**European Centre for Modern Languages**
**Second medium-term programme, 2004–2007**

**Strand C**
**Professional development and reference tools for language educators**

# Project C6
# Training teachers to use the European Language Portfolio

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## Introduction to Project C6: Training teachers to use the European Language Portfolio

The purpose of Project C6 was to support the implementation of the European Language Portfolio (ELP) in Council of Europe member states by (i) developing a kit of materials and activities for ELP-related teacher training; (ii) mediating the materials and activities in a central workshop; and (iii) supporting national ELP training events arising from the central workshop. Accordingly, this booklet and the accompanying DVD are aimed at teacher educators and multiplier teachers who are responsible for introducing language teachers to the ELP and helping them to explore its many dimensions and implications.

There were five members of the project team: David Little (Ireland; co-ordinator), Hans-Peter Hodel (Switzerland), Viljo Kohonen (Finland), Dick Meijer (The Netherlands), and Radka Perclová (Czech Republic). The project began in January 2004 with a planning meeting at which the project team identified the themes and issues that it wished to address in its teacher training materials. Each theme/issue was assigned to one team member for further development. At a second planning meeting, in July 2004, the team finalized the components of the kit and agreed on the programme for the central workshop, which was held in ECML from 23 to 26 November 2006. One place at the central workshop was allocated to each ECML member state and the remaining places were filled by other Council of Europe member states on a first-come first-served basis.

Including the project team, there were 42 participants in the central workshop, drawn from the following 32 countries: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria (2), Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic (2), Estonia, Finland (3), "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland (3), Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands (2), Norway (2), Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland (2), United Kingdom (2). The aim of the central workshop was not only to mediate the first version of the teacher training kit to participants but also to encourage them to reflect on the kind of national training event they were in a position to organize.

At the beginning of the planning process the project team decided that the teacher training kit must be as wide-ranging as possible. Accordingly the central workshop addressed the following themes and issues:

- the Common European Framework – competences, levels and descriptors (Hans-Peter Hodel);
- self-assessment in relation to the common reference levels (Dick Meijer);

- learning how to learn – a model for reflection for teacher trainers, teachers and learners (Viljo Kohonen);
- learner autonomy – drawing together the threads of self-assessment, goal-setting and reflection (David Little);
- language in the ELP – language(s) of presentation and language(s) of process; plurilingualism (Radka Perclová);
- developing intercultural awareness (Dick Meijer);
- integrating the ELP with language curricula and textbooks (Hans-Peter Hodel, Radka Perclová, Viljo Kohonen);
- using the ELP to go beyond the textbook (Dick Meijer);
- connecting assessment with the ELP and the common reference levels (Hans-Peter Hodel).

In the first session of the workshop participants were invited to take stock of their own ELP situation and reflect on their options for a national training event. Thereafter each theme/issue was introduced in a plenary session and explored in working groups of not more than nine participants. The working groups remained the same throughout the workshop in order to encourage the growth of a strong interactive dynamic; each group was animated by a member of the project team. Most working group sessions produced poster summaries of their conclusions; these were displayed in the plenary room and were thus available to all other participants. As the workshop progressed, participants gradually compiled their own version of the teacher training kit comprising handouts and activity sheets, the products of group work, and individual notes and reflection.

At the end of the workshop a draft timetable of 25 follow-up events was drawn up. During January and February 2005 the project coordinator negotiated a final timetable, which was submitted to ECML at the end of February 2005. In May 2005 a lightly revised version of the teacher training materials and activities used at the central workshop was made available to participants on CD-ROM.

In 2005 national training events supported by members of the project team, and in one case by an Austrian colleague who attended the central workshop, were held in 10 countries: Finland (Radka Perclová), Liechtenstein (Margareta Nezbeda), Armenia (Dick Meijer), Norway (David Little), Sweden (David Little), Germany (Dick Meijer), Lithuania (Radka Perclová), Estonia (Radka Perclová), Latvia (David Little), Romania (Hans-Peter Hodel). In 2006 follow-up events were held in six further countries: France (Hans-Peter Hodel), Czech Republic (Hans-Peter Hodel), Albania (David Little), Poland (Radka Perclová), Austria (David Little), Iceland (Viljo Kohonen). In 2007 a follow-up event was held in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Madedonia (Dick Meijer).

On 30 June and 1 July 2006 the project team met in ECML to pool the experience they had gained from the national training events held so far, share the additional materials they had developed in response to the needs of specific national contexts, and discuss the form that the project's final product should take. We decided to produce the present booklet and DVD, the DVD to contain a revised version of the kit of training materials; supplementary materials developed by project team members; reports on the national ELP training events together with training materials and papers/reports on ELP implementation submitted by the organizers of national events; and reference documents relevant to ELP-related teacher training.

# 2

# The European Language Portfolio and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

## 2.1 The European Language Portfolio

### 2.1.1 What is the ELP?

The European Language Portfolio (ELP) has three obligatory components: a Language Passport, a Language Biography, and a Dossier. The Language Passport summarizes the owner's linguistic identity and his or her experience of learning and using second/foreign languages; it also provides space for the owner periodically to record his or her self-assessment of overall second/foreign language proficiency. The Language Biography accompanies the ongoing processes of learning and using second/foreign languages and engaging with the cultures associated with them. It supports goal setting and self-assessment in relation to specific learning objectives, and encourages reflection on learning styles, strategies and intercultural experience. Sometimes this reflection is a matter of filling in a form or recording one's thoughts under a series of headings; sometimes it is entirely open. The Dossier is where the owner collects evidence of his or her second/foreign language proficiency and intercultural experience; in some implementations it also has a strongly developed pedagogical function.

There is no single version of the ELP. In 1997 the Council of Europe published a collection of preliminary studies that suggested forms the ELP might take in order to meet the needs of language learners in various categories (Council of Europe 1997). From 1998 to 2000 pilot projects were implemented in 15 Council of Europe member countries and by three international non-governmental organizations (the full report on the pilot projects, Schärer 2001, is included on the DVD). Each pilot project developed and trialled its own ELP, which resulted in considerable variation. However, project leaders came together twice a year in order not only to share experience but gradually to identify the ELP's common European core – those features that should be obligatory in all ELPs. Since 2000 these have been defined as a set of *Principles and Guidelines* (a version with explanatory notes is incorporated in key reference documents on the ELP, Council of Europe 2006, www.coe.int/portfolio; also included on the DVD). Towards the end of the pilot projects a standard version of the Language Passport was developed for use by adults; it has been adopted by the great majority of ELPs designed for adolescent and adult learners.

In 2001 the Council of Europe established a Validation Committee whose function is to analyse ELPs submitted from the member states and, if they are judged

to conform to the *Principles and Guidelines*, award them an accreditation number. By the autumn of 2006 more than 80 ELPs had been validated and several more were being revised prior to validation. According to reports from the Council of Europe's member states, more than 1,250,000 language learners have received an ELP and have worked with it more or less intensively for a shorter or longer period (for details of ELP implementation at European level from 2001 to 2005, see Schärer 2004, 2005).

### 2.1.2 What are the ELP's functions?

The Council of Europe developed the ELP in order to serve two complementary functions. The first is pedagogical: the ELP is designed to make the language learning process more transparent to learners and to foster the development of learner autonomy; that is why it assigns a central role to reflection and self-assessment. This function reflects the Council of Europe's long-established commitment to learner autonomy as an essential part of education for democratic citizenship and a prerequisite for lifelong learning. The second function is to provide concrete evidence of second/foreign language communicative proficiency and intercultural experience. This reflects the Council of Europe's equally long-established interest in finding ways of reporting language learning achievement in an internationally transparent manner. In addition the ELP is intended to promote the development of plurilingualism, the ability to communicate in two or more languages besides one's first language.

### 2.1.3 How is the ELP meant to work?

The ELP's pedagogical and reporting functions both depend on the so-called common reference levels of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR; Council of Europe 2001). These define communicative proficiency in second/foreign languages

- in behavioural terms, in the form of "can do" statements;
- at six levels arranged in three bands: *basic user* – A1, A2; *independent user* – B1, B2; *proficient user* – C1, C2;
- in relation to five communicative activities: listening, reading, spoken interaction, spoken production, writing.

The common reference levels are elaborated in a series of illustrative scales and summarized in the so-called self-assessment grid (Council of Europe 2001, pp. 26f.).

