

ELP in whole-school use

Case study – Iceland

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Summary

- Fjölbrautaskóli Suðurlands School (FSu), an upper secondary school for pupils aged 16–20
- Approximately 1,000 pupils
- Almost all students have Icelandic as their home language
- Languages taught: Icelandic (as language of schooling/school subject), Danish, English, French, German, Spanish, occasionally Latin
- ELP model used: parts of 75.2006 (Icelandic model for learners in upper secondary education)
- Scope of the project: 18 teachers, 5 languages (Danish, English, French, German, Spanish) and approximately 600 pupils

The school's application for funding to support its whole-school ELP project was rejected. It made sense to proceed on a voluntary basis, however, because there is a close connection between the ELP and the new curriculum. Also, teachers who had already worked with the ELP were keen to promote its use across the school. Using selected parts of the Icelandic ELP for learners in upper secondary education, the project had two principal aims: (i) to introduce the ELP to teachers who had not already worked with it, and (ii) to encourage teachers who were already familiar with the ELP to use it more extensively. In both cases the intention was to take small steps that over time would lead to full implementation of the ELP. Two teachers sought their students' opinions on working with the ELP. Although a few students were unenthusiastic, most of them acknowledged the advantages of peer and self-assessment based on the ELP checklists. At the end of the reporting period the co-ordinator judged that the project had been a modest success and was confident that use of the ELP would continue.

Description of context

Country/region/area

The school lies in Selfoss town 50 km east of Reykjavík, the capital city.

School type, age range of students

The name of the school is Fjölbrautaskóli Suðurlands (FSu) and it is an upper secondary school which offers vocational education as well as an education that gives access to universities both in Iceland and in other countries. The age of most of the students ranges from 16 to 20.

Total number of students in the school

Approximately 1,000 students of mixed ability.

Sociolinguistic profile of students

The students are almost all monolingual and a rather homogeneous group. The diversity of social classes in Iceland is not as large as in many other countries. The difference lies mostly in a somewhat different economic status of parents. This difference does not greatly influence the academic status of students at this school level.

Languages taught in the school

Danish, English, French, German, Spanish, and occasionally Latin. The students' mother tongue is Icelandic.

ELP model used

Selected parts of accredited model No. 75.2006

Number of languages, teachers and students involved in the project

Five foreign languages, i.e. all foreign languages taught in the school except for Latin, were involved in the project.

Eighteen teachers participated to some extent during the spring term of 2009 and seventeen teachers in the autumn of 2009 and spring of 2010. The project affected approximately 600 students in one way or another.

Age and level of students involved in the project

Most of the students in FSu are 16 – 20 years of age.

- Danish: Level A1 – B2 (a few students have lived in Denmark and are at level C1 in some skills)
- English: A1 – C1
- German, French and Spanish: A1 – A2

Background to the project

Principal motivation

When the ELP-WSU project started in FSu in January 2009, the Ministry of Education in Iceland had decided that no later than August 2011 all upper secondary schools must teach according to a new law for this school level. At this time the Ministry had already published a framework with the new objectives that all teachers were required to use as a model for the school's own curriculum. Thus the schools would write their own curriculum which would make them more independent and varied than they have been before.

In June 2010 the Ministry decided to delay the implementation of the new law until the autumn of 2014 because a new contract with the Teachers' Organisation had not yet been made. The new curriculum puts a larger work load on teachers, among other things because it requires

comprehensive changes in teaching which all teachers must be involved in and the school year will be prolonged.

In FSu work on the new curriculum will most likely be concluded in 2010 or 2011. The school's management has decided that FSu will work according to the new curriculum starting in the autumn term of 2012. This is earlier than the deadline set by the Ministry, but several other schools in the country will also have finished writing their new curriculum and will therefore start following it sooner than in 2012.

The teachers in FSu have been working on this new curriculum since January 2009 and it is still work in progress. In drawing up this curriculum the FL teachers used a curriculum written in 2005–2006 for the Ministry but never implemented for political reasons (a change of Minister). Because the coordinator of the FSu project was one of the writers of this curriculum she knew that the self-assessment checklists in the ELP had been used as a basis for the Icelandic curriculum for FL learning.

In the opinion of the coordination team the close connection between the new curriculum that will be implemented no later than 2014 (and will come into effect in FSu in 2012) and the ELP meant that it made sense that the teachers should work on the implementation of the ELP and the elaboration of the new curriculum simultaneously. It also seemed logical that in future the school's students should work on their ELP at the same time as they are working towards achieving the objectives of the new curriculum, which include the five skills as described in the ELP.

