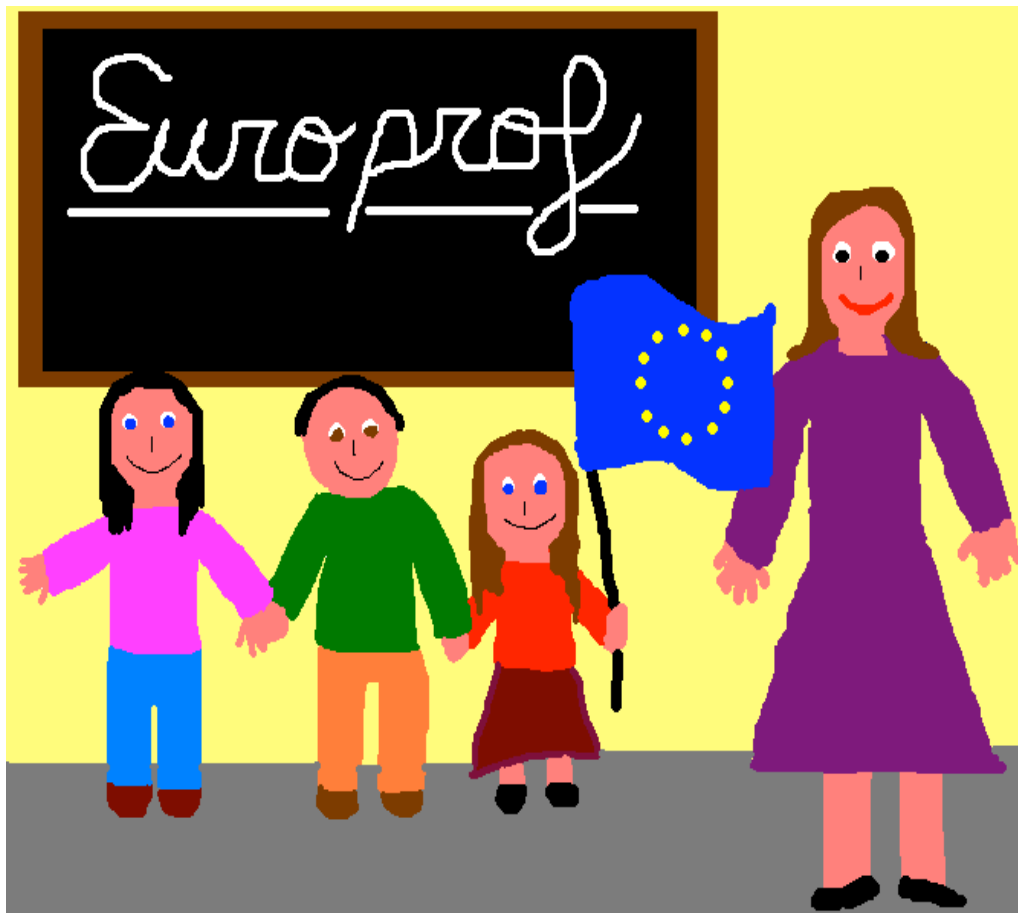


Europrof

Professional Portfolio



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EUROPROF PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO

INTRODUCTION

The mind of man is capable of anything – because everything is in it, all the past as well as the future. (Joseph Conrad Korzeniowski, Polish-born British writer)

A Teacher Portfolio is a tool for lifelong learning and professional development; it provides evidence of becoming/being a competent and effective teacher. A portfolio serves as a collection or record of your professional background and experience as a teacher and it documents what you believe about language learning and teaching and how you teach. What makes this particular portfolio, The EUROPROF Portfolio, special is its purpose to train you to create your own personal and professional portfolio in order to become a reflective practitioner.

When?

- ❖ Whilst you are still in the 'preparation' stage of becoming a teacher and throughout your career.

How?

- ❖ On your own and/or with your mentor during your training as a reflective diary.

Why?

- ❖ To enable you to monitor your own development from your initial steps to a competent professional;
- ❖ To help you to examine your own cultural perceptions and to increase your awareness of the importance of developing a perspective, for example, seeing others as they see you and celebrating diversity;
- ❖ To highlight the importance of the cultural aspect of foreign language teaching.