In the ELP the self-assessment grid provides the overall scale against which communicative proficiency is recorded in the language passport, while the illustrative scales yield checklists that support goal setting and self-assessment in the language biography. For example, in the self-assessment grid SPOKEN INTERACTION at A1 level is summarized like this:

*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.*

And in the ELP designed for use in Irish secondary schools (Authentik 2001) the A1 checklist for SPOKEN INTERACTION (developed by drawing on the illustrative scales to restate the communicative goals of the official curriculum in the form of "can do" statements) looks like this:

- *I can say basic greetings and phrases (e.g., please, thank you), ask how someone is and say how I am*
- *I can say who I am, ask someone's name and introduce someone*
- *I can say I don't understand, ask people to repeat what they say or speak more slowly, attract attention and ask for help*
- *I can ask how to say something in the language or what a word means*
- *I can ask and answer simple direct questions on very familiar topics (e.g., family, school) with help from the person I am talking to*
- *I can ask people for things and give people things*
- *I can handle numbers, quantities, cost and time*
- *I can make simple purchases, using pointing and gestures to support what I say*

## 2.2 The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

### 2.2.1 The relation between the ELP and the CEFR

In 1991 an intergovernmental symposium held in Rüschlikon, Switzerland, recommended that the Council of Europe should establish "a comprehensive, coherent and transparent framework for the description of language proficiency" (Council of Europe 1992, p. 39); and it further recommended that "once the Common Framework has been elaborated, there should be devised, at the European level, a common instrument allowing individuals who so desire to maintain a record of their language learning achievement and experience, formal or informal" (ibid.). In other words, from the beginning the ELP was conceived as an implementation tool for the CEFR. The symposium proposed that the Council of Europe should set up two working parties, one to elaborate the Common Framework and the other to consider possible forms and functions of a European Language Portfolio (ibid., pp. 39-40):

> The Portfolio should contain a section in which formal qualifications are related to a common European scale, another in which the learner him or herself keeps a personal record of language learning experiences and pos-

> sibly a third which contains examples of work done. Where appropriate, entries should be situated within the Common Framework. (ibid., p. 40)

This description of the ELP clearly anticipates the tripartite structure of Language Passport, Language Biography, and Dossier. At this early stage, however, the ELP was evidently seen largely as a means of recording language learning experience and achievement; its pedagogical function was to emerge only in the course of the pilot projects.

Between them the CEFR and the ELP are designed to help fulfil the Council of Europe's central aims, which are to defend human rights, parliamentary democracy and the rule of law. In pursuit of these aims the Council develops continent-wide agreements to standardize the social and legal practices of member states, and promotes awareness of a European identity that is based on shared values and cuts across different cultures. These concerns explain why the Council of Europe attaches great importance to the maintenance of linguistic and cultural diversity, and encourages language learning as a means of preserving linguistic and cultural identity, improving communication and mutual understanding, and combating intolerance and xenophobia. And this in turn explains why the Council is centrally concerned with the learning of languages for communicative purposes.

The CEFR was developed to provide "a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe" (Council of Europe 2001, p.1). As these words suggest, the CEFR is founded on the conviction that language learning outcomes are likely to benefit internationally if syllabuses and curricula, textbooks and examinations are shaped by a common understanding. The CEFR does not claim to be that understanding, but rather a means of promoting various forms of international collaboration out of which such understanding can arise and gradually be refined.

The ELP should be seen as a means of bringing the concerns, perspectives and emphases of the CEFR down to the level of the learner in the language classroom. For this reason it is important to insist that the CEFR's **vertical** dimension comprises three kinds of scale. The first is concerned with what the learner can *do* in the target language at each level: the CEFR presents 34 scales of listening, reading, spoken interaction, spoken production and writing. These are the scales that impact directly on the ELP via the self-assessment grid and the checklists. But there are also scales that refer to the strategies we use when we perform communicative acts (for example, planning our utterances or compensating for gaps in our proficiency) and scale that focus on our communicative language competence (the words we know, the degree of grammatical accuracy we can achieve, our control of the sounds of the language, etc.). In order to understand

the common reference levels fully it is essential to read these three kinds of scale in interaction with one another, because each helps to define the other two. This is one reason why teacher trainers and teachers involved in ELP implementation projects need to have more than a nodding acquaintance with the CEFR.

### 2.2.2 The CEFR's action-oriented approach

Since the 1970s the Council of Europe has promoted an action-oriented approach to the description of language use. As elaborated in the CEFR this approach is complex, technical and extensive, but its key features may be summarized in six paragraphs as follows:[1]

- Language is one of the foundations of human behaviour: we use it continuously to perform **communicative acts**. Those acts may be external and social. For example, we have conversations with family, friends and colleagues; hold formal meetings; make speeches and give lectures; write personal and official letters; promote our political views in written manifestos; extend knowledge in our domain of expertise by publishing articles and books. Communicative acts may also be internal and private. All forms of reading and some forms of listening are examples of this; so too are the many different ways in which we use language for purposes of thinking things through – for example, to plan the apology we have to make for absence from an important business meeting, or to prepare ourselves for a difficult interview by trying to anticipate the questions we shall be asked and working out what our answers should be.

- Communicative acts comprise **language activity**, which is divided into four kinds: reception, production, interaction and mediation. **Reception** entails understanding language produced by others, whether in speech or in writing, while **production** entails producing speech or writing. **Interaction** refers to spoken or written exchanges between two or more individuals, while **mediation** (often involving translation or interpretation) makes communication possible between individuals or groups who are unable to communicate directly. Clearly, interaction and mediation involve both reception and production.

- In order to engage in language activity, we draw on our **communicative language competence**, which includes knowledge (not necessarily conscious) about the words, sounds, and syntactic rules of the language we are using, together with the ability to use such knowledge in order to understand and produce language.

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[1] These paragraphs are reproduced by permission of the Language Policy Division, Council of Europe, Strasbourg.

- The language activity required to perform communicative acts always occurs in a **context** that imposes **conditions** and **constraints** of many different kinds. The CEFR proposes four main **domains** of language use: **public**, **personal**, **educational** and **occupational**.

- Because communicative acts are always contextualized, our communicative language competence also includes sociolinguistic and pragmatic components. Our **sociolinguistic competences** – again to be thought of as a combination of (not necessarily conscious) knowledge and ability – enable us to cope with the social and cultural dimensions of communicative behaviour, for example, by adhering to social conventions and cultural norms. Working in harness with our sociolinguistic competences, our **pragmatic competences** underpin our ability to use language appropriately to fulfil particular functions, for example, greeting, leave-taking, making an apology.

- Finally, communicative acts entail the performance of **tasks**, and to the extent that they are not routine or automatic, those tasks require us to use **strategies** in order to understand and/or produce spoken or written **texts**.

The CEFR's action-oriented approach to the description of language use supports what might be described as the **horizontal** dimension of language learning and teaching. At any level of proficiency it enables us to consider how the capacities of the language learner, the different aspects of language activity, and the conditions and constraints imposed by context combine to shape communication. Although the CEFR is careful not to say how languages should be taught, its approach to the description of language use nevertheless reminds us at every turn that communicative language use plays a central role in communicative language learning. In other words, language learning no less than language use requires that we use strategies to draw on linguistic resources in order to perform communicative acts.

### 2.3 The ELP and learner autonomy[2]

As we have seen, the development of learner autonomy is central to the ELP's pedagogical function. This prompts two questions: What exactly is learner autonomy? And what kind of pedagogical measures does it presuppose?

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[2] These paragraphs are adapted from an article by David Little originally published in Danish as 'Den Europæiske Sprogportfolio' in *Sprogforum* 31 (Copenhagen, November 2004), pp.7–10.

In formal educational contexts learners become autonomous to the extent that they develop and exercise the capacity to plan, monitor and evaluate their own learning. In the case of second/foreign languages, learner autonomy also embraces target language use because of the central role that language use plays in the development of communicative proficiency. When a French teenager starts to learn (say) English, there are various things she can do to support her learning. For example, she can memorize those chunks of language that occur in almost every interaction, like greetings, leave-takings and conversational fillers; and she can compile lists of basic vocabulary – numbers, colours, days of the week, months and seasons of the year, and so on. But she will become proficient in understanding English only by listening to English and proficient in speaking English only by speaking English. The same is true of reading and writing.

