

CEFR Journal

Research and Practice



Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT)
CEFR & Language Portfolio SIG (CEFR & LP SIG)

Volume 3 (October 2020)

ISSN 2434-849X

Title: CEFR Journal – Research and Practice

Type: Online Journal

URL: <https://cefrjapan.net/publications/journal>

Contact: journal@cefrjapan.net

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ISSN: 2434-849X
J-STAGE, SCOPUS, & Web of Science

Is a self-regulatory eELP the way forward? A reflection on two decades of achievements and failures of the ELP

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The European Language Portfolio (ELP) launched in 2001 was created and promoted by the Council of Europe (CoE) as a tool to foster learner autonomy, plurilingualism, and life-long learning. In spite of the progressive educational principles and promising perspectives to develop and support language learning, the ELP has not become established as a widely implemented tool within the European educational context, not even in its electronic version. This paper starts by briefly introducing the original elements and principles of the ELP in order to evaluate some of its main achievements and failures. After examining different models of electronic ELPs, the paper focuses on ePortfolios as pedagogical tools and, in particular, on the suitability of ePortfolios to develop self-regulation. The authors then present some examples of self-regulatory ePortfolios they have created and implemented in different educational contexts. Finally, they present a new self-regulatory ePortfolio prototype. Although still in an exploratory phase, this prototype seems to offer a flexible, adaptable and powerful tool for a variety of learning contexts and learner needs, including the learning of languages and specifically for a state-of-the-art variant of the ELP. This paper concludes by mapping out the self-regulatory ePortfolio as a possible way forward for the ELP.

Keywords: European Language Portfolio (ELP), ePortfolio, self-regulation

1 Introduction

The creation and launch of the European Language Portfolio (ELP) almost twenty years ago, together with the CEFR, can be considered together as milestones in terms of language policy and language pedagogy. The ELP was conceived as a transnational tool to develop learner autonomy, plurilingualism and lifelong learning. It also represented a substantial educational shift from teacher-centred to learner-centred pedagogies. Although the influence of the ELP pedagogy and its implementation across Europe is undeniable, the ELP has not been able to establish itself in formal educational settings.

This paper starts by looking at the background and principles of the ELP and it looks into some of the factors that might explain its lack of success. It then examines the role of electronic portfolios as one possible version of the language portfolio, before considering, more fundamentally, the pedagogical potential of ePortfolios. In particular, we focus on ePortfolios to develop and foster self-regulation. We present different examples of learning ePortfolios; by these we refer to a type of process-based portfolio, whose main function is to enable learners to take control of their learning, to become more aware of their learning process and to foster meta-cognitive skills. In that sense ePortfolios are more than a tool.

First, however, there is a need to take stock of the achievements of the ELP but also to reflect on its failures and to explore new ways of working with the ELP. We suggest flexible approaches with a strong focus on 'learning to learn' and argue that the ELP could become a self-regulatory ePortfolio without losing its original spirit.

2 The ELP context and developments

The European Language Portfolio (ELP) is a language learning tool promoted by the Council of Europe in order to adapt to the new intercultural and multilingual reality in Europe at the end of the 20th century. In general terms, we could define the ELP as an educational tool that is the property of the learner. It records their skills in foreign languages and encourages autonomy and reflection on the learning process.

The history of the ELP is closely related to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (CoE 2001). The origin of both (Trim 2007) can be traced right back to an intergovernmental symposium held in Rüslikon, near Zürich, in 1971, where it was decided that a system of transparent objectives for language learning by adults should be created. The subsequent proposal was then, unfortunately, rejected at another symposium in Ludwigshafen in 1977. However, a second Rüslikon symposium took place in 1991, which recommended the development of a Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and a European Language Portfolio to report personal achievement (CoE 1992). Then in 2001, after ten years of meetings, projects and piloting, both the ELP and the CEFR were launched on the occasion of the Council of Europe Conference in Brussels for the European Year of Languages.

From 2001 to 2012, activity around the ELP was constant: experimentation, launching of different projects to create and implement portfolios, teacher training, data collection, European, national and regional seminars, etc. However, it is difficult to find a clear comprehensive picture of ELP use at the European level after 2012, since projects were no longer being officially tracked.

2.1 The ELP pedagogical rationale

The ELP was created as a practical tool to put the guidelines specified in the CEFR into practice. Thus, both documents share common objectives: to protect and develop the cultural heritage and diversity of Europe as a source of mutual enrichment, to facilitate the mobility and exchange of ideas of European citizens, to develop an approach to language teaching based on common principles and to encourage plurilingualism. Apart from these four common goals, the ELP, being a pedagogical tool, further elaborates on two aims: to promote both autonomous and lifelong learning.

