



EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR MODERN LANGUAGES

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Project C3 – FTE

From Profile to Portfolio:

A Framework for Reflection in Language Teacher Education

Report of Central Workshop 5/2006

(Graz, Austria, 27-29 April 2006)

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The report is accessible in English and in French on the ECML website: <http://www.ecml.at>

The Executive Director of the ECML should be informed about any full or partial translation of the report and a copy of the translation should be sent to the ECML for information.

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Organisation and aims

From 27-29 April, 2006 the central workshop of our project was held, which was attended by 30 representatives of the 33 member states plus additional participants from the Russian Federation and Austria. All participants were working in the field of initial teacher education. The main aims of the workshop were:

- a) to present the draft version of the *Student Teacher Portfolio* (STP);
- b) to allow participants to analyse, comment on and suggest amendments to the draft version (they had been sent out this version in advance of the workshop);
- c) for participants to present similar work they had carried out on portfolios and reflection tools in their own countries;
- d) to draw up plans for disseminating and piloting the STP.

The workshop was organised by the co-ordinating team: David Newby, Karl-Franzens University, Graz, Austria, Rebecca Allan, Southampton University, UK, Anne-Brit Fenner, University of Bergen, Norway, Barry Jones, University of Cambridge, UK, Hanna Komorowska, University of Warsaw, Poland. Kristine Soghikyan, Brusov Linguistic University, Yerevan, Armenia.

Workshop programme

One overall topic or task was allotted to each of the three days of the workshop. These were:

- Thursday – exchange of ideas related to the project topic, short introduction to STP;
- Friday – close analysis of STP;
- Saturday – setting up of action plans.

Day 1

After introductions by Adrian Butler, the executive director of the ECML, and David Newby, the project co-ordinator, participants introduced themselves and discussed in small groups the strengths and weaknesses of the teacher education at their own institution. Following this, the groups turned their attention to the question of reflection and self-evaluation, since this is a concept which is at the core of the Portfolio project, and were posed the question “What do you do or would you like to do to encourage reflection/self-evaluation among your students?”. The following categorisation from one group exemplifies the large range of answers given in the group sessions.

Different layers + tools of reflection:

- 1) Guided reflection
 - Set of questions
- 2) Tutor assisted reflection
 - Analysis of teaching practice
- 3) Written reflection
 - Students reflect on what they do and learn (= theory)
 - Log book / diary
 - Peer reflection
- 4) Unstructured reflection
 - Sharing experiences of learning (oral)

This group work led to a wider consideration of the nature, role and value of reflection.

In the afternoon the STP was presented concerning its inception, concept and structure, after which participants were invited to consider how they might best use the Portfolio in their own context. One group answer will be provided to reflect the general tenor of suggestions.

WHO?	WHAT FOR?
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ To trace development over time✓ To develop action plans
Teacher educator	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ To evaluate their own courses✓ To (re-)design curriculum
In-service teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ To evaluate their own course✓ To trace development over time
Mentors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ To train them to provide relevant support to trainee teachers

Day 2

On Friday a more detailed presentation of the STP was given by the co-ordinating team. The purpose of this session was to explain the rationale behind both the form and content of the STP. Prominence was given to explaining the aims, the choice of categorisation, and the relationship between the “can-do” descriptors and the underlying knowledge that needs to be acquired in order to successfully carry out the tasks formulated in the descriptors. The co-ordinating team also discussed the process of drawing up the Portfolio and outlined both some of the theoretical issues underlying its design and the problems which were confronted when we were developing the draft version of the STP. These problems included:

- Descriptors: foreign language teaching related or general educational?
- Descriptors - based purely on skills and/or underlying knowledge and values?
- How many descriptors? How detailed?
- How to categories and group descriptors?
- What terminology to use?
- Whether to reflect any particular approaches?
- How to avoid dogma?
- How to cater for different learning/teaching environments and cultures?
- Should an instrument for mapping progress be included?
- Where to put what?
- Not everything fits into neat categories!
- etc.

The first afternoon session was devoted to a close analysis of the wording of the descriptors, which took place in small groups, and following this to the passport and dossier sections of the Portfolio.

In the final session of the day, participants who had developed portfolio materials to be used in their own context were invited to present samples of their materials to workshop members. This served to show both the importance and diversity of reflective tools in teacher education.

Day 3

On the final day of the workshop the main focus of attention was how the STP might be disseminated and piloted. A website (only accessible by password) was created, on which workshop participants were invited a) to make suggested amendments to the draft version of the portfolio, b) to outline any dissemination activities they may be planning and c) to publish the findings of piloting the portfolio at an institutional or national level. In addition, participants were informed of changes that would be made to the draft version of the STP in light of discussions and comments made during the course of the workshop.

Next steps

Considerable enthusiasm was expressed for the concept of the STP and a range of constructive suggestions were put forward during group work and discussions as to how it might be improved. At the conclusion of the workshop, the co-ordinating team met to discuss amendments that we shall make on the basis of the workshop feedback and of discussions.

The following changes are envisaged:

- The title of the portfolio is to be changed to *European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages*, subtitle *A reflection tool for language teacher education* (EPOSTL).
- The three-section structure of “passport-biography-dossier” is to be abandoned since it was felt inappropriate for EPOSTL. It will now contain the following sections:
 - Users’ Guide (there will no longer be a separate *Guide for Teacher Educators and Students*);
 - Personal Statement (personal setting of scene, expectations of teacher education course)

etc.);

- Self-assessment (containing the descriptors);
- Dossier (will include various sections to be finalised over the next few months);
- Glossary.

- The self-assessment scaling bars will be redesigned.
- Various changes to individual descriptors will be made, as suggested by workshop participants.
- A user-friendly and user-appropriate layout will be given particular attention.

Work is currently being carried out on incorporating the changes listed above prior to the publication meeting, planned for 13-15 October 2006. It is expected that the final version of EPOSTL will appear by the end of the year.

David Newby
Project co-ordinator