes for your presentation.

- On behalf of her/his group, each member must present to the whole class two of the posters (two Hats).
- Each group must conclude their presentation by 3 suggestions on what happens if we try to draw conclusions wearing any of the hats other than blue. Each member must present one suggestion and give one example.

5 minute break

- *If you are a member of a group working on a task, then it is important that you evaluate together what you have achieved. To measure your success, divide your activity into the different headings mentioned below and answer the following questions:*

<p style="text-align: center;">1. Processes What did you do?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2. Structures How organised were you?</p>																																
<p style="text-align: center;">3. Resources Did you have enough time and space? Were the group members alert or tired?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">4. People Did everyone contribute? Was everyone's contribution useful?</p>																																
<p style="text-align: center;">5. Effectiveness Considering the effort you put in, how satisfied were you with the results?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">6. Impact How can this learning experience help you in your life (if at all)?</p>																																
<p>7. Language Reflect on your performance and rate yourself <i>individually</i> against the provided general scale:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin: 10px auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 15%;"></th> <th style="width: 25%;">Phonology</th> <th style="width: 25%;">Fluency</th> <th style="width: 35%;">Grammar</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Level 1</td> <td>speech could almost not be understood</td> <td>speech was very slow and uncertain</td> <td>mistakes make speech impossible to understand</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Level 2</td> <td>strong L1 accent</td> <td>speech managed to keep going with many stops</td> <td>many mistakes, but speech could be understood</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Level 3</td> <td>fair L2 accent</td> <td>speech was fluent with some stops</td> <td>basic grammar was good, problems with difficult structures</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Level 4</td> <td>good L2 accent and intonation</td> <td>speech was fluent with good choice of words</td> <td>could use difficult structures with only a few mistakes</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;">GROUP: A B C D</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NAME: _____</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 30%;"></th> <th style="width: 20%;">Phonology</th> <th style="width: 20%;">Fluency</th> <th style="width: 30%;">Grammar</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Self-assessment</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>level:</i></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>level:</i></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>level:</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Assessment by teacher</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>level:</i></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>level:</i></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>Level:</i></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Phonology	Fluency	Grammar	Level 1	speech could almost not be understood	speech was very slow and uncertain	mistakes make speech impossible to understand	Level 2	strong L1 accent	speech managed to keep going with many stops	many mistakes, but speech could be understood	Level 3	fair L2 accent	speech was fluent with some stops	basic grammar was good, problems with difficult structures	Level 4	good L2 accent and intonation	speech was fluent with good choice of words	could use difficult structures with only a few mistakes		Phonology	Fluency	Grammar	Self-assessment	<i>level:</i>	<i>level:</i>	<i>level:</i>	Assessment by teacher	<i>level:</i>	<i>level:</i>	<i>Level:</i>
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<p>NOTE: • You should work on sections 1 to 6 as a group and present the outcomes of your discussion on a large poster at the end of class. Each learner will be asked to present two headings. • You should work on the section 7 individually.</p>																																	

What changes would you have to make to this activity in order to use it with your own learners? Can you adapt the self-assessment component so that it uses positive *I can do* statements?

Expand one of the other learning tasks presented in this book so that it includes peer assessment and self-assessment conducted on the basis of the common reference levels.

Some classroom activities that include self-assessment

Two minutes' talk

Once a week get your learners to form pairs and have a conversation in the target language on a topic of their choice (e.g., what they did at the weekend, a new hobby, the film they are going to see this evening). To begin with, their aim is to keep talking for two minutes; as they become more proficient the time limit can be extended. They must time themselves. If their conversation dries up in less than two minutes they must make a note of how long they kept going for and try to improve on it next time. (This activity is regularly used by Leni Dam.)

Peer correction of essays

Give your learners an essay-writing task. When they have finished the first draft of their essay, ask them to choose a partner with whom to exchange drafts. Tell them to give each other constructive feedback, focussing on good points as well as on mistakes, ambiguities and obscurities. The learners then revise their essays before handing them in to the teacher for correction.

Self-assessment using the Council of Europe's illustrative scales

Get your learners to form groups of three or four. Each group chooses one descriptor from the illustrative scales (Appendix 1). If they are working at level B2 they might choose one of the following:

- Sustained monologue, describing experience – *Can give clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to his/her field of interest*
- Listening to announcements and instructions – *Can understand announcements and messages on concrete and abstract topics spoken in standard dialect at normal speed*
- Writing reports and essays – *Can write an essay or report which develops an argument, giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view and explaining the advantages and disadvantages of various options.*

Challenge the groups to reflect (as far as possible in the target language) on

their previous learning and consider how far they have progressed towards attaining the descriptor they have chosen to focus on. Which learning activities relate to the descriptor? Are these activities easy/difficult, helpful/unhelpful? Why? What do they still need to do if they are to master the descriptor? Get the groups to report back to the whole class.

Self-assessment, peer assessment and project work

Learners work in groups to prepare a presentation in the target language on a particular topic. The whole class discusses what will make a good presentation, and key features are noted on a poster. Each group chooses a leader who is responsible for co-ordinating the work. After the presentations the group leaders meet to compare the presentations and identify positive and negative points. At the same time, individual learners write a reflection on the contribution they made to the group work. The final evaluation of all projects follows, first in groups and then as a whole-class activity.

A homework task: making a test for other learners

For homework ask your learners to make a test for the rest of the class. It should focus on one or more of the Council of Europe descriptors and be based on (for example) the last two units in the textbook or the last month of learning. Tell the learners how long the test should be. Learners exchange tests in pairs or small groups; each learner corrects his or her own test.

Use the ELP biography for regular self-assessment

In the biography section of the ELP learners specify learning targets and record particularly interesting or significant intercultural or learning experiences. Use this function of the ELP as a focus for regular self-assessment. For example, when your learners review their learning targets, get them to write a short self-assessment. Have they achieved all their targets? If so, with what degree of thoroughness? If not, why not? What further learning do they need to do?

Three final points for individual reflection and/or discussion with colleagues

Look at your own situation

Which of the activities presented in this chapter could you use (with or without adaptation) in your situation?

Preparing to introduce self-assessment

Think about the lessons you are going to teach in the coming week. How could you include self-assessment in them?

Teachers too can engage in self-assessment

How would you assess your teaching (or your ideas about teaching) with the ELP? Make notes under the following headings:

FOCUS ON THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE'S DESCRIPTORS

USE OF THE TARGET LANGUAGE

REFLECTION ON THE TARGET LANGUAGE

REFLECTION ON LANGUAGE USE

REFLECTION ON LANGUAGE LEARNING

SUPPORTING LEARNERS' INITIATIVES

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Chapter 6

Responding to the wider challenge of the ELP

In this guide we have tried to show how the ELP can be used to support the development of a reflective approach to communicative language teaching and learning. In doing so, we have necessarily concentrated on the concerns of the individual teacher and classroom. In this brief concluding chapter we link these concerns to the broader agenda that underlies the ELP.

In Chapter 1 we noted that besides its reporting and pedagogical functions, the ELP also has a political purpose, to contribute to *the preservation of linguistic and cultural diversity, the promotion of linguistic and cultural tolerance, the promotion of plurilingualism, and education for democratic citizenship*. In principle the second and fourth of these goals – promoting linguistic and cultural tolerance and educating for democratic citizenship – are served by the reflective, self-reliant approach to learning that the ELP can be used to stimulate; to that extent they are subsumed in the aims of the individual foreign language classroom. But the first and third goals – preserving linguistic and cultural diversity and promoting plurilingualism – carry us beyond the classroom into the realms of more general educational policy and its implementation. Essentially, these latter goals require that teachers and classrooms are brought into interaction with one another at a succession of different levels – school, college or university; city, town or district; region; country; international community.

The ELP has been piloted by teachers of particular languages, but it is designed to embrace the owner's whole experience of learning and using foreign and in some cases heritage languages. There are some contexts, especially in adult education, where the use of the ELP as a pedagogical tool will mostly focus on one particular language. But in schools, colleges and universities its broader aims require that the ELP issued to each learner is used by all his or her language teachers. This calls for an institutional policy towards the pedagogical and political issues that the ELP raises. The development of such a policy would be greatly facilitated if curricula were explicitly oriented to the aims of the ELP and versions of the ELP were developed to dovetail neatly with specific curricula. This is still some way from becoming a reality, but in the meantime much can be achieved by working upwards and outwards from the individual teacher and classroom. We conclude our guide by offering some practical suggestions.

Points for individual reflection and/or discussion with colleagues***Turning the whole school/college/university into a language learning community***

What can you do in your situation to develop an institutional approach to language learning and a sense that the whole institution is a language learning community?

Confronting the issue of plurilingualism

What other language(s) do your learners learn/use/know? In your situation, what steps are necessary in order to use the ELP to support all foreign language learning?

Involving learners' parents

If you work in a school system, think about ways of making your learners' parents aware of the ELP, its functions and its benefits. What would you expect them to find specially useful and/or attractive?