Another reason for the interest in undertaking a collaborative project involving all the FL teachers in FSu was that in 2006–2007 they had participated in a course for FL teachers where the FSu teachers met once a week during the spring semester of 2007 and exchanged ideas and experience concerning an action research project they were working on. The experience from this work was very positive and fruitful. The coordination team was interested in promoting this kind of collaboration a second time. The biggest incentive for the teachers doing this work was perhaps that the teachers received a certain amount of money for it.

A third reason is that in some of the FL courses (in French, in some of the English courses, and from the autumn of 2010 also in German) the students were using textbooks that take account of the five skills as defined in the self-assessment checklists in the ELP.

Needless to say, some of the FSu teachers already appreciated the benefits of the ELP in foreign language learning and they wished to promote this tool within the school.

Principal aims of the project

The principal aims were directed at the teachers as they are the ones who put the changes regarding implementation into effect:

1. To assist those teachers who had already implemented selected parts of the ELP to develop further their use of the ELP and gradually incorporate the complete ELP into their teaching over the next few years.
2. To assist teachers who had not yet implemented any parts of the ELP in their teaching to get acquainted with the ELP and show them how to use student reflection as a starting point.

In both cases the intention was to take small steps that would eventually lead to full implementation. There was already a discrepancy between the various FL courses at FSu because some teachers were already heading towards full implementation of the ELP by using selected parts of it, whereas others were not. This project was also meant to give the FL teachers an opportunity to establish a common ground for cooperation across languages.

Status of the project in the school

The school management supported the project morally but did not require or allow it to be obligatory for all the FL teachers. It was clear from the very beginning that the school did not have the capacity to contribute to the project financially, and the project received no funding from external sources.

There were two other projects running simultaneously with the ELP-WSU project. One of them had to do with the creation of a completely new curriculum and was run by the school management in line with the new law referred to earlier. The other project was under the protection of the school management and was allocated time in the school's schedule. All the teachers in the school were obliged to participate in both these projects, which were demanding and left some FL teachers uninterested in working on other innovations.

These obstacles made it more difficult to involve all the teachers completely in the ELP-WSU project, especially during the school year 2009–2010. Nevertheless all the FL teachers attended at least one of the three lectures that the coordination team offered to them in the spring term of 2009 and thus they were acquainted with the ELP-WSU project. Whether they read the e-mails sent by the coordinator and the materials made available to them on the internet is not known. Although the coordination team considered it necessary that everyone participated to the extent they felt comfortable with, the team is aware of the fact that it is inadvisable to make this kind of project mandatory. Forcing people to participate could result in frustrated teachers who give up on the ELP completely.

Where did the initiative for the project come from?

Having read Elísabet Valtýsdóttir's report on the October 2008 ELP-WSU workshop, the school principal suggested that the FL teachers should start the project (top-down), but some of the FL teachers had been interested in implementing the ELP fully for some years and were therefore ready to embark on this journey and make this their own project (bottom-up). The principal did not influence the process or claim any authority in the execution of the project.

At a later stage it was apparent that some teachers were reluctant to participate for several reasons that will be mentioned later in this report. The fact remains that during the next two years the FL teachers will inevitably be forced to review teaching materials, teaching methods and assessment procedures in order to make them consistent with the objectives of the new curriculum. The demand for a more varied assessment that includes non-traditional methods has been increasing with the adoption of more modern teaching methods and the increasing emphasis on skills that can't be assessed in a written test.

In the school year 2009–2010 a few of the teachers who have been using selected parts of the ELP (the coordinator of the project and at least one of the team members) will implement the ELP completely in some of their courses.

Teachers' previous experience of using the ELP

No FL teacher in FSu had used the complete form of the ELP when the ELP-WSU project started. A few years previously four teachers had attended summer courses on the ELP and a winter course where the focus was on assessment including the ELP. In the winter course the group did a project on the ELP. These teachers had the longest experience of using selected parts of the ELP and perhaps the greatest motivation to implement the complete ELP. Five teachers had some or much experience of using a portfolio at university to gather proof of all their work and serve as a basis for reflection and self-assessment. A few teachers had no or very limited knowledge of the ELP. Fourteen teachers had used a free-form portfolio (equivalent to the ELP's dossier) as a container for students' work, the purpose being to teach students proper work habits. Some teachers had used the self-assessment grid (8) and/or self-assessment checklists (6) in the ELP. Only 14 of the 17 FL teachers in the school

responded to the two surveys made by the coordination team and the coordinator (in 2009 and 2010), which makes the results a little uncertain, though some inferences can be made.