Language teachers who want to promote the development of learner autonomy must do three things. First, they must involve their learners in their own learning, giving them ownership of learning objectives and the learning process. Secondly, they must get their learners to reflect about learning and about the target language. Self-assessment plays a central role here, for unless we can make reasonably accurate judgements about our knowledge and capacities against stated criteria, our planning, monitoring and evaluation are bound to be haphazard and uncertain. Note that reflection is made much easier when we write things down – learning plans, lists of vocabulary, drafts of work in progress, reminders of things we need to look into; for in this way we make our thoughts and our learning available for inspection and analysis. Thirdly, teachers must engage their learners in appropriate target language use, which includes the language of reflection and self-assessment. This entails that they model and scaffold the different kinds of discourse in which their learners need to become proficient.

These three things that language teachers must do can be summarized as the pedagogical principles of *learner involvement*, *learner reflection* and *appropriate target language use*. Note that the order in which they are listed here does not imply a hierarchy. On the contrary, the three principles encapsulate three perspectives on the same complex phenomenon, and each principle implies the other two. For example, we cannot engage learners in reflection unless we also involve them in their own learning and draw them into particular modes of target language use – reflection is, after all, a kind of discourse. (For an extended discussion of the three principles and their interaction in the development of language learner autonomy, see Little 2007.)

The ELP can help teachers to implement each of these three principles. When checklists correspond to the demands of the official curricula, they provide learners with an inventory of learning tasks that they can use to plan, monitor and evaluate their learning over a school year, a term, a month or a week. The

Language Biography is explicitly designed to associate goal setting and self-assessment with reflection on learning styles and strategies and the cultural dimension of second/foreign language learning and use. And when the ELP is presented (partly) in the learners' target language, it can help to promote the use of the target language as medium of learning. This is especially true when checklists are available in the target language.

It is important to stress that the ELP is intended to be an "open" document – this is reflected in the fact that most models are presented in a loose-leaf binder. So if language biography pages that invite reflection on learning strategies seem to leave out things that are important to a particular learner, he can easily make good the omission. And a teacher who has previously used open-form learning diaries can adapt the dossier section to serve the same purpose. In other words, the ELP is designed to help learners to manage their learning and teachers to manage their teaching, but it is not a straitjacket.

The considerations raised in this section are returned to in various ways in Chapter 3, which is concerned with the implications of the CEFR and the ELP for teacher education.

# 3

# Implications of the CEFR and the ELP for teacher education

## 3.1 Introduction: a new paradigm in foreign language education

As the CEFR points out, promoting the goals of student autonomy and education for democratic citizenship requires us to develop working methods that will strengthen "independence of thought, judgement and action, combined with social skills and responsibility" (Council of Europe 2001, p. 4; Byram & Beacco 2002). Such goals clearly involve a paradigm shift in foreign language teaching, moving from the "mastery" of languages in isolation from one another to the development of a plurilingual and pluricultural competence in which all languages interrelate and interact.

This paradigm shift poses a significant new challenge for language teachers, requiring them to help students/language users to see themselves as social actors and agents of their own learning and to develop their intercultural communicative competence and their capacity for intercultural communication and cooperation on a lifelong basis. The CEFR notes that the goal of language education is profoundly modified by such a prospect, and that the "full implications of such a paradigm shift have yet to be worked out and translated into action" (Council of Europe 2001, p. 5). The ELP provides important concepts and tools that help us to translate the new educational paradigm into pedagogic action.

Treating foreign language teaching as language education entails that the teacher works consistently towards coherent pedagogical action and guides student learning over time, as appropriate in the given context. In doing this the teacher needs to work on his/her professional identity and educational values, beliefs and assumptions. Professional change brings with it new goals and practices in teacher education, both pre-service and in-service. It involves a shift from the knowledge transmission model of teaching to a transformative, negotiated learning model. Moving from a (relatively) teacher-directed organization of the classroom towards student-centred teaching that promotes autonomy and intercultural learning is a major educational change for the participants. The change is not a simple one; it requires a complex set of new professional understandings, skills and attitudes.

If they are to motivate their students to engage with the ELP, teachers must acquire a good theory-based understanding of the rationale that underlies it and the benefits that it can bring to their language teaching. They need to explain why they ask their students to assess themselves and reflect on their foreign language

learning and assume increasing responsibility for their work in the social context of the classroom. Students also need to work on their beliefs and assumptions about language learning and their roles as learners.

Self-directed language learning imposes great demands on students' ability to cope with uncertainty in developing their skills of reflection and self-assessment. Taking charge of their learning as socially responsible members of the classroom community is similarly a new learning experience for many of them. They can take control of complex social and cognitive learning processes only to the extent that they have the necessary understanding, knowledge and skills to organize their work, to work together and to commit themselves to the new goals. Teachers need to understand the paradoxical nature of the task they ask their students to undertake when encouraging them to assess themselves (Kohonen 2004, 2006; Little 1999, 2004; Perclová 2006; Sisamakis 2006.)

Educational change is very much a matter of undertaking the necessary conceptual and emotional work inherent in any major change. It requires teachers to modify their beliefs and assumptions about their professional role. In this chapter we will discuss a number of research findings relevant to teacher education that is focussed on ELP implementation.

### 3.2 Pre-service teacher education: the Swiss experience

S'il est question d'une expérience suisse faite avec le Cadre européen commun de référence (CECR) dans le contexte de la formation des enseignants de langues, il s'agit dans ces lignes des cours de didactique du français langue étrangère pour les futurs enseignants du primaire (formation initiale) à la Haute Ecole Pédagogique de Suisse centrale/site Lucerne (HEP/LU). Depuis deux ans (sans compter la phase de préparation), le CECR et le Portfolio européen des langues (PEL) y constituent une des bases les plus importantes des contenus de cette formation.

#### 3.2.1 Le CECR et le PEL – tronc commun des formations

Mentionnons juste au passage trois influences importantes qu'avait et continue d'avoir le CECR pour la HEP/LU :

a) Pendant la planification des contenus de formation, le CECR et le PEL constituaient le terrain d'entente et le langage vernaculaire des responsables de cette planification, formateurs des différents degrés scolaires (primaire et secondaire) et des différentes langues enseignées (anglais et français), d'où la chance de pouvoir rapidement se mettre d'accord sur les grands enjeux de la

formation et de disposer ainsi d'un concept commun pour les niveaux primaire et secondaire I, français et anglais confondus.

b) La volonté de mettre en oeuvre une didactique générale des langues se fait de plus en plus pressante (Wokusch 2005). En effet, la région où la HEP/LU est implantée s'apprête à introduire, au lieu d'une, deux langues étrangères à l'école primaire (encore que le débat sur cette question n'est pas du tout clos à l'heure qu'il est). La didactique des langues (avec la recherche) se doit dès lors de miser davantage sur le plurilinguisme, dont les jalons sont posés dans le CECR. Un plurilinguisme d'ailleurs aussi vécu à la HEP, vu la création de cours multilingues (anglais, français, allemand) donnés par une équipe de formateurs.

c) A la HEP/LU, tous les futurs enseignants et enseignantes doivent obligatoirement avoir et remplir leur propre Portfolio européen des langues et par là apprendre à l'utiliser. Il sert aussi de support ou d'objectif pour des acquis de compétence, surtout en début de parcours.

### 3.2.2 Le CECR comme instrument pédagogique et didactique : pluralité des méthodes

Venons-en à ce que nous considérons ici comme étant l'essentiel : la « lecture » pédagogique et didactique du CECR et du PEL. Un premier point saute aux yeux : Le CECR propose de reconnaître et de tenir compte de la pluralité des publics, des parcours, des besoins et des méthodes.

> À l'heure actuelle, les façons d'apprendre et d'enseigner les langues vivantes sont nombreuses. … le Cadre de référence n'a pas pour vocation de promouvoir une méthode d'enseignement particulière mais bien de présenter des choix (Ch. 6.4).

