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LANGUAGE POLICY DIVISION
STRASBOURG

**European Language Portfolio:
Strategies for dissemination in the framework of the
European Year of Languages 2001**

A seminar sponsored by the Ministry of Education of Portugal

Coimbra

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**Report by
David Little
Seminar Co-ordinator**

Thursday 28 June

Official opening

On behalf of the Director of the Bureau for European International Relations, Manuela Lopo Tuna welcomed the participants to the seminar and thanked all those whose efforts had made the seminar possible. Her words of welcome were echoed by Rui Alberto Nunes dos Santos.

Speaking on behalf of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Johanna Panthier (Language Policy Division, Council of Europe) thanked the Portuguese authorities for hosting and organizing what was an important event in the Council of Europe's calendar for 2001, the European Year of Languages: the first seminar that brought together representatives of all 43 Council of Europe member states to discuss the European Language Portfolio and the challenges posed by its widespread dissemination. She thanked the team of Portuguese organizers, Isabel Hub Faria, Glória Fischer, Helena Correia and Manuela Tuna conveyed to the participants the best wishes of Joe Sheils, Head of the Language Policy Division, Council of Europe.

Isabel Hub Faria, Portuguese co-ordinator for the European Year of Languages 2001, addressed the participants as follows:

“Ex.ma Senhora Representante do Conselho da Europa, Ex.mo Senhor Director da Direcção Regional de Educação Centro, Exmos Senhores Representantes do Ministério da Educação e da Universidade de Coimbra, Caros colegas, Dear colleagues, Dear friends,

“In the name of the Portuguese Co-ordination of the European Year of Languages, let me welcome you to Portugal and to this workshop on the dissemination of the European Language Portfolio, organized by the Council of Europe together with several departments of the Portuguese Ministry of Education and the Portuguese Executive Committee for the European Year of Languages 2001.

“Socialized human behaviour and natural languages make extensive use of metonym in order to represent a shared meaning, referring to a part of the referent that must be understood as standing for the whole that is to be represented: an exchange of look may stand for a relationship, a birthday cake with its candles may stand for the whole birthday, the postcard that you send from abroad may stand for a good memory you have of the recipient, a picture you take of an event is intended to stand for that event in the future. Making use of this symbolic device that human thought makes available to us through interaction, I suggest that the European Language Portfolio, in its inclusive relation to the *Common European Framework* of Reference, ‘stands for’ the European Year of Languages 2001.

“I must apologize to all those colleagues who for years have been deeply and daily involved in conceiving, piloting and disseminating the Portfolio if I seem to be overlooking the reality of their work in order to fly directly, for the next few minutes, to three ideological aspects that are contained in that symbolic relation I have just referred to:

“First, the *Common European Framework* of Reference and the European Language Portfolio stand for the European Year of Languages 2001 because they promote democratic citizenship as well as natural language rights, whether the languages in question are widely used internationally or restricted to a region or a particular social community, whether they are spoken or sign languages, whether they have their origin inside or outside Europe.

“In the second place, the *Common European Framework* of Reference and the European Language Portfolio stand for the European Year of Languages 2001 because they support plurilingualism, the use by individual citizens of several languages other than their mother tongue(s), not necessarily always at advanced levels of proficiency. In this way they openly challenge the traditional meanings attached to ‘knowledge of languages’ and ‘natural language usage’.

“In the third place, the *Common European Framework* of Reference and the European Language Portfolio stand for the European Year of Languages 2001 because they draw attention to a possible, desirable and necessary change of attitude towards language learning. They draw attention to the fact that all languages are equal in value and that when we learn another language we can draw on previous linguistic knowledge even as we build on direct exposure to the new language and to the particular culture it conveys. They also draw attention to the fact that language learning involves the development of a hierarchy of skills which may be evaluated by the learner him- or herself.

“This metonymic relation should not surprise us. Both the *Common European Framework of Reference* and the European Language Portfolio derive from the Council of Europe, and the initiative to put forward this European Year of Languages also came from the Council of Europe. From this point of view, it is the European Year of Languages 2001 that stands for the enormous amount of time and work that has been devoted to the European Language Portfolio and the *Common European Framework* of Reference. That is why, here in Portugal, the co-ordinators of the European Year of Languages have considered the launch of these two instruments as a priority.

“I thank you all for taking part in this event and for sharing this European Year of Languages with us. I wish you a good stay in Portugal and hope that this seminar will help your work in developing and disseminating the European Language Portfolio in your own countries.”

Elvira Florindo, Deputy Director of the Directorate of Secondary Education, Ministry of Education, identified the ability to communicate as the key to integration in European society. It was essential to help learners to understand others, she said, despite cultural and economic differences. Portugal had recently become a country of immigration, receiving newcomers from its former African colonies and from eastern Europe. This meant that Portuguese was now important not only as a mother tongue but also as a second language. The importance attached to language learning in Portugal was evident in the fact that foreign languages had been made mandatory for students of technical as well as literary subjects. Current language policy insisted on the indivisibility of language and culture.

Maria Helena Correia addressed the participants as follows:

I would like to reflect with you (although time constraints mean that I have to be brief) on the two main areas of the Council of Europe's modern languages projects: learning and teaching. Both require us to define concepts, produce programming frameworks and devise measures which will meet the needs of a target group comprising learners and teachers.