The great danger of portfolios is that they can easily become mere collections of papers, a sort of scrapbook. The scaffolding provided in the EUROPROF Portfolio should prevent this and help it to become the documentation of the dynamic process of a student teacher's, and later an increasingly experienced teacher's, development – the evidence of work and growth.

The EUROPROF Portfolio will address the following areas:

- Biography
- Language competence
- Teaching
- Cultural dimension / Intercultural competence

A bibliography is included at the end.

SECTION 1

BIOGRAPHY – SETTING THE SCENE

Some of the best lessons we ever learn, we learn from our mistakes and failures. The error of the past is the success and wisdom of the future. (Tyron Edwards, American theologian)

Presentation of self as a teacher

Aims:

- to reflect on the formative process of becoming a teacher;
- to analyse factors underpinning the learning of a second language (or another language) starting from personal experience;
- to reflect on the role of motivation in your own language learning experiences;
- to analyse the relevance of personal/biographical experiences in the professional growth of a teacher;
- to understand which personal/biographical experiences contribute to the development and making of a teacher.

Personal Information

I. My personal biography

- Who I am: name, surname, date of birth / age.
- Where I come from / where I live: country, region, city, town, village.
- Where I have trained: my education, institution, qualifications, other competences/skills.
- Where I work: country, region, city, town, village, name of institution.
- What I speak: the languages I have learnt, the languages I am learning, the languages I intend to study, brief outline of my areas of interest.

You may wish to provide a link to your Facebook, use photos, caricatures or other forms of pictorial information as well as text based.

Personal Statement

II. My biography as a learner of foreign languages

Reflect upon your personal experience as a language learner by considering the following points:

- When I started learning foreign languages;
- Why I studied language/s;
- How I learned language/s;
- What was helpful in learning;
- To what extent I developed my cultural awareness;
- My successes and failures as a language learner;
- What is a language to me? My emerging personal philosophy.

III. My biography as a student teacher

Referring to any previous experience, for example as foreign language assistant, working in a kindergarten, consider the following areas:

- What professional knowledge I have gained so far – outline briefly the areas you are familiar with, methodologies, relevant bibliography, courses, workshops or conferences you have attended;
- What classroom observation experience I have gained – how many lessons I have observed, what types of schools I have visited, how old the students I saw were, what my comments and reflections are;
- What classroom teaching experience I have had – how many lessons I have taught, in what types of schools, what age groups I have taught, what methods, techniques, aids I have used, how effective they were, how I coped with class management;
- What was helpful in my teaching practice – mentors, college/university tutors, fellow students, school students/pupils, courses in college/university, books and articles;
- How should students learn a foreign language? What is my emerging philosophy of language teaching and learning?

IV. My biography as a reflective practitioner so far – both as a learner and as a teacher

Consider the following:

- Why I am considering becoming a teacher;
- What kind of (LANGUAGE) teacher I am now and what kind of teacher I would like to be, e.g. my expectations, my fears, the areas I want to develop and improve;
- To what extent I have developed my ideas about teaching and how my views on the role of the teacher have changed. Am I prepared to challenge my existing beliefs?
- What preferences I have about the kind of students I want to teach or the institutions I want to work in;
- Where do I see myself in the future? How am I going to get there? How do I protect myself from too much pressure?

Suggested illustrative material

In the following chart describe the artefacts/sources of evidence you wish to include in your portfolio, explaining why you have chosen them (e.g. why is each of them meaningful to me?) and reflect on the didactic implications.

Some examples of artefacts have been provided below as guidance. However, you can choose, add or delete as you think appropriate.