Cette pluralité trouve un écho dans la fréquente utilisation et discussion des listes du chapitre 6 du CECR. En voici un exemple :

> 6.4.7.1 Jusqu'où peut-on attendre ou exiger des apprenants qu'ils développent leur vocabulaire ?
>
> a. par la simple exposition à des mots et des locutions figées utilisés dans des textes authentiques oraux ou écrits
> b. par la déduction de l'apprenant ou l'utilisation d'un dictionnaire consulté selon les besoins au cours des tâches et des activités
> c. par la présentation des mots en contexte, par exemple dans les textes des manuels scolaires et l'utilisation qui s'en suit dans des exercices, des activités d'exploitation, etc.

d. par leur présentation accompagnée d'aides visuelles (images, gestes et mimiques, actions correspondantes, objets divers, etc.)
e. par la mémorisation de listes de mots, etc. avec leur traduction
f. par l'exploration de champs sémantiques et lexicaux
g. par l'entraînement à l'utilisation de dictionnaires unilingues et bilingues, de glossaires et *thesaurus* et tout autre ouvrage de référence
h. par l'explication du fonctionnement de la structure lexicale et l'application qui en résulte (par exemple, dérivation, suffixation, synonymie, antonymie, mots composés, collocations, idiomes, etc.)
i. par une étude plus ou moins systématique de la distribution différente des éléments lexicaux en L1 et L2 (sémantique contrastive).

Souligner la pluralité des méthodes sert surtout les méthodes « directes », c'est-à-dire les méthodes intégrées, celles qui mobilisent une pluralité de compétences chez les apprenants et qui sont par là exigeantes et « autonomisantes » (par exemple enseignement/apprentissage par tâches). On peut les opposer aux méthodes partielles, axées sur l'apprentissage d'aspects particuliers de la langue (du type « exercices formels » portant sur des structures grammaticales). Il faut en partie (re-)construire une confiance chez les étudiant-es dans l'utilisation communicative de la langue comme méthode d'apprentissage reconnue et efficace, surtout en ce qui concerne l'interaction directe entre enseignant-es et apprenant-es et apprenants entre eux, mais aussi concernant les activités communicatives langagières du type écoute et lecture. Il faut leur montrer, recherches à l'appui (par exemple Bogaards 1994), que c'est en utilisant la langue que l'on l'apprend, et que l'on apprend par cette voie également bien le vocabulaire et la grammaire. C'est là un fait que les étudiants confirment volontiers puisque qu'ils en ont souvent fait eux-mêmes l'expérience. Néanmoins, ce qu'on peut observer dans les stages pratiques que les étudiants de la HEP effectuent dans les écoles publiques, c'est qu'une méthode qui met l'activité communicative au centre de l'enseignement / apprentissage, a encore de la peine à percer tant les attentes des enseignants en service mais parfois aussi des apprenants marqués par une approche « atomisante » de l'apprentissage des langues s'y opposent encore souvent. Mais comme a été dit plus haut, il ne s'agit pas d'être doctrinaire, mais d'élargir et d'assouplir le faisceau des « savoir-enseigner ». En plus, un enseignement où les apprenants sont vus comme des acteurs sociaux – vision propre au CECR – un tel enseignement ne peut pas se contenter de simplement faire utiliser la langue. La pédagogie par tâches demande un encadrement soigné des apprenants, un savant dosage de guidage et de responsabilisation. Elle peut, pour ce faire, suivre avec profit les stratégies métacognitives que décrit le CECR : préplanification, exécution, contrôle, remédiation (chap. 4.4)

### 3.2.3 Le plan d'études

Les plans d'études en vigueur en Suisse centrale, pour le primaire et le se-

condaire, sont des adaptions du CECR, resp. du PEL. C'est là une perspective qui évidemment renforce l'importance du CECR/PEL également dans la formation initiale. Se familiariser avec le langage du CECR, avec ses catégories d'objectifs, ses niveaux, apparaît désormais comme condition sine qua non de l'implémentation du plan d'études. Dans ce sens, la mise en pratique du plan d'études mène comme naturellement à l'autonomisation des apprenants. Les apprenants ont une prise sur les contenus des cours, dès lors que l'enseignant-e les organise autour des objectifs définis par le PEL. Sans cela, il manquerait à ces apprenant-es souvent l'expérience tout simplement des activités communicatives langagières que le PEL décrit.

Ce qui est vrai pour les apprenant-es, l'est également pour les futur-es enseignant-es. Leur compétence à communiquer est également mesurée en termes de niveaux du CECR. Ils/elles doivent attester d'un C1 à la fin de leur formation. Les plans d'études de l'école obligatoire font ainsi partie d'un tout de plus en plus cohérent, dans l'attente que toutes les écoles du secondaire II en Suisse se mettent à combler le fossé entre le secondaire I et le tertiaire en introduisant à leur tour (et à leur manière) le CECR.

#### 3.2.4 D'autres éléments de formation inspirés du CECR

L'exploitation du CECR au profit de la didactique des langues a des côtés évidents, notamment pour tout ce qui est en rapport avec la définition des objectifs et leur (auto-)évaluation. Pour d'autres questions de didactique (par exemple la conception d'opérations d'apprentissage), il semble moins aisé de puiser dans le CECR. Néanmoins, des outils commencent à en être déduits : renforcement de l'enseignement par thèmes et par tâches, renforcement des contenus et des textes dans l'apprentissage, enseignement qui se conçoit en mode détaché par rapport aux manuels scolaires (bien que ceux-ci se réfèrent de plus en plus – et peut-être parfois assez approximativement – aux niveaux du CECR), évaluation des capacités à communiquer), pour en citer quelques-uns. Pour des descriptions plus approfondies de ces éléments, nous nous permettons de renvoyer le lecteur/la lectrice aux autres articles du présent kit sortis de notre plume.

### 3.3 In-service teacher education: the Finnish experience

From 1998 to 2001 Finland undertook a national pilot project in the Tampere (Pirkanmaa) region, coordinated at Tampere University by Viljo Kohonen and Ulla Pajukanta. The project was carried out in eight schools with a total of 360 students and 22 language teachers. The teachers joined in the project on a voluntary basis. They were ready to commit themselves to the challenging research and development task, and also willing to invest a fair amount of their professional time and effort. The project ran for three school years to give the partici-

pants the opportunity to complete the whole cycle of schooling (lower/upper secondary/vocational) and review their ELPs at the end (Kohonen 2004, 2006).

Working within an experiential, reflective learning framework (Kohonen 2001, 2005), the project emphasized the participating teachers' professional growth. Decisions concerning the implementation of the project were discussed and negotiated with the participants. For this purpose a project planning group was established consisting of the two coordinators and three teachers representing the schools. The group evaluated the work of the project in monthly meetings and decided the programmes of the project seminar days.

The seminars and the joint planning work created a spirit of professional sharing and negotiated learning in the project. Collegial small-group discussions played a central role in the seminars, and this provided the teachers with opportunities for mutual professional learning. The interactive process also encouraged them to experiment with similar techniques in their language classes, based on their own experience of reflective learning.

The project developed the concept of bridging tasks, which involved professional reading and/or classroom piloting arising from topics discussed and agreed during the seminar day. Teachers were invited to study a great deal of professional literature related to the ELP and to discuss their thoughts in their school ELP teams. Experience from the schools fed into the group work during the next seminar day. Thus the bridging tasks provided continuity between the seminars and gave teachers opportunities to explore their work in the light of input from the seminars and the reading materials.

Teachers were also encouraged to record their observations, thoughts and insights in personal diaries and to collect their worksheet materials for the students in their project portfolios together with samples of student work. Based on such qualitative research and development material, teachers were asked to submit professional development essays at the end of each school year to report on their experiences and findings. This qualitative material was an important source of data for the evaluation of the project (supplemented by thematic interviews with a number of teachers and their pupils). In this way reflective, interactive teacher learning gradually became a natural element of the project work.

In accordance with the emphasis on reflective work with the ELP the participants in the project realized that they needed to widen the original term "portfolio assessment" into a broader process-oriented concept. After about a year of project work this led to the concept of "portfolio-oriented language learning", which was used to refer to the negotiated teaching-learning process in which the students

gradually took increasing charge of their learning, within the pedagogical learning space and guidance provided by the teacher (Kohonen 2002).

Being new to most of the students, reflective learning and self-assessment were taught explicitly and concretely. Reflection on learning produced more reflective students. In several of the initial teacher seminars on the ELP, teachers spent a great deal of time putting together their understanding and experience of teaching reflective learning. Working in small groups they outlined concrete lesson plans for the initial motivation and orientation of their students towards reflective learning. They used the plans in their classes with modifications as appropriate to their students. In subsequent seminars the teachers again shared their experience with one another, getting new perspectives and ideas to further enrich their experience.

Giving options, tutoring the work and providing encouragement and feedback to the students was pedagogically quite challenging for the teachers. Collegial support in school and joint discussions at the project seminars were a useful way of sharing ideas and considering possible ways of dealing with emerging problems of student guidance, motivation and evaluation. These seminars were held at regular intervals, almost monthly. As they took place during the school day, with substitute teachers taking project teachers' classes, the investment of the local municipalities in the ELP project was quite substantial.