Sharing ideas and experience with colleagues

How could you share with colleagues your experience of working with the ELP and at the same time benefit from their experience? Consider the following possibilities:

- Meet regularly with colleagues in your institution who also use the ELP
- Meet regularly with colleagues in other institutions in your locality who also use the ELP
- Get your teachers' association to establish a special interest group to focus on the ELP
- Prepare a joint presentation on the ELP with one or more colleagues
- Make a presentation at a staff meeting, a regional teachers' meeting, or a parents' meeting
- Prepare an exhibition of your learners' work
- Write about the ELP for your school bulletin, a teachers' journal or a local magazine or newspaper

What other possibilities can you think of that would be appropriate to your situation?

Some classroom activities that involve the wider community of language learners/users***Establishing pen-friendships***

Use local and international contacts to help your learners to establish pen-friendships with other learners and/or with native speakers of their target language. Depending on the age and proficiency of your learners, it may be more appropriate to exchange letters on a whole-class rather than an individual basis. You may be able to use such exchanges to work on intercultural projects of various kinds; in some circumstances they may lead to reciprocal visits. E-mail and the internet offer many new possibilities.

Developing learning materials for younger/less proficient learners

Get your learners to contribute to the sense that your institution is a language learning community by creating tasks for younger or less proficient learners. For example, have them read a story that is slightly above their target language level and then turn it into a simple dialogue that can be used by learners in a lower grade. This activity supports the development of reading comprehension and concludes naturally with a written assignment. In addition, it gives learners a genuine purpose for their work, and the younger learners feel challenged by being given the older learners' products.

Advertising your learners' achievements

Give your learners the project of presenting the results of their learning, organizing their exhibition around the three components of the ELP – passport, biography and dossier. Tell them to aim the exhibition at those who have not yet started language learning or at newcomers to your course or institution. Challenge your learners to use the target language as much as possible while working on the project.

Towards plurilingualism – getting to know other countries

Create a permanent display area in your institution where different countries and their languages can be presented one after another. Discuss with your colleagues what countries you are going to focus on and how often you are going to change the exhibition. Make it possible for everyone in the institution to contribute to the display. Encourage your learners to set conditions for the display, e.g. that contributions must be in the language(s) of the country, or must reflect a personal interest of the author.

A final point for individual reflection and/or discussion with colleagues

Here are some of the things that teachers who piloted the ELP said about its impact on their teaching:

I now think more about what is important for my learners and I discuss things with them.

I tended to underestimate my learners. I was surprised how objective they can be in their self-assessment.

I use group work more often and I try to help my learners to become more autonomous.

I try to classify the subject matter of my teaching into smaller units and link them together.

I try to help my learners to think about the purpose of their work.

I have changed my approach to homework. I now respect my learners' individual needs more.

For the first time I find myself thinking about long-term goals.

The ELP has helped me to think about new ways of teaching.

The ELP has made me think about the collaborative nature of learning.

What impact would you most like the ELP to have on your teaching?

Some advice from teachers involved in one pilot project

Teachers involved in the Czech pilot project were asked: "What advice would you give to a colleague who is about to start working with the ELP?" This is what four of them said:

Rely on your learners' initiative. If they are suitably motivated, they will create their own opportunities to learn.

The ELP is about collaboration between teacher and learners. Listen to your learners' opinions and you will understand them better.

If you give responsibility to your learners, you will not see the ELP as an additional burden at all!

Meet other teachers and discuss your problems with them. Find a colleague in your school with whom you can discuss everything.

Drawing up a concluding balance sheet

Based on your reading of this book, what do you now expect from the ELP? Make brief notes under the following headings:

HOW I ORGANIZE MY TEACHING

HOW I PREPARE MY TEACHING

HOW I USE THE TEXTBOOK

HOW I ASSESS MY LEARNERS

You may like to add other headings that correspond to your particular interests.

Compare your notes with the notes you made at the end of Chapter 1.

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Appendix 1

The *Common European Framework's* illustrative scales for listening, reading, spoken interaction, spoken production, written interaction and written production

The illustrative scales that follow expand the general descriptions of proficiency contained in the self-assessment grid reproduced in Chapter 1 (Figure 1.3). Note that the illustrative scales divide WRITING into WRITTEN INTERACTION and WRITTEN PRODUCTION.

Except where there is a statement to the contrary, the scales have been empirically calibrated (for an account of the techniques involved, see North 2000).

In some scales no descriptors are available at one or more levels; and in some scales the maximum proficiency achievable is judged to be below C2.

In many scales WAYSTAGE, THRESHOLD and VANTAGE (levels A2, B1 and B2) are subdivided. The descriptors below the dividing line describe the proficiency appropriate to the level in question; while the descriptors above the line are higher than the level in question but below the next level up. This subdivision of levels should make the scales easier to use in planning and assessing learning that covers several years of formal education.

Listening

	OVERALL LISTENING COMPREHENSION
C2	Has no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, delivered at fast native speed
C1	<p>Can understand enough to follow extended speech on abstract and complex topics beyond his/her own field, though he/she may need to confirm occasional details, especially if the accent is unfamiliar.</p> <p>Can recognise a wide range of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms, appreciating register shifts.</p> <p>Can follow extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly.</p>
B2	Can understand standard spoken language, live or broadcast, on both familiar and unfamiliar topics normally encountered in personal, social, academic or vocational life. Only extreme background noise, inadequate discourse structure and/or idiomatic usage influences the ability to understand.
	<p>Can understand the main ideas of propositionally and linguistically complex speech on both concrete and abstract topics delivered in a standard dialect, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation.</p> <p>Can follow extended speech and complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar, and the direction of the talk is sign-posted by explicit markers.</p>
B1	Can understand straightforward factual information about common everyday or job related topics, identifying both general messages and specific details, provided speech is clearly articulated in a generally familiar accent.
	Can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure etc., including short narratives.
A2	Can understand enough to be able to meet needs of a concrete type provided speech is clearly and slowly articulated.
	Can understand phrases and expressions related to areas of most immediate priority (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment) provided speech is clearly and slowly articulated.
A1	Can follow speech which is very slow and carefully articulated, with long pauses for him/her to assimilate meaning.

	UNDERSTANDING INTERACTION BETWEEN NATIVE SPEAKERS
C2	<i>As C1</i>
C1	Can easily follow complex interactions between third parties in group discussion and debate, even on abstract, complex unfamiliar topics
B2	Can keep up with an animated conversation between native speakers.
	Can with some effort catch much of what is said around him/her, but may find it difficult to participate effectively in discussion with several native speakers who do not modify their language in any way.
B1	Can generally follow the main points of extended discussion around him/her, provided speech is clearly articulated in standard dialect.

UNDERSTANDING INTERACTION BETWEEN NATIVE SPEAKERS (continued)	
A2	Can generally identify the topic of discussion around her which is conducted slowly and clearly.
A1	<i>No descriptor available</i>

LISTENING AS A MEMBER OF A LIVE AUDIENCE	
C2	Can follow specialised lectures and presentations employing a high degree of colloquialism, regional usage or unfamiliar terminology.
C1	Can follow most lectures, discussions and debates with relative ease.
B2	Can follow the essentials of lectures, talks and reports and other forms of academic/professional presentation which are propositionally and linguistically complex.
B1	Can follow a lecture or talk within his/her own field, provided the subject matter is familiar and the presentation straightforward and clearly structured.
	Can follow in outline straightforward short talks on familiar topics provided these are delivered in clearly articulated standard speech.
A2	<i>No descriptor available</i>
A1	<i>No descriptor available</i>

LISTENING TO ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INSTRUCTIONS	
C2	<i>As C1</i>
C1	Can extract specific information from poor quality, audibly distorted public announcements e.g. in a station, sports stadium etc.
	Can understand complex technical information, such as operating instructions, specifications for familiar products and services.
B2	Can understand announcements and messages on concrete and abstract topics spoken in standard dialect at normal speed.
B1	Can understand simple technical information, such as operating instructions for everyday equipment.
	Can follow detailed directions.
A2	Can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcement.
	Can understand simple directions relating to how to get from X to Y, by foot or public transport.
A1	Can understand instructions addressed carefully and slowly to him/her and follow short, simple directions.

	LISTENING TO AUDIO MEDIA AND RECORDINGS
C2	<i>As C1</i>
C1	Can understand a wide range of recorded and broadcast audio material, including some non-standard usage, and identify finer points of detail including implicit attitudes and relationships between speakers.
B2	Can understand recordings in standard dialect likely to be encountered in social, professional or academic life and identify speaker viewpoints and attitudes as well as the information content.
	Can understand most radio documentaries and most other recorded or broadcast audio material delivered in standard dialect and can identify the speaker's mood, tone etc.
B1	Can understand the information content of the majority of recorded or broadcast audio material on topics of personal interest delivered in clear standard speech.
	Can understand the main points of radio news bulletins and simpler recorded material about familiar subjects delivered relatively slowly and clearly.
A2	Can understand and extract the essential information from short recorded passages dealing with predictable everyday matters which are delivered slowly and clearly.
A1	<i>No descriptor available</i>

Reading

	OVERALL READING COMPREHENSION
C2	Can understand and interpret critically virtually all forms of the written language including abstract, structurally complex, or highly colloquial literary and non-literary writings. Can understand a wide range of long and complex texts, appreciating subtle distinctions of style and implicit as well as explicit meaning.
C1	Can understand in detail lengthy, complex texts, whether or not they relate to his/her own area of speciality, provided he/she can reread difficult sections.
B2	Can read with a large degree of independence, adapting style and speed of reading to different texts and purposes, and using appropriate reference sources selectively. Has a broad active reading vocabulary, but may experience some difficulty with low-frequency idioms.
B1	Can read straightforward factual texts on subjects related to his/her field and interest with a satisfactory level of comprehension.
A2	Can understand short, simple texts on familiar matters of a concrete type which consist of high frequency everyday or job-related language
	Can understand short, simple texts containing the highest frequency vocabulary, including a proportion of shared international vocabulary items.
A1	Can understand very short, simple texts a single phrase at a time, picking up familiar names, words and basic phrases and rereading as required.

