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European Language Portfolio for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People

TEACHER'S SUPPLEMENT TO THE USER'S GUIDE



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Teacher's Supplement to the User's Guide

Teacher's Supplement to the User's Guide to the European Language Portfolio for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People (ELP DHH)

The Teacher's Supplement to the User's Guide to the ELP DHH offers guidance to teachers about supporting deaf or hard of hearing learners of foreign languages. The supplement contains suggestions for helping users adopt and use the ELP DHH in their language study, with the main focus on teaching and administrative aspects of using a European Language Portfolio

The User's Guide is the main point of reference for many details about the ELP DHH.

Contents

The European Language Portfolio	3
Role of the Council of Europe	3
The ELP for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People	3
What languages are covered by the ELP DHH?	3
The main components of the ELP DHH	4
Introducing the ELP DHH to students	5
Working with Deaf and Hard of Hearing Learners.....	6
Assessing the learner with reference to the ELP.....	7
Building a dossier of evidence	8
Identifying learning styles.....	9
Learning Activities Quiz.....	10

The European Language Portfolio

The European Language Portfolio (ELP) is a record of the language skills and abilities of the holder. Its purpose is to show the range of foreign language competence of the holder.

The ELP provides a convenient summary for individuals to demonstrate their language. Although the documentation comes from Europe, it can be used to record abilities in any language in the world. It is therefore a useful document for migrant workers, whose range of languages and skills might be unknown to an employer, yet seen as normal in the community.

Role of the Council of Europe

The European Language Portfolio was introduced with the support and encouragement of the Council of Europe to enable individuals to build a record of the sum total of their language skills. The resulting document might be described as a ‘language curriculum vitae’, which may be presented to anyone interested in the owner’s level of competence in a range of language skills – teachers, family and friends, employers.

The use of the ELP encourages desirable outcomes such as increased mobility of labour and tolerance and respect for diversity in languages. It is also hoped that its use will promote plurilingualism – the ability of increasing numbers of Europeans to speak several languages other than their mother tongue.

The ELP for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People

This version of the European Language Portfolio (ELP) is specifically for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People (DHH). In order to achieve a particular level of ability in any language skill, the performance of a deaf and hard of hearing person must match the internationally agreed norms and standards which apply to everyone.

The European Language Portfolio for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People (ELP DHH) is registered with the Council of Europe. The levels of ability and competence described in the ELP are written to the agreed international standards of the CEFR – the Council of Europe’s Framework for Reference. This ELP DHH uses the CEFR as the main reference point for the descriptors of competence A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2, which are listed in detail in the *Language Biography*.

The skills referred to in this ELP DHH are:

- Reading
- Writing
- Speaking with other people
- Making announcements and speeches
- Understanding what people say

What languages are covered by the ELP DHH?

The ELP DHH is about learner’s ability to use another language, which can include any of these:

- languages which people learn formally (e.g. at school, at college, or on a study visit)
- languages which are learned from experience (e.g. through travel, a hobby, or work)
- languages of the family or community
- in certain circumstances, the mother tongue (e.g. where deafness has affected acquisition of the language)

Any language can be incorporated into the ELP. The word *European* shows that it was designed at the Council of Europe, but the ELP can apply to any language, whether spoken in Europe or not, such as Arabic, Chinese, Navaho or Urdu. The ELP DHH is a version especially for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. The levels of ability which are described in the ELP DHH take account of the difficulties they have in using a foreign language because of deafness, especially when they are talking and listening to hearing people.

Sign language

The ELP DHH does not deal with ability in using sign languages or finger-spelling. The Deaf Port Project recognises that deaf sign languages are independent of oral languages. However, the descriptions of ability in sign languages would be quite different from the descriptions of ability in the ELP DHH for Speaking with other people, Making announcements and speeches, or Understanding what people say.

The influence of sign languages, with their richness and complexity of facial expressions and movements of the hands, arms or body, may well help deaf and hard of hearing people to explain things when they are trying to use a foreign language. If they are good at using gestures, then that is an advantage, just as any learner or hearing person might use mime or simple drawings as an aid to making themselves understood.