Promoting autonomous learning is closely related to lifelong learning, since the autonomous learner seeks and finds opportunities for learning beyond the classroom. A learner is considered to be autonomous when he/she is able to take responsibility for his/her learning and exercise this responsibility in a continuous effort to understand what, why, and how to learn (Holec 1981; Boud 1981; Little 1991). The ELP helps students to take responsibility for their learning. It not only collects all the learning experiences that the language learner has had both inside and outside the classroom in any circumstance of his/her personal situation, it also fosters reflection and understanding of their own learning. Thus, trying to meet both objectives.

These two objectives of the ELP, to promote autonomous learning and lifelong language learning, show its character as a tool, as an instrument that puts into practice the aims of the CEFR and also presents its own. The ELP is aimed at developing learning awareness, it is aimed directly at the learner, while the CEFR is a document that proposes general guidelines. Both are instruments of learning but they operate at different levels: the ELP with the learner and the CEFR with educational institutions.

Regarding its characteristics, they are specified in the document *ELP Principles and guidelines* (CoE 2000) and could be classified and summarised as follows:

Table 1. ELP main characteristics

General characteristics	Plurilingualism and Pluriculturalism	Property of the learner
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the CEFR • Incorporates core elements that make it recognisable and easy to understand • A tool to promote learner autonomy • It has both a pedagogic as well as a reporting function 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a plurilingualism and pluriculturalism promoting tool • Values linguistic and intercultural competence in and outside formal education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owned by the student • Fosters self-assessment • One of a series of documents that the student will own throughout his life

The ELP consists of three parts: Passport, Biography and Dossier. However, the sections might vary depending on the country or type of learner to whom it is addressed.

The *Language Passport* contains a self-assessment grid through which the holder can reflect on their language competence according to skills (listening, reading, spoken interaction, spoken production and writing). The learner uses language descriptors from the CEFR to assess their level of language proficiency in each of these skills. Certificates and accreditations that the holder has accumulated throughout his/her experience as a language learner are also recorded in the Passport.

The second section of the ELP, the *Language Biography*, is the part of the ELP in which its pedagogical function is realised. It is there the learners describe their learning process. It contains forms where the student self-evaluates, describes the learning activities that help them learn, reflects on the use of learning strategies, sets new objectives, and where he details his linguistic and cultural experiences outside formal education (Lenz and Schneider 2000).

The third section of the ELP, the *Dossier*, is the section that most reminds us of that portfolio of the artist who inspired the idea of the ELP (Little and Perclová 2002). It contains samples of the student's work. It is the holder who must decide what projects, recordings, etc. they will include in their ELP, since these works are the ones that they will present as a sample of what they can do in foreign languages and, therefore, they must be significant tasks for the holder.

These three sections of the ELP fulfil two different distinct functions: the reporting and the pedagogic. The Passport shows the owner's linguistic competence in different languages and has thus mainly a reporting function. The Biography has mainly a pedagogic function, it supports the learner's learning process and the Dossier combines both functions.

The ELP can also be used to illustrate the student's linguistic competence in foreign languages - the reporting function. The ELP documents the linguistic capacities of its holder in a comprehensive and transparent manner. It helps the holder to record their level of competence achieved in one or more languages and in each of the skills; accounts for the formal and non-formal learning experiences that the holder has lived; it shows the self-evaluation that the student has made of his/her capabilities.

The pedagogic function of the ELP involves making the learning process more visible and helping individuals to develop their ability for organisation, reflection and self-assessment. That is, it improves their meta-cognitive skills, and therefore it will foster their learner autonomy. This way, learners will be able, little by little, to assume more and more responsibility for their learning (Little and Perclová 2002). The objective of this function coincides with the emphasis on learning to learn and the development of critical thinking skills increasingly present in regional and national curricula.

To sum up, the ELP was a tool launched by the Council of Europe in 2001 in order to implement CEFR principles and promote student's autonomy and lifelong learning. The ELP was structured around

three recognisable sections (Passport, Biography and Dossier) and had both a pedagogic and reporting function. Its use was implemented throughout Europe (albeit unevenly) from 1998 to 2012, after which the different projects stopped being officially monitored. 32 countries participated in the project during those years and they provided evidence of their successes, failures and challenges. What follows is a summary and a reflection on its adoption.

3 A major change within languages education? Critical evaluation

Viljo Kohonen, one of the most relevant researchers in the field of the European Language Portfolio, writes about the ELP-oriented pedagogy as a major change within language education (Kohonen 2012). In their European Language Portfolio Impact study, Stochieva et al. (2009) concluded that the ELP seemed to have had positive effects on the classroom, textbooks, tests and exams, other educational projects, teacher education and training and on language policy in general. Their personal conclusion about the study emphasises the link between the ELP and CEFR:

The ELP with its emphasis on learner autonomy, self-assessment and lifelong learning has reinforced some of the basic implications of the CEFR approach – those elements which constitute the underlying concerns behind its conception. By engaging in the ELP development process practitioners, teachers, educators and a wide range of FLL stakeholders have, we believe, achieved a better understanding of these underlying principles of the CEFR. (Stochieva et al. 2009: 20).