	READING CORRESPONDENCE
C2	<i>As C1</i>
C1	Can understand any correspondence given the occasional use of a dictionary.
B2	Can read correspondence relating to his/her field of interest and readily grasp the essential meaning.
B1	Can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters well enough to correspond regularly with a pen friend.
A2	Can understand basic types of standard routine letters and faxes (enquiries, orders, letters of confirmation etc.) on familiar topics
	Can understand short simple personal letters.
A1	Can understand short, simple messages on postcards.

	READING FOR ORIENTATION
C2	<i>As B2</i>
C1	<i>As B2</i>
B2	Can scan quickly through long and complex texts, locating relevant details. Can quickly identify the content and relevance of news items, articles and reports on a wide range of professional topics, deciding whether closer study is worthwhile.
B1	Can scan longer texts in order to locate desired information, and gather information from different parts of a text, or from different texts in order to fulfil a specific task.
	Can find and understand relevant information in everyday material, such as letters, brochures and short official documents.
A2	Can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus, reference lists and timetables.
	Can locate specific information in lists and isolate the information required (e.g. use the "Yellow Pages" to find a service or tradesman). Can understand everyday signs and notices: in public places, such as streets, restaurants, railway stations; in workplaces, such as directions, instructions, hazard warnings.
A1	Can recognise familiar names, words and very basic phrases on simple notices in the most common everyday situations.

READING FOR INFORMATION AND ARGUMENT	
C2	<i>As C1</i>
C1	Can understand in detail a wide range of lengthy, complex texts likely to be encountered in social, professional or academic life, identifying finer points of detail including attitudes and implied as well as stated opinions.
B2	Can obtain information, ideas and opinions from highly specialised sources within his/her field. Can understand specialised articles outside his/her field, provided he/she can use a dictionary occasionally to confirm his/her interpretation of terminology.
	Can understand articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular stances or viewpoints.
B1	Can identify the main conclusions in clearly signalled argumentative texts. Can recognise the line of argument in the treatment of the issue presented, though not necessarily in detail.
	Can recognise significant points in straightforward newspaper articles on familiar subjects.
A2	Can identify specific information in simpler written material he/she encounters such as letters, brochures and short newspaper articles describing events.
A1	Can get an idea of the content of simpler informational material and short simple descriptions, especially if there is visual support.

READING INSTRUCTIONS	
C2	<i>As C1</i>
C1	Can understand in detail lengthy, complex instructions on a new machine or procedure, whether or not the instructions relate to his/her own area of speciality, provided he/she can reread difficult sections.
B2	Can understand lengthy, complex instructions in his/her field, including details on conditions and warnings, provided he/she can reread difficult sections.
B1	Can understand clearly written, straightforward instructions for a piece of equipment
A2	Can understand regulations, for example safety, when expressed in simple language. Can understand simple instructions on equipment encountered in everyday life – such as a public telephone.
A1	Can follow short, simple written directions (e.g., to go from X to Y)

Spoken interaction

	OVERALL SPOKEN INTERACTION
C2	Has a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms with awareness of connotative levels of meaning. Can convey finer shades of meaning precisely by using, with reasonable accuracy, a wide range of modification devices. Can backtrack and restructure around a difficulty so smoothly the interlocutor is hardly aware of it.
C1	Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Has a good command of a broad lexical repertoire allowing gaps to be readily overcome with circumlocutions. There is little obvious searching for expressions or avoidance strategies; only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language.
B2	Can use the language fluently, accurately and effectively on a wide range of general, academic, vocational or leisure topics, marking clearly the relationships between ideas. Can communicate spontaneously with good grammatical control without much sign of having to restrict what he/she wants to say, adopting a level of formality appropriate to the circumstances.
	Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction, and sustained relationships with native speakers quite possible without imposing strain on either party. Can highlight the personal significance of events and experiences, account for and sustain views clearly by providing relevant explanations and arguments.
B1	Can communicate with some confidence on familiar routine and non-routine matters related to his/her interests and professional field. Can exchange, check and confirm information, deal with less routine situations and explain why something is a problem. Can express thoughts on more abstract, cultural topics such as films, books, music etc.
	Can exploit a wide range of simple language to deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling. Can enter unprepared into conversation of familiar topics, express personal opinions and exchange information on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).
A2	Can interact with reasonable ease in structured situations and short conversations, provided the other person helps if necessary. Can manage simple, routine exchanges without undue effort; can ask and answer questions and exchange ideas and information on familiar topics in predictable everyday situations.
	Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters to do with work and free time. Can handle very short social exchanges but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of his/her own accord.
A1	Can interact in a simple way but communication is totally dependent on repetition at a slower rate of speech, rephrasing and repair. Can ask and answer simple questions, initiate and respond to simple statements in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.

	UNDERSTANDING A NATIVE SPEAKER INTERLOCUTOR
C2	Can understand any native speaker interlocutor, even on abstract and complex topics of a specialist nature beyond his/her own field, given an opportunity to adjust to a non-standard accent or dialect.
C1	Can understand in detail speech on abstract and complex topics of a specialist nature beyond his/her own field, though he/she may need to confirm occasional details, especially if the accent is unfamiliar.
B2	Can understand in detail what is said to him/her in the standard spoken language even in a noisy environment.
B1	Can follow clearly articulated speech directed at him/her in everyday conversation, though will sometimes have to ask for repetition of particular words and phrases.
A2	Can understand enough to manage simple, routine exchanges without undue effort. Can generally understand clear, standard speech on familiar matters directed at him/her, provided he/she can ask for repetition or reformulation from time to time.
	Can understand what is said clearly, slowly and directly to him/her in simple everyday conversation; can be made to understand, if the speaker can take the trouble.
A1	Can understand everyday expressions aimed at the satisfaction of simple needs of a concrete type, delivered directly to him/her in clear, slow and repeated speech by a sympathetic speaker.
	Can understand questions and instructions addressed carefully and slowly to him/her and follow short, simple directions.

	CONVERSATION
C2	Can converse comfortably and appropriately, unhampered by any linguistic limitations in conducting a full social and personal life.
C1	Can use language flexibly and effectively for social purposes, including emotional, allusive and joking usage.
B2	Can engage in extended conversation on most general topics in a clearly participatory fashion, even in a noisy environment.
	Can sustain relationships with native speakers without unintentionally amusing or irritating them or requiring them to behave other than they would with a native speaker. Can convey degrees of emotion and highlight the personal significance of events and experiences.
B1	Can enter unprepared into conversations on familiar topics.
	Can follow clearly articulated speech directed at him/her in everyday conversation, though will sometimes have to ask for repetition of particular words and phrases. Can maintain a conversation or discussion but may sometimes be difficult to follow when trying to say exactly what he/she would like to. Can express and respond to feelings such as surprise, happiness, sadness, interest and indifference.

CONVERSATION (continued)	
A2	<p>Can establish social contact: greetings and farewells; introductions; giving thanks.</p> <p>Can generally understand clear, standard speech on familiar matters directed at him/her, provided he/she can ask for repetition or reformulation from time to time.</p> <p>Can participate in short conversations in routine contexts on topics of interest.</p> <p>Can express how he/she feels in simple terms, and express thanks.</p>
	<p>Can handle very short social exchanges but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of his/her own accord, though he/she can be made to understand if the speaker will take the trouble.</p> <p>Can use simple everyday polite forms of greeting and address</p> <p>Can make and respond to invitations and apologies.</p> <p>Can say what he/she likes and dislikes.</p>
A1	<p>Can make an introduction and use basic greeting and leave-taking expressions.</p> <p>Can ask how people are and react to news.</p> <p>Can understand everyday expressions aimed at the satisfaction of simple needs of a concrete type, delivered directly to him/her in clear, slow and repeated speech by a sympathetic speaker.</p>
INFORMAL DISCUSSION (WITH FRIENDS)	
C2	<i>As C1</i>
C1	Can easily follow and contribute to complex interactions between third parties in group discussion even on abstract, complex unfamiliar topics.
B2	<p>Can keep up with an animated discussion between native speakers</p> <p>Can express his/her ideas and opinions with precision, present and respond to complex lines of argument convincingly.</p>
	<p>Can take an active part in informal discussion in familiar contexts, commenting, putting point of view clearly, evaluating alternative proposals and making and responding to hypotheses.</p> <p>Can with some effort catch much of what is said around him/her in discussion, but may find it difficult to participate effectively in discussion with several native speakers who do not modify their language in any way.</p> <p>Can account for and sustain his/her opinions in discussion by providing relevant explanations, arguments and comments.</p>
B1	<p>Can follow much of what is said around him/her on general topics provided interlocutors avoid very idiomatic usage and articulate clearly.</p> <p>Can express his/her thoughts about abstract or cultural topics such as music, films.</p> <p>Can explain why something is a problem.</p> <p>Can give brief comments on the views of others.</p> <p>Can compare and contrast alternatives, discussing what to do, where to go, who or which to choose etc.</p>
	<p>Can generally follow the main points in an informal discussion with friends provided speech is clearly articulated in standard dialect.</p> <p>Can give or seek personal views and opinions in discussing topics of interest.</p> <p>Can make his/her opinions and reactions understood as regards solutions to problems or practical questions of where to go, what to do, how to organise an event (e.g. an outing).</p> <p>Can express belief, opinion, agreement and disagreement politely</p>