For some people, the language of the country or region where they live may be like a foreign language to them if they have been brought up to sign. The ELP DHH can easily be used to measure their ability in the language used around them.

Functions of the ELP

The ELP is expected to perform both a reporting and a pedagogic function. It provides a record of the owner's proficiency in languages. It also supports the teaching and learning process in various ways.

- It promotes a common awareness of a standardised scale of proficiency by using the CEFR assessment framework.
- It encourages learners to reflect on their progress and preferred learning styles and achieve a measure of autonomous self-criticality.
- It stimulates an informed dialogue between learners and teachers, enabling them to discuss progress in relation to the assessment criteria
- It validates intercultural experience and recognises intercultural competence as a skill that may often be further developed

The main components of the ELP DHH

There are three main sections in the ELP DHH - The Language Passport, The Language Biography and The Language Dossier.

The Language Passport

This document is a summary of the language skills, the levels of ability and the range of languages of an individual ELP DHH holder. Use the *Language Passport* to quickly assess the holder's capability for foreign language tasks. It also contains information on intercultural experiences.

The Language Biography

This is the key document for the details of levels of competence. It profiles the user's preferred methods of learning, and gives an account of how the holder gained the skills and competences in foreign languages which they have.

The *Language Biography* allows for the recording of levels, times and dates of language learning. It can also record reactions to the experience and perceptions of how the user learns best. It contains a task checklist, which is a breakdown of descriptors in the Self-Assessment Scale into typical tasks that might be set for continuous assessment. The learner and teacher may initially record what the user can do at any given time.

There is also a section in which the user records his/her experience of intercultural encounters and how effectively he/she is able to interact with people of different cultures from his/her own.

The Language Dossier

The dossier contains evidence for the claims in the Language Passport. Everyone creating a ELP DHH compiles their own personal dossier. It is a collection of items which provide some evidence

that they have the language skills which they have chosen in the *Language Biography*. All sorts of things can be added to the *Language Dossier*, but the most common types of evidence include:

- Certificates awarded to the user
- Performances by the user in real life
- Learning situations at school, college or study visits
- Statements by observers

A suitably qualified person (you as a teacher, an employer, an interpreter) may be an observer, and sign off appropriate items.

The *Language Dossier* includes suggestions for organizing and cross-referencing the evidence collected. But note that you and the learner may make any mutually-agreed arrangement that supports the easy location of evidence. Finally, it is suggested that the user keeps a log of learning experiences which will substantiate the Learning Experiences section of the Language Biography.

Introducing the ELP DHH to students

For a first introduction to students, some teachers choose the user-friendly way of starting with what appears to be a quiz about the students' ability. Starting with a skill like Reading, and the set of levels appropriate to the class (for example A2 and B1) means that students can begin to understand the nature of the descriptors and self assessment of their own levels, before moving on to more difficult issues – such as Listening skills for deaf people. The moment for introducing the ELP DHH should be well chosen. It is better to introduce an easy task leading to the overall concept early on, so that it is perceived as part of the course.

It is important that the ELP is integrated with a language learning and teaching course. It should not be seen as a separate aspect of the course which is artificially introduced, but rather as:

- a reference point to which teacher and learner can go when there is a need for clarification as to the level of competence at which the learner is performing.
- a record which is constantly at hand for noting important developments in the learner's proficiency, experience and perceptions of his/her learning process.
- a focal point for stimulating a dialogue between teacher and learner so that there is a common understanding of how each feels about the on-going process.

Time should be allowed for the use of the ELP, but this should be managed so that it does not unduly interfere with the flow of teaching and learning. For example, to timetable a regular, whole-period 'ELP session' could be obtrusive. It is better if a few minutes are set aside regularly, with perhaps a longer session from time to time for general advice and questions and answers arising from the ELP. A teacher may also find that different time allocations suit different groups.

The order in which documents are first introduced, will depend on the patterns of assessment and recording of progress adopted. Because the Passport contains a summary of attainment to date, it may be that this is left till later, unless learners already have past attainments to record. The Language Biography, on the other hand, contains background information about the learner, such as his/her mother tongue or past contacts with other cultures that could be recorded early in the process.