Students were introduced to the idea of reflective learning by reference to themselves as learners in general and as language learners in particular. The teachers worked first on a basic reflective orientation by helping their students to reflect on their language learning experiences, their beliefs about learning, and their view of their role as language learners. Learning to be reflective about oneself as a human being and as a language learner was an easier way to begin reflective work than using the self-assessment grid and the checklists right away. Teachers used simple questions or semi-structured statements to facilitate student reflection, for example: How do you see your role as a language student? What aspects of foreign language learning are easy (difficult) for you? How might you improve your participation in group work?

To promote more independent work, teachers gave students curriculum-related learning tasks that were open enough to leave space for real choices, as appropriate to the students' age, learning skills and level of proficiency in the target language (for example, preparing a report/presentation on topics like "My family/home town/hobbies"). Having options required students to make personal choices about how to set objectives and draw up action plans. The plans specified the timeframe for the work to be done: agreeing deadlines for consulting and returning completed assignments, the content of the report, and the expected out-

comes, possibly with (minimum) requirements for acceptable work (for example, in terms of the length of the report and how work should be presented).

To sum up, the Finnish ELP journey evolved during the project through the following major steps (Kohonen 2006):

1. Clarifying the participating teachers' educational orientation, their pedagogical beliefs and assumptions, and their conceptions of language learning, that is, how they saw their task and role in the classroom.

2. Clarifying the students' views, beliefs and assumptions about themselves as language learners: how they saw their roles in the classroom context.

3. Working towards a supportive environment of negotiated language learning and respect for diversity.

4. Working towards reflection on individual and collaborative learning processes and increasing awareness of foreign language learning.

5. Guiding the students to undertake a number of portfolio tasks each school year, carried out in the target language, and discussed and evaluated both individually and in groups using peer assessment.

6. Learning to use the self-assessment grid and the checklists to assess their learning tasks and current language skills.

The success of the project was due to several factors. As noted above, voluntary participation meant that teachers were predisposed to respond to long-term challenges with commitment. They were also able to convey their interest and enthusiasm to their pupils/students and motivate them to assume increasing responsibility their ELP-oriented language study. Teachers repeatedly emphasized the significance of collegial support for their professional learning. Collegial collaboration clearly helped them to arrive at a better understanding of their role as language educators and work out viable solutions to the puzzling issues coming up in their classrooms.

The organisation of the project as an open space for professional learning created an atmosphere of equal partnership between the participants; a partnership of openness and interdependence, learning from one another. The teachers felt able to invite their pupils/students to become full participants in the interactive learning-teaching process, encouraging them to come up with their questions and suggestions. In a supportive environment, the teachers felt safe to explore their professional beliefs and understandings and take the risks of modifying them where they saw it possible and appropriate. (Kohonen 2004, 2006.)

### 3.4 The professional change processes

In this section we briefly discuss some more general themes that have come up in the course of ELP implementation, based on research findings in different national contexts. Our purpose is to provide teacher educators with relevant research background and to encourage them to develop ways of working with the ELP appropriate to their national/regional contexts.

#### 3.4.1 Sociocultural theory: the role of beliefs and interaction

Connected with the rise of qualitative methods in classroom research, there has been a manifest shift towards emphasizing the importance of students' own contributions to their language learning through active involvement. In current views of sociocultural theory, the process of knowledge construction is discussed with an emphasis on interaction between the participants. Vygotsky (1978), an early precursor of the theory, writing in the 1920s and 1930s, emphasized social interaction as the basis for developing the individual's higher-level mental activity.

He described this process of development using the metaphor of the **zone of proximal development** (ZPD), the zone between the individual's actual and potential levels of development. In his definition of this highly influential concept, Vygotsky states that the ZPD is the distance between what a person can achieve when acting alone (the level of actual development) and what the same person can accomplish when acting under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (the level of potential development): "what a child can do with assistance today, she will be able to do by herself tomorrow" (Vygotsky 1978, p. 87). The tasks that pupils can do on their own are within their area of self-regulation. Development in the ZPD thus proceeds from other-regulation to self-regulation, towards increasing autonomy. The teacher has a significant role in mediating this development, but it can also be mediated by interaction with more capable peers (Wertsch 1998; van Lier 1996, 2004; Lantolf 2000; Kalaja & Barcelos 2003; Alanen 2003).

The process of helping the learner to assume a more active role is also discussed by the American developmental psychologist Jerome Bruner (1983) using another influential metaphor, **scaffolding**, which is closely related to the ZPD. Bruner defines scaffolding as a "process of 'setting up' the situation to make the child's entry easy and successful and then gradually pulling back and handing the role to the child as he becomes skillful enough to manage it": "One sets the game, provides a scaffold to assure that the child's ineptitudes can be rescued or rectified by appropriate intervention, and then removes the scaffold part by part as the reciprocal structure can stand on its own" (Bruner 1983, p. 60).

The teacher's scaffolding interventions provide specific contextual support for the student. The structures provided by the teacher create a safe but still challenging environment within which the pupil's participation is encouraged without being forced and within which errors are allowed. The emphasis is on mutual engagement, and the teacher (or parent) observes the child closely and watches for opportunities to hand over parts of the action to the child as soon as he or she shows signs of being ready for them. The actions are intertwined so that the interaction flows in a natural way.

Students' experience of ELP-oriented language learning reflects the importance of teachers' and students' mutual engagement for motivation and successful learning outcomes. Concluding their evaluation of the pilot phase of the Irish post-primary ELP project, Ushioda and Ridley (2002, p. 50) discuss their students' enthusiasm and the ELP's positive impact on motivation. The Irish students enjoyed preparing the documents to be kept in the Dossier. The Language Biography helped them to consolidate their learning by giving them concrete tools for self-assessment and reflection on their language learning and intercultural skills, but they needed to be supported in their ELP work before they were able to understand its potential.

The evaluation of the Irish ELP implementation project, carried out during the school year 2003-2004 (in 19 classes, with a total of 364 students), confirmed the positive impact of the ELP on learning outcomes (Sisamakis 2006). The predominantly positive motivational effects of using the ELP were connected with a number of process-oriented factors such as regular, flexible use of the ELP in tandem with the textbook, involving a variety of activities that focused on personal goals. Learners were invited to work on their beliefs about language learning and maximize the use of the target language throughout the process. They were also encouraged to make an effort to do well and take ownership of their learning, aiming at autonomy.

The project elaborated a modular, cyclical way of working with the ELP which broke the intimidating task of language learning down into more easily manageable chunks. The modules involved a cycle of personal goal setting, monitoring, and self-assessment/evaluation using the checklists, leading to a new cycle (Sisamakis 2006, pp. 335-340).

In sociocultural theory students are seen as a significant resource for their own and one another's learning. They need to take charge of their learning in order to exercise their autonomy as language learners and as language users. This shift in research has brought about a new focus on the students themselves as language learners. Students need to be helped to develop a basic reflective orientation to learning by working on their experiences, beliefs and expectations in relation to

language learning and language use. Similarly, teachers need to reflect on their educational beliefs and identities as language educators.

Kalaja & Barcelos (2003, p. 1) define beliefs as "opinions and ideas that learners (and teachers) have about the task of learning a second/foreign language". Beliefs are socially constituted, interactively sustained and time-bound assumptions about the roles and duties of the participants in the social teaching–learning process. Being socially constituted, they are constantly evolving and thus modifiable (at least to some extent) rather than stable and permanent (Lantolf 2000; Kalaja & Barcelos 2003; Little 2004; Watson-Gegeo 2004; van Lier 2004; Perclová 2006).

As Devon Woods points out, beliefs are integrated in a larger dynamic model of thought and action forming a central framework within which all learning takes place. The formation and development of beliefs can thus be seen as a type of learning. Beliefs impinge on the teacher's decisions, actions and events and the interpretation of events. Teaching behaviour is influenced by a complex set of relationships which the teacher may or may not be aware of at a particular moment and which he/she may not be able to make explicit (Woods 2003, pp. 202-08). Being unconscious and covert, they easily remain unnoticed and tend to be taken for granted in the classroom community. In this sense they can exercise a powerful hidden influence on the learning/teaching culture in the social contexts of foreign language education.