	INFORMAL DISCUSSION (WITH FRIENDS) (continued)
A2	<p>Can generally identify the topic of discussion around her which is conducted slowly and clearly.</p> <p>Can discuss what to do in the evening, at the weekend.</p> <p>Can make and respond to suggestions.</p> <p>Can agree and disagree with others.</p>
	<p>Can discuss everyday practical issues in a simple way when addressed clearly, slowly and directly.</p> <p>Can discuss what to do, where to go and make arrangements to meet.</p>
A1	<i>No descriptors available</i>

	FORMAL DISCUSSION AND MEETINGS
C2	Can hold his/her own in formal discussion of complex issues, putting an articulate and persuasive argument, at no disadvantage to native speakers.
C1	<p>Can easily keep up with the debate, even on abstract, complex unfamiliar topics.</p> <p>Can argue a formal position convincingly, responding to questions and comments and answering complex lines of counter argument fluently, spontaneously and appropriately.</p>
B2	<p>Can keep up with an animated discussion, identifying accurately arguments supporting and opposing points of view.</p> <p>Can express his/her ideas and opinions with precision, present and respond to complex lines of argument convincingly.</p>
	<p>Can participate actively in routine and non routine formal discussion,.</p> <p>Can follow the discussion on matters related to his/her field, understand in detail the points given prominence by the speaker.</p> <p>Can contribute, account for and sustain his/her opinion, evaluate alternative proposals and make and respond to hypotheses.</p>
B1	<p>Can follow much of what is said that is related to his/her field, provided interlocutors avoid very idiomatic usage and articulate clearly.</p> <p>Can put over a point of view clearly, but has difficulty engaging in debate.</p>
	Can take part in routine formal discussion of familiar subjects which is conducted in clearly articulated speech in the standard dialect and which involves the exchange of factual information, receiving instructions or the discussion of solutions to practical problems.
A2	<p>Can generally follow changes of topic in formal discussion related to his/her field which is conducted slowly and clearly.</p> <p>Can exchange relevant information and give his/her opinion on practical problems when asked directly, provided he/she receives some help with formulation and can ask for repetition of key points if necessary.</p>
	Can say what he/she thinks about things when addressed directly in a formal meeting, provided he/she can ask for repetition of key points if necessary.
A1	<i>No descriptors available</i>

Note: The descriptors on this sub-scale have not been empirically calibrated with the measurement model.

	GOAL-ORIENTED CO-OPERATION (e.g. Repairing a car, discussing a document, organising an event)
C2	<i>As B2</i>
C1	<i>As B2</i>
B2	<p>Can understand detailed instructions reliably.</p> <p>Can help along the progress of the work by inviting others to join in, say what they think etc.</p> <p>Can outline an issue or a problem clearly, speculating about causes or consequences, and weighing advantages and disadvantages of different approaches.</p>
B1	<p>Can follow what is said, though he/she may occasionally has to ask for repetition or clarification if the other people's talk is rapid or extended.</p> <p>Can explain why something is a problem, discuss what to do next, compare and contrast alternatives.</p> <p>Can give brief comments on the views of others.</p>
	<p>Can generally follow what is said and, when necessary, can repeat back part of what someone has said to confirm mutual understanding.</p> <p>Can make his/her opinions and reactions understood as regards possible solutions or the question of what to do next, giving brief reasons and explanations.</p> <p>Can invite others to give their views on how to proceed.</p>
A2	<p>Can understand enough to manage simple, routine tasks without undue effort, asking very simply for repetition when he/she does not understand.</p> <p>Can discuss what to do next, making and responding to suggestions, asking for and giving directions.</p>
	<p>Can indicate when he/she is following and can be made to understand what is necessary, if the speaker takes the trouble.</p> <p>Can communicate in simple and routine tasks using simple phrases to ask for and provide things, to get simple information and to discuss what to do next.</p>
A1	<p>Can understand questions and instructions addressed carefully and slowly to him/her and follow short, simple directions.</p> <p>Can ask people for things, and give people things.</p>

	TRANSACTIONS TO OBTAIN GOODS AND SERVICES
C2	<i>As B2</i>
C1	<i>As B2</i>
B2	<p>Can cope linguistically to negotiate a solution to a dispute like an undeserved traffic ticket, financial responsibility for damage in a flat, for blame regarding an accident.</p> <p>Can outline a case for compensation, using persuasive language to demand satisfaction and state clearly the limits to any concession he/she is prepared to make.</p>
	<p>Can explain a problem which has arisen and make it clear that the provider of the service/customer must make a concession.</p>

	TRANSACTIONS TO OBTAIN GOODS AND SERVICES (continued)
B1	<p>Can deal with most transactions likely to arise whilst travelling, arranging travel or accommodation, or dealing with authorities during a foreign visit.</p> <p>Can cope with less routine situations in shops, post office, bank, e.g. returning an unsatisfactory purchase. Can make a complaint.</p> <p>Can deal with most situations likely to arise when making travel arrangements through an agent or when actually travelling, e.g., asking passenger where to get off for unfamiliar destination.</p>
A2	<p>Can deal with common aspects of everyday living such as travel, lodgings, eating and shopping.</p> <p>Can get all the information needed from a tourist office, as long as it is of a straightforward, non specialised nature.</p>
	<p>Can ask for and provide everyday goods and services.</p> <p>Can get simple information about travel, use public transport: buses, trains, and taxis, ask and give directions, and buy tickets.</p> <p>Can ask about things and make simple transactions in shops, post offices or banks.</p> <p>Can give and receive information about quantities, numbers, prices etc.</p> <p>Can make simple purchases by stating what is wanted and asking the price.</p> <p>Can order a meal.</p>
A1	<p>Can ask people for things and give people things.</p> <p>Can handle numbers, quantities, cost and time.</p>

	INFORMATION EXCHANGE
C2	<i>As B2</i>
C1	<i>As B2</i>
B2	<p>Can understand and exchange complex information and advice on the full range of matters related to his/her occupational role.</p>
	<p>Can pass on detailed information reliably.</p> <p>Can give a clear, detailed description of how to carry out a procedure.</p> <p>Can synthesise and report information and arguments from a number of sources.</p>
B1	<p>Can exchange, check and confirm accumulated factual information on familiar routine and non-routine matters within his/her field with some confidence.</p> <p>Can describe how to do something, giving detailed instructions.</p> <p>Can summarise and give his/her opinion about a short story, article, talk, discussion interview, or documentary and answer further questions of detail.</p>
	<p>Can find out and pass on straightforward factual information.</p> <p>Can ask for and follow detailed directions</p> <p>Can obtain more detailed information.</p>

	INFORMATION EXCHANGE (continued)
A2	<p>Can understand enough to manage simple, routine exchanges without undue effort.</p> <p>Can deal with practical everyday demands: finding out and passing on straightforward factual information.</p> <p>Can ask and answer questions about habits and routines.</p> <p>Can ask and answer questions about pastimes and past activities.</p> <p>Can give and follow simple directions and instructions e.g. explain how to get somewhere.</p>
	<p>Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information.</p> <p>Can exchange limited information on familiar and routine operational matters</p> <p>Can ask and answer questions about what they do at work and in free time</p> <p>Can ask for and give directions referring to a map or plan.</p> <p>Can ask for and provide personal information.</p>
A1	<p>Can understand questions and instructions addressed carefully and slowly to him/her and follow short, simple directions.</p> <p>Can ask and answer simple questions, initiate and respond to simple statements in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.</p> <p>Can ask and answer questions about themselves and other people, where they live, people they know, things they have.</p> <p>Can indicate time by such phrases as next week, last Friday, in November, three o' clock.</p>

	INTERVIEWING AND BEING INTERVIEWED
C2	Can keep up his/her side of the dialogue extremely well, structuring the talk and interacting authoritatively with complete fluency as interviewer or interviewee, at no disadvantage to a native speaker.
C1	Can participate fully in an interview, as either interviewer or interviewee, expanding and developing the point being discussed fluently without any support, and handling interjections well.
B2	Can carry out an effective, fluent interview, departing spontaneously from prepared questions, following up and probing interesting replies.
	Can take initiatives in an interview, expand and develop ideas with little help or prodding from an interviewer.
B1	Can provide concrete information required in an interview/consultation (e.g. describe symptoms to a doctor) but does so with limited precision.
	<p>Can carry out a prepared interview, checking and confirming information, though he/she may occasionally have to ask for repetition if the other person's response is rapid or extended.</p> <p>Can take some initiatives in an interview/consultation (e.g. to bring up a new subject) but is very dependent on interviewer in the interaction.</p> <p>Can use a prepared questionnaire to carry out a structured interview, with some spontaneous follow up questions.</p>

	INTERVIEWING AND BEING INTERVIEWED (continued)
A2	Can make him/herself understood in an interview and communicating ideas and information on familiar topics, provided he/she can ask for clarification occasionally, and is given some help to express what he/she wants to.
	Can answer simple questions and respond to simple statements in an interview.
A1	Can reply in an interview to simple direct questions spoken very slowly and clearly in direct non-idiomatic speech about personal details.