However, despite reports of its positive impact at so many levels and the fact that learning portfolios were becoming increasingly popular in different disciplines, the ELP, both in the original paper format and the more recent versions in electronic design (e-ELP), was not adopted as widely as had been expected. We do agree that the ELP had the potential for a major change in languages education, however, this change did not materialise.

David Little, a leading figure in the ELP project, admits that in spite of the large number of portfolios validated and registered, 118 portfolios, the ELP has not been successfully implemented on a large scale in any educational system: “the ELP has never been used on a large scale in most national education systems and seems to be largely forgotten in some of those that were among the first to develop ELPs and submit them for validation” (2016: 162). However Little adds, the ELP has had a major impact on transforming curriculum, textbooks, and teaching practice.

It is paradoxical that, once the pedagogical value of the ELP was demonstrated after its pilot phase and the years in which the implementation projects were active and after the use of learning portfolios appeared in various educational areas, ELPs have not been disseminated and implemented in a systematic way. Little (2016: 166-167) points to four main reasons for this failure:

- The ELP did not live up to the expectation of being the magic bullet that would provide the universal remedy for language learning and teaching ailments: in many countries the ELP needed much more support than the authorities could provide.
- The ELP’s pedagogical approach was not well aligned to most educational systems; it was strange (Little calls it *alien*).
- The ELP encountered integration problems in three areas: Most ELP models were not developed as part of a broader curricular reform, making self-assessment descriptors difficult to relate to curriculum objectives. In addition, in most educational centres a textbook was used, which meant that the ELP was an extra burden. Furthermore, the culture of self-evaluation and reflective learning that underlies the ELP was unthinkable in many educational systems.
- The ELP itself presents some problems, such as the dichotomy between the use of the target language and plurilingualism.

However, Little wonders whether the time is now ripe for a revival of the ELP (2016). He considers that “the educational ideals on which the CEFR and the ELP are founded have lost nothing of their relevance and urgency” (2016: 168). Therefore, he proposes different ideas to guarantee a successful return of the ELP and suggests a bottom-up implementation model starting in the primary classroom and spreading to higher education. He furthermore recalls the importance of establishing clear links between official syllabi and the ELP. This involves the reformulation of the objectives of the official curricula following the CEFR scales. Lastly, Little proposes that it is important to redesign the tool according to each particular context, now that there are no longer any validation or registration processes and, therefore, the creation of new ELPs can be more flexible, affirming that “sticking to the three core sections is now a *moot* question” (2020: 15, emphasis in the original). He suggests the following guidelines for the development of new ELPs:

Some form of language biography is clearly essential to provide a reflective accompaniment to learning and support the recurrent cycle of goal setting and self-assessment; and a dossier is an obvious way of storing both work in progress and work that can be used to support self-assessment claims. But a version of the language passport might be used for a reporting function only. In a school system, for example, students might need different curriculum frameworks and portfolios for first, second and subsequent foreign languages but could use the same language passport to summarize their learning achievement at the end of schooling. (Little 2020: 15).

Finally, we note that Stoicheva et al. (2009: 27, original emphasis) have reported a “*loss of momentum*” in use of the ELP. We believe that this momentum can be re-established through investment in a structured reconceptualisation of the ELP as a Personal Learning Environment (PLE) (Haines and van Engen 2012: 143). These authors consider that the original structure of the ELP produced “artificial separation of the language learning experience” and propose a “more organic representation of the language learning process from the learner perspective” (2012: 139).

Regarding the implementation of the ELP, Forster Vosicki (2012) argues that different key factors have to be taken into account. She draws from her experience implementing the ELP at the University of Lausanne Language Centre for more than a decade and offers a solid analyse of the challenges that working with an ELP at higher education present. These key factors offer a clear vision of the issues that need to be addressed to ensure successful ELP adoption; at the management level, the awareness that implementation is a long process that needs to be facilitated and monitored; at the teacher level it needs the integration of teacher training; and in term of learning infrastructures, the design of tasks and learning support systems in line with the objectives of the ELP (Forster Vosicki 2012).

The above discussion and evaluation clearly demonstrate the complexity and multiplicity of factors that are involved in the successful implementation of the ELP. In this paper we would like now to focus on two aspects of the ELP: the pedagogical concept and the use of an ePortfolio. In the following sections these two fundamental aspects are explained and documented.

4 The need for an electronic e-ELP

Originally, the European Language Portfolio was a paper document, but soon it became apparent that a more flexible and accessible format would be the future of the tool. Furthermore, the use of electronic portfolios in various academic fields was spreading more and more (Haines and van Engen 2012).