From the teacher's viewpoint, the first indications of progress and attainment will be in the form of tasks carried out in a learning situation and these may originate from the checklist of tasks in the Language Biography and be filed, when significant, in the Dossier.

All the above suggests that teachers

- need to have a provisional strategy that is likely to work with their teaching approach
- must to be prepared to adapt their strategy according to the situation and students' preferred learning styles and rates of progress.

Working with Deaf and Hard of Hearing Learners

This ELP acknowledges the different needs of DHH learners. DHH learners are subject to undeniable constraints, but there are few linguistic goals beyond their grasp where favourable conditions prevail. There are various detailed references in the *Language Biography* to the circumstance of DHH learners which are summarised here.

Technological aids and visual contact

DHH language learners will need access to a range of DHH-specific devices and modes of communication, according to their degree of aural impairment.

The available range of visual signing conventions comes instantly to mind. For the totally deaf learner, one or more systems of signing may be his/her sole means of 'speaking'. Key constraints arising from this necessity are speed of communication (sometimes) and the need for direct visual contact (always).

In the case of hard of hearing learners various enhancing technologies (hearing aids, assistive listening devices) may play an important part in the learning process. Using these aids may affect the speed at which the DHH learner can participate in a language task and this should not be prejudicial to the assessment process. Similarly, use of DHH-specific devices and modes may slightly increase the risk of inaccuracies or misunderstandings occurring in productive and receptive skills. If inaccuracies do not invalidate the outcome and are clearly attributable to the DHH-specific support these should not be counted against the learner.

DHH learners will be at a disadvantage when involved in any communication process in which there is a lack of visual contact or support. This is acknowledged in the descriptors.

Speaking with other people

- DHH learners dependent on lip-reading or signing cannot be expected to respond to interlocutors who are not clearly visible face-to-face.
- One-to-one conversations may be handled well, but discussion in large groups may be more difficult, especially where lip-reading is the mode of comprehension.
- Hearing members of the group will need to avoid interruptions and simultaneous contributions to the discussion.

Making announcements and speeches

- If the DHH speaker receives feedback or questions, then members of the audience should take care to address the speaker directly.

Understanding what people say

- When listening to anything through speakers DHH-specific support should be available – for example, someone present and visible can repeat to the learner what has been said.
- When watching anything on screen, some DHH learners can only be expected to follow speech where the speaker(s) are fully visible for lip-reading or where DHH-specific support is provided.

Facial expression, gestures and body language

A DHH learner can have the advantage over a hearing learner of having learnt to interpret more expertly the facial expression, gestures and body language of a speaker.

Sharing experiences

This is the first ELP or similar document designed for DHH users. It is recommended that teachers pioneering its use should make a note of their experiences, and share with others what works well in classroom practice, especially the integration of DHH-specific support into the language learning process. See the website for further details.

Task completion and attainment

The criteria in the CEFR descriptors that apply to the assessment process make some allowance for DHH-specific support and the constraints that apply to the DHH learner. However, no concessions should be made where a task is not successfully completed. In order to achieve a particular level of ability in any language skill, the performance of a deaf and hard of hearing person must match the internationally agreed norms and standards which apply to everyone.

If it takes longer for a DHH learner to reach a given level, this is quite acceptable and not unfairly discriminatory. The situation is similar to that of any learner: it usually takes longer to reach a target level in a language quite different from the speaker's mother tongue than in a cognate language sharing many features with the mother tongue.

Allowance should be made if a DHH learner is prevented from achieving a task by limitations of available DHH-specific support, and not by his/her lack of linguistic proficiency.

Including DHH learners in classroom activities

All the above should be noted in the context of assessment and in the learning situation. The planning of lessons should take account of the DHH-specific modes of communication, such as lip-reading or signing and DHH-specific technology, such as hearing aids. DHH learners should participate as fully as possible in the lesson. Such planning will include:

- seating arrangements that ensure optimum visual contact between teacher and learners and between the learners themselves
- optimum visual strategies to support presentation and explanation of the linguistic content of the lesson
- how best to include and situate such auxiliary personnel as sign interpreters (where the teacher is not able to provide such support, as where a DHH learner is attending a class of otherwise hearing learners)
- how to make best use of DHH-specific technology such as hearing devices in the context of the planned lesson
- what DHH-specific modes of communication will be used by learners and when switching between these modes is likely to occur

Assessing the learner with reference to the ELP

Assessing the learners' competence for an ELP is not an examination. The assessment process might be Continuous, Periodic, or Summative, probably reflecting what is normal where you teach.