To explore their teaching and professional identity as educators, teachers need to develop an awareness of their educational beliefs and the potential consequences of those beliefs for their teaching. Teachers' educational practices and their beliefs about language teaching and learning will also shape the pupils' images of "good" language teaching and learning. Thus it is important for teachers to increase their understanding of educational phenomena in their classes, to consider their beliefs and views about education and the roles of the participants in the process (Kalaja & Barcelos 2003; Alanen 2003, pp. 60-63; Woods 2003; Kohonen 2001, 2004, 2005; Perclová 2006; Sisamakis 2006).

It is important to realize that the teacher's conception of what it is to be human is inherent and embedded in his/her educational practices whether he/she is aware of it or not. Our lesson plans and methods inevitably presuppose some perspective from which we view learning, teaching and students. Our teaching methods are an inseparable part of our conception of man. As Jorma Lehtovaara points out, our methods are our philosophy of praxis. He argues that we need genuine contemplative thinking based on a lived and personally experienced open dialogue in the spirit of a humanistic-scientific approach. We need to clarify our educational stance and make our implicit conception of man more explicit by

asking questions such as: What is it – being human? What is the meaning of that for **me**? How can **I** approach a person's way of being-in-the-world so that I let it be what he or she experiences it to be? To what extent can and dare another person manifest himself or herself as he or she inherently is in **my** presence? (Lehtovaara 2001, pp. 157-158).

### 3.4.2 Towards a transformative paradigm in teacher education

In the transformative paradigm, the teacher is seen as an ethical professional who needs to be engaged in the process of reflection to understand his or her work at a deeper level of professional awareness. Experiential and sociocultural learning theories provide a powerful educational basis for integrating theoretical and practical elements of learning as a whole-person approach, emphasizing the significance of personal experience and social interaction for language teaching and learning. Together they provide important concepts and pedagogical tools for building a new learning culture between the participants in school.

The notion of transformative learning also entails that teachers emancipate themselves from their constraining educational beliefs and assumptions and work towards a professional identity as educators designing pedagogical learning environments in collaboration with other educators and stakeholders and evaluating the outcomes of their efforts. Transformative learning includes the following properties (Kolb 1984; Askew & Carnell 1998; Edge 2002; Kohonen 2001, 2003, 2005; Huttunen 2003; Sachs 2003):

1. Realizing the significance of professional interaction for growth.

2. Developing an open, critical stance to professional work and seeing oneself as a continuous learner.

3. Developing a reflective attitude as a basic habit of mind, which involves regular reflection on educational practices and their philosophical underpinnings.

4. Developing new self-understandings in concrete situations.

5. Reflecting on critical events or incidents in one's life and work history and learning from the personal insights gained.

6. Conscious risk-taking*:* acting in new ways in class and with colleagues.

7. Ambiguity tolerance: learning to live with uncertainty concerning the decisions to be made.

The transformative approach emphasizes the teacher's self-understanding, based on pedagogical reflection in concrete situations with learners. Linda Darling-Hammond points out that teachers learn by observing and listening to their students carefully and looking at their work thoughtfully. This develops their understanding of how their students see themselves as learners, what they care about, and what tasks are likely to give them sufficient challenge and success to sustain their motivation. Teacher learning therefore needs to be connected with actual teaching, supported by ongoing reflection and theory building: "Teachers learn best by studying, doing, and reflecting; by collaborating with other teachers; by looking closely at students and their work; and by sharing what they see" (Darling-Hammond 1998, p. 8).

To develop the curriculum, teachers need to share their ideas, insights and uncertainties with one another. They need to clarify and redefine their educational beliefs and assumptions; and they need to work towards increased reflectivity by considering their goals and practices, judging their findings against empirical classroom-based evidence and feedback from relevant stakeholders. The purpose of reflective work is to integrate professional beliefs and current theoretical knowledge into new personal meanings and concrete practices for the benefit of student learning. Transformative learning thus entails that teachers move from being consumers of external expert knowledge to taking an active role as curriculum developers and researchers of their own work.

### 3.4.3 Encountering educational change

In the Finnish ELP project, the teachers reported that using the ELP with their students changed their views of teaching in a fundamental way. Developing new practices also produced stress. Many teachers asked themselves how they could behave confidently in their classes while having inner doubts about the new pedagogy and their professional skills. They were facing the paradox of being innovative teachers: How do I give the impression of being a competent and encouraging teacher while feeling professionally uncertain and at times lost? They found it emotionally demanding to work on their professional beliefs and practices while dealing with a full work load in school. In addition to working on their own change processes, innovative teachers also had to face suspicion and doubt from a number of their students (and also colleagues in many cases).

Behind such problems is the well-known phenomenon of resistance to major changes in life and work. Change generally triggers a broad spectrum of feelings, including tension and discomfort, so resistance to change is quite understandable. Educational change may give rise to a sense of threat to one's personal security because it implies that at least some of one's knowledge and skills are becoming obsolete and need to be replaced. The transitional period of change processes often involves feelings of discomfort, and sometimes even anxiety,

because of the uncertainties involved. However, people relate differently to such tensions. What makes some teachers anxious may be experienced by others as an energizing challenge.

On the other hand, the feelings of progress that go with increased understanding and professional growth are generally very rewarding and even empowering. An important source of teacher motivation and development is provided by observation and experience of student progress. As noted above, there seems to be a cyclical interplay between teacher and student engagement: the teacher's professional conviction and confidence increase student interest and motivation, and a positive student response promotes teacher enthusiasm. Essential in the process is the common understanding between teachers and students based on shared ground rules and negotiated learning. Ushioda and Ridley (2002, p. 51) make this point succinctly when they note that common understanding came about only "when there was mutual agreement (negotiation) about the priorities regarding what was to be tackled, when and in what manner".

Change requires emotional work that consumes mental resources. That is why support and (where possible) a reduced work load are advisable to avoid so-called innovation overload (Fullan 1996). Moving from a relatively teacher-oriented to a clearly student-centred classroom that aims to promote learner autonomy is a major educational change that requires a complex set of new skills and attitudes. It also entails the development of a new kind of professional identity, seeing oneself as a facilitator of student learning and an intercultural language educator.

Knowing about change processes in general is also beneficial. It is helpful to know that professional learning often brings with it the sense that one's classroom management skills are decreasing (the so-called "DIP" phenomenon, an acronym for "decrease in performance", as noted by Michael Fullan). It is common to feel that one's teaching is less effective than before until newly emerging pedagogical skills take over and yield positive experiences. This is what seems to happen in ELP-oriented pedagogy when the teacher begins to shift pedagogical power and responsibility to the students. Students often misuse their increased freedom until they are helped to understand the purpose of the change and assume a more responsible stance and self-regulation. For these reasons it is essential that teachers are supported through the crucial transition in their professional growth so that they don't give up and revert to their former "safe" practices. Creating pressure without providing sufficient support is likely to lead to disappointment and withdrawal (Fullan 1996; Kohonen 2003, 2004, 2006).

Research findings show that language teachers should not be left to cope with ELP-oriented work on their own. The support they receive needs to be made

explicit at the different levels of school administration: the national central administration, the local/regional educational authority, and the head teacher of the school. Rather than restricting innovation to foreign languages alone, it is also desirable as far as possible to link portfolio work to a whole-school approach to promoting socially responsible student learning as a public pedagogical orientation (Kohonen 2003, 2004; Sisamakis 2006).

The significance of collegial collaboration has also come up repeatedly in research findings. Teachers find it very helpful to discuss theoretical principles and practical ways of organizing student work in relation to a given classroom context. When they share experiences and uncertainties, significant professional learning develops through mutual interaction, trust and respect. Similarly, sharing moments of insight and success in the classroom strengthens the spirit of community and professional growth.

Margarita Limón Luque discusses professional learning as a matter of integrating the intellectual, emotional and behavioural components of personality development into a conscious capacity for action. She points out that the following three conditions are necessary for a conceptual change (Luque 2003, 135–140): (a) knowledge and understanding of what it is that needs to be changed (metacognitive/-linguistic condition), (b) motivation for change (volitional condition: engagement, commitment), and (c) self-regulation of the change process (self-regulatory condition: goal-setting, monitoring, self-assessment). An intentional conceptual change becomes possible when the person understands the reasons for it and is helped to plan, monitor and evaluate the change process. As the skills of self-regulation develop, the person gets positive rewards from the process and becomes more motivated for change, with proper support and encouragement. Reflection is an essential element in all of these conditions, and it needs to be facilitated explicitly (Kohonen 2005).