The first accredited electronic ELP was developed in 2001 by EAQUALS/ALTE. From then on, the development of electronic portfolios was promoted by the Council of Europe. In recent years, several versions have appeared, despite the fact that neither its use nor its creation have had the expected impact.

The creation of an electronic portfolio brought with it many advantages. Haines and van Engen pointed out, for example, that the use of various languages in different settings was becoming commonplace

and that it could be made visible through the different components of the portfolio in digital format: “The use by learners of several languages in a variety of settings and with a variety of goals is becoming the norm, and the production of digital language biographies, dossiers and language passports can make this explicit” (2012: 131).

It is important to note, however, that adapting the ELP to electronic format was not simply a matter of updating its format. This is how García explains it: “Electronic portfolios cannot remain a digital version of their pencil and paper peers, as many authors suggest. They must go beyond a mere compilation function and assume functions of learning management” (2005: 115). Despite this recommendation: “The tendency has been mostly to replicate the paper design and format”, without taking into account the technological advantages that can improve the learning process through eportfolios (Álvarez 2012: 131).

The first European Language Portfolio in electronic format was developed by EAQUALS and ALTE and accredited in 2000. After this one, many others followed, such as the Lolipop project (2003-2007), the European Language Portfolio for Professional Purposes (Prof-ELP) for vocational training students, developed by the Employment Service of the Community of Navarra, the e-ELP of the University of Montesquieu (2010) or the electronic ELP of the Regional Centre for Education and the Official School of Languages in Pilsen, in the Czech Republic (2014).

More recently, other e-ELP models have been developed and used by various international institutions. As an example, we could mention *Peppels*, which is a Dutch e-ELP model created in 2007. Since then, its use has spread in schools in the Netherlands in a commercialised version that is currently active. *LinguaFolio* is not a European project, however, both its design and the underlying principles are the same as those of the European Language Portfolio. It was created for students between 12 and 18 years old and, mainly, to be used in secondary schools. Currently, it is also used in some universities, such as the University of Oregon, and in intensive language learning programs in other institutions where it has proved to promote self-regulation and motivation (Ziegler and Moeller 2012).

The last example we would like to mention is EPOS, which was launched in 2012 to take advantage of technological innovations that could facilitate learning through portfolios, creating a tool that offered more modern functionalities, while adapting to learner-centered methodologies that began to be used more and more. Already in the first version launched in 2012, EPOS allowed for the creation of groups to use it cooperatively, carry out projects together, create collections of works and allow other students to see and comment on them (Fehse et al. 2011: 5).

The principles on which EPOS is developed make it clear that this portfolio is much more than a change of format from a paper to electronic medium. EPOS already introduced more functions that were implicit in the ELP, such as Learning objectives, *Lernziele*, Projects, Learning journal etc. Friedrich and Kühn highlight how EPOS goes beyond the ELP, in terms of flexible self-assessment, the possibility to work with different descriptors, e.g., CercleS, CARAP, Intercultural communication etc, and the possibility of collaborative learning and group work (Friedrich 2019; Kühn 2016). It was implemented at the Universities of Bremen Language Centre for language exchange tandems and in many other German and European universities. This e-ELP model is especially relevant in the context of our work, since the underlying principles and functionalities of EPOS have been used as a basis for the ePortfolio prototypes that will be described below.

5 Developing a learning ePortfolio for languages

5.1 The pedagogical role of ePortfolios

As the previous section has shown the move to an electronic Portfolio was both a ‘natural’ and necessary step within the development of the ELP. Over the last decade ePortfolios have become an increasingly common component of Higher Education (HE) programmes, serving as constructivist learning spaces where students can reflect on their learning journeys, where they can be assessed, collect their work and

demonstrate their achievements to potential employers (Pegrum and Oakley 2017). The recent saliency of ePortfolios has been stressed (Chaudhuri and Cabau 2017) as they are demonstrating in different contexts and across disciplines how they might fit with institutional objectives as well as allowing for a greater personalisation of learning. As Pegrum and Oakley state:

It is suggested that ePortfolios may have a role to play in supporting a shift away from today's administratively oriented, pedagogically limited learning management systems (LMSs), and towards personal learning environments (PLEs) where students can engage in more individualised, autonomous learning practices. (Pegrum and Oakley 2017: 21)

In line with this position held by Pegrum and Oakley that ePortfolios foster the shift to a more personal and autonomous learning, we have brought this claim further with regard to two aspects:

- by stressing the fundamental role that an ePortfolio can play as a learning tool.
- applying and integrating the pedagogical structure of self-regulation to different ePortfolios.