It is recommended that recorded attainment for continuous assessment should be based on the learner's performance being consistent at this level. The checklist in the Language Biography gives the learner three choices: I can do this a little I can do this fairly well I can do this really well. As the teacher, you are invited to enter your agreement or disagreement with their self-assessment.

At each level in any skill, there are five tasks (a) to (e). Having this choice ensures that the learner's performance is properly sampled. Once the learner is satisfied that they have shown competence in four of the five tasks and you feel able to endorse their self-assessment, he/she may be considered to have achieved the targeted level for that skill.

Recording attainment

Once learners begin to produce evidence, they should be encouraged to look at the Self-assessment Scale (Passport) and the corresponding item in the checklist (Language Biography) and reflect on which descriptor best fits the task they have performed. This is one of the many situations in which they may be motivated to discuss with you, the teacher, how their performance of the task meets, or does not yet meet, the level descriptor they are working towards.

At this point, they may be ready to record their success (one of three stages of progress) against the checklist item and here you may confirm, upgrade or downgrade their self-assessment. You are both

entitled to disagree at this point, but it is advisable to wait till there is firm agreement before recording a level of attainment in the Passport.

This may also be the moment at which they begin to reveal what it is that they most, or least, enjoy about their learning experiences to date. This might also lead to their wishing to record these feelings in the Learning Experiences sub-section of the Language Biography. Note that there is a questionnaire on learning experiences. Both you and the learner have the key to this in the Language Biography Appendices document. The profile that emerges of the learner's approach to learning is not intended to be a definitive label, but a stimulus for constructive discussion between the learner and you about his/her development.

Building a dossier of evidence

The Language Dossier is where all the evidence which supports the assessment is kept. The Language Dossier itself will be in a suitable form, such as a multimedia disc, a personal website, or a wallet file, ring-binder or cardboard box.

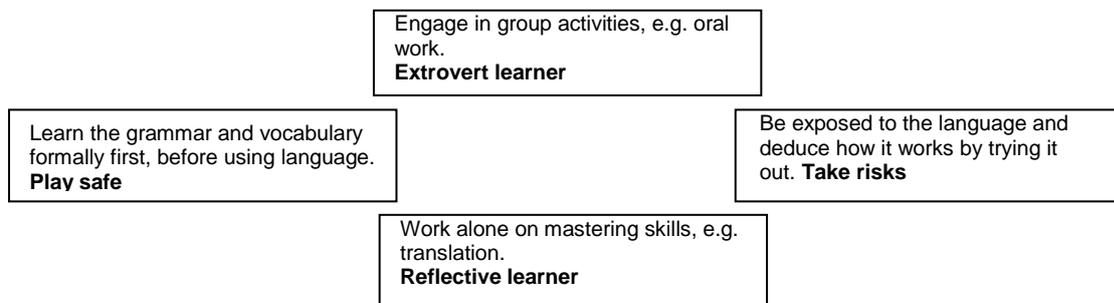
Each example should be catalogued as suggested in the Language Dossier for rapid location. The Language Dossier can include

- Language performance under simulated conditions (e.g. classroom tasks).
- Witness statements authenticating performance in real-life situations (e.g. in the workplace) and relating both to language proficiency and to intercultural skills.
- Certificates and/or diplomas issued by a national Ministry of Education or other recognised Awarding Body or institution.

Identifying learning styles

The learners and users of the ELP DHH are given a short profiling exercise and a Learning Activities Quiz to complete in the Language Biography Appendix. The objective is to lead them to reflect on their language learning experiences.

The first exercise leads them to think about themselves as learners. They are invited to identify themselves with one or more of these different learning styles: Extrovert learners; Risk taking learners; Reflective learners; and Learners who prefers to play safe.