Spoken production

	OVERALL ORAL PRODUCTION
C2	Can produce clear, smoothly-flowing well-structured speech with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.
C1	Can give clear, detailed descriptions and presentations on complex subjects, integrating sub themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.
B2	Can give clear, systematically developed descriptions and presentations, with appropriate highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail.
	Can give clear, detailed descriptions and presentations on a wide range of subjects related to his/her field of interest, expanding and supporting ideas with subsidiary points and relevant examples.
B1	Can reasonably fluently sustain a straightforward description of one of a variety of subjects within his/her field of interest, presenting it as a linear sequence of points.
A2	Can give a simple description or presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines, likes/dislikes etc. as a short series of simple phrases and sentences linked into a list.
A1	Can produce simple mainly isolated phrases about people and places..

	SUSTAINED MONOLOGUE: Describing Experience
C2	Can give clear, smoothly-flowing, elaborate and often memorable descriptions.
C1	Can give clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects.
	Can give elaborate descriptions and narratives, integrating sub themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.
B2	Can give clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to his/her field of interest.

	SUSTAINED MONOLOGUE: Describing Experience (continued)
B1	<p>Can give straightforward descriptions on a variety of familiar subjects within his/her field of interest.</p> <p>Can reasonably fluently relate a straightforward narrative or description as a linear sequence of points. Can give detailed accounts of experiences, describing feelings and reactions.</p> <p>Can relate details of unpredictable occurrences, e.g., an accident.</p> <p>Can relate the plot of a book or film and describe his/her reactions.</p> <p>Can describe dreams, hopes and ambitions.</p> <p>Can describe events, real or imagined.</p> <p>Can narrate a story.</p>
A2	<p>Can tell a story or describe something in a simple list of points. Can describe everyday aspects of his/her environment e.g. people, places, a job or study experience.</p> <p>Can give short, basic descriptions of events and activities.</p> <p>Can describe plans and arrangements, habits and routines, past activities and personal experiences.</p> <p>Can use simple descriptive language to make brief statements about and compare objects and possessions.</p> <p>Can explain what he/she likes or dislikes about something.</p>
	<p>Can describe his/her family, living conditions, educational background, present or most recent job.</p> <p>Can describe people, places and possessions in simple terms.</p>
A1	Can describe him/herself, what he/she does and where he/she lives.

	SUSTAINED MONOLOGUE: Putting a Case (e.g. in a Debate)
C2	<i>No descriptor available</i>
C1	<i>No descriptor available</i>
B2	<p>Can develop an argument systematically with appropriate highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail.</p> <p>Can develop a clear argument, expanding and supporting his/her points of view at some length with subsidiary points and relevant examples.</p> <p>Can construct a chain of reasoned argument.</p> <p>Can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.</p>
B1	<p>Can develop an argument well enough to be followed without difficulty most of the time.</p> <p>Can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions, plans and actions.</p>
A2	<i>No descriptor available</i>
A1	<i>No descriptor available</i>

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS	
C2	<i>No descriptor available</i>
C1	Can deliver announcements fluently, almost effortlessly, using stress and intonation to convey finer shades of meaning precisely.
B2	Can deliver announcements on most general topics with a degree of clarity, fluency and spontaneity which causes no strain or inconvenience to the listener.
B1	Can deliver short, rehearsed announcements on a topic pertinent to everyday occurrences in his/her field which, despite possibly very foreign stress and intonation, are nevertheless clearly intelligible.
A2	Can deliver very short, rehearsed announcements of predictable, learnt content which are intelligible to listeners who are prepared to concentrate.
A1	<i>No descriptor available</i>

Note: The descriptors on this sub-scale have not been empirically calibrated.

ADDRESSING AUDIENCES	
C2	Can present a complex topic confidently and articulately to an audience unfamiliar with it, structuring and adapting the talk flexibly to meet the audience's needs. Can handle difficult and even hostile questioning
C1	Can give a clear, well-structured presentation of a complex subject, expanding and supporting points of view at some length with subsidiary points, reasons and relevant examples. Can handle interjections well, responding spontaneously and almost effortlessly.
B2	Can give a clear, systematically developed presentation, with highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail. Can depart spontaneously from a prepared text and follow up interesting points raised by members of the audience, often showing remarkable fluency and ease of expression. Can give a clear, prepared presentation, giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view and giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options. Can take a series of follow up questions with a degree of fluency and spontaneity which poses no strain for either him/herself or the audience.
B1	Can give a prepared straightforward presentation on a familiar topic within his/her field which is clear enough to be followed without difficulty most of the time, and in which the main points are explained with reasonable precision. Can take follow up questions, but may have to ask for repetition if the speech was rapid.
A2	Can give a short, rehearsed presentation on a topic pertinent to his/her everyday life, briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions, plans and actions. Can cope with a limited number of straightforward follow up questions. Can give a short, rehearsed, basic presentation on a familiar subject. Can answer straightforward follow up questions if he/she can ask for repetition and if some help with the formulation of his/her reply is possible.
A1	Can read a very short, rehearsed statement - e.g. to introduce a speaker, propose a toast.

Note: The descriptors on this sub-scale have been created by recombining elements of descriptors from other scales

Written interaction

	OVERALL WRITTEN INTERACTION
C2	<i>As C1</i>
C1	Can express him/herself with clarity and precision, relating to the addressee flexibly and effectively.
B2	Can express news and views effectively in writing, and relate to those of others.
B1	Can convey information and ideas on abstract as well as concrete topics, check information and ask about or explain problems with reasonable precision.
	Can write personal letters and notes asking for or conveying simple information of immediate relevance, getting across the point he/she feels to be important
A2	Can write short, simple formulaic notes relating to matters in areas of immediate need.
A1	Can ask for or pass on personal details in written form

	CORRESPONDENCE
C2	<i>As C1</i>
C1	Can express him/herself with clarity and precision in personal correspondence, using language flexibly and effectively, including emotional, allusive and joking usage.
B2	Can write letters conveying degrees of emotion and highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences and commenting on the correspondent's news and views.
B1	Can write personal letters giving news and expressing thoughts about abstract or cultural topics such as music, films.
	Can write personal letters describing experiences, feelings and events in some detail.
A2	Can write very simple personal letters expressing thanks and apology.
A1	Can write a short simple postcard

	NOTES, MESSAGES & FORMS
C2	<i>As B1</i>
C1	<i>As B1</i>
B2	<i>As B1</i>
B1	Can take messages communicating enquiries, explaining problems.
	Can write notes conveying simple information of immediate relevance to friends, service people, teachers and others who feature in his/her everyday life, getting across comprehensibly the points he/she feels are important.
A2	Can take a short, simple message provided he/she can ask for repetition and reformulation.
	Can write short, simple notes and messages relating to matters in areas of immediate need.
A1	Can write numbers and dates, own name, nationality, address, age, date of birth or arrival in the country etc. such as on a hotel registration form.

Written production

	OVERALL WRITTEN PRODUCTION
C2	Can write clear, smoothly-flowing, complex texts in an appropriate and effective style and a logical structure which helps the reader to find significant points.
C1	Can write clear, well-structured texts on complex subjects, underlining the relevant salient issues, expanding and supporting points of view at some length with subsidiary points, reasons and relevant examples, and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.
B2	Can write clear, detailed texts on a variety of subjects related to his/her field of interest, synthesising and evaluating information and arguments from a number of sources.
B1	Can write straightforward connected texts on a range of familiar subjects within his/her field of interest, by linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence.
A2	Can write a series of simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like "and", "but" and "because".
A1	Can write simple isolated phrases and sentences.

Note: The descriptors on this scale and on the two sub-scales which follow (Creative Writing; Reports and Essays) have not been empirically calibrated with the measurement model. The descriptors for these three scales have therefore been created by recombining elements of descriptors from other scales.

	CREATIVE WRITING
C2	Can write clear, smoothly-flowing, and fully engrossing stories and descriptions of experience in a style appropriate to the genre adopted.
C1	Can write clear, detailed, well-structured and developed descriptions and imaginative texts in an assured, personal, natural style appropriate to the reader in mind.
B2	Can write clear, detailed descriptions of real or imaginary events and experiences marking the relationship between ideas in clear connected text, and following established conventions of the genre concerned.
	Can write clear, detailed descriptions on a variety of subjects related to his/her field of interest. Can write a review of a film, book or play.
B1	Can write straightforward, detailed descriptions on a range of familiar subjects within his/her field of interest.
	Can write accounts of experiences, describing feelings and reactions in simple connected text.
	Can write a description of an event, a recent trip - real or imagined.
	Can narrate a story .

	CREATIVE WRITING (continued)
A2	Can write about everyday aspects of his/her environment e.g. people, places, a job or study experience in linked sentences.
	Can write very short, basic descriptions of events, past activities and personal experiences.
	Can write a series of simple phrases and sentences about their family, living conditions, educational background, present or most recent job. Can write short, simple imaginary biographies and simple poems about people.
A1	Can write simple phrases and sentences about themselves and imaginary people, where they live and what they do .

