

ELP in whole-school use

Case study – Norway

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Summary

- Kassellet School, Oslo – primary and lower secondary school (pupils aged 6–16)
- 610 pupils in the school
- Very few immigrant pupils compared with other schools in Oslo
- Languages taught: Norwegian (as language of schooling/school subject), English (first foreign language), German, Spanish, French (second foreign languages)
- ELP models used: 97.2008 (for learners aged 13–18) and 100.2009 (for learners aged 6–12)
- Scope of the project: all languages, language teachers and pupils in the school

This school's ELP experience goes back to 2004, when it became compulsory to use the ELP in all foreign language classes. The school has also participated in the piloting of ELP models under development. Nevertheless, a consistent whole-school approach is still not in place. Some teachers have been uncomfortable with the ELP and wanted the freedom to decide whether or not to use it. Pupils at the school already hand in most of their written work digitally, so the lack of a digital version of the ELP has been a disadvantage. However, teachers have worked out a way of using the ELP digitally, and this will provide a basis for future work.

Background

Kastellet school is a primary and lower secondary school that opened its doors in 2004. Expectations were high, and the school did not hesitate in launching a variety of projects. For language teachers, the implementation of the ELP was one aim.

Foreign languages taught at the school are English, Spanish, French and German. English (FL1) is taught from the first year of primary school, and Spanish, French and German (FL2) are offered from the 5th year of primary school. Primary school in Norway is 7 years in total. FL2 is compulsory from the 8th to the 10th grade (age group 13–16).

Two versions of the ELP are in use, one for primary classes and another for secondary classes. The school participated in a pilot project concerning the ELP for primary classes from 2005, and in the nationwide implementation of the ELP for secondary classes at the same time. In the last couple of years the school has taken part in the primary school ELP implementation project along with a few other schools from different parts of the country. The ELP is still optional in Norwegian schools.

From 2010 onwards, Kastellet will join another 2-year pilot project for FL2 at primary level (early start; 10-12 years) where the objective is to try out a sample national curriculum that has been elaborated. In this way the educational authorities want to collect data and experience about early language learning. This project explicitly encourages the use of the ELP with checklists, strategies and cultural awareness. A first seminar to introduce the project will be held in September this year.

ELP whole-school implementation at Kastellet

Implementing the ELP as a whole-school project at Kastellet was attempted with a top-down approach from 2004 onwards by making the tool compulsory in all language classes. The idea was to promote the school in implementing the ELP at all levels.

At an early stage of the implementation, a project “room” was established on the school’s intranet where links to the portfolios and other useful material for language learning has been stored. This “room” is open to all language teachers at the school.

Participation in the pilot project helped teachers to become familiar with the ELP. The school cooperated with other schools in the neighbourhood to share thoughts, experiences and ideas about the ELP. Issues that were brought up were, for instance, how to deal with practical issues such as documenting several languages in the ELP, how to begin and what to hand out to the pupils, where to store the pupils’ ELPs, and so on. All the pupils got a starting kit consisting of a folder containing a few pages from the ELP.

Our head of department, who was responsible for the implementation from the beginning, had ELP kick-off classes which other language teachers could attend. She used the ELP logo as the basis for an oral discussion with the pupils, raising questions about the meaning of communication and language learning. At the end of the class, the pupils filled in their language passport where they registered which languages they were able to speak or understand.

A German class led by the head of department and another teacher of German had a project with the Goethe institute in Oslo three years ago, where the use of the ELP in class was taped and pupils were interviewed. This resulted in a video that was even presented at a film festival in Berlin in 2008! Other teachers have also filmed class activities more recently. One video shows discussions about different ways of observing the target language outside school or how to use strategies when lacking words. All of these videos have been used in order to promote the ELP.

However, not all the teachers have been comfortable with the ELP. An implementation plan was made in 2008. This was meant as a help for the teachers and as a way of favouring progressive

implementation, beginning with awareness-raising about multilingualism in class and in the local area in the first years of primary school, and gradually introducing more reflection and autonomy as the pupils get older (see Appendix 1).

Although different work with the ELP has been carried out, a consistent whole-school use is still not in place. Teachers also have different opinions as to how to deal with the ELP and different issues have been discussed.

A small group of teachers was responsible for following up the work with the ELP over the past year, but without extra time this is not easy. A small-scale workshop was organized at primary school. A staff meeting was held at secondary school.

Conclusion after staff meeting in April 2010

1. Teachers want to be free to decide whether to use the ELP, how and to what extent
2. A digital ELP is needed. Most written work is handed in digitally on the school's intranet in proper folders for each subject. The ELP exists on the Centre for Foreign Languages' website, but only in PDF-documents. A digital ELP has been asked for, but this is not a priority for the moment.

In the meantime, we usually refer to the digital ELP in the classroom by displaying it to the pupils thanks to the projectors in class. It may be consulted here:

<http://www.fremmedspraksenteret.no/index.php?ID=10109>

We have discussed how to use the ELP digitally and have decided to create a digital dossier for each pupil. This will be tried out simultaneously with the new early start project mentioned above. Pupils may put their texts, reflection notes and sound files from FL1 and FL2 in this dossier and store Internet sources and other useful material there too. Digital documents inspired by the ELP have also been made by the teachers for this purpose.