Other

The ELP is not very visible in Iceland, at least not in upper secondary schools. According to one of the very few experts in Iceland, Brynhildur Anna Ragnarsdóttir at the Language Studio in Reykjavík, no schools are using the complete form of the ELP. No official figures are available, but as far as Mrs Ragnarsdóttir knows, several lower secondary schools use the portfolio and some of them also use self-assessment and reflection. It seems that only a handful of upper secondary schools are using the portfolio along with reflection and learner self-assessment.

During the last few years the teachers in lower secondary schools all over the country have been offered several courses in which the ELP has been the main focus. So in a few years some of the students who attend FSu may be expected to have experience of the ELP, reflection and self-assessment. This fact may encourage a change of mind in the FL teachers in FSu who lack the urge to implement the ELP.

Organizational arrangements

How was the project coordinated and by whom?

By the coordinator, Elísabet Valtýsdóttir (EV), and a coordination team which consisted of volunteers from among the teachers. Six teachers answered the coordinator's invitation to participate in the planning and decision making; one of them was not a supporter of the ELP.

How did teachers and students become involved?

The teachers became involved after Elísabet Valtýsdóttir's return from the ELP-WSU workshop in Graz in October 2008. When the school principal had read her report on the workshop he suggested that the FL teachers should start a pilot project in the autumn of 2009. EV summoned the foreign language teachers to a meeting and they expressed interest in the project. At this point no teacher declared his or her reluctance to participate. The students participated to different degrees depending on the contribution of each teacher.

Were there any incentives to encourage teachers to participate in the project?

The teachers did not get any reduction in teaching hours nor was it possible to offer any economic incentive because the application for subsidy was turned down. The school's bonus system requires teachers to send in an application describing all the extra work they have done over a two-year period. This extra work may be accredited by a special committee that decides the extent to which it will result in a bonus. It is therefore not possible to calculate in advance how much each teacher will get paid for his/her work on the ELP or if he/she will get a bonus at all.

However, it can be asserted that work on the school's new FL curriculum can be viewed as a kind of incentive for at least some of the teachers. As stated earlier, the ELP and the objectives of the new curriculum are closely related. There should have been only two innovations as far as the teachers were concerned, namely students setting their own goals and assessing themselves.

Self-assessment can be a great obstacle for teachers who are not familiar with this form of assessment, which requires them to trust the students' judgement and objectivity. At an early stage of the ELP-WSU project it became obvious that several teachers were unfamiliar with self-assessment based on the self-evaluation grid and the checklists and also with learner reflection on learning progress and achievement. It was thus decided to focus on these aspects when preparing the ELP-WSU project in FSu.

How often did teachers meet and what did they discuss?

The project was launched in the spring of 2009, before the teachers realized that they would not get any payment for their work on the ELP except perhaps for a small amount of money through the bonus system. This is a description of what was done:

1. Three lectures were held by the teachers who had knowledge or experience of one or more of the following:
 - a. the purpose and function of the ELP
 - b. the various parts of the ELP
 - c. the benefits of the ELP
 - d. logbooks
 - e. reflection
 - f. self-assessment
 - g. peer assessment
2. The coordination team held 7 meetings during the calendar year 2009.
3. The coordinator sent several e-mails to the coordination team, and the other teachers also received e-mails.
4. The coordinator put materials related to the ELP on the internet with access for all the FL teachers in the school.
5. The plan was that the teachers would work on the implementation of the ELP individually or in collaboration with others. The coordination team had no option but to allow the FL teachers to decide whether and to what extent they would participate in the ELP-WSU project.
6. In the autumn of 2009 the coordination team and the coordinator carried out a survey of 14 of the 17 FL teachers in the school. Due to lack of time the coordinator carried out the second survey without the support of the coordination team in the spring of 2010. This second survey also involved 14 teachers. Both surveys were accessible on the internet and were anonymous in order to encourage honest and frank answers. The main purpose of these surveys was to find out about the teachers' attitude towards the implementation of the ELP and the extent to which they had actually been working with it. The surveys were relatively easy for the coordination team to manage, although the team members did not have the professional knowledge to design them or analyse the results.

How did teachers share experience and materials?