	REPORTS AND ESSAYS
C2	Can produce clear, smoothly-flowing, complex reports, articles or essays which present a case, or give critical appreciation of proposals or literary works. Can provide an appropriate and effective logical structure which helps the reader to find significant points.
C1	Can write clear, well-structured expositions of complex subjects, underlining the relevant salient issues. Can expand and support points of view at some length with subsidiary points, reasons and relevant examples.
B2	Can write an essay or report which develops an argument systematically with appropriate highlighting of significant points and relevant supporting detail. Can evaluate different ideas or solutions to a problem.
	Can write an essay or report which develops an argument, giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view and explaining the advantages and disadvantages of various options. Can synthesise information and arguments from a number of sources.
B1	Can write short, simple essays on topics of interest. Can summarise, report and give his/her opinion about accumulated factual information on familiar routine and non-routine matters within his/her field with some confidence.
	Can write very brief, reports to a standard conventionalised format, which pass on routine factual information and state reasons for actions.
A2	<i>No descriptor available</i>
A1	<i>No descriptor available</i>

Appendix 2

Self-assessment checklists from the Swiss version of the European Language Portfolio

These checklists are based on the common reference levels elaborated in the *Common European Framework*; they are thus closely related to the illustrative scales set out in Appendix 1.

The Swiss ELP explains that the checklists can be used in two ways: (i) to review one's overall proficiency in a particular language prior to updating one's language passport at the beginning or end of an extended period of learning; and (ii) to monitor one's learning progress, perhaps in relation to a particular skill or skills.

Like the illustrative scales, the checklists can also be used to plan a course of learning and to identify appropriate learning tasks.

Self-assessment Checklist

Language: _____

Use this checklist to record what you think you can do (Column 1). Ask someone else, for example your teacher, to also assess what they think you can do (Column 2). Use Column 3 to mark those things that you cannot yet do which you feel are important for you (Column 3 = Objectives). Add to the list – perhaps with your teacher – other things that you can do, or that are important for your language learning at this level.

Use the following symbols:

In columns 1 and 2

✓ I can do this under normal circumstances

✓✓ I can do this easily

In column 3

! This is an objective for me

!! This is a priority for me

If you have over 80% of the points ticked, you have probably reached Level A1.



Listening

I can understand when someone speaks very slowly to me and articulates carefully, with long pauses for me to assimilate meaning.

I can understand simple directions how to get from X to Y, by foot or public transport.

I can understand questions and instructions addressed carefully and slowly to me and follow short, simple directions.

I can understand numbers, prices and times.



Reading

I can understand information about people (place of residence, age, etc.) in newspapers.

I can locate a concert or a film on calendars of public events or posters and identify where it takes place and at what time it starts.

I can understand a questionnaire (entry permit form, hotel registration form) well enough to give the most important information about myself (name, surname, date of birth, nationality).

I can understand words and phrases on signs encountered in everyday life (for instance "station", "car park", "no parking", "no smoking", "keep left").

I can understand the most important orders in a computer programme such as "PRINT", "SAVE", "COPY", etc.

I can follow short simple written directions (e.g. how to go from X to Y).

I can understand short simple messages on postcards, for example holiday greetings.

In everyday situations I can understand simple messages written by friends or colleagues, for example "back at 4 o'clock".



Spoken Interaction

I can introduce somebody and use basic greeting and leave-taking expressions.

I can ask and answer simple questions, initiate and respond to simple statements in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.

I can make myself understood in a simple way but I am dependent on my partner being prepared to repeat more slowly and rephrase what I say and to help me to say what I want.

I can make simple purchases where pointing or other gestures can support what I say.

I can handle numbers, quantities, cost and time.

I can ask people for things and give people things.

I can ask people questions about where they live, people they know, things they have, etc. and answer such questions addressed to me provided they are articulated slowly and clearly.

I can indicate time by such phrases as "next week", "last Friday", "in November", "three o'clock".

Use the following symbols:

In columns 1 and 2

✓ *I can do this under normal circumstances*

✓✓ *I can do this easily*

In column 3

! *This is an objective for me*

!! *This is a priority for me*

If you have over 80% of the points ticked, you have probably reached Level A1.



	Me	My teacher/another	My objectives
Spoken Production	1	2	3
I can give personal information (address, telephone number, nationality, age, family, and hobbies)			
I can describe where I live.			
Strategies	1	2	3
I can say when I don't understand.			
I can very simply ask somebody to repeat what they said.			
I can very simply ask somebody to speak more slowly.			
Writing	1	2	3
I can fill in a questionnaire with my personal details (job, age, address, hobbies).			
I can write a greeting card, for instance a birthday card.			
I can write a simple postcard (for example with holiday greetings).			
I can write a note to tell somebody where I am or where we are to meet.			
I can write sentences and simple phrases about myself, for example where I live and what I do.			



Self-assessment Checklist

Language: _____

Use this checklist to record what you think you can do (Column 1). Ask someone else, for example your teacher, to also assess what they think you can do (Column 2). Use Column 3 to mark those things that you cannot yet do which you feel are important for you (Column 3 = Objectives). Add to the list – perhaps with your teacher – other things that you can do, or that are important for your language learning at this level.

Use the following symbols:




In columns 1 and 2

- ✓ I can do this under normal circumstances
- ✓✓ I can do this easily

In column 3

- ! This is an objective for me
- !! This is a priority for me

If you have over 80% of the points ticked, you have probably reached Level A2.

	Me	My teacher/another	My objectives
 Listening	1	2	3
I can understand what is said clearly, slowly and directly to me in simple everyday conversation; it is possible to make me understand, if the speaker can take the trouble.			
I can generally identify the topic of discussion around me when people speak slowly and clearly.			
I can understand phrases, words and expressions related to areas of most immediate priority (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 essential information in short recorded passages dealing with predictable everyday matters which are spoken slowly and clearly.			
I can identify the main point of TV news items reporting events, accidents etc. when the visual supports the commentary.			
 Reading	1	2	3
I can identify important information in news summaries or simple newspaper articles in which numbers and names play an important role and which are clearly structured and illustrated.			
I can understand a simple personal letter in which the writer tells or asks me about aspects of everyday life.			
I can understand simple written messages from friends or colleagues, for example saying when we should meet to play football or asking me to be at work early.			
I can find the most important information on leisure time activities, exhibitions, etc. in information leaflets.			
I can skim small advertisements in newspapers, locate the heading or column I want and identify the most important pieces of information (price and size of apartments, cars, computers).			
I can understand simple user's instructions for equipment (for example, a public telephone).			
I can understand feedback messages or simple help indications in computer programmes.			
I can understand short narratives about everyday things dealing with topics which are familiar to me if the text is written in simple language.			
 Spoken Interaction	1	2	3
I can make simple transactions in shops, post offices or banks.			
I can use public transport : buses, trains, and taxis, ask for basic information and buy tickets.			
I can get simple information about travel.			
I can order something to eat or drink.			
I can make simple purchases by stating what I want and asking the price.			
I can ask for and give directions referring to a map or plan.			
I can ask how people are and react to news.			
I can make and respond to invitations.			

Use the following symbols:

In columns 1 and 2

✓ I can do this under normal circumstances



✓✓ I can do this easily

In column 3

! This is an objective for me

!! This is a priority for me

If you have over 80% of the points ticked, you have probably reached Level A1.

	Me	My teacher/another	My objectives
I can make and accept apologies.			
I can say what I like and dislike.			
I can discuss with other people what to do, where to go and make arrangements to meet.			
I can ask people questions about what they do at work and in free time, and answer such questions addressed to me.			
 Spoken Production	1	2	3
I can describe myself, my family and other people.			
I can describe where I live.			
I can give short, basic descriptions of events.			
I can describe my educational background, my present or most recent job.			
I can describe my hobbies and interests in a simple way.			
I can describe past activities and personal experiences (e.g. the last weekend, my last holiday).			
Strategies	1	2	3
I can ask for attention.			
I can indicate when I am following.			
I can very simply ask somebody to repeat what they said.			
Language Quality	1	2	3
I can make myself understood using memorised phrases and single expressions.			
I can link groups of words with simple connectors like "and", "but" and "because".			
I can use some simple structures correctly.			
I have a sufficient vocabulary for coping with simple everyday situations.			
 Writing	1	2	3
I can write short, simple notes and messages.			
I can describe an event in simple sentences and report what happened when and where (for example a party or an accident).			
I can write about aspects of my everyday life in simple phrases and sentences (people, places, job, school, family, hobbies).			
I can fill in a questionnaire giving an account of my educational background, my job, my interests and my specific skills.			
I can briefly introduce myself in a letter with simple phrases and sentences (family, school, job, hobbies).			
I can write a short letter using simple expressions for greeting, addressing, asking or thanking somebody.			
I can write simple sentences, connecting them with words such as "and", "but", "because".			
I can use the most important connecting words to indicate the chronological order of events (first, then, after, later).			

Self-assessment Checklist

Language: _____

Use this checklist to record what you think you can do (Column 1). Ask someone else, for example your teacher, to also assess what they think you can do (Column 2). Use Column 3 to mark those things that you cannot yet do which you feel are important for you (Column 3 = Objectives).
Add to the list – perhaps with your teacher – other things that you can do, or that are important for your language learning at this level.