The second exercise is a more detailed Learning Activities Quiz, which is reproduced below. There are 21 questions in the quiz, presented in columns A and B. The A items are about taking risks in learning and using languages, and the B items are about systems, grammar and book-based exercises.

Each person gets an A score and a B score, and there are learner profiles for these. For example, high scores for A items show risk takers, and high scores for B items indicate a learner who prefers certainty to risk. The profile of the learner's approach to learning is not intended to be a definitive label, but a stimulus for constructive discussion between you as a teacher and the learner about his/her development. This is the quiz as presented to the learners.

Learning Activities Quiz

The Learning Activities Quiz looks at the sorts of things you may be asked to do in language lessons and evaluates how you react to various teaching or learning activities when you learn a language.

The Quiz Scale 0 - 5

Use the scale 0 – 5 by choosing the short description which best describes your reaction to an activity. Write your score next to each item in the clear box which will sometimes be in column A, sometimes in column B. Leave all the shaded boxes blank.

0 = greatly dislike – feel threatened by this

1 = dislike

2 = still not satisfactory

3 = just satisfactory

4 = enjoyable

5 = very enjoyable – feel confident in this

Scores

Check your total scores for columns A and B and then check your result. The remarks will help you to get a deeper insight into what sort of a learner you are.

The comments on each score are not meant to label you forever as one type of learner. They are intended to get you to reflect on how you have studied so far and how you may become more effective as a language learner. development.

You may disagree with some of the suggestions or the profile. This is not a problem. These comments provide the basis for discussion with your teacher on your present strengths and ways in which you can try to develop further.

Learning Activities Quiz

	In class my language teacher...	<i>Enter the score in the clear box</i>	A	B
1	always uses the foreign language expecting me to work out what is being said.			
2	gives regular lists of vocabulary to learn and tests me.			
3	sets a lot of written exercises in class which are marked and discussed.			
4	often gets us to practise oral work in pairs, using a stimulus, e.g. role-play cards.			
5	attaches a lot of importance to translation in lessons.			
6	gives me an imaginary situation, and asks me to write a letter or report based on it			
7	regularly gives me a recorded listening comprehension exercise or test			
8	expects me to use a range of linguistic and commonsense strategies to work out the meaning of an unfamiliar foreign language text			
9	tends to begin a teaching unit with a reading text, which we explore for grammar points			
10	gets me to write a work-related report for homework			
11	asks me to read a foreign language text aloud to the class			
12	uses games as a language teaching technique			
13	gives gap filling exercises in order to practise grammatical points			
14	tests my reading comprehension using multiple-choice items			
15	sometimes asks me to match items e.g. words with pictures as a listening comprehension exercise or test			
16	records me making a short presentation in the foreign language			
17	asks me questions about a text using the foreign language			
18	gives me a difficult text e.g. from a real newspaper and asks me to use logic and contextual clues (e.g. headlines, pictures)to work out the meaning			
19	outlines a simulated situation (e.g. asking the way)in which I have to play a role			
20	writes a list of vocabulary on the board and comments on each item before the lesson gets under way			
21	when marking my written work, ignores some mistakes and focuses instead on a few that he/she wants me to pay special attention to			
	Total scores for column A and B items		0	0

Quiz Scores and Evaluation

Column A

The items in Column A relate to activities that tend to appeal to the sociable risk-taker. Add up the scores for column A. Click on the score or scroll down to see the evaluation.

[Score 0 - 11](#) [Score 12 - 22](#) [Score 23 - 33](#) [Score 34 - 44](#) [Score 45 - 55](#)

Score 0 - 11

If your score totals 0-11 on these items, you may:

- invariably 'play safe' when learning a language.
- always expect vocabulary and grammar and structures to have been formally presented and explained before they are either introduced for listening or reading or used for speaking or writing.
- always tend to prefer working alone and feel uncomfortable working in a pair or group.
- always favour formal, written exercises over informal, oral activities, unless these are highly structured and focused on linguistic points.

Score 12 - 22

If your score totals 12-22 on these items, you may:

- usually 'play safe' when learning a language.
- tend to expect vocabulary and grammar and structures to have been formally presented and explained to you before they are either introduced for listening or reading or used for speaking or writing.
- usually tend to prefer working alone and feel uncomfortable working in a pair or group.
- usually favour formal written exercises over informal, oral activities, unless these are to some extent structured and focused on linguistic points.