As the contexts in which we operate change, we were obliged to seek out in each project solutions to new challenges in various fields, aimed at target groups of different educational levels: primary, secondary, adults, migrants, etc.

Teachers' initial and in-service training has always cut across these levels.

The choice of priority themes and appropriate strategies and approaches has given a dynamism to the projects to which Portugal, as a member of the Council of Europe, has attempted to make its contribution. A good example is the new-style workshops which have served as a catalyst for hundreds of teachers and trainers and thousands of pupils who have participated in the school exchange schemes.

On the subject of exchanges, a need is felt to exchange not only linguistic knowledge but also knowledge of the associated cultures. In general terms, there is a growing awareness of the need to learn how to cope with the new challenges posed by globalisation.

This calls to mind the title of the Conference "Language learning for a new Europe" and the final recommendations of that conference, which included:

- combating intolerance and prejudice;
- strengthening democratic practices;
- facilitating the free movement of people and ideas in Europe.

However, mobility and a multilingual and multicultural Europe also require, for example:

- a diversification of the languages taught in schools and greater emphasis on the cultural aspects;
- life-long language learning;
- validation of school-leaving qualifications (validation of linguistic skills).

In an attempt to address these requirements, we have to put forward a clear definition of objectives, criteria and methods. This is one of the aims of the Common European Framework of Reference, a linguistic tool which, along with the European Language Portfolio, is one of the end products of the "language policies for a multilingual and multicultural Europe" project.

A great deal of thought went into both of these instruments, at various levels. In view of their characteristics, I would go so far as to say that schools – as far as languages are concerned – will never be the same again once the portfolios have been distributed. Nor will they be the same once teachers and those responsible for

education policies have grasped the value of the portfolio and the underlying philosophy of the Framework of Reference.

In my country, the Framework of Reference served as a cornerstone when the department of lower secondary education defined essential language skills.

It was also taken into account in the review of foreign language curricula in upper secondary education (the new curricula will come into effect in 2002).

Two portfolio models have been developed: the first for lower secondary education (10-15 years) and the second for upper secondary education (15-18).

This level of achievement in respect of both the Framework of Reference and the portfolios was possible thanks to the exceptional collaboration between language teachers' associations and representatives of the departments and the 7 regional education directorates, who made a significant contribution to ensuring that the conditions in the field were right for trying out the three models (primary; lower secondary (10-15 years) and secondary (15-18 years)).

Members of the working party set up by ministerial decree included representatives of the agencies I have just mentioned and also representatives of (polytechnic and university) higher education who had already drawn up their own portfolios.

Credit is also due to the Director of the Office of Foreign Affairs and International Relations, the Director of the department of lower secondary education and the Director of upper secondary education, who fully appreciated the value and significance of the process upon which we had embarked and which has culminated in a number of practical activities.

We sincerely hope that the subsequent stages, the planning for which was described earlier, will also lead to success. In other words, that the portfolios will be published and distributed and teachers given the appropriate training.

We are very happy to be among the 15 countries experimenting with the portfolios and to have completed the two models I have mentioned in time for this seminar.

Thank you for your attention.

Concluding the official opening, Francis Goullier, vice-chair of the ELP Validation Committee, briefly summarized the functions of the committee and its mode of operation.

***The European Language Portfolio: origins, structure, functions* – David Little, seminar co-ordinator**

David Little began by pointing out that this was the first seminar to bring together representatives of all member states of the Council of Europe. It thus marked the

beginning of a significant new stage in the dissemination of the European Language Portfolio.

He went on to remind participants that the Council of Europe has always stood for democracy, human rights, and the rule of law: its key instruments are the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Court of Human Rights. This explains the Council of Europe's interest in education for democratic citizenship, the promotion of cultural and linguistic diversity, and the facilitation of individual mobility. The teaching and learning of second/foreign languages plays a key role in the pursuit of this agenda.

Next David Little summarized the purpose of the *Common European Framework* (CEF) and the definitional approach adopted: "analysis of language use in terms of the *strategies* used by learners to activate *general* and *communicative competences* in order to carry out the *activities* and *processes* involved in the *production* and *reception* of *texts* and the construction of discourse dealing with particular *themes*, which enable them to fulfil the *tasks* facing them under the given *conditions and constraints* in the *situations* which arise in the various *domains* of social existence". He concluded this part of his talk by briefly outlining the common reference levels contained in the CEF.

David Little then spoke about the three components of the ELP: the *language passport*, which summarizes the owner's linguistic identity and language learning experience and achievement; the *language biography*, which is used to track the learning process – set intermediate learning goals, review progress, and record significant language learning and intercultural experiences; and the *dossier*, in which the owner collects samples of his/her work in the second/foreign languages he/she has learnt. He explained that the ELP has a *reporting function*: it presents information about the owner's experience of learning and using second/foreign languages and concrete evidence of his/her achievements; and a *pedagogical function*: it helps to make the language learning process more transparent to learners, developing their capacity for reflection and self-assessment, and thus enabling them gradually to assume more and more responsibility for their own learning

David Little concluded by drawing attention to three principal benefits of the ELP:

- *transparency* – any language curriculum that aims to develop learners' communicative proficiency can be restated in terms of the common reference levels elaborated in the CEF and included in the language passport of the ELP;
- *transferability* – because it is based on the common reference levels, the ELP facilitates "transfer" both inside and outside educational systems;
- *awareness raising and reflection* – it is fundamental to the ELP that it involves the learner in planning, monitoring and evaluating learning; the ELP can thus facilitate the development of learner autonomy.