Use the following symbols:

In columns 1 and 2

✓ I can do this under normal circumstances

✓✓ I can do this easily

In column 3

! This is an objective for me

!! This is a priority for me

If you have over 80% of the points ticked, you have probably reached Level B1.



Listening

I can follow clearly articulated speech directed at me in everyday conversation, though I sometimes have to ask for repetition of particular words and phrases.

I can generally follow the main points of extended discussion around me, provided speech is clearly articulated in standard dialect.

I can listen to a short narrative and form hypotheses about what will happen next.

I can understand the main points of radio news bulletins and simpler recorded material on topics of personal interest delivered relatively slowly and clearly.

I can catch the main points in TV programmes on familiar topics when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.

I can understand simple technical information, such as operating instructions for everyday equipment.



Reading

I can understand the main points in short newspaper articles about current and familiar topics.

I can read columns or interviews in newspapers and magazines in which someone takes a stand on a current topic or event and understand the overall meaning of the text.

I can guess the meaning of single unknown words from the context thus deducing the meaning of expressions if the topic is familiar.

I can skim short texts (for example news summaries) and find relevant facts and information (for example who has done what and where).

I can understand the most important information in short simple everyday information brochures.

I can understand simple messages and standard letters (for example from businesses, clubs or authorities).

In private letters I can understand those parts dealing with events, feelings and wishes well enough to correspond regularly with a pen friend.

I can understand the plot of a clearly structured story and recognise what the most important episodes and events are and what is significant about them.



Spoken Interaction

I can start, maintain and close simple face-to-face conversation on topics that are familiar or of personal interest.

I can maintain a conversation or discussion but may sometimes be difficult to follow when trying to say exactly what I would like to.

I can deal with most situations likely to arise when making travel arrangements through an agent or when actually travelling.

I can ask for and follow detailed directions.

I can express and respond to feelings such as surprise, happiness, sadness, interest and indifference.

	Me	My teacher/another	My objectives
	1	2	3
Listening			
I can follow clearly articulated speech directed at me in everyday conversation, though I sometimes have to ask for repetition of particular words and phrases.			
I can generally follow the main points of extended discussion around me, provided speech is clearly articulated in standard dialect.			
I can listen to a short narrative and form hypotheses about what will happen next.			
I can understand the main points of radio news bulletins and simpler recorded material on topics of personal interest delivered relatively slowly and clearly.			
I can catch the main points in TV programmes on familiar topics when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.			
I can understand simple technical information, such as operating instructions for everyday equipment.			
Reading			
I can understand the main points in short newspaper articles about current and familiar topics.			
I can read columns or interviews in newspapers and magazines in which someone takes a stand on a current topic or event and understand the overall meaning of the text.			
I can guess the meaning of single unknown words from the context thus deducing the meaning of expressions if the topic is familiar.			
I can skim short texts (for example news summaries) and find relevant facts and information (for example who has done what and where).			
I can understand the most important information in short simple everyday information brochures.			
I can understand simple messages and standard letters (for example from businesses, clubs or authorities).			
In private letters I can understand those parts dealing with events, feelings and wishes well enough to correspond regularly with a pen friend.			
I can understand the plot of a clearly structured story and recognise what the most important episodes and events are and what is significant about them.			
Spoken Interaction			
I can start, maintain and close simple face-to-face conversation on topics that are familiar or of personal interest.			
I can maintain a conversation or discussion but may sometimes be difficult to follow when trying to say exactly what I would like to.			
I can deal with most situations likely to arise when making travel arrangements through an agent or when actually travelling.			
I can ask for and follow detailed directions.			
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Use the following symbols:

In columns 1 and 2

- ✓ I can do this under normal circumstances
- ✓✓ I can do this easily

In column 3

- ! This is an objective for me
- !! This is a priority for me

If you have over 80% of the points ticked, you have probably reached Level A1.



Spoken Production

I can narrate a story.

I can give detailed accounts of experiences, describing feelings and reactions.

I can describe dreams, hopes and ambitions.

I can explain and give reasons for my plans, intentions and actions.

I can relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.

I can paraphrase short written passages orally in a simple fashion, using the original text wording and ordering.

Strategies

I can repeat back part of what someone has said to confirm that we understand each other.

I can ask someone to clarify or elaborate what they have just said.

When I can't think of the word I want, I can use a simple word meaning something similar and invite "correction".

Language Quality

I can keep a conversation going comprehensibly, but have to pause to plan and correct what I am saying – especially when I talk freely for longer periods.

I can convey simple information of immediate relevance, getting across which point I feel is most important.

I have a sufficient vocabulary to express myself with some circumlocutions on most topics pertinent to my everyday life such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel, and current events.

I can express myself reasonably accurately in familiar, predictable situations.



Writing

I can write simple connected texts on a range of topics within my field of interest and can express personal views and opinions.

I can write simple texts about experiences or events, for example about a trip, for a school newspaper or a club newsletter.

I can write personal letters to friends or acquaintances asking for or giving them news and narrating events.

I can describe in a personal letter the plot of a film or a book or give an account of a concert.

In a letter I can express feelings such as grief, happiness, interest, regret and sympathy.

I can reply in written form to advertisements and ask for more complete or more specific information about products (for example a car or an academic course).

I can convey – via fax, e-mail or a circular – short simple factual information to friends or colleagues or ask for information in such a way.

I can write my CV in summary form.

	Me	My teacher/another	My objectives
I can give or seek personal views and opinions in an informal discussion with friends.			
I can agree and disagree politely.			
Spoken Production	1	2	3
I can narrate a story.			
I can give detailed accounts of experiences, describing feelings and reactions.			
I can describe dreams, hopes and ambitions.			
I can explain and give reasons for my plans, intentions and actions.			
I can relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.			
I can paraphrase short written passages orally in a simple fashion, using the original text wording and ordering.			
Strategies	1	2	3
I can repeat back part of what someone has said to confirm that we understand each other.			
I can ask someone to clarify or elaborate what they have just said.			
When I can't think of the word I want, I can use a simple word meaning something similar and invite "correction".			
Language Quality	1	2	3
I can keep a conversation going comprehensibly, but have to pause to plan and correct what I am saying – especially when I talk freely for longer periods.			
I can convey simple information of immediate relevance, getting across which point I feel is most important.			
I have a sufficient vocabulary to express myself with some circumlocutions on most topics pertinent to my everyday life such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel, and current events.			
I can express myself reasonably accurately in familiar, predictable situations.			
Writing	1	2	3
I can write simple connected texts on a range of topics within my field of interest and can express personal views and opinions.			
I can write simple texts about experiences or events, for example about a trip, for a school newspaper or a club newsletter.			
I can write personal letters to friends or acquaintances asking for or giving them news and narrating events.			
I can describe in a personal letter the plot of a film or a book or give an account of a concert.			
In a letter I can express feelings such as grief, happiness, interest, regret and sympathy.			
I can reply in written form to advertisements and ask for more complete or more specific information about products (for example a car or an academic course).			
I can convey – via fax, e-mail or a circular – short simple factual information to friends or colleagues or ask for information in such a way.			
I can write my CV in summary form.			

Self-assessment Checklist

Language: _____

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Add to the list – perhaps with your teacher – other things that you can do, or that are important for your language learning at this level.

Use the following symbols:

In columns 1 and 2

✓ I can do this under normal circumstances

✓✓ I can do this easily

In column 3

! This is an objective for me

!! This is a priority for me

If you have over 80% of the points ticked, you have probably reached Level B2.



Listening

	Me	My teacher/another	My objectives
	1	2	3
I can understand in detail what is said to me in standard spoken language even in a noisy environment.			
I can follow a lecture or talk within my own field, provided the subject matter is familiar and the presentation straightforward and clearly structured.			
I can understand most radio documentaries delivered in standard language and can identify the speaker's mood, tone etc.			
I can understand TV documentaries, live interviews, talk shows, plays and the majority of films in standard dialect.			
I can understand the main ideas of complex speech on both concrete and abstract topics delivered in a standard dialect, including technical discussions in my field of specialisation.			
I can use a variety of strategies to achieve comprehension, including listening for main points; checking comprehension by using contextual clues.			



Reading

	1	2	3
I can rapidly grasp the content and the significance of news, articles and reports on topics connected with my interests or my job, and decide if a closer reading is worthwhile.			
I can read and understand articles and reports on current problems in which the writers express specific attitudes and points of view.			
I can understand in detail texts within my field of interest or the area of my academic or professional speciality.			
I can understand specialised articles outside my own field if I can occasionally check with a dictionary.			
I can read reviews dealing with the content and criticism of cultural topics (films, theatre, books, concerts) and summarise the main points.			
I can read letters on topics within my areas of academic or professional speciality or interest and grasp the most important points.			
I can quickly look through a manual (for example for a computer program) and find and understand the relevant explanations and help for a specific problem.			
I can understand in a narrative or play the motives for the characters' actions and their consequences for the development of the plot.			



Spoken Interaction

	1	2	3
I can initiate, maintain and end discourse naturally with effective turn-taking.			
I can exchange considerable quantities of detailed factual information on matters within my fields of interest.			
I can convey degrees of emotion and highlight the personal significance of events and experiences.			
I can engage in extended conversation in a clearly participatory fashion on most general topics.			