5.2 The way to a self-regulatory ePortfolio

Drawing from our own experience designing and working with different electronic ELPs, it appeared clear that the pedagogical potential of ePortfolios had not been fully explored and acknowledged. Elsewhere we argued (Pérez Cavana 2012) that there was a need for a *soft portfolio*. With the word *soft* we were not only referring to an electronic portfolio, but also to the **pedagogical component** of the ELP as opposed to the *hard pages* or **reporting function** of the ELP. In that paper we showed how the ELP can foster strategic self-regulated learning and metacognitive knowledge.

Following this line of inquiry over the last years, we have focused on the development of an ePortfolio that specifically fosters and develops self-regulation. As explained in the sections above, the ELP is based on the principle of learner autonomy. In this paper we argue that an ePortfolio can drive this principle further to promote self-regulation. Thus, we endeavoured to make the most out of the affordances of an ePortfolio to develop a learning, self-regulatory ePortfolio, that can be used in a variety of contexts, and definitely as a language portfolio.

5.3 Integrating Self-regulated Learning (SRL) functions in the ePortfolio structure

Self-regulation is widely recognised as an important factor in active control of the learning process (Goulão and Cerezo Menedez 2015) and consequently, in students' academic performance. According to Zimmerman (2000) self-regulated learning in education is based on the premise that students use metacognitive, motivational, and behavioural processes in their learning.

As described above, autonomous learning requires self-management; that means being proactive and developing self-knowledge and control of the learning process. Bjork et al. (2013) have demonstrated in their research that for a learner to become effective in the learning process, they should not only be able to assess accurately the states of their own learning, but also be able to manage their own learning and activities in response to such monitoring.

Gavaldón (2019), drawing from her research on studies on ePortfolios for student teachers, stressed that for the ePortfolio method to be effective, teachers need to direct students progressively toward self-regulated learning. In order to functionalise the principles of self-regulation and adapt them to fit within an ePortfolio structure, we used as the starting point the five stages of learning recommended by the Open University for students to work on their Personal Development Planning as seen in Figure 1 (Open University 2020).



Figure 1. Five-step learning cycle.

As you can see this series of actions is understood as a learning cycle which describes the types of actions characteristic of self-regulation. The cycle comprises of the following stages: identifying (learning goals, weaknesses etc.); planning (how to work with these weaknesses, how to achieve the learning goals); action (performing the planned actions); recording (evidence of the actions performed, successes etc.); and reviewing the whole process (has it worked as planned, have I achieved what I wanted? If not, what can I do differently?).

Although there are different models of SRL, according to the cyclical model proposed by Zimmerman (2000) there are three phases in SRL: forethought, performance and self-reflection, as can be seen in Figure 2. These phases closely match the pedagogical cycle shown and described above:

- Forethought – (Identifying, Planning).
- Performance – (Action, Recording).
- Self-reflection – (Reviewing, Evaluating).

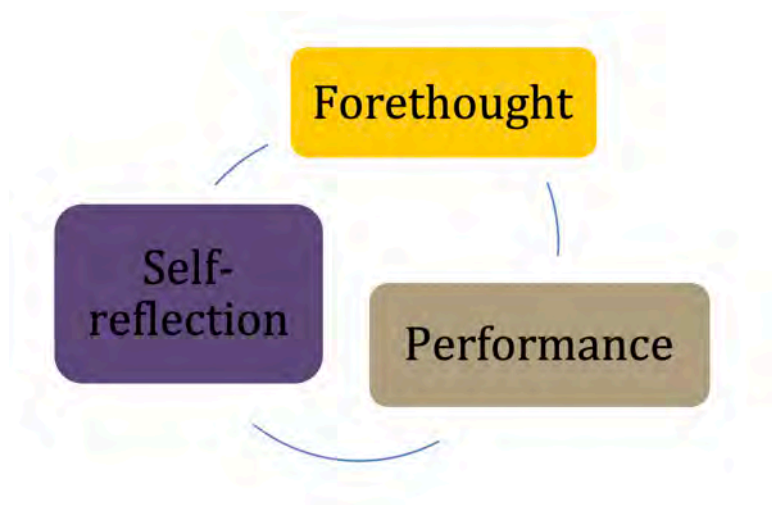


Figure 2. SRL pedagogical cycle.

Drawing from the pedagogical principle of self-regulation and the functions described above we designed and refined our learning ePortfolio prototype, which we could call a self-regulatory ePortfolio.

6 Applying the self-regulatory ePortfolio to different contexts

6.1 ePortfolios for Personal Development Planning (PDP)

From 2016-2018, we carried out a pilot to implement a new approach to Personal Development Planning (PDP) using the Three-layered model (Pérez Cavana and Lowe 2018) in an ePortfolio. Through successive pilots we designed and refined our learning ePortfolio prototype. For the first pilot we used EPOS, the ePortfolio developed by the Language Centre for the Universities of Bremen. As explained above, it was

originally designed as a language ePortfolio following the structure of the European Language Portfolio. We adapted EPOS specifically for PDP at the Open University (OU) by integrating the pedagogical functions (identify, plan, record, review) in the main tabs (see Figure 3) in order to facilitate the visualisation of the pedagogical process.