The European Language Portfolio: from piloting to implementation – Rolf Schärer, rapporteur général for the European Language Portfolio project

Reviewing the results of the pilot projects, Rolf Schärer noted that the ELP has proved to be a valid and innovative pedagogical tool in that it addresses key educational issues and supports the aims of the Council of Europe. On this basis, the

CDCC Education Committee had recommended its widespread implementation starting in 2001.

During the pilot phase (1998–2000), projects had been conducted in 15 Council of Europe member states and by four international non-governmental organizations, and had involved some 30,000 learners and 1,800 teachers. The pilot project group had regularly discussed and monitored development, experimentation and implementation at seven international seminars.

A number of different ELP models had been developed, corresponding to different learner needs, though all of them respected a common core as laid down in the *Principles and Guidelines*. The importance of the different elements of the ELP seemed to change with the age of the learner. For very young learners the dossier seemed to be more important, for adolescents the language biography, and for adults the language passport.

The pilot phase had been long enough to show that the ELP can succeed in its pedagogical function, but not long enough to confirm its usefulness as a means of reporting language learning achievement and intercultural experience. It was also important to emphasize that although between them the pilot projects covered all educational sectors, no individual project had sought to cover the full range.

Presentation of five ELP models

Swiss, for learners aged 15+ – Christoph Flügel

Introducing the Swiss ELP, Christoph Flügel explained that it had been designed to be introduced in the last year of obligatory schooling and to meet the needs of any adult language learner. Switzerland is a multilingual society where plurilingualism and pluriculturalism are everyday realities. The language passport is in four languages – French, German, Italian and English; Romansch will shortly be added. What is more, the passport allows the owner to record competence in up to six languages.

Christoph Flügel emphasized the principles that underlie the ELP:

- It is the property of the owner (thus the Swiss ELP is clearly designed, easy to understand and easy to read).
- It values competence in any language and at any level, whether acquired at school or outside the educational system.
- It assigns a central role to learner autonomy and self-assessment, even though the latter is little practised in formal education.

Christoph Flügel concluded by appealing to participants who were new to the ELP to consider the available models and adapt what they have to offer, rather than developing their own ELP from scratch.

French, for primary learners – Christine Tagliante

Christine Tagliante explained that the piloting of the French primary ELP was now at an end and the process of dissemination had begun. This ELP had been designed by a mixed team that included teachers, teacher trainers and a design artist. It conforms to the spirit rather than the letter of the *Principles and Guidelines*, giving greatest prominence to the language biography. It aims to reconcile awareness raising and

teaching and to integrate the intercultural component of language learning. Although its presentation is deliberately ludic, resembling a board game, it proposes a variety of tasks and activities, including self-assessment. It is addressed to children, parents and educational institutions. The guidelines published with this ELP recommend that it should be used once a term. The two years of experimentation had met with an overwhelmingly favourable response. In particular the fun element in tracking language learning seemed to have a positive impact on learners' motivation.

Irish, for lower and upper secondary learners – Ema Ushioda

Ema Ushioda explained that this ELP model had been developed in the Centre for Language and Communication Studies, Trinity College Dublin, as part of a research-and-development project on learner autonomy in the second/foreign language classroom. Involving mostly teachers of French and German, the project had four principal focuses: (i) getting learners to accept responsibility for their learning, (ii) fostering the use of the target language in the classroom, (iii) helping teachers to develop their planning skills, and (iv) looking for a new way of “teaching for the exams”.

The Irish ELP has a simple language passport for use through most of lower and upper secondary, but introduces the standard adult passport towards the end of upper secondary; a language biography that emphasizes learning how to learn – planning, monitoring and evaluating the learning process; a general introduction to the Council of Europe and the ELP; and a detailed “learning how to learn” introduction to each part of the ELP. All introductory elements are in English and Irish. There is also a handbook for teachers.

The checklists of learning targets at the core of the language biography were developed by bringing the illustrative scales in the *Common European Framework* into interaction with the communicative objectives of the official curriculum for Junior Certificate (lower secondary; A1 and A2) and Leaving Certificate (upper secondary; B1 and B2). Thus teachers and learners can use this ELP to plan a course of learning that constantly has the Junior and Leaving Certificate examinations in view.

It is hoped that the Irish ELP will help learners to plan, monitor and evaluate their learning and thus become more reflective learners; encourage use of the target language in the classroom; foster the development of learners' awareness of (i) their target language(s) and (ii) the language learning process; and foster the development of learners' intercultural awareness.

Portuguese, for upper secondary learners – Glória Fischer

Glória Fischer began her presentation by recalling that until the 1970s Portugal had been a country of emigration rather than immigration. Many families left the country looking for a better living, mainly in Europe but also in Africa and America. Portugal had also been isolated from the rest of Europe – one often heard sentences like “My son is studying in Europe”, as though the Portugal were somehow detached from the rest of the continent. Now, by contrast, Portugal is fully integrated in Europe and has become a country of immigration. More than 90 different nationalities are currently

represented in Portuguese schools and there are large numbers of pupils for whom Portuguese is a second language. In this new context, the importance of the ELP as a tool for promoting plurilingualism should be self-evident.