Score 23 - 33

If your score totals 23-33 on these items, you may:

- like to feel formally prepared for activities (e.g. some prior vocabulary and grammar input) but not be afraid of making the occasional mistake.
- while expecting some prior explanation, be prepared to draw occasional inferences in listening and reading and take informed chances in speaking and writing.
- be equally at home with private and individual work and interactive learning activities, though may want help from reference sources in the latter. Quite enjoy games as a learning activity.
- be equally at home with simple written and oral tasks as long as these relate to recently learned linguistic points.

Score 34 - 44

If your score totals 34-44 on these items, you may:

- be moderately adventurous about performing tasks in which you draw on prior knowledge that is not always recent. you are not normally deterred by the risk of error.
- be able to tackle receptive and productive language tasks without preparation on topics that are fairly familiar.
- tend to prefer interactive, lifelike tasks and activities to individual work focusing on grammar. Enjoy games.
- tend to prefer lifelike written and oral activities, in which you must rely on a wide range of linguistic knowledge acquired over some time.

Score 45 - 55

If your score totals 45-55 on these items, you may:

- be very adventurous in performing tasks, often with high risk of error. (you are a compulsive risk-taker who is excited by trying out communicative possibilities.)
- be willing to take part in all manner of communicative tasks needing a knowledge of unfamiliar language and subject matter
- much prefer interactive, realistic pair and group tasks over individual and grammar-focused work. Respond very well to games, entering into them in a competitive spirit.
- much prefer realistic written and oral tasks, in which you must rely on a wide range of linguistic knowledge acquired over some time.

Column B

These items relate to activities that tend to appeal to the quiet 'safe-player'.
Add up the scores for column B. Click on the score or scroll down to see the evaluation.

[Score 0 - 10](#) [Score 11 - 20](#) [Score 21 - 30](#) [Score 31 - 40](#) [Score 40 - 50](#)

Score 0 - 10

If your score totals 0-10 on these items, you may:

- invariably take risks rather than check sources when using the language
- attach no importance to mastering vocabulary and grammar when you learn a language
- always tend towards outgoing learning behaviour, e.g. be impatient to get on and conduct a conversation or play a language-related game, but dislike working alone with a textbook
- always prefer informal oral activities to formal, written exercises

Score 11 - 20

If your score totals 11-20 on these items, you may:

- usually take risks rather than check sources when using the language
- attach little importance to mastering vocabulary and grammar in the learning of a language
- typically tend towards outgoing learning behaviour, e.g. be impatient to get on and conduct a conversation or play a language-related game, but be less inclined to work alone with a textbook
- typically tend to prefer informal, oral activities to formal, written exercises

Score 21 - 30

If your score totals 21-30 on these items, you may:

- only occasionally take risks when using the language, and feel a little insecure there is no reference source to help you
- be aware of the value of mastering vocabulary and grammar when you learn a language
- like to combine different ways of learning, e.g. you see the value of 'social' activities that simulate real situations, but also want the activity to be supported e.g. based on recent formal learning or closely directed. Quite enjoy games as a learning activity
- have no particular preference for either informal, oral activities or formal, written exercise

Score 31 - 40

If your score totals 31-40 on these items, you may:

- very rarely take part in a language task unless fairly sure of most of the vocabulary and grammar needed to complete it
- be committed to mastering vocabulary and grammar when learning a language
- tend towards studying on your own, clearly preferring formal individual rote learning of vocabulary or grammar exercises to trying out your knowledge in a simulated real life task
- not respond particularly to games
- tend to prefer formal, written exercises to informal, oral activities

Score 40 - 50

If your score totals 41-50 on these items, you may:

- always insist on researching all vocabulary and grammar needed for a task before being willing to embark on it
- be utterly absorbed by mastering vocabulary and grammar, often finding this as satisfying in its own right as using it in practical tasks
- always rather learn vocabulary by heart and do grammar exercises than apply your knowledge to simulated real life tasks. Find games irritating
- much prefer formal, written exercises to informal, oral activities