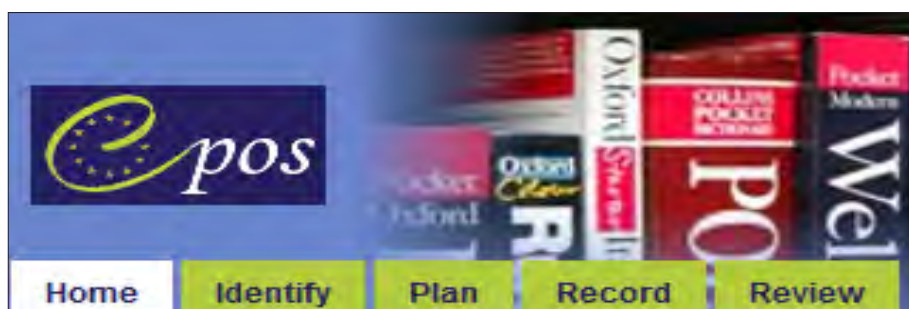


Figure 3. The ePortfolio EPOS for PDP.

The rationale behind inserting these pedagogical functions in the ePortfolio was twofold: cognitive, to help to understand what PDP is about, and practical, to facilitate the factual work with learning by doing.

The findings of those studies have been published elsewhere (Pérez Cavana and Lowe 2018) but the main finding was that the visualisation of the pedagogical cycle as part of the structure of the ePortfolio helped students to become aware of their learning, to manage, to plan it and to take control of their learning.

At the time of the second pilot study, the OU was starting to provide students with Microsoft Office 365, a cloud-based suite of tools including OneNote. This aligned to Kim et al.'s (2010) proposal of a cloud-based approach for ePortfolios. We therefore piloted the use of OneNote as a means of supporting students in their PDP.

As advocated by Howes et al. (2011), we provided a structure within the ePortfolio through the creation of a template in OneNote which we then made available to the students. Once set up with Office 365, students installed the OneNote template on their own devices. They had a choice of desktop version and cloud-based, potentially syncing the two and using both depending on their location and device at hand.

The template in OneNote (Figure 4) was a simplified version of the EPOS ePortfolio used in our first pilot (Figure 3) but maintained the idea of the tabs to provide guidance through the stages of PDP (identify; plan; record; review). Under each of the tabs was a space for students to use, in some cases with minimal scaffolding in the form of framework or prompt questions, and in other cases, space for students to use as they wish.

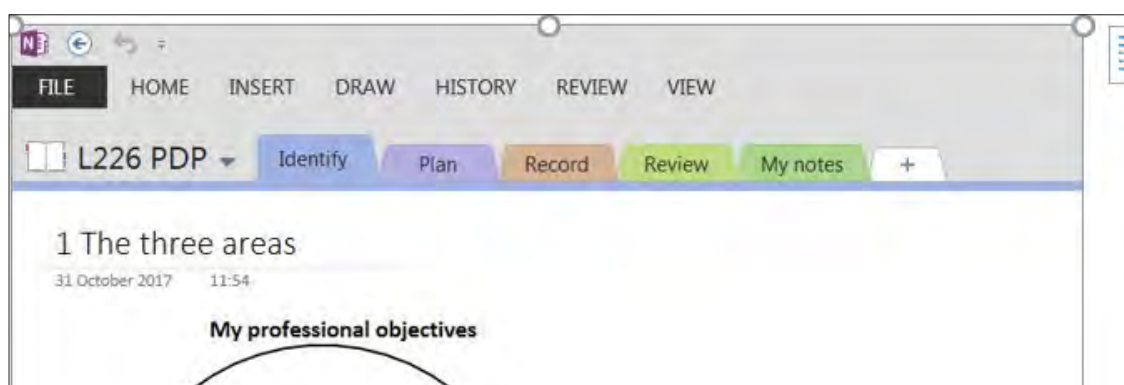


Figure 4. Tabs created within OneNote.

One of the advantages of using OneNote is that it is very easily customised by the users. Under the tabs and in their personal space, students were able to enter their thoughts as text, in paragraphs, in tables, in lists. They can upload photos of work done or inspirations, upload audio/video recordings of themselves reflecting, and upload their assignments containing tutor feedback. They can make use of checkboxes to help prioritise and to keep track of progress.

6.2 ePortfolios for languages

Following this prototype self-regulatory ePortfolio and the promising findings from the first pilot study on PDP, a similar OneNote ePortfolio was designed based on the European Language Portfolio using the same pedagogical functions (identify; plan; record; review). The pedagogical self-regulatory cycle is also the basis of the structure, although the tabs have been kept relevant for the specifics of language learning and follow the traditional structure of the European Language Portfolio.