Portugal was the last country to join the network of ELP pilot projects, which means that it was able to benefit from the experience that had already been gathered by other pilot projects. In particular the Portuguese team (which represented different departments of the Ministry of Education) was inspired by the ELPs developed in Switzerland, Germany and the United Kingdom. By now two Portuguese ELPs, for learners aged 10–15 and 15–19, are in the final phase of development; in due course a model will be developed for learners aged 6–10.

In the ELP for learners aged 10–15 the language passport draws attention not only to the languages of the Portuguese school system, like English, French, German and Spanish, but also to the languages spoken by immigrant communities. In this way the Portuguese authorities hope to raise pupils' awareness of the importance of language learning that takes place outside the educational system. The ELP for learners aged 15–19, which adopts the standard adult passport, gives a prominent place to plurilingualism and pluriculturalism in the language biography. The descriptors for self-assessment were adapted from the Swiss ELP, with the permission of the authors. They also correspond to the recommendations contained in the national syllabus for foreign languages.

UK, for the VOLL sector – John Thorogood

John Thorogood introduced the United Kingdom's ELP for the VOLL sector, developed by the Languages National Training Organization (LNTO), which is linked to the Centre for Information on Language Teaching (CILT). The pilot process had elicited positive feedback and the ELP had now been validated by the Validation Committee.

This model uses the standard adult passport, to which are added soft pages that provide comparison of language assessment scales, introductory notes to the National Vocational Qualifications system, and National Language Standards. The language biography allows the owner to assemble information on his/her language background, languages learnt inside and outside the educational system, present language learning (aims, competence achieved so far, preferred learning approaches), and contacts with different cultures. The dossier is a container for evidence of the owner's language learning achievement and contains (among other things) notes on the functions of the dossier section, notes on the use of model pages, a qualifications summary sheet, and a table for listing tasks.

The LNTO has been working to interest employers in the ELP. It hopes to disseminate the ELP via the trainers of business clients and the tutors of individual language learners.

Workshop 1: Analysis of five ELP models (Swiss, French, Irish, Portuguese, UK) taking account of the Principles and Guidelines, the Rules for Accreditation, the final report on the pilot projects, and the form that accompanies ELPs submitted for accreditation

Discussion task: Summarize the principal design challenges that you faced/will face in producing an ELP model for your particular language learning/teaching context

Infomarkt

On Thursday evening there was a plenary session in which the following presentations were made:

- The ELP in the Russian Federation (Kira Irishkhanova)
- Dissemination of the ELP in Finland (Viljo Kohonen)
- The ELP in the Netherlands (Dick Meijer and Peter Broeder)
- DIALANG and the *Common European Framework of Reference* (Sauli Takala)

In addition there was a display of

- ELPs and ELP-related materials from the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Sweden, Switzerland
- the European Year of Languages in Romania
- projects to establish centres for modern languages in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Friday 29 June

Workshop 1: reports from the working groups

Group 1 (co-ordinator: Chris van Woensel; rapporteur: Francis Goullier)

1. Difficulties related to the administrative context: problems associated with the existence of linguistic communities having an educational authority of their own.
2. The need to motivate an adequate number of teachers to:
 - devise an ELP project
 - take part in an experimental phase
 - make dissemination possible
 - = need for financial and human resources

Proposals:

- limit the number of ELP models to be developed
 - clearly identify the ELP models' target groups
3. Problems encountered in devising an ELP
 - a) modification of descriptors so that they can be
 - made easily comprehensible to users
 - adapted to syllabuses and curricula

Proposals:

- have the descriptors drawn up and tried out by teachers of different languages and from different regions

- allow them to take control of the descriptors, *but*
 - retain the reference to the Common Framework
 - not lose sight of the European dimension
 - not overlook the life-long learning angle
 - b) potential conflict between the way in which the ELP is reshaped and the formal rules for validation
 - c) assessment: the relationship with self-assessment; opportunity for more positive assessment.
- Touched on briefly:
- d) management of the large variety of different learners
 - e) achievement of the aim of plurilingualism
 - f) definition of intermediary levels

Group 2 (co-ordinator: John Thorogood; rapporteur: Kira Irishkhanova)

Secondary school ELP

ELP developers should be aware of the following design challenges:

- physical durability
- cost (who is going to pay for the ELP?)
- continuity (the number of versions covering lower and upper secondary sectors)
- principles of selecting and renewing material for the dossier
- forms of the ELP (paper and/or electronic versions)

ELP for adults and vocational learners

ELP developers in this domain might face the following challenges:

- precise definition of the target group(s)
- correlation between general descriptors and specific needs
- clearly indicated links with the curriculum
- vertical (within domains) and horizontal (across domains) continuity
- transparency of descriptors to employers

Group 3 (co-ordinator: Zita Mazouliene; rapporteur: Radka Perclová)

Design challenges

1. Price: durability and accessibility; size and design; the role of publishing houses; a compromise is necessary; a black-and-white copy that can be coloured in by children or colourful samples for teachers to show to learners.
2. Descriptors: general and specific; adapting descriptors, tailoring them to the national syllabus. How far can we depart from the CEF? (See the guide for ELP developers, pp.43–51). The backwash effect of the ELP: investigation and revision of the national syllabus. Should levels C1 and C2 be included in ELPs for secondary learners? Yes: some learners are very fluent in languages.
3. Translations of descriptors: the importance of comparability across languages.
4. Transferability into everyday classroom procedures: e.g. the learner is the owner of the ELP; when using a metaphor – going on a journey: who is the captain of the boat? what is the manoeuvring space? (authorship; encouraging learners to make an ELP that will be theirs)

5. Group to start with: depends on the particular context. Any group is equally good if in-service training is provided for teachers. What support do they need? What is the main objective of the project? What is the feasibility of the project?
6. Credibility: an ELP should provide credible evidence for politicians and decision makers.