### 3.4.4 A note on the context of professional growth

The perspectives discussed above pose new demands for the teacher's professional knowledge, skills and educational beliefs and values. They encourage teachers to rethink their traditional ways of organizing classroom work and consider the moral nature of teaching. Teachers need to update their professional knowledge, skills and understanding, assuming a more autonomous professional stance as educators. Autonomy is part of a more general concept of values education in school. Being an autonomous person entails respect for one's dignity as a moral person and valuing others by treating them with dignity. Fundamental to human dignity is the notion of moral agency: being morally aware of one's conduct and its consequences for others. Values education is thus an inherent part of any encounter between the participants in the school community (Jackson et al. 1993; Kohonen 2003.)

As Jackson et al. (1993) point out, schools do much more than pass on knowledge. School as a social learning environment lays the foundations for lifelong beliefs about learning and habits of action. Teachers need to reflect on their educational values and assumptions and the ways in which they organize, monitor and evaluate student learning in their classes. Teachers' awareness of ethical issues and their commitment to the educational ethos of their school provide the context for fostering student autonomy.

However, the policies and practices of school development are frequently contradictory in today's market-oriented educational culture. In many national settings it seems that the principles and working methods of the neo-liberal market economy are transferred uncritically from business life to education. The key tenets in public sector reform, borrowed from market theories, are now effectiveness, efficiency and economy. Effectiveness means managing change better, efficiency suggests focusing on outcomes and results, while economy refers to doing more with less (Sachs 2003, p. 20). If some practices seem to work in business life, that does not automatically mean that they are also valid for education. Education is inherently an ethical process of fostering and nurturing human growth.

In transformative professionalism the teacher becomes a facilitator of learning, an organizer of learning opportunities, a resource person providing students with feedback and encouragement, and a creator of the learning atmosphere and the learning space. All this requires time for reflection, collegial discussion and planning for site-based pedagogical action. Teachers also need time to collect their observations, evaluate them and, based on their findings, modify their action. This is why major educational innovations should not be pushed through too hastily in the interest of effective change management in schools. Changes of the magnitude of paradigmatic shifts in teacher thinking, pedagogical action and school culture do not take place overnight. They inevitably need time, conscious effort and explicit concrete support.

Wielding educational power requires wisdom and thoughtful action and a commitment to professional ethics. The policies and practices of educational administration ought to support such an orientation, not undermine it. Teacher educators have a crucial task in investigating and developing teacher professionalism through pre-service and in-service teacher education. The materials on the DVD that accompanies this booklet are designed to assist these processes.

# 4

# The DVD

This chapter describes the four sections of the DVD.

## 4.1 The kit of teacher training materials

There are separate English and French versions of the kit, which is presented as it was used in the central workshop, though some of the materials have been revised and/or expanded. As noted in Chapter 1, participants in the workshop gradually compiled a portfolio of materials, activities, notes and reflections. Thus the kit contains a table-of-contents page for the portfolio, a cover page for each of the ten sections of the kit, and PowerPoint presentations, supplementary texts, discussion points and workshop activities for sections 3–10. The text from the ten cover pages provides a comprehensive overview of the contents of the kit:

### 4.1.1 Individual and group reflection on the ELP and key issues in teacher training

*Why is this topic in the programme?* – This is the necessary starting point for the workshop. Reflecting on one's own ELP experience and key issues in teacher training and exchanging information with the other members of the group lays the essential foundation for informed and focussed discussion.
*Working methods* – Individual reflection on the basis of a questionnaire; discussion leading to posters summarizing the group's experience.
*What we want to achieve* – An understanding of the range of ELP experience, ELP-related teacher training issues, and teacher training contexts represented in each group. Firm reference points to which we can return repeatedly through the workshop.

### 4.1.2 Sketching preliminary action plans

*Why is this topic in the programme?* – The ECML promotes innovative approaches to language teaching and learning. The implementation of these approaches depends on the active involvement of all participants in ECML workshops. Participants in this workshop are expected to organize a follow-up event or project.
*Working methods* – Use of a questionnaire to draft an individual action plan for a follow-up event or project; group discussion of action plans summarized on posters.
*What we want to achieve* – The creation by participants of preliminary action plans; a collective sense of the range of follow-up actions and projects available to participants.

### 4.1.3 Activities, competences, levels

*Why is this topic in the programme?* – The self-assessment grid of the language passport of the ELP is based mainly on the descriptors of communicative language activities. In classroom practice, however, vocabulary and grammar, rather than these communicative activities, are perceived as the main objectives of teaching and learning, since learners are aware of them as two explicit constituents of language competence. This contradiction needs to be addressed. What is the relationship, in language use as well as in language learning, between grammar and vocabulary and communicative activities? How does one learn each of them? Can one of them be acquired while learning the other one?

*Working methods* – Plenary presentation followed by two workshops exploring and discussing the concepts.

*What we want to achieve* – Project participants will be able to distinguish – as does the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) – between activities and competences. They will have a detailed knowledge not just of activities, but also of the different constituents of communicative competence (linguistic competence is just one of several). This knowledge will help them to understand more comprehensively the scope and potential of the ELP, especially through exploration of the underlying concepts of the language biography and relating these to communicative competence. The knowledge will also enable them to help and guide users of the ELP as they extend the range of curricular and methodological options open to them, and adopt a more flexible approach.

### 4.1.4 Self-assessment in relation to the common reference levels

*Why is this topic in the programme?* – In order to implement (or promote) the ELP among teachers and their pupils it seems to be necessary to have some experience of working with a portfolio. This might be one of the first steps in teacher training: working with an ELP oneself instead of listening to someone talking about the ELP.

*Working methods* – Individual reflection on the ELP checklists, discussion in small groups on how one finds answers to the following questions:

- How do I know what level I am at?
- How do I prove it?

Group work summarizing the arguments and possible proofs, which are shared with the larger group on posters

*What we want to achieve* – Experience of self-assessment based on ELP checklists; exploration of the kinds of arguments that can be used in the teacher training process; insight into ways of justifying one's self-assessment (which can be used as products for the dossier).

### 4.1.5 Learning to learn: a model of reflection

*Why is this topic in the programme?* – Experience of language, communication,

culture, learning processes and oneself as a learner are essential for language learning – but they need to be processed consciously for learning to take place. Learning requires an explicit awareness of what it is that needs to be learned (metalinguistic and meta-cognitive awareness). Learning is the process of creating new knowledge through the transformation of experience. Reflection plays an important role in this process by providing a bridge between experience and theoretical conceptualisation. For an intentional conceptual change to take place, three conditions need to be met: (a) knowledge/ understanding of what needs to be changed (metacognitive/ metalinguistic condition), (b) motivation for the change (volitional condition: engagement, commitment), and (c) self-monitoring the change process (condition of self-regulation: goal-setting, monitoring, self-assessment). Reflection is an essential element in all of these conditions for learning to learn, and it needs to be taught and facilitated explicitly.

*Working methods* – Plenary presentation followed by individual reflection and sharing and reflection as pair work, leading to group work in the home groups; poster summaries.

*What we want to achieve* – A model of reflection is proposed as a whole-school approach, including the students, the teacher and the institutional context. Reflection is discussed in terms of three areas of student (and teacher) awareness: (1) personal awareness, (2) process and situational awareness, and (3) awareness of the learning task. Student awareness is facilitated by the teacher's professional awareness and commitment to foster student learning, in the context of the institutional learning culture and the surrounding society. The model provides a checklist and suggestions for reflection by the participants to promote ELP-oriented language learning.

### 4.1.6 Learner autonomy

*Why is this topic in the programme?* – One of the stated aims of the ELP is to foster the development of learner autonomy. This reflects the Council of Europe's long-established interest in learner autonomy as a prerequisite for life-long learning. However, learner autonomy is not defined either in the key ELP documents or in the Common European Framework. It is therefore both appropriate and necessary to consider what we mean by the term "learner autonomy", what kinds of pedagogical procedure lead to its development, and what implications it has for the pedagogical implementation of the ELP. This topic is continuous with learning to learn and reflection. However, the concept of learner autonomy also raises new questions.

*Working methods* – Plenary presentation followed by group discussion leading to individual reflection in portfolios and poster summaries.

*What we want to achieve* – Engagement with the theoretical construct "learner autonomy", consideration of the practical measures that lead to its development, and ideas for particular ELP-related pedagogical procedures.