The OneNote template was introduced in a number of hands-on workshops for language teachers in the context of a European Centre for Modern Languages' project. The language teachers were highly positive in their response to the ePortfolio. They also valued the ability to customise and adapt it to their specific needs. These teachers are now able to use their own adapted versions in their teaching, but have yet to report on their experiences.

Figure 5 shows one example of a language ePortfolio. In it the traditional parts of the ELP (Passport, Biography and Dossier) have been freely adapted to the learners' needs. In this particular example, the self-assessment section – normally included in the Passport – has been presented in three language skills (speaking, listening and writing) and an additional section on *learning objectives* has been added to allow students to plan and manage their learning and to strengthen self-regulation. Another main section is the *Dossier* as in the original ELP concept, but with the facilities an ePortfolio provides, such as the possibility to store and collect all types of files and documents, including video and audio files, pictures etc. Finally, the learning journal part fulfils the function of the biography.

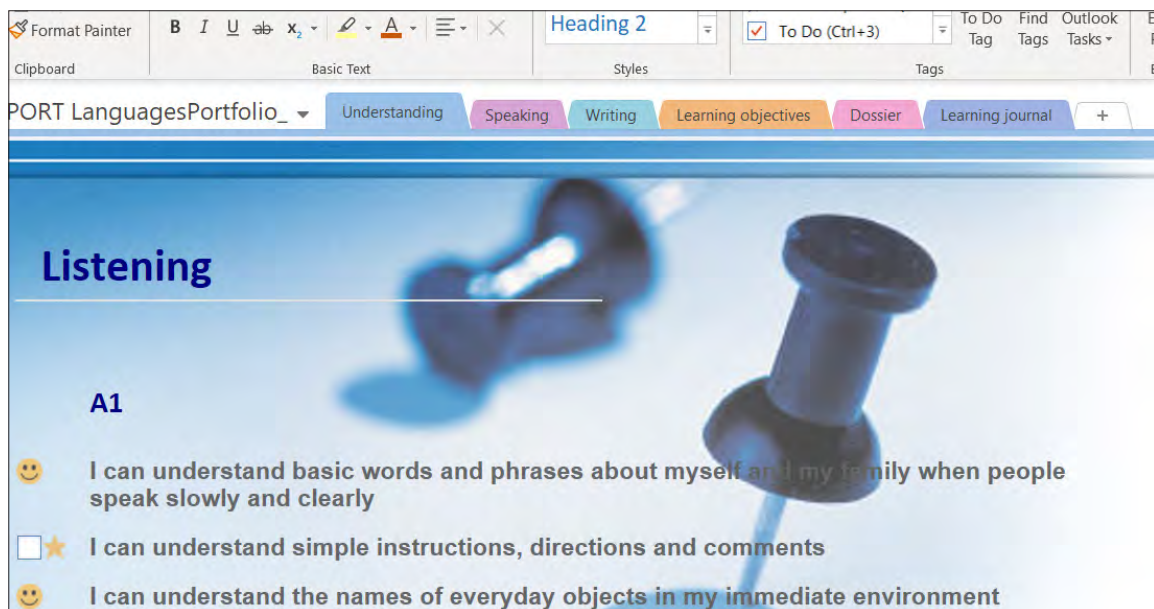


Figure 5. Structure of OneNote Languages ePortfolio.

6.3 ePortfolios for English student teachers

Since the OneNote ePortfolio template could be tailored to suit different target groups, a different prototype was designed on the same basis. Using the same pedagogical functions (identify; plan; action; record; review), another OneNote ePortfolio was created for future pre-primary teachers. In this case, the students were taking the subject English Language and its Pedagogy within their Pre-primary Education Degree and the portfolio was used not only to promote their language learning but also the core content of the subject: English Teaching Methodology. The portfolio was meant as class activity and the students were asked to complete the different portfolio sections after each unit with the work being supervised by the teacher.