Group 4 (co-ordinator: Edith Matzer; rapporteur: Gilbert de Samblanc)

With regard to the portfolio:

	<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Means</i>	<i>Portfolio status</i>
government	to be informed	to give time, money	although it does not replace existing assessments, it must be taken sufficiently seriously
teachers	to be informed and involved	to have time	
users	to be informed and involved	to have time, invest little money	
employers	to be informed and involved		

With regard to the Framework

	<i>To be done</i>	<i>To be hoped for</i>
government	adapt curricula, assessment	harmonisation of practices
teachers	adapt assessment, practices	
users	be able to understand it, and make a self-assessment	greater awareness
employers	find the profiles needed	supplement CVs

Comments

- The drawing up of the portfolio, informing of the parties concerned and training of teachers should take place virtually at the same time
- The portfolio makes provision for the generally less used languages
- There should ideally be a link between the portfolio and other European projects (exchanges, Erasmus, Europass, etc)
- Despite all the problems, it is important to take the first step
- Seek sponsors

Introduction to Workshop 2: pedagogical aspects of the ELP and implications for teacher training – David Little

David Little began by stressing the interdependence of the ELP's reporting and pedagogical functions: it was a common finding of the pilot projects that learners of all ages value the ELP to the extent that it is central to their language learning

experience; they quickly tire of it if they work with it only occasionally, in order to bring it up to date (especially when that entails filling in forms and ticking boxes).

He went on to point out that the ELP is designed to promote plurilingualism, which implies the need for a whole-school policy. At the same time, however, implementation must always begin with individual teachers of particular languages. Teachers who are new to the ELP need support, for example in the form of in-service courses, national, regional or local projects, and local networks.

Next David Little argued that in principle all communicative curricula can be restated in terms of the Council of Europe's common reference levels. Because they imply learning activities, the common reference levels support teaching as well as goal-setting and assessment; and they help learners as well as teachers to develop a more communicative orientation in their language learning/teaching. In addition they can be used to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the textbook and other learning materials in relation to the communicative demands of the curriculum. Via the ELP they provide learners with a means of (i) controlling and (ii) supplementing the textbook.

David Little concluded by suggesting that successful pedagogical implementation of the ELP depends on developing learners' capacity for self-assessment. This had been a contentious issue for some of the pilot projects, but the evidence suggested that self-assessment soon comes naturally to learners who are involved in planning and monitoring their own learning.

Workshop 2

Discussion task: What pedagogical challenges has the ELP posed/will the ELP pose in your particular language learning/teaching context? How have you attempted/will you attempt to solve them?

Reports from the working groups

Group 1 (co-ordinator: Christoph Flügel; rapporteur: Maria Anália Gomes)

The ELP aims to promote plurilingualism by developing genuine plurilingual competence

- by valuing the learner's linguistic and intercultural experience, wherever it has been gained;
- by giving evidence of partial competences, not only in languages taught at school but also in languages learnt outside the educational system.

The expected pedagogical impact of the ELP is

- to bring about a change of attitude among teachers:
 - focus on learners
 - pedagogical co-operation among teachers
 - change strategies, teaching methods, assessment criteria
- to develop self-assessment/autonomy in the learner – a process that can be learnt (it needs positive feedback from others).

Problem: a possible tension between the learner's self-assessment and external assessment/certification.

Solution: a clear definition of assessment criteria; a clear formulation of the descriptors; the development of learners' self-assessment capacities.

The concept of self-assessment is based on a pedagogical philosophy that is not yet deeply embedded in schools

Group 2 (co-ordinator: Radka Perclová; rapporteur: Rosa Lúdia Silva)

Teachers' involvement

Conditions

To look for ways of encouraging teachers to engage in ELP work. Motivations derive from each teacher's mental context and from very specific institutional facilities (working conditions, relation with the government, etc.).

How?

By giving teachers support by

- organizing meetings between teachers and national co-ordinators
- showing teachers positive outcomes of work with the ELP
- giving teachers time to react to and absorb information
- establishing links with national curricula and textbooks

Constraints

- At national level: differences between national programme and ELP principles; lack of time to monitor and control the process after the pilot phase.
- At school level: lack of information; lack of motivation (ELP work is perceived as a burden, means extra work); fear of failure.

Possible solution

In-service teacher training programmes: with proper training teachers will be more likely to

- place their students in the centre of the pedagogical process and focus on co-operative learning
- establish goals
- negotiate learning objectives with their students
- appreciate the importance of assessment that focuses on learning process as well as learning product
- promote students' awareness
- develop students' capacity for self-assessment

Possible conclusions

- Student motivation depends on teacher motivation
- Student awareness depends on teacher awareness
- Students' capacity to assess themselves depends on teachers' competence in assessment
- ELP work must be voluntary. Beyond teachers' knowledge it deals with beliefs, fears and emotions.

