

European Centre for Modern Languages

Report on ELP event organised in Poland within the framework of Project C6 – Training teachers to use the European Language Portfolio

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The context

At present in Poland there are all types of Portfolio produced, however, not all of them are accredited yet, which means that not all of them are in broad use. Yet, we expect that presently we will be able to benefit from the possibility of having the whole spectrum of Portfolios. But still, in the last few months we can observe that enthusiasm for the Portfolio slightly decreased, which puts the future of the Portfolio in Poland into question.

The aims

Consequently, the main aim of the workshop was to:

- Acquaint teacher trainers from different parts of Poland with the full range of available Polish versions of the Portfolio
- Motivate them to use the Portfolio
- Encourage them to run their own local or regional workshops and be disseminators of what they learn during the central workshop

The participants

22 teacher trainers from regional in-service teacher training centres from all over Poland.

The organizer

The workshop was organized by Pawel Poszytek and the National In-service Teacher Training Centre in Warsaw.

The venue

The workshop took place in the premises of the National In-service Teacher Training Centre in Sulejowek where both conference and accommodation facilities were available.

The programme

The workshop focused on six main topics, which were as follows:

1. Czech and Polish experience with the ELP,
2. The descriptors of language proficiency and their use,
3. Language exams and assessment of language proficiency,
4. Learner self-assessment, its use in the classroom and development of learner autonomy,
5. Development of intercultural competence, and
6. Preparations of workshops for teachers.

At the beginning of the workshop the participants were welcomed by Maria Gorzelak, an editor of the Polish journal for languages, who emphasized the importance of the ELP and provided the teachers with samples of all the Polish portfolios that had been published.

The group of participants was heterogeneous. While several of them had already prepared workshops about the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, others had not had any experience with the Framework and the ELP. The participants therefore appreciated information about the Czech experience and information about the development of the project in Poland that several of them had known.

During group work activities, the participants discussed the importance of communicative language activities and the students' need to achieve various can-do tasks. They evaluated the textbooks in use and pointed out their positive features and common use of these tasks in them. They also gave examples of effective activities they had done during their workshops with teachers and shared successful ways in which teachers can encourage the development of students' communicative competences.

The Sample Interview of Reference Level B1, which should be the level of the Polish Upper-secondary school leaving exam was viewed (Cambridge ESOL Main Suite and CELS Speaking Documentation, CE 2004), however it raised different reactions as some teachers considered it an example that might lower the Polish good tradition of high standards.

Examples were given of the development of learner self-assessment and autonomy and the rich knowledge based on several teachers' experience was shared.

The inclusion of the topic focusing on the development of intercultural experience was highly appreciated. A very interesting discussion was held as some participants were of different origin and gave authentic examples of their experience both from the perspective of their own culture and of Polish culture.

The workshop was concluded with the preparation of participants' potential workshops for teachers in which the participants could benefit both from their colleagues with similar experience and from colleagues with different experience.

As Poland is one of the countries that piloted the ELP, it seems that the rich Polish experience could have been presented to those who lacked ELP experience and a more homogeneous group could have been formed.

The participants made a list of their email addresses and decided to stay in contact and support each other in their future action.

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