In light of the positive experience from 2006, the original plan was that the FL teachers should meet once every week or fortnight in order to exchange ideas and experience and to share materials. But this plan was not carried out for two reasons. First, it is not permitted to ask teachers to do any extra work without being paid for it. A handful of teachers did do the extra work anyway to some extent, but that was insufficient because the project was conceived on a whole-school basis. Secondly, the 70 minutes reserved every Wednesday for teachers' meetings with school management were taken up with two other projects. One of them was the writing of the new curriculum, mentioned above, and the other was a project that received a subsidy from the fund that had turned down the WSU-ELP application. This other project was unknown to the FL teachers until the autumn of 2009, when it emerged as the successful competitor to the ELP-WSU project. Without this new project the ELP-WSU project could have been allocated two or even three Wednesday meetings.

In spite of this difficult situation the coordination team carried on working on the ELP-WSU project because the teachers had already devoted much time and energy to preparing it during the spring term of 2009 and also because some of the teachers were determined to implement the ELP eventually.

At the last meeting of the FL teachers in May 2010 several teachers expressed the view that it would

be enough to meet once a month to share experience.

Did teachers of different languages share a common approach to language teaching?

With regard to the ELP there was some cooperation, although on an informal level. There was practically no cooperation between the teachers of different languages. Traditionally those who teach courses with the same content must work together, whereas those who teach different courses do not. Some of the teachers emphasize speaking and listening, while others emphasize grammar and reading comprehension. The school has not yet determined a policy on teaching approaches for FLs. During the last century reading comprehension has been given the greatest attention because many Icelanders study at universities abroad. Only in the last few decades have teachers in many schools focused on listening and speaking skills.

What accompanying material is used?

The ELP is available on the internet and in print. Other material included:

- The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* in both English and French
- *Measurement and Assessment in Teaching* (M. David Miller et al.) for reference
- The 1999 national curriculum
- The 2005 curriculum, available on the internet
- Several articles and other materials from various sources

The teachers who had attended courses on the ELP made the material available to the other teachers.

Were students given their ELP free of charge?

The teachers who used parts of the ELP copied this material and distributed it to the students free of charge. In the autumn of 2010 the students in the beginners' course in Danish were asked to purchase their ELP along with all other material used in the course. In Icelandic upper secondary schools students must purchase all the books and other materials they need for their studies. The government does not subsidize teaching material at this school level.

Pedagogical exploitation of the ELP

What techniques did you use to foster the development of learner autonomy?

An increasing number of students have experienced self-assessment using checklists in the ELP or made by teachers and by writing their reflections in logbooks. Peer assessment has also become an option for some of them, and some of the teachers have been trying out alternative methods of assessment. Some teachers have not yet tried any form of non-traditional assessment or participated in the development of learner autonomy.

In a few courses students were allowed to choose their own objectives, select the material they wanted to work with, and even decide how their work should be assessed. Hopefully more teachers will follow on this path of developing learner autonomy when confronted with the positive experience these teachers have had. It must be noted here that not all students appreciate this kind of approach. Students can be the slaves of their own habits just as much as teachers.

How did you make learners aware of their developing plurilingual repertoires?

By using methods that draw attention to strategies that can be used in all language learning. From August 2010 students learning Danish as a FL will also have to pay attention to their proficiency in other languages because they will be asked to fill out the forms in the ELP that concern all the languages they have been learning.

How did you help learners to explore the intercultural dimension of language learning and plurilingualism?

Several teachers in more than one FL give their students tasks that require them to explore the

variety of cultures all over the world. In addition, our school participates in various exchange projects that include interaction with schools in many countries, e.g. China, Canada, France, Germany, Slovakia and Sweden.

Evaluation of whole-school ELP use

What use will be made of evaluation?

The results of evaluation will be used to support the implementation and further development of the ELP in our language classes. Data is scarce because the project had to be run on a voluntary basis, but we consider the experience wide enough to be useful in the further implementation of the ELP.

What were the focuses of evaluation?

Only two teachers gathered data from their students' reflection on their attitude towards the dossier/portfolio, reflection and checklists. They found that although a few students are not enthusiastic, most of them acknowledge the advantages of all three aspects. The teachers who have used them are convinced that they facilitate learning. An interesting anecdote is relevant here: One FL teacher who has never tried out any parts of the ELP told the coordination team that he has realized that students who had used logbooks for their glossary and reflection the previous semester with another teacher had made greater progress and were better organized than his students usually were. This is a new experience for him and hopefully it will encourage him to try it out himself.