Group 3 (co-ordinator: Maria Arminda Bragança; rapporteur: Viljo Kohonen)

National challenges/concerns:

- How to disseminate the IDEA of ELP to FL teachers? ELP as part of pedagogical innovation → ROLE OF TEACHER?
- How to get started? Teachers' willingness to join in? Economic considerations? What SUPPORT?
- Co-ordination? Site-based curricula → national curriculum guidelines? Place of ELP in curriculum reforms?
- Integration of CEF/ELP with regional/local/national curriculum (guidelines)?
- Vague situation in the middle of the ongoing reforms! How to convince people? What support?
- Use of IT to promote self-assessment/ELP? (DIALANG: diagnostic evaluation) Internet?
- Role of Internet in dissemination?
- Role of teacher in an ELP classroom → BIG CHANGES!
- How to move from voluntary piloting to broad implementation – teacher motivation? from bottom up?
- Balance between top-down and bottom-up strategies
- Teacher training: getting people involved (schools, administration, universities), working together: create an *atmosphere of collaboration*
- “Going public” – making ELP idea/models/materials available
- Role of central administration in innovations: different national solutions/strategies/contexts – atmosphere of innovation essential.
- How to fit ELP into existing/forthcoming curricula/materials/evaluation procedures? A regular part of classroom learning and homework; no extra work for anyone
- Teacher's professional understanding of his/her work, *integrating ELP*:
 - teacher training essential
 - financial problem: role of decision makers
 - basic and in-service training
 - involve teacher educators in ELP
 - aim for an “incremental” process, incorporating ELP with local traditions
- National evaluation: role of ELP in school-leaving/matriculation exams? Involve various partners in ELP in positive ways: “evolution”, joint responsibilities
- Rationale/motivation of CEF/ELP: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to be included in ELP pedagogy
- ELP *not* a new “subject”, should not involve extra work → new approach, tool, resource for promoting learner-centred foreign language pedagogy

Group 4 (co-ordinator: Barbara Glowacka; rapporteur: Christine Tagliante)

Consensus

The real challenge

- To bring about a change of attitude, outlook, perspectives and professional competence to encourage developments in teaching methods.
- To focus simultaneously on all language teachers, not those of individual languages, both in initial and in-service training.

- To involve parents of pupils.

As much information as possible

- For teachers, pupils, parents, society as a whole and educational psychologists
- Via all liaison facilities, resource centres, parents' associations, school councils, education advisers

Initial and in-service training

- There is at present a great disparity in training syllabuses. Generally speaking, each individual language is very much dealt with separately
- What should be included in syllabuses in order to change outlooks, remove the divisions between languages and harmonise the use of ELPs in language classes?

Common core for all languages

- Two desirable preconditions:
 - recognition of the ELP by the authorities → official status
 - harmonisation of language certification in line with the CEF
- Avenues to explore
 - training of initial training instructors
 - use of the ELP by future teachers of all languages
 - training teachers to be independent → ELP as a means of assessing how far objectives A1, A2, etc have been achieved
 - raising awareness of an open Europe
 - raising awareness of social and cultural aspects
 - training in assessment and self-assessment of what has been learnt
 - encouraging recognition of what has been learned outside the school environment

Introduction to Workshop 3, phase 1: Implementing the ELP – validation, publication/dissemination, monitoring, evaluation – Rolf Schärer

In introducing the first phase of Workshop 3, Rolf Schärer emphasized that moving from the pilot phase to full implementation presents a very large challenge: about 30,000 learners were involved in the pilot phase, whereas there are some 138,000,000 school-based language learners in the member states of the Council of Europe. He suggested that widespread dissemination of the ELP would pose the following challenges:

- Dissemination becomes more difficult the longer it lasts, and this necessarily raises the question of feasibility.
- Reporting on the pilot phase was already a complex matter; inevitably it will become many times more complex as the numbers of countries, ELP models and learners increase.
- Different stakeholders – learners, teachers, schools, ministries, employers – have different goals and objectives.
- Dissemination requires human and material resources – time, competence, training, money.

- Monitoring must take account of the effect of the ELP on learning and teaching, on educational systems and their goals, on quality issues, and on the ratio of cost to benefit.
- Dissemination needs to be accompanied by the development of principles, strategies, concepts, common tools, and an overarching support structure.

Rolf Schärer concluded by briefly outlining the reporting tools he was recommending for the dissemination phase: web-based questionnaires for learners, teachers and project co-ordinators.

The discussion task for the first phase of Workshop 3 was: How will you overcome the challenge of disseminating the ELP in your particular language learning/teaching context?

Saturday 30 June

Introduction to Workshop 3, phase 2: *Monitoring and evaluating the next phase* – Rolf Schärer

Rolf Schärer introduced the second phase of Workshop 3 by returning to the questionnaires he had drafted in order to elicit data from project co-ordinators, teachers and learners. He made the following points:

- The questionnaires had been designed to meet the Council of Europe's reporting needs, though they would also elicit information useful at other levels.
- Diversity makes clear reporting very difficult; in this regard, the usefulness of learner questionnaires is especially open to doubt.
- It is important not to collect more information than it is possible to cope with.
- It will be possible to fill in the questionnaires on the project web-site, but those who do not have Internet access will be able to use printed versions instead.
- The information on the web-site should be open and accessible, at least to project co-ordinators.
- The Council of Europe has no wish to be involved in local decision making, including who should be named as project co-ordinator.

