



Pupils' reactions during the implementation of the PEL in the classroom

They were interested in:

- seeing reminders of other places; they showed a great interest in places that the teacher had visited and they contributed information about places their parents and relatives had visited.

They enjoyed:

- being able to choose their favourite activities.
- collecting their work in the Portfolio box.
- remembering the people who spoke a different language and whom they had met on their travels or at summer camp.

They were motivated by:

- having to use their best handwriting to fill in the Passport and the Biography. Even pupils who were not particularly keen made an effort.

They were enthusiastic:

- when they had to indicate their progress level in their personal record. However, after the teacher had finished her explanations, many pupils often lowered their expectations and were more realistic in their assessment of what they had learnt.
- in finding out who knew most words in different languages and they even organised a competition to demonstrate it.
- in using the box, working with it in primary and continuing with it in secondary.

They discovered that:

- they all had a relative or an acquaintance who lives abroad.



- they all learned new words in other languages during their trips.

They saw that:

- they didn't know anything about the daily routines of their correspondents in other countries and they were pleased to learn about them..

They reached the conclusion that:

- you can't say that you know a language simply because you often hear it; the process is much more complicated. One girl claimed that she knew Galician because her mother has relatives in Galicia and they go there every summer. With a little probing she realised that speaking Galician is more than understanding a few phrases and questions.
- English is useful for communicating with people in many different places because it has become an international language.
- many of the activities related to the Portfolio led them to reflect on the importance of knowing languages.
- there were certain descriptors for written production that they still hadn't mastered in Catalan. They said that they still made a lot of mistakes and had difficulty in writing continuous prose. However, they realised that in Catalan they had reached the levels of oral comprehension and oral production specified in the linguistic Biography.

They learnt:

- to be more realistic about what they know and don't know, that is to say their idea is now closer to that of the teacher.
- to appreciate what is considered to be different in their language, culture and customs.



They changed:

- the notion of 'can't speak' and 'speaks badly' to 'is learning our language and knows another one'. Languages aren't 'strange', they're 'different'.
- what they said when someone took a photo of them: instead of 'cheese', they said 'Portfolioooo'.

Comments made by the pupils during the ELP implementation:

Comments referring to the teacher:

- She always wants to know if we can already do in Catalan or Spanish what we are about to do in English: How do we write a recipe in Catalan? How do we make a poster about...? What should we write?
- She always finds out what we know and she gives us clues to the meaning with examples from games and films.
- She always asks the children from other countries words in their language. She says that languages are languages and we can learn something from all of them.
- She gets us to think before we act.
- This year she speaks more in Catalan.

Comments referring to the process of learning:

- We used to learn English vocabulary; now we learn what we need.
- We work a lot in groups and we help each other.
- We don't have a textbook, but we consult many different books.
- Today I really have had to think in order to do this activity.



- We speak a lot; we always think things over before doing anything.
- We all know what's to be done.
- We keep the evidence of our progress in the Portfolio box.
- It's more fun.
- It's easier to remember what we study.
- We find out how sentences are made.
- I'd never made a plan of our house but I've learnt to do it in the English class.
- We don't follow the order in the book.
- The story in the book is very simple but clear. This is fine for English; if it was complicated, we wouldn't understand it. In Catalan we wouldn't like it, but in English it's all right.
- People who speak several languages are more intelligent than us.
- We study certain science topics in English.

Comments referring to languages:

- One pupil said: 'If it's a European portfolio, why isn't the title on the box cover in all the languages of Europe?' The other replied: 'Wow! The box would be enormous!'
- The Basques really are strange; nobody understands them.
- Yes, but the English only speak English and that's it!
- I also have relatives in France; you're not the only one who's heard French.



- And why wasn't Catalan chosen as the world language instead of English? It's not fair!

A couple of anecdotes:

- One day when a teacher said that, if the pupils thought they had finished the activity, it was time to put it away, one pupil asked another: 'Where do we have to put it? In the box? And the other replied: 'Not likely! The Portfolio is not called a box, it's called a Portfolio. Haven't you realised that yet?'
- There was a pupil in the 5th class who always does everything right and who cries if he isn't first in everything. When it came to the issue of different languages, he couldn't contribute anything because his parents were local people, and he hadn't been abroad. He claimed that he knew Italian because his grandfather was from Italy. Some days later his mother told us that he didn't have an Italian grandfather.