All students in FSu must learn English and Danish. Students who are specializing in science must add a third FL and those who are specializing in languages must add a third and fourth FL. A few students take one more FL than are required to, but those who are aiming for university usually feel that three (or four) foreign languages are sufficient.

Our problem is not that the students want to learn fewer foreign languages but that one of the third foreign languages seems to attract more students than the others. This threatens the job security of teachers of the other languages. The school needs some stability in its staff, and it is not attractive for a well-qualified teacher if he/she can only be promised a job one semester at a time.

Impact on teachers (motivation, attitudes, beliefs, approach to teaching)

The emphasis of our evaluation was on the teachers because the school is still in the early stages of implementing the ELP. Only a few teachers had used the self-assessment grid and ELP checklists before starting the ELP-WSU project. It was considered necessary to change the teachers' attitude towards self-assessment and reflection and to convince them that the achievement gained is worthwhile and desirable. As stated elsewhere in this report, some teachers were reluctant to participate in the project.

According to the results of the teachers' survey, some teachers claimed that they could not see the purpose of the ELP, some were afraid of the extra work that implementation would entail, and others said they were not interested in innovation. On the other hand, the teachers who had been positive towards the ELP from the very beginning did not change their attitude towards it.

Although some of the teachers remained completely outside the project, the writer of this report is optimistic that in time reluctant teachers will become more open-minded towards the ELP. This is because, at the meeting the coordinator held with the teachers in May 2010, the 14 who attended were interested in and positive towards the changes planned for the Danish courses, where she and her colleague were aiming at full implementation of the ELP in the autumn term of 2010. Since the new FL curriculum to be implemented in 2012 was nearly ready, the two Danish teachers intended to start following it. In this way they would gain experience while developing these new courses. This would require large changes and much work but they were confident that they had already gained a great deal of experience from working with the ELP.

Impact on the school

In June 2010 a large project was launched in Iceland to support FL teaching. The Vigdís Finnbogadóttir Language Institute was collecting the last of the funding needed for a new building. The Institute will accommodate the teaching of foreign languages at the University of Iceland as well as a broad variety of research projects in this field. Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, the former president of Iceland, is UNESCO's ambassador for languages and the new building will draw attention to Vigdís Finnbogadóttir herself and her strong support for foreign language teaching. Every Icelander appreciates the need for the country's small population to know foreign languages.

As far as FSu is concerned the ELP-WSU project was not visible outside the school because it was not as large as the coordinator had hoped. It is her strong belief, however, that the ELP will strengthen foreign languages because of its emphasis on plurilingualism. English is the only foreign language taught in FSu that has a strong position among both students and teachers as regards its role in modern education. English will probably not be in danger of reduction in the negotiations that lie ahead, where the teachers must decide how many languages the students need to learn and for how many semesters, following the new programmes of study that will be established during the next two years according to the new law on upper secondary education.

Impact on language learning

Impact on learners: The project aimed to increase students' motivation and confidence in their FL learning. There is very little data on this, but what there is suggests that most of the learners appreciated self-assessment and the use of a logbook. They were also happy to use a portfolio as a place to keep all their work, thus reducing the risk of losing it. The teachers are certain that the impact on learners was very positive, though they don't have the evidence to prove it.

Impact on teachers: The project's principal aim, to persuade all FL teachers to use selected parts of the ELP and further develop their teaching methods, has not yet been realized. Not all the teachers in FSu have implemented parts of the ELP whereas others have managed to do so.

Impact on language learning: The project aimed to increase learner autonomy and improve language learning strategies. There is no data on this due to the lack of both money to pay the teachers for their work and extra time for the teachers to work, nor was it possible to get external experts to lead the work.

Recording of spontaneous comments

Minutes were written at all the lectures and meetings concerning the ELP.

Reflective writing in the ELP

The students of 10 several teachers did reflective writing in connection with the logbook, but only the coordinator utilized them in compiling this report.

Conclusion

Although the principal aims of the ELP-WSU project in FSu were not met, the project did not fail completely, for the following reasons:

- Some of the teachers (5 + possibly the three teachers who did not answer the surveys) had very limited or no knowledge of the ELP at the beginning of the project. They could not be expected to make significant progress in the implementation of a tool that was quite new to them.
- Several teachers are using self-assessment (7) and reflection (10) in their classes, which is a prerequisite for understanding the function of the ELP. Five teachers utilized peer assessment

during the spring semester of 2010 and four teachers had their students use a special logbook.