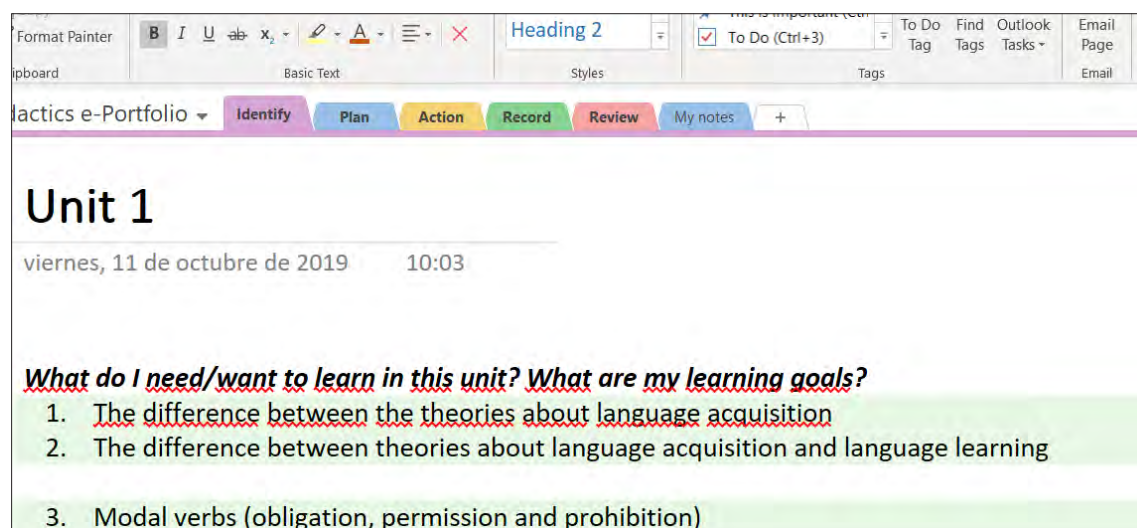


Figure 6. Structure of OneNote Portfolio for student teachers.

Figure 6 shows how OneNote was adapted for these students. Again, the original sections of the ELP (Passport, Biography and Dossier) were adapted to this new context. The Identify tab helps the student set goals and identify what they can already do, resembling the Passport. The Plan and Action tabs are for designing a plan of action and developing specific activities to cover the contents of the subject in a flexible way. Together with the Review tab, where a learning journal can be found, they keep the spirit of the Language Biography. Lastly, evidence can be stored in the Record section (Dossier).

The ePortfolio was used as a voluntary class activity and students were surveyed about the experience when the course was over. Student teachers showed a very positive attitude towards it and most of them felt it helped them with self-assessment and getting more control over their learning process. In general terms, they felt it was a useful reflection tool. As it has been shown, we have opted for a flexible ELP model to suit different contexts and target students.

7 Discussion

Continuous development has resulted in the latest examples of language eportfolios we have described. Is it possible to still recognise the original ELP within these new examples of the Self-regulatory portfolio that we are suggesting?

The answer is 'yes' and 'no'.

Yes: the new learning ePortfolio for languages we are proposing is clearly based on the original spirit of the ELP: to develop learner autonomy and supporting plurilingual lifelong learning. It also includes the reporting and the pedagogical functions. That means it works as a product (Dossier/Record) and as

a process, although the emphasis is more on this latter, on the scaffolding¹ function, aiming to make learning visible and to facilitate the learner taking control of their learning.

Yes: it is property of the learner, and self-assessment is a main element in the ePortfolio. In fact, this aspect of self-reflection is much more developed in the SRL ePortfolio. The learning function in the SRL ePortfolio has taken over the reporting function (although both are present since the ePortfolios we are suggesting can be used to assess learners).

No: the original three-part structure (Passport, Biography and Dossier) might not be recognisable at first sight, it has become much more flexible and fluid. The main elements of these parts are either integrated or expanded upon, however there are some elements such as the record of formal language qualifications, that do not have a main role in the SRL ePortfolio, although they can be easily included.

The SRL ePortfolio we are proposing is much more flexible than the original one and much more learner- and context-centred. In that sense we are in line with Blanch et al. (2011) who believe that portfolios “have to be flexible and must promote self-reflection and autonomy in students’ learning; therefore, proposing a standardised learning portfolio model that homogenises the results and allows for a statistical approach would be incoherent with this conception”. Thus, the flexible approach we are proposing enables the purposeful development of the three parts. In the example discussed above, the passport has been designed around the different language skills (writing, listening, speaking) and a new section to work with learning objectives has been introduced. Also, in that example, the Biography was adapted to follow the self-regulation cycle (Plan-Action-Record-Review). Besides, when the original ELP is integrated in the SRL ePortfolio as we are proposing, it can support other disciplines or skills such as Personal Development Planning, language teaching or teaching practice as shown in the examples.

Another major difference with the original ELP is that it is not meant to be implemented at a regional-national-European scale like the old projects, but rather to be adapted to one’s context and used following the initiatives or demands of individual teachers or educational institutions, as suggested by Little (2016).

We are aware of the limitations of this new ePortfolio prototype. It is a work in progress and we only have incidental evidence of its effectiveness. Therefore, it is essential to carry out studies in different contexts and to collect and analyse significant amounts of data. Regarding the digital platform of the SRL ePortfolio, the pilots we carried out with OneNote showed several technical drawbacks, such as the co-existence of different versions, the difficulties of importing a template on some computers and the limited inter-connectivity of the parts. Therefore, we will be using a different platform, Mahara, for the design and development of our next SRL ePortfolio. We are also in the process of developing measurement tools to collect a robust set of data.

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8 Biographies

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