Rolf Schärer suggested that the working groups should look again at the questionnaire circulated in preparation for the seminar, attempting to clarify their objectives and their role on the national scene. They should also consider how best to collect information from their particular project, bearing in mind that there are different ways of measuring success. He reminded participants that in the face of very large numbers it is necessary to be humble; also that some objectives and principles are seen differently by different stakeholders. For example, in the pilot phase learners tended to view self-assessment positively, whereas it raised difficulties for many teachers. Also, in stable societies it is easy to be positive towards heritage languages, whereas in societies in conflict the same languages may be a matter of life and death.

Workshop 3: reports from the working groups

Group 1 (co-ordinator: Dick Meijer; rapporteur: John Thorogood)

Group 1 was only able to discuss two of the headings in the stakeholder grid: learners and employers.

Learners

- Pleasure in learning is an instinctive first objective.
- This is rendered more specific by making it possible for the learner to define his/her own needs, e.g. in relation to a first visit abroad.
- The ELP helps learners to be more aware of what they can already do, sometimes to their surprise, and what they have it in them to do later.
- This could be the basis of a lifelong romance with languages.
- Learners should be enabled to recognize a whole range of intercultural experiences and encounters (film, visits, friendship, music, etc.).
- Language learning should begin to be perceived more readily as a process of reward for achievement rather than censure for error.
- Learners could sign up to European/global citizenship. This is enormously important to those who only recently have a window open on Europe and are hoping soon to have an open door.
- The development of the whole personality was cited.
- Mother tongue would be recognized and valued.
- Minority languages would be cherished and protected. Language learning should not only be about learning foreign languages.

Employers

- Their support and recognition is essential. Society and politicians attach importance to what employers see as important.
- We must therefore sell them the ELP through events/dissemination and actual use of the ELP in the workplace.
- Training.
- Recruitment.
- Audit own hidden potential.

Monitoring and evaluating the next phase

- The Council of Europe must ultimately decide how many individuals per member state it is willing to liaise with.
- It is to be hoped that the system of reporting adopted will not stifle diversity.
- It might be wise to have at least two people acting as co-ordinator for each member state.
- More scope should be allowed for regional developments.
- There was some criticism of the “openness” of the description of goals.
- There is a problem in following up individual ELP users. Questionnaires might be included with published versions of the ELP; alternatively it might be possible for learners to give their feedback on the web-site.

Group 2 (co-ordinator: Martina Adler; rapporteur: Ema Ushioda)

Goals/objectives

Learners

- ELP as reporting tool (adult/university/VOLL)
- “What I can do” (primary)
- ?? (secondary)

The importance of teacher mediation: getting learners to personalize their ELP.

Teachers

- Will the ELP make life easier for me?
- Will it motivate my learners?
- Will it make them more autonomous?
- What about comparison with other countries?

Schools

- Whole-school policy

Ministries

- Comparing standards with other countries

Employers and parents

- Reporting function of ELP

Monitoring and evaluating the next phase

Group 2 approved the proposals for co-ordinator accreditation, project registration, and the learner questionnaire. However, it thought that question 9 on the learner questionnaire (“Your suggestions”) might be made more specific; also that the options for ELP use listed in the same questionnaire might usefully be numbered.

Group 3 (co-ordinator: Branka Petek; rapporteur: Peter Broeder)

Resources

- Time: timing depends on GOALS AND OBJECTIVES. The group agreed on a step-by-step approach.
- Funds: “Simple is beautiful. Cheap may be beautiful too.”
- Printing and/or publishing.
- Active involvement of the learner → motivation.

Goals and objectives

- Learners’ goals change with age → need to explore students’ goals.
- Teachers’ goals and objectives → how to negotiate objectives with the students:
 - learner-centred approach
 - socially responsible autonomy
 - student’s awareness
 - teachers’ and students’ objectives can coincide
- Parents’ objectives → it is important to involve the community.
- School objectives: “If you persuade headmasters, you persuade everybody.”

Monitoring and evaluating the next phase

- Students are pleased to be part of a European project (strategies to involve pupils).
- Students' justification (qualitative data) as a part of reflective work.
- The ELP will be more influential for national decision makers if it comes approved by the co-ordinators in Strasbourg (this can be essential to securing funding).
- Transparency: information on the web-site as a working tool.
- Teachers' involvement is necessary to avoid negative reactions.
- Co-ordinator as a key figure.
- University autonomy may make it difficult to co-ordinate projects involving more than one university.
- Reporting data should be collected only once a year, at the end of the academic year.

Group 4 (co-ordinator: Christine Tagliante; rapporteur: Francis Goullier)

Objectives

- General ELP objectives, specific objectives of the stakeholders
- Objectives of the ELP, the teacher, the CEF (scales and levels)
- Dependence of the group and sectors targeted
- Difficulty in defining objectives for learners/teachers → observable effects
- Assessment criteria → need for a new seminar

Empowerment of co-ordinators (and rapporteurs)

- Where rapporteurs fit in
- Clarifications
 - representative of education authorities or schools?
 - project identification
 - project number (who gives it?)
- Communication requested
 - individual project
 - different information
 - what information should be given to regions?
 - too geared towards school sectors
 - questions missing
- The paragraph on Council of Europe reports is not in the right place
- Invert the columns showing general rapporteur/calendar/co-ordinators

Project registration

- Questions
 - institutional
 - sectors outside the education system
- Two last items under project objectives → general objectives (plurilingualism, skills acquired)
- Ambiguity on the resources to be created
- What about the national committee?