- Most of the teachers (14 + two who did not answer the survey) let students put their work into a portfolio; four of them had the students select the best pieces of work.
- All the FL teachers in the school had the opportunity to get some insight into the ELP and its function.
- As a result of the project two teachers will be implementing the whole ELP in the autumn of 2010.
- The FL teachers in FSu have had an opportunity to address issues of FL teaching and learning and have exchanged views and experiences. For the most persevering teachers the ELP-WSU project was a fine opportunity to work towards the full implementation of the ELP in a more organized manner than before. These teachers will be the guides for other teachers in the future as regards the implementation of the ELP and assessment as a whole.
- The students are gradually becoming familiar with reflection, self-assessment and even peer-assessment, which in time will increase their learner autonomy.
- The more teachers utilize the ELP, the more students' plurilingual awareness will be enhanced.
- In the opinion of EV the following prerequisites would have to be met in order for the WSU-ELP project in FSu to be counted a success:
 - The FL teachers must meet once every week or fortnight during the school year for at least 60 minutes each time in order to exchange experiences and give support to each other (this costs money).
 - The FL teachers who have little or no experience of the ELP must get incisive guidance during the first year of working with it (money will be needed for this).
 - Although some of the teachers in FSu have quite good knowledge of the ELP it probably takes a professional (e.g. from the University) to convince the doubtful teachers of the benefits of the ELP.

It seems that in spite of the goodwill of the lecturers there still remained some misunderstanding about the ELP:

- Some teachers thought that the portfolio many teachers have their students put all their work into is identical with the ELP. They shudder at the thought of having to read through it all at the same time and assess it. But the teachers who have chosen to work with a portfolio are aware that it is not a dossier.
- Some teachers still think that the ELP is a teaching method and therefore a fad that will disappear within a few years, just as other teaching methods have done.

An electronic version of the ELP would certainly be welcomed in a school that is conscious of the environment, but unfortunately the Ministry of Education has not allocated the money needed for its development.

The ELP has the support of several teachers in FSu and the coordinator of the ELP-WSU project in FSu is still determined to carry on promoting the ELP within the school. It may take some time, but she is certain that eventually the ELP will be implemented in the school. *Gutta cavat lapidem, non vi, sed saepe cadendo!*

Appendix 1 – Teacher surveys

First survey – teachers' written answers to questions

Why haven't you used a portfolio in your language teaching?

1. I have not studied the use of portfolios
2. I am using them for the first time this autumn (2009).

Why do you think that items you ticked off in the ELP have been successful?

1. Reflections enhance the students' overview and awareness of their language learning.
2. I used a checklist to evaluate their work, esp. the written work. It is easier to evaluate them and the students understand better what they are supposed to do and what is expected of them.
3. This will only be a précis: I think that my students create a larger awareness about their learning: Organizing requires a good overview, when you form an overview, you strengthen your own insight into the material at hand. All this is a collective characteristic feature of reflecting work and the learning merit of the portfolio itself.
4. The students gain a better overview of their learning. They manage to keep all their material in one place and to assess their own competence in the FL. All my evaluation has been more purposeful.
5. Reflection has been successful because the students now think more than they did before about their strong and weak sides, how they learn and what they can do to succeed. The students learn to understand themselves as learners and they begin to concentrate on other things than grades. The logbook has been successful for the students who used it. The portfolio is an efficient container for the students' work and gives them a good overview of the FL learning. I have tried the checklists in the ELP, but my experience of them is still very scarce. I think that they have the advantage of giving the students a clear picture of the skills they have to consider and where they do well, fairly well or need to make a greater effort.
6. A good start
7. Does not apply. I have no former experience of the portfolio.
8. My students were quite positive towards the use of the parts of ELP mentioned and they became more aware of the FL learning, and their own and other students' strategies.
9. A portfolio as a container for the students – also gives a good picture of the students' work through the semester. A dossier requires the student to assess herself/himself and her/his work.
10. The student takes a greater responsibility for his language learning; he/she gets a more varied assessment and organizes his learning better. The student also deliberates his achievement in the FL learning.
11. The students organized their language learning better and considered more the different learning methods.
12. The students become more aware of themselves as students, what they are doing and how, where they have problems, where they need to make a bigger effort, where they have made a success. They also start to take a greater responsibility in their FL learning, in my opinion.

Which parts of the ELP were less successful in your opinion and why?