Use the following symbols:

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✓✓ I can do this easily

In column 3

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!! This is a priority for me

If you have over 80% of the points ticked, you have probably reached Level A1.

	Me	My teacher/another	My objectives
I can account for and sustain my opinions in discussion by providing relevant explanations, arguments and comments.			
I can help a discussion along on familiar ground confirming comprehension, inviting others in, etc.			
I can carry out a prepared interview, checking and confirming information, following up interesting replies.			
Spoken Production	1	2	3
I can give clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my fields of interest.			
I can understand and summarise orally short extracts from news items, interviews or documentaries containing opinions, argument and discussion.			
I can understand and summarise orally the plot and sequence of events in an extract from a film or play.			
I can construct a chain of reasoned argument, linking my ideas logically.			
I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.			
I can speculate about causes, consequences, hypothetical situations.			
Strategies	1	2	3
I can use standard phrases like "That's a difficult question to answer" to gain time and keep the turn while formulating what to say.			
I can make a note of "favourite mistakes" and consciously monitor speech for them.			
I can generally correct slips and errors if I become aware of them or if they have led to misunderstandings.			
Language Quality	1	2	3
I can produce stretches of language with a fairly even tempo; although I can be hesitant as I search for expressions, there are few noticeably long pauses.			
I can pass on detailed information reliably.			
I have sufficient vocabulary to express myself on matters connected to my field and on most general topics.			
I can communicate with reasonable accuracy and can correct mistakes if they have led to misunderstandings.			
Writing	1	2	3
I can write clear and detailed texts (compositions, reports or texts of presentations) on various topics related to my field of interest.			
I can write summaries of articles on topics of general interest.			
I can summarise information from different sources and media.			
I can discuss a topic in a composition or "letter to the editor", giving reasons for or against a specific point of view.			
I can develop an argument systematically in a composition or report, emphasising decisive points and including supporting details.			
I can write about events and real or fictional experiences in a detailed and easily readable way.			
I can write a short review of a film or a book.			
I can express in a personal letter different feelings and attitudes and can report the news of the day making clear what – in my opinion – are the important aspects of an event.			

Self-assessment Checklist

Language: _____

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✓✓ I can do this easily

In column 3

! This is an objective for me

!! This is a priority for me

If you have over 80% of the points ticked, you have probably reached Level C1.



Listening

- I can follow extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly.
- I can understand a wide range of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms, appreciating shifts in style and register.
- I can extract specific information from even poor quality, audibly distorted public announcements, e.g. in a station, sports stadium etc.
- I can understand complex technical information, such as operating instructions, specifications for familiar products and services.
- I can understand lectures, talks and reports in my field of professional or academic interest even when they are propositionally and linguistically complex.
- I can without too much effort understand films which contain a considerable degree of slang and idiomatic usage.



Reading

- I can understand fairly long demanding texts and summarise them orally.
- I can read complex reports, analyses and commentaries where opinions, viewpoints and connections are discussed.
- I can extract information, ideas and opinions from highly specialised texts in my own field, for example research reports.
- I can understand long complex instructions, for example for the use of a new piece of equipment, even if these are not related to my job or field of interest, provided I have enough time to reread them.
- I can read any correspondence with occasional use of a dictionary.
- I can read contemporary literary texts with ease.
- I can go beyond the concrete plot of a narrative and grasp implicit meanings, ideas and connections.
- I can recognise the social, political or historical background of a literary work.



Spoken Interaction

- I can keep up with an animated conversation between native speakers.
- I can use the language fluently, accurately and effectively on a wide range of general, professional or academic topics.
- I can use language flexibly and effectively for social purposes, including emotional, allusive and joking usage.
- I can express my ideas and opinions clearly and precisely, and can present and respond to complex lines of reasoning convincingly.

	Me	My teacher/another	My objectives
	1	2	3
Listening			
I can follow extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly.			
I can understand a wide range of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms, appreciating shifts in style and register.			
I can extract specific information from even poor quality, audibly distorted public announcements, e.g. in a station, sports stadium etc.			
I can understand complex technical information, such as operating instructions, specifications for familiar products and services.			
I can understand lectures, talks and reports in my field of professional or academic interest even when they are propositionally and linguistically complex.			
I can without too much effort understand films which contain a considerable degree of slang and idiomatic usage.			
Reading			
I can understand fairly long demanding texts and summarise them orally.			
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I can read any correspondence with occasional use of a dictionary.			
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Spoken Interaction			
I can keep up with an animated conversation between native speakers.			
I can use the language fluently, accurately and effectively on a wide range of general, professional or academic topics.			
I can use language flexibly and effectively for social purposes, including emotional, allusive and joking usage.			
I can express my ideas and opinions clearly and precisely, and can present and respond to complex lines of reasoning convincingly.			

Use the following symbols:

In columns 1 and 2

✓ *I can do this under normal circumstances*

✓✓ *I can do this easily*

In column 3

! *This is an objective for me*

!! *This is a priority for me*

If you have over 80% of the points ticked, you have probably reached Level A1.



	Me	My teacher/another	My objectives
Spoken Production	1	2	3
I can give clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects.			
I can orally summarise long, demanding texts.			
I can give an extended description or account of something, integrating themes, developing particular points and concluding appropriately.			
I can give a clearly developed presentation on a subject in my fields of personal or professional interest, departing when necessary from the prepared text and following up spontaneously points raised by members of the audience.			
Strategies	1	2	3
I can use fluently a variety of appropriate expressions to preface my remarks in order to get the floor, or to gain time and keep the floor while thinking.			
I can relate own contribution skilfully to those of other speakers.			
I can substitute an equivalent term for a word I can't recall without distracting the listener.			
Language Quality	1	2	3
I can express myself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language.			
I can produce clear, smoothly-flowing, well-structured speech, showing control over ways of developing what I want to say in order to link both my ideas and my expression of them into coherent text.			
I have a good command of a broad vocabulary allowing gaps to be readily overcome with circumlocutions ; I rarely have to search obviously for expressions or compromise on saying exactly what I want to.			
I can consistently maintain a high degree of grammatical accuracy ; errors are rare and difficult to spot.			
Writing	1	2	3
I can express myself in writing on a wide range of general or professional topics in a clear and user-friendly manner.			
I can present a complex topic in a clear and well-structured way, highlighting the most important points, for example in a composition or a report.			
I can present points of view in a comment on a topic or an event, underlining the main ideas and supporting my reasoning with detailed examples.			
I can put together information from different sources and relate it in a coherent summary.			
I can give a detailed description of experiences, feelings and events in a personal letter.			
I can write formally correct letters, for example to complain or to take a stand in favour of or against something.			
I can write texts which show a high degree of grammatical correctness and vary my vocabulary and style according to the addressee, the kind of text and the topic.			
I can select a style appropriate to the reader in mind.			



Self-assessment Checklist

Language: _____

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!! This is a priority for me

If you have over 80% of the points ticked, you have probably reached Level C2.

Me	My teacher/another	My objectives
----	--------------------	---------------



Listening

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 recognise plays on words and appreciate texts whose real meaning is not explicit (for example irony, satire).

I can understand texts written in a very colloquial style and containing many idiomatic expressions or slang.

I can understand manuals, regulations and contracts even within unfamiliar fields.

I can understand contemporary and classical literary texts of different genres (poetry, prose, drama).

I can read texts such as literary columns or satirical glosses where much is said in an indirect and ambiguous way and which contain hidden value judgements.

I can recognise different stylistic means (puns, metaphors, symbols, connotations, ambiguity) and appreciate and evaluate their function within the text.



Spoken Interaction

I can take part effortlessly in all conversations and discussions with native speakers.



Spoken Production

I can summarise orally information from different sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation.

I can present ideas and viewpoints in a very flexible manner in order to give emphasis, to differentiate and to eliminate ambiguity.

Strategies

I can backtrack and restructure around a difficulty so smoothly the interlocutor is hardly aware of it.

Use the following symbols:


In columns 1 and 2

- ✓ I can do this under normal circumstances
- ✓✓ I can do this easily

In column 3

- ! This is an objective for me
- !! This is a priority for me

If you have over 80% of the points ticked, you have probably reached Level A1.

	Me	My teacher/another	My objectives
Language Quality	1	2	3
I can express myself naturally and effortlessly; I only need to pause occasionally in order to select precisely the right words.			
I can convey finer shades of meaning precisely by using, with reasonable accuracy, a wide range of expressions to qualify statements and pinpoint the extent to which something is the case.			
I have a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms with an awareness of implied meaning and meaning by association.			
I can consistently maintain grammatical control of complex language even when my attention is otherwise engaged.			
 Writing	1	2	3
I can write well-structured and easily readable reports and articles on complex topics.			
In a report or an essay I can give a complete account of a topic based on research I have carried out, make a summary of the opinions of others, and give and evaluate detailed information and facts.			
I can write a well-structured review of a paper or a project giving reasons for my opinion.			
I can write a critical review of cultural events (film, music, theatre, literature, radio, TV).			
I can write summaries of factual texts and literary works.			
I can write narratives about experiences in a clear, fluent style appropriate to the genre.			
I can write clear, well-structured complex letters in an appropriate style, for example an application or request, an offer to authorities, superiors or commercial clients.			
In a letter I can express myself in a consciously ironical, ambiguous and humorous way.			