Artefacts/sources of evidence	Rationale	Reflections/comments
Paper materials Text, reflective diary/log/journal, poems, extracts from books/journals, publications		
Multimedia Music, recordings of performances, e.g. drama, dance, music, teaching, video, podcasts, YouTube, interviews, Facebook		
Visual materials posters, caricatures, photos, pictures, collages		
Other		

SECTION 2

LANGUAGE COMPETENCE

"I wish life was not so short," he thought. "Languages take such a time, and so do all the things one wants to know about." (J.R.R. Tolkien, Professor of English and author)

Any tool has multiple uses. Language, for example, can be either a bridge or a barrier.
(Shane Tourtellotte in *String of Pearls*, a science fiction story)

I. Describing your language competences

Stage A: brainstorming and discussion to exchange opinions and knowledge:

- What does language competence mean?
- What does language competence include?
- Why is this competence important for language teachers?

Way of working: open discussion or text as a starting point.

Stage B: description of your language competence as a student teacher / teacher

- Include clear, specific references to the Common European Framework and the European Language Portfolio (e.g. Ch. 5);
- Describe your competence in the 4-5 skills identified in the CEP/ELP together with lexical and grammatical accuracy;
- Explain how the above has enabled you to get a better understanding of a foreign culture;
- Consider the specific competences needed by language teachers (classroom language; meta language; teacher's ability to explain, give instructions and feedback, encourage and facilitate discussions using the target language clearly and concisely; ability to choose appropriate level of language for the situation.)

II. How did you reach this level?

Stage A

- With reference to Section I above, describe your level. You might wish to refer to the Self-Assessment Grids in the European Language Portfolio / descriptors in the Common European Framework.

Stage B

- Cross-reference to Biography section of EUROPROF Portfolio.
- Referring to the ELP Biography (certificates gained, language learning experiences, experiences with L1 + L2's, 3, 4, awareness of multilingualism research), how does your knowledge of, experience with and opinion about "your" languages influence your language learning?
- Specify what you have learned during teaching practice, your teacher education courses and observation of others. Provide evidence of this collected during your teaching experiences (e.g. comments from mentors and tutors, colleagues, evaluations and reflective diary).

Your future plans

- Refer back to parts I and II.
- Identify strengths and weaknesses.
- Prioritise areas for development.
- Devise an action plan for developing areas where there are strengths and weaknesses. Working on areas particularly relevant to the teaching profession (see II above), consider how you will maintain your language level and remain informed of current developments in the language.

IV. Knowledge of literature, culture and current affairs

- Refer also to the section on intercultural competence.
- How do intercultural learning and your own personal experiences influence your language learning and development?
- In what ways does English, e.g. as a lingua franca, differ from the language embedded in culture?
- Which 'variant' of the target language (e.g. American English) influences your own use of language most?
- What is the relationship between the culture of this 'variant' and your own culture?

SECTION 3

TEACHING

What will the pupils take away with them? It will certainly be different from what the teacher believes himself to be teaching. Every pupil in the class will go away with a version of the lesson, which in some respects is different from all of the other pupils' versions, because what each pupil brings to the lesson will be different. (D. Barnes in Communication to Curriculum)

Aims

- to focus on the experience of initial teacher education in order to understand it better and reflect on its didactic implications;
- to become more able to manage a classroom and use resources, materials and new technologies;
- to encourage your development as a teacher within the perspective of lifelong learning.

Brainstorming of your perceptions, ideas and images as a teacher of foreign languages

- How do you see yourself as a language teacher?

As ...

a mediator a facilitator a transmitter of knowledge
a controller an organiser a counsellor a resource
other.....

- Use an image or a metaphor which you think best represents you as a teacher.

Areas of investigation and analysis of teaching:

- I. Observing others
- II. Analysing students' needs
- III. Planning and implementing lessons
- IV. Taking into account student diversity
- V. Developing students' skills
- VI. Monitoring and assessing
- VII. Reflecting upon and developing your own professional skills

In each of these areas you will find questions and prompts to guide you in analysing and reflecting upon your teaching practice.

I. Observing others

I.1 Observation as a process

- What is the purpose of your observation?
- How do you feel when observing?

I.2 Observing the institution/school

- The type of school (courses, language level, student profile);
- The local area (socio-economic background);
- School ethos (educational provision; traditions and values);
- The school organisation (curricula; timetable);
- Teachers' roles and relationships (functions; individual/ group work; projects).