1. Reflection, checklist. Not purposeful.

2. In general I do not like portfolios because I think they are aimed at girls.
3. I was sometimes unsecure of my assessment of the students' portfolios. I have used the Self-assessment grid a few times. But for some reason I have not managed to return to it, follow up on it and reassess the students' status.
4. Reflection/logbook gets the students to consider and reflect upon in a purposeful way what they are doing in their FL learning. The portfolio is a necessary container for their work. The checklists show clearly the status of the student and peer assessment is also a practical tool to obtain the peers objective opinion. In the dossier the student can put her/his best work she/he wants to show as a product of her/his language learning.
5. The logbook must consist of a small notebook and not of loose sheets of paper in the portfolio.
6. Assessment.
7. I did not use the self-assessment grid and the checklists in a purposeful way. But I shall do that during this semester (autumn 2009)
8. A limited experience but ... peer assessment: sometimes randomly used: a slight lowering of grade on one hand, a generous grading of friends and relatives, perhaps the grids --> the teacher's fumbling effort, less processing (what next???)
9. Reflection – was not used purposefully enough by the teacher.
10. I need to ask the students to reflect more often. I need to implement more parts of the ELP..

Why were they not successful in your opinion?

1. Above all I think that it is my own fault, I did not manage to let the self-assessment grid work. I simply used too little energy and teaching time for it.
2. I have no real explanation.
3. I am afraid of being unfair.
4. Same answer as in nr. 7: limited experience but ... peer assessment
5. I forgot to let the students reflect more often.

In your opinion, what is obstructing the implementation of the ELP

1. Fear of the extra work, some parts of it are not purposeful.
2. I am set in my habits. Lack of need for innovations.
3. Nothing.
4. The other teachers need to be convinced and also some of the students of the merit of the ELP.
5. The ELP needs to be implemented over a long time. It is not possible to swallow it in one bite. In my estimation nothing but conservatism hinders the implementation of the ELP.
6. Fear of extra work and adaption to new workhabits.
7. The teachers' lack of knowledge of how to use the ELP and the methodology needed for the ELP to function according to it purpose.
8. If the ELP will be implemented all at once. It is better to take small steps and make experiments.

9. Ow! ow! ow!

10. Nothing in particular – this only takes time and the teachers are not equally prepared to try this tool (method)

11. It is huge – the teachers' lack of experience must not prevent the students' learning process.

12. If not all the teachers have realized what practical use is gained from the ELP

Would you like to add anything in connection with the implementation of the ELP?

1. I would like the ELP to be implemented in other subject matters as well as the foreign languages.

2. Good initiative!

3. Cooperation and discussion is a positive thing. At language teachers' meetings the teachers should present and introduce small examples of the novelties they are working with in order to „infect“ the rest of us and urge us to do the same things. Show us examples of how the students can reflect in a purposeful manner, show how a test can be used as formative assessment etc.

4. Offer a course in each department in the things that each subject matter will gain the most from.

5. I like this initiative but I haven't studied it yet.

6. It is necessary that discussions about the ELP will be held in small as well as large groups. Encourage the teachers to ask others how the things work and to bring new ideas etc.

7. Carry on with the small steps!

8. I hope that all the teachers are willing to participate!

Second survey – Teachers' written answers to questions:

Why have you used the portfolio in only some of your courses?

1. Partly because I haven't adopted the portfolio well enough because my adoration of the ELP is limited, I have doubts about its usefulness and because it takes too much time!

2. I use the portfolio in all my courses.

3. Because in some of my courses I am working with students with special needs and the portfolio is not always suitable for them.

4. It doesn't work with the weaker students in the S-courses.

Why haven't you used the portfolio in any of your courses?

1. I haven't got acquainted with the subject at hand and therefore I do not consider it appropriate.

2. I don't think that it's worthwhile.

What items other than the ones incorporated in the ELP have you used in your teaching?

1. Checklists made by myself

2. It varies what I use in my courses.

Have you added or dropped any items in the ELP since the school year of 2008 – 2009? Which?

1. The addition is a cautious use of reflection – most of which in connection with letting the students write down their thoughts about the results of certain tests / tasks.
2. The portfolio is just about the same as last year. My students wrote reflection more seldom during this last semester than last year.
3. No.
4. I have made the logbook more purposeful. The students must write regularly in the logbook, e.g. glossary, tasks from the textbook, reflections.
5. I give two grades for the portfolio: 1. for its appearance and finish 2. orthography.
6. Yes – logbook in course 103.
7. No.
8. More often reflection. More checklists.

