

A portfolio for student teachers of language

One of the projects of the second medium-term programme of the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) in Graz (Austria) is developing a “European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages” listing the competences and knowledge required by language teachers in their daily work. The project, entitled “From Profile to Portfolio: a Framework for Reflection in Language Teacher Education”, is working on a tool to be used by students during their initial teacher education.

The group of experts who make up the project team, under the coordination of Dr David Newby of the University of Graz, took as the starting point of their work, the “European Profile for Teacher Education – a Frame of Reference” published as a result of a project initiated by the European Commission and implemented by a project group based at Southampton University in the United Kingdom.

Building on the work of the *European Profile* and integrating elements of the *Common European Framework* and the *European Language Portfolio*, the project has so far compiled a draft version of the portfolio, which was presented at an ECML workshop in April.

The European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL) is intended to help students undergoing their initial teacher education to prepare for their future profession in a variety of teaching contexts. It encourages them to reflect on the didactic knowledge and skills necessary to teach languages, helps them to assess their own didactic competences and enables them to monitor their progress and to record their experiences of teaching during the course of their teacher education.

At a global level, the EPOSTL aims to facilitate discussion and comparison of aims and structures among teacher educators working in different national or international contexts.

The EPOSTL consists of three sections: a passport, in which students can document their own experience of teaching and the qualifications they attain, a biography with lists of “can-do” descriptors relating to didactic competences and a dossier for recording examples of personal work relevant to their future profession.

Sample materials from the EPOSTL, including the full “Guide for Teacher Educators” and an extract from the Biography section, may be consulted on the ECML website (<http://www.ecml.at/mtp2/FTE/>). The final version of the Portfolio is expected to be published at the end of 2006.

Contact:
Adrian Butler
adrian.butler@ecml.at





Education Newsletter



Editorial

How do we perceive 'Others' and how do 'Others' perceive us in our diverse societies? The world is full of 'Others', whom we see through our own eyes, from our own central viewpoint, as separate, perhaps even alien or strange. We interpret that reality with our particular emotions, knowledge and experience. But we may never know how others interpret the reality that we represent to them. We do not know how they see us, for we are not party to their feelings; we are just as detached from them as they from us. To them, we are one of the 'Others.' Yet the whole of our lives is spent interacting with other people: 'No man is an island, entire of it self'¹. The image we have of others is therefore fundamental to human society and whether we are conscious of that image or not, it influences the relationships between individuals, between individuals and institutions and between different communities.

Images do not remain constant but change according to experience and knowledge, and as that knowledge grows so does understanding. The notion of individual and collective change is pervasive to the mission of the Council of Europe: transformation is vital in the pursuit of shared values and is an inherent part of learning. Improving society involves improving our understanding of all of its aspects, of our own role and of how we are perceived by others. We must also try to see others through glasses that are as little tinged with bias as possible. Positive change must be based on values: the values of the Council of Europe were born out of an awareness of diversity, and the need to accept that diversity as our common heritage, and also of a communality that is particularly evident in the eyes of the 'Others', who have no difficulty defining 'Europe' or those who live there as 'Europeans.'



Education, both formal and non-formal, is a prime instrument for carrying out this mission. The premise behind the Education Directorate's new project "The Image of the Other in History Teaching" (page 3) is that the functioning of a democracy requires that people live together in peace, tolerance and mutual understanding, and that to be able to do so they must accept that each one of us is an 'Other' to the others.

... (continued page 2)

1. John Donne, *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions* (1624) Meditation XVII.