### 4.1.7 Language in the ELP: language(s) of presentation and process; plurilingualism

*Why is this topic in the programme?* – The choice of language(s) to be used in ELPs and language(s) to be used when working with the ELP is an important issue. If the ELP uses only the mother tongue (e.g., Czech), how can it be understood, e.g., at a German university to which the owner applies for admission? Would use of the languages taught in the given context solve the problem? However, if the Council of Europe's policy with regard to minority and migrant languages were taken into account, the number of languages would increase enormously (in some member states there may be as many as 50 mother tongues in one school). As for the language used when working with the ELP, how could beginners and pre-intermediate learners thoroughly discuss their achievements in the target language? And if the target language cannot be used, does that mean a decrease of target language use in the classroom?

*Working methods* – Plenary presentation of the main issues, group discussion, individual reflection.

*What we want to achieve* – Fostering awareness of the problem, collecting and sharing ideas about effective language use when working with the ELP.

### 4.1.8 The intercultural dimension

*Why is this topic in the programme?* – The intercultural component of the ELP "reflects the Council of Europe's concern with ... respect for diversity of cultures and ways of life" and the ELP should be "a tool to promote plurilingualism and pluriculturalism". According to the *Principles and Guidelines* the language passport should record "intercultural learning experiences". However, in most cases foreign language learning takes place in classrooms far away from the "target country", and it is traditionally dominated by "a narrow view of language".[3] It is therefore necessary to look for methods or activities to bring intercultural experiences into the classroom, mediated through the internet and other media. Global simulation is an activity that can give (especially young) foreign language learners intercultural experience.

*Working methods* – Work in pairs. Invent a native speaker of the target language by

- giving him/her a name, age, family, etc.
- decide where he/she lives (region, town, street, etc.)
- finding his/her school and give him/her a realistic language profile
- .....

Check the information on the internet or with a resource person.

The outcome of this activity should be a language biography page.

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[3] D. Little & B. Simpson, *European language Portfolio: the intercultural component and learning how to learn*, Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 2003, p. 5.

*What we want to achieve* – Participants are introduced to a number of activities they can use to develop the intercultural experience with their learners. Presentations on posters should provide an overview of possible activities.

### 4.1.9 The language communication task – making the link between the language curriculum, school textbooks and the ELP

*Why is this topic in the programme?* – Communication activities play a key role in the ELP. They appear in the passport and in numerous language biographies. The main stages in any activity are design, execution and assessment. Here we will focus on the design of an activity, since part of the work with the ELP is concerned precisely with designing communicative language activities. Generally speaking, activities have to be designed whenever a descriptor is a subject of learning and a communicative language activity is therefore the starting point for learning operations. This then raises the question of how to make the progression from a descriptor of a language communication activity to the activity itself, in other words how to design a successful activity. But why in fact should ELP users design tasks? Learners managing their ELP will carry our self-assessments with the aid of checklists presenting communication activities (as in the case of the Swiss ELP). Following these self-assessments, they will set themselves learning objectives, of the "communication activities" variety. How will they achieve these activity objectives? What can they do? Other learners working with their ELP may find that their school textbook (or even the curriculum) fails to cover all the learning objectives, and that the book does not offer activities that might illustrate them. They must therefore design these activities, taking the activity descriptors as their starting point. Alternatively, teachers may discover that a school curriculum emphasises the common reference levels in terms of communicative language activities – in other words is directly based on the ELP – but that there are no textbooks adapted to this type of objective. They must therefore "teach" these activities to their students or pupils.

*Working methods* – Plenary input followed by two workshops concerned with exploring and developing ideas

*What we want to achieve* – The participants will familiarise themselves with and explore a particular tool, such as a table or model, for designing communicative language activities and assessing communication or learning tasks that already exist, for example in textbooks. In working with this tool, they will take account of the main aspects of a particular task that emphasises communication (comprehension, processing/negotiation and expression of meaning) but is also of value in learning and teaching the language. They will be able to use this tool to prepare and adapt classroom activities in response to the learners' reactions. They can also use it to help pupils/students overcome learning difficulties and develop their individual learning capacities.

### 4.1.10 Linking assessment to the ELP and the CEFR

*Why is this topic in the programme?* – Self-assessment is one of the key elements of the ELP. If it is to prove its worth in the "directed" (institutional) areas of language teaching and learning, it must also take account of the needs and goals of teachers and their institutions, in particular the need to assess students' performance. Such assessment is actually one of the official aspects of the ELP. The Swiss ELP, for example, sets out to help teachers, schools and other education institutions to assess and document performance and relate final examinations and internal and external certificates and diplomas to the Council of Europe reference levels. The ELP is also important in the preparation of examinations. Schools and other education institutions are required to base their profiles on the ELP, to make them more transparent *vis-à-vis* the general public and ensure that their courses and examinations are comparable within the broader European framework. But how to make sure that tests and assessments do become transparent and can be compared with the common reference levels, while at the same time remaining feasible, in other words compatible with the resources at teachers' disposal?

*Working methods* – Plenary input followed by two workshops concerned with developing ideas, a video presentation and individual and collective assessment.

*What we want to achieve* – Participants will become familiar with the different types of assessment in the ELP and the instruments and summary procedures associated with them. They will explore the opportunities offered by the ELP and the CEFR to design, specify and assess tests and examinations to assess communicative skills. They will also become familiar with techniques for and practical aspects of the process of drawing up tests. They will draft summaries of objectives of tests comparable to the CEFR. They will assess pupils'/students' performance and consider how strict they are as examiners and how much examiners can vary in their level of strictness.

We recognize that there will be few training situations in which it is possible to use the whole kit in the intensive manner of the central workshop. But users are free to select whatever parts of the kit are appropriate to their particular context, translating and adapting as appropriate.

## 4.2 Additional materials

This section of the DVD contains additional materials that members of the project team developed for national training events in order to respond to particular needs. It also contains the full text of Ph.D. theses on the ELP by Radka Perclová (Czech ELP project) and Emmanouil Sisamakis (Irish ELP project), two articles from Austria, by Veronika Weiskopf-Prantner and Claudia Zekl, reports on ELP developments in Albania (Andromaqi Haloçi) and Norway (Heike Speitz), and sample pages from the ELP of an Irish student (Niamh Guven). All of these materials are in one language only – English, French or German.

### 4.3 National training events

This section of the DVD contains the reports of the national ELP training events organized by participants in the central workshop. Each report was jointly written by the local organizer and the member of the project team who helped to animate the event. The reports are in either English or French.

### 4.4 Reference documents

The final section of the DVD contains English and French versions of the following ELP-related documents commissioned and published by the Council of Europe:

- G. Schneider & P. Lenz, *European Language Portfolio: Guide for developers*, Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 2001.
- D. Little & R. Perclová, *European Language Portfolio: Guide for teachers and teacher trainers*, Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 2001.
- D. Little (ed.), *The European Language Portfolio in use: nine examples*, Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 2003.
- D. Little, "The European Language Portfolio and self-assessment", Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 1999.
- Council of Europe, "European Language Portfolio: key reference documents", Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 2006.
- R. Schärer, *Final report: a European Language Portfolio, pilot project phase 1998–2000*, Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 2000.
- D. Little & B. Simpson, *European Language Port folio:the intercultural component and learning how to learn*, Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 2003.
- P. Lenz & G. Schneider, "Introduction to the bank of descriptors for self-assessment in European Language Portfolios", Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 2003.

This section of the DVD also contains the following articles in English:

- H.-M. Järvinen, "The Common European Framework in teaching writing", in K. Mäkinen, P. Kaikkonen & V. Kohonen (eds), *Future perspectives in foreign language education*, Oulu, Oulu University Press, 2004, pp. 145-151.
- V. Kohonen & G. Westhoff, "Enhancing the pedagogical aspects of the European Language Portfolio (ELP), Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 2002.
- V. Kohonen, "On the notions of the language learner, student and user in FL education: building the road as we travel", in P Pietilä, P. Lintunen & H.-M. Järvinen (eds), *Kielenoppija tänään – Language learners of today*, AFinLA Yearbook, Jyväskylä: Association of Applied Linguistics in Finland, 2006, pp. 37-66.
- D. Little, "Constructing a theory of learner autonomy: some steps along the way", in K. Mäkinen, P. Kaikkonen & V. Kohonen (eds), *Future perspec-*

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Council of Europe, *European Language Portfolio: key reference documents*, Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 2006.

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