Explain why you are not interested in implementing the ELP in the near future.

1. For various reasons: e.g. it's oriented towards the girls. The conscientious girls write everything down and they will profit greatly from it. When the students write down their reflections for the teachers, are they really doing that – or are they above all writing what they think their teachers want to hear? I'm not suicidal. I can't see that it is possible (to use the ELP) without adding 15 hours to the existing 24 hours.
2. I see the portfolio as a container and a way for the students to plan their work and to get a good grasp of what they are doing or achieving every semester. A full implementation of the ELP will in my opinion be useful for students in the language programmes because they are more likely than the others to be able to utilize it after graduation. This may change in time when we have implemented the new curricula with objectives based on the ELP and then can the use of the portfolio perhaps evolve into the full implementation of the ELP. Many of the weaker students only finish one or two courses in e.g. Danish and therefore the full implementation of the ELP is not justified.
3. It is sufficient to use what you think is useful.
4. Because I prefer to work with certain parts of the ELP and mix with other things.
5. I don't think that I can manage well enough to make it useful and not problematic.
6. I have planned to use selected parts of the ELP in the beginning, whether I will call for full implementation of the ELP I have not decided yet.

Explain why you are interested in implementing the ELP in the near future.

1. I think that the ELP is the way to learn languages, and therefore I absolutely want to use it in my teaching.
2. I have not yet decided how I want this to be. I think that I want to let the students deliver their assignments at once, but nevertheless they (assignments) sometimes consist of parts of the ELP e.g. reflection. The dossier as such I don't think is a bit charming. Too many assignments that are handed over at one time and the students seem to have a tendency not to finish some of the assignments because they don't have to deliver the portfolio until later. I think that by handing in all assignments as soon as they are finished the students will work better and finish all the work in due time.
3. A good tool to evaluate competence, skills and all that.

4. Enhances the students' strategies and they appreciate what learning a language is all about. All in one place.
5. I think it helps the students.
6. I suppose I will be forced to do it.

In your opinion, what must happen before you fully implement the ELP?

1. Do you mean that you are determined to force the ELP upon everybody??? I think that I would rather search for a new job. I have doubts about that this will be the reality.
2. I need time to change the materials and my teaching more towards the objects of the ELP og when that has happened I might take the next step and implement the ELP fully.
3. I think it is mainly a question of time and energy.
4. Perhaps if there would be held some practical presentations and we were shown how to use it properly.
5. I need to adopt better methods and ways in my teaching.
6. I need more time to adjust this method slowly and easy in to my teaching.
7. I need more time for preparation, fewer students in class and higher salary.
8. I need more time for planning and more willing students.
9. I need proof that this works properly and that it is of use to all students in their FL learning. I also want to hear what the students feel about this kind of work by having them answering a survey.
10. An order from the school management.
11. I need to see that it works and has a positive impact on the students' FL learning.
12. Nothing in particular.
13. That the FL teachers will be allocated fixed time once a week / month to implement the ELP for exchanging ideas, to assist one another etc.

Appendix 2 – Examples of questions for students' reflection

Quotations from students' logbooks which are representative for all the remarks of students in two different courses in Danish:

The questions asked were as follows (the students wrote their answers in their mother tongue):

- What do I gain by using the portfolio as a container for all my work?
- How well have I succeeded in putting all my material into the portfolio?
- Are there any drawbacks connected to the portfolio? If yes, explain.
- How has the logbook worked for me? Why?
- How well have I managed to reflect upon my language learning? Why?
- In what way have the checklists been useful to me?

Portfolio

- "Excellent for keeping all my materials in one place; I can go through the materials and find the main things that will be on a test."
- "I can read through the material for reviewing whenever I need it."

- “Practical because all the material is in one place and the sheets of paper are not all over the place and therefore don’t get lost.”

Logbook

- “I have been doing fine with the logbook because all my work is in one place. But not as well with the portfolio because it contains loose sheets of papers.”
- “I can see no serious faults in it – good because all my work is in one place.”
- “Good because all my work is in one place.”
- “It functions well because it is a notebook.”

Reflection

- “Just fine, because now I understand completely and know how I am doing.”
- “Not good. I have not done it much and I don’t want to do it.”

Checklists

- “I don’t really know.”
- “They help you get a grasp of your knowledge.”
- “Then you know what tasks you have been doing.”
- “Good, because then I know what I can say in many ways.”