3. Physical portfolios will no longer be handed out to pupils, though teachers may still copy parts of the ELP for use in the classroom if they wish to do so.

Appendices 2 and 3 give examples of peer and self-assessment in a Grade 8 French classroom.

Appendix 1

Kastellet skole – The European Language Portfolio, implementation plan for 2008–09

	English	Deutsch/ Español/Français
 <p>Primary school 1–4</p>	<p>My language passport Discussions about different languages in class. Focus on plurilingualism in the class and the local environment.</p> <p>Other countries and people Discuss languages and culture in different countries</p> <p>My language learning Reflect on language learning, participate in the decisions-making concerning what to learn and how to learn it</p>	<p>No FL2</p>
<p>Primary school 5-6</p>	<p>My language sources Awareness-raising about language learning in everyday situations outside school Practice on learning strategies Start using checklists to raise awareness about objectives for learning and one's competences Start to set your own objectives</p> <p>Other countries and people</p> <p>Communication, food and culture: Create a link between the <i>languages</i> the pupils learn, the <i>places</i> they are spoken and the <i>people</i> who speak them Use of the dossier as documentation of skills.</p>	<p>My language learning Reflect on language learning, participate in the decisions-making concerning what to learn and how to learn it Start using checklists to raise awareness about objectives for learning and one's skills. Level A1 Start to set your own objectives</p> <p>Communication, food and culture: Use of the dossier as documentation of skills.</p>
<p>Primary school 7th grade</p>	<p>Active use of the descriptions from the checklists as objectives for the work in class as well as the evaluation Acquire knowledge and understanding of the learning process: independent use of strategies</p> <p>By the end of primary classes: Check the pupils language profile and skills using checklists level A2 (B1 for certain pupils) with documentation in the dossier</p>	<p>Active use of the descriptions from the checklists as objectives for the work in class as well as the evaluation Acquire knowledge and understanding of the learning process: independent use of strategies</p> <p>By the end of primary classes: Check the pupils language profile and skills using checklists level A2 (B1 for certain pupils) with documentation in the dossier</p>

 <p>Lower secondary, 8th and 9th grade</p>	<p>Work with and evaluate different language sources</p> <p>Continue to develop learning strategies</p> <p>Develop the ability to reflect on one's learning; set individual objectives; auto-evaluation. The aim is to increase the responsibility of one's learning</p> <p>My intercultural observations: increase awareness about other people and places, stimulate curiosity, create a better understanding for other cultures</p>	<p>Work with and evaluate different language sources</p> <p>Continue to develop learning strategies</p> <p>Develop the ability to reflect on one's learning; set individual objectives; auto-evaluation. The aim is to increase the responsibility of one's learning</p> <p>My intercultural observations: increase awareness about other people and places, stimulate curiosity, create a better understanding for other cultures</p>
<p>Lower secondary, 10th grade</p>	<p>Set individual objectives, choose sources for learning, self-evaluation of progress</p> <p>By the end of 10th grade: Describe one's language profile and skills using checklists level B2 (C1 for certain pupils); use dossier for documentation</p> <p>Cultural awareness: Show understanding for other cultures and customs, see things in perspective and become aware of the importance of communication with people from other countries</p>	<p>Set individual objectives, choose sources for learning, self-evaluation of progress</p> <p>By the end of 10th grade: Describe one's language profile and skills using checklists level A2 (B1 for certain pupils); use dossier for documentation</p> <p>Cultural awareness: Show understanding for other cultures and customs, see things in perspective and become aware of the importance of communication with people from other countries</p>

Appendix 2: Example of simple peer assessment and self-assessment of oral production in the French classroom 8th grade

The objective was to observe other learners and thus become aware of what characterizes a good oral presentation. The pupils prepared an oral presentation and assessed each other in groups before assessing themselves. The peer-assessment should make it easier for them to assess themselves after the oral presentation. This was carried out during the first half year of a beginner's French class. Strategies from the ELP were discussed beforehand. To prepare for this presentation, the pupils listened to a presentation by their teacher about a friend, and then they practised orally in class.

Objective from the ELP, oral production, level A2: "I can give very simple descriptions of people, things and places I know well."

Strategies from the ELP: "I dare to talk even though I may make mistakes. I use body language when lacking words."

Task:

Prepare yourself to talk about a friend in groups. You are not allowed to read from a script, but you should bring a picture of the friend you want to present. You will be assessed by the other pupils in your group according to criteria such as content, pronunciation and variation in vocabulary.

The pupils used the form below for the peer assessment, ticked off and handed in to the teacher who returned it to the right person later.