Co-ordinator's feedback on the seminar – David Little

David Little began his summing up by reminding the participants of the complementarity of the *Common European Framework* and the European Language Portfolio. The CEF is a tool for planning language learning programmes and language assessment, while the ELP is a tool for promoting plurilingualism, intercultural awareness/learning, and reflective learning/learner autonomy. The common reference levels form the point of articulation between the CEF and the ELP. The descriptors provide the criteria for self-assessment in the language passport, but they can also be used to specify goals and learning tasks in the language biography.

The seminar served to remind us of our diversity. We come from many different countries with different kinds of language background, different educational systems and structures, and different political, cultural and educational priorities. What is more, we have different purposes in designing and implementing the ELP. For some of us the priority is to promote plurilingualism, for others it is to develop our learners' intercultural awareness, and for others again it is to engage our learners in planning, monitoring and assessing their own learning.

This diversity is also our strength, and it helps to explain the enormous amount of progress that has been made in a relatively short time. When the co-ordinators of pilot projects met in Tampere in May 1998, we had before us the Finnish ELP for upper secondary learners, the first Nordrhein-Westphalen ELP for lower secondary learners, the first draft of the French ELP for primary learners, drafts of parts of the Swiss ELP, and more tentative drafts from EAQUALS (adult learners) and CILT (primary). Now, three years later, 15 ELP models have been validated (from Switzerland, France, Russia, Nordrhein-Westphalen, EAQUALS/ALTE, Czech Republic, UK, Ireland, Hungary), and a number of new ELP projects are in preparation.

We are also united in crucial ways. Whatever the precise nature of our particular educational system and structures, we must all secure and retain official support. Whatever our particular focus of implementation (plurilingualism, intercultural awareness/learning, learner autonomy), the ELP must be mediated to learners, which means that we must find ways of engaging and supporting teachers. And we all recognize that the ELP will quickly disappear if it does not become an integral part of language learning experience (though it is important to stress that "integral part" has many different potential senses).

When he presented the Swiss ELP on Thursday morning, Christoph Flügel urged those of us who are new to the ELP not to start again from scratch but to benefit from the work that has been done. This is already happening in some cases. For example, some ELPs are being used in domains for which they were not originally designed. The French primary ELP is being used with young learners of French as a foreign language in four other countries; the Nordrhein-Westphalen secondary ELP is being used in other parts of Germany; and versions of the Irish ELPs for immigrants are being prepared in Germany, Finland, Portugal, the Netherlands and Sweden. When we use the work of colleagues in other countries, of course, we must be careful to respect their copyright, as we must respect the Council of Europe's copyright in the common reference levels and descriptors as elaborated in the *Common European Framework*.

If the ELP is to continue to succeed as a European phenomenon, we must accept and respect our diversity even as we learn from one another. We must support Rolf

Schärer's reporting efforts, collect and share examples of good practice (using them to stimulate our own intercultural learning), ensure that our projects are empirically evaluated, and publish examples of good practice and empirical findings. Above all, we must be realistic.

In order to cope with the increasing demands of an ever-expanding European project, we must continue to hold seminars at which all Council of Europe member states are represented. But we must also encourage the growth of special interest groups in professional associations and explore the possibility of holding seminars for particular sectors/foci of interest.

Next meeting and related matters – Johanna Panthier

Johanna Panthier announced that the next ELP seminar would be held in Italy, probably in March 2002, perhaps with a special focus on adult and university learners. She noted that the secretariat often finds it difficult to secure nominations for participation in seminars and therefore recommends that national ELP co-ordinators keep in touch with the representatives of their countries on the Council of Europe's Education Committee. The co-ordinator's report on the present seminar would be sent to all participants as soon as possible and the Education Committee would be informed of the seminar results. Meanwhile, work would continue on the design, piloting and validation of ELPs. Wherever possible projects should work together in networks.

Noting that the Validation Committee would next meet on 7 and 8 November 2001, Mrs Panthier reminded participants that ELPs must be submitted for validation in 17 copies three months before the meeting at which they are to be considered. She stressed that ELP models should be piloted before being submitted for validation (and not the opposite). She also reminded participants that the Council of Europe is ready to send experts to help new ELP projects.

Mrs Panthier informed participants that the Council of Europe's Education Committee would be meeting in September, and that the Language Policy Division would seek the committee's further support for the ELP project. In November 2001 a European Year of Languages conference would be held in Rotterdam under the joint auspices of the European Union and the Council of Europe. The focus of the conference would be the diffusion of innovative European projects, in which the CEF and ELP play a central role.

Finally, on behalf of the Council of Europe Mrs Panthier thanked the Portuguese Ministry of Education for sponsoring the seminar; the authorities of Coimbra for their generosity in providing the social programme; the interpreters; the technical and hotel staff; the team of local organizers; David Little, Rolf Schärer and Francis Goullier; and the participants for all their hard work.

Closing of the seminar

On behalf of the Director of the Bureau for European International Relations, Manuela Lopo Tuna offered her thanks to the participants, experts and interpreters; to Johanna Panthier, David Little, Francis Goullier and Rolf Schärer for their co-operation in the preparation of the Portuguese ELPs; to her colleagues in the Regional Centre for Education; and to the authorities in Coimbra.

Glória Fischer brought the proceedings to a close by thanking everyone involved in the seminar, which had marked an important step forward in the Council of Europe's ELP project.

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