Name of the pupil	I think the presentation was...	I think the pronunciation was...	I think the vocabulary was...	The pupil brought a picture of the friend
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • very short • relatively short • neither short nor long • long • very long 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • difficult to understand • quite easy to understand • very clear and easy to understand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a bit varied • quite varied • very varied 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • yes • no

After the presentation, pupils also assessed themselves according to two simple observations:

1. What I managed well
2. What I need to practice more

Examples of pupils' writing:

Pupil 1:

1. I had quite varied vocabulary and had included a few important facts about the person
2. The pronunciation of certain words

Pupil 2:

1. I am satisfied that I was able to ignore my script, and that I used body language a lot.
2. I need to practice more on pronunciation and not be afraid to forget what to say.

Pupil 3:

1. I managed to pronounce quite well and did not read much from the script.
2. To write correctly, to learn more figures in French and learn things by heart.

Pupil 4 presented a pet:

1. To say its name and where it lives. To say which colour its fur is.
2. To express age. I need to practice my French more.

Appendix 3: Example of text writing and simple self-assessment in the French classroom, 8th grade

This text was written in the beginning of the year in a beginners' French class. Previously to writing this text, pupils had practiced simple role plays orally in class and read texts where people present themselves in the textbook. The pupils received a letter from a (fictive) Canadian girl that they should answer.

A few pupils had had French classes at primary school.

The objective from the ELP checklist level A2: "I can write simple texts about myself or people and things I know well."

Strategies from the ELP: "I use other texts as models for my own texts."

Task:

You have received a letter from a Canadian girl named Mathilde who wants to correspond with you. Write back to her and present yourself as thoroughly as you can.

A sound version of the letter was also played in class.

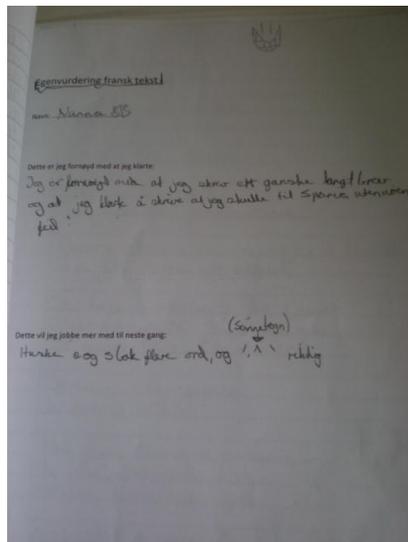
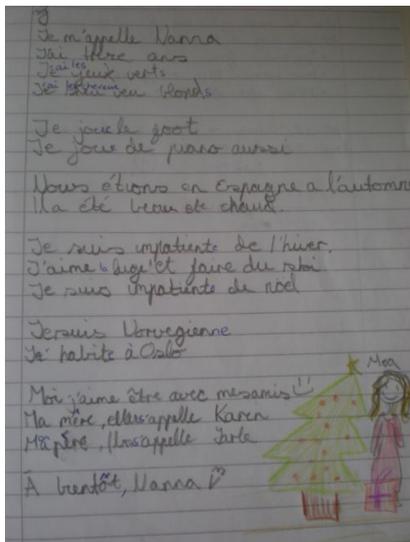
The self-assessment:

Two simple observations were asked for:

1. What I managed well
2. What I need to practice more

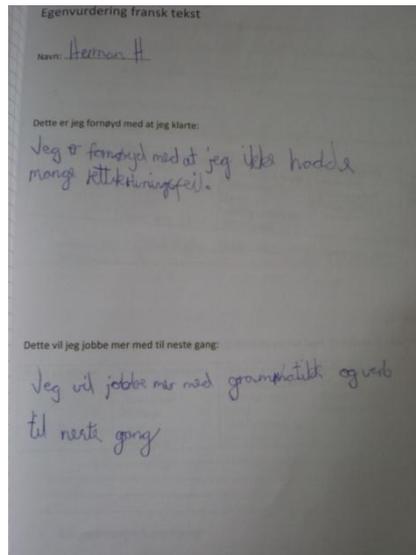
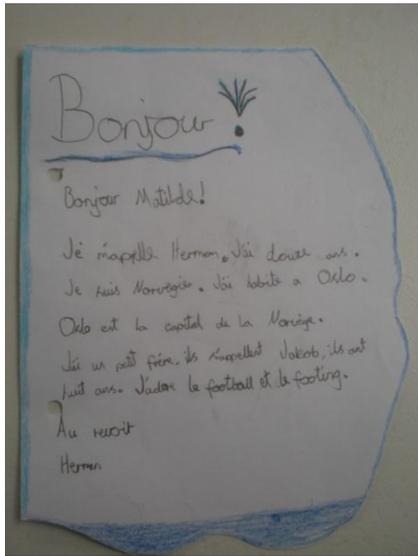
Examples of texts and self-assessment:

Example 1, Nanna:



1. I am glad that I was able to write a quite long letter and that I wrote that I was going to Spain without errors!
2. Remember "e" and "s" at the end of words and to use these accents: 'ˆ' correctly.

Example 2, Herman:



1. I am satisfied that I made very few spelling mistakes.
2. I want to work on grammar and verbs for the next time.