I.3 Observing in the classroom

- Teacher or mentor behaviour: classroom procedures (e.g. starts and ends of lessons); handling of critical incidents/discipline; use of teaching aids and resources; patterns of movement; stance and posture; use of voice; eye contact; 'psychological projection' (e.g. confidence, uncertainty, anger, good humour);
- Student behaviour: personality; attitudes; motivation; possible case studies;
- Classroom tasks, activities and procedures;
- Interaction: patterns and roles; desk arrangement and classroom management.

Suggested illustrative material

In the following chart describe the artefacts/sources of evidence you wish to include in your portfolio, explaining why you have chosen them (e.g. why is each of them meaningful to me?) and reflect on the didactic implications.

Some examples of artefacts have been provided below as guidance. However, you can choose, add or delete as you think appropriate.

Artefacts/sources of evidence	Rationale	Reflections/comments
a journal/diary related to the experience of observation		
observation sheet/checklists		
a report on other teachers' classes that you have observed		
a reflective commentary/report by a mentor/tutor/supervisor or of a colleague (peer observation) who has observed you		
Other (pictures, drawings, recordings)		

II. Analysing students' needs

An analysis of learners' needs is preliminary to any planning: it includes procedures to collect information about learners in order to tailor the tasks to the students' needs.

Find out for example:

- biographical information about the students;
- details of the communicative tasks learners might want or need in order to carry these out in the target language;
- language needs, skills and linguistic demands of the course;
- information about students' learning styles (VAKOG – visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, olfactory and gustatory).

You can use different methods for carrying out an initial needs analysis, e.g. informal conversations, standardised forms or tests, interviews and surveys.

Suggested illustrative material

In the following chart describe the artefacts/sources of evidence you wish to include in your portfolio, explaining why you have chosen them (e.g. why is each of them meaningful to me?) and reflect on the didactic implications.

Some examples of artefacts have been provided below as guidance. However, you can choose, add or delete as you think appropriate.

Artefacts / sources of evidence	Rationale	Reflections/comments
Informal conversations		
Student questionnaires		
Entry tests		
Interviews		
Tests on learning styles		
Drama activities or games		
Other		

III. Planning and implementing lessons

III.1 Planning a lesson

Planning is a process that does not necessarily occur in a linear order, but the potential success or relative failure of a lesson/unit/module is often determined by the perceived quality of the teacher's planning.

You may wish to consider the following questions:

- What are you designing: a lesson, a unit, a module or a syllabus?
- What are its aims and objectives?
- What grammar/functions/intercultural skills/literature/ESP do you wish to include?
- What resources are you selecting and developing?
- What tasks are you designing?
- What procedures are you following?
- What problems in classroom management do you think you will have to face?
- What roles will the students/teacher play?

III.2 Implementing a lesson

Analyse a lesson you have taught and reflect on its main aspects by considering the following:

- opening and closing procedures;
- sequencing, pace and timing;
- *magic moments* and/or *critical incidents* (e.g. *sensible diversion*, when something happens which we simply cannot ignore, or *unforeseen problems*, which crop up however well you plan);
- Decisions taken on the spot.

Suggested illustrative material

In the following chart describe the artefacts/sources of evidence you wish to include in your portfolio, explaining why you have chosen them (e.g. why is each of them meaningful to me?) and reflect on the didactic implications.

Some examples of artefacts have been provided below as guidance. However, you can choose, add or delete as you think appropriate.

Artefacts / sources of evidence	Rationale	Reflections/comments
Lesson plans (objectives, activities, resources)		
A description of your philosophy of classroom management		
Photographs of your classroom with students engaged in a learning activity		
Photographs of you teaching your class		
A recording of one or more lessons		
A video of one or more lessons		
A written comment on your management and organisational skills by a mentor/tutor/supervisor		
Examples of teaching materials you have prepared		
Examples of student work		
Evaluation of student work		
An account of critical incidents related to student behaviour and how you responded to them		
A student account of your classroom management technique and effectiveness		
Other		

IV. Taking into account student diversity

Differentiation or personalisation within language learning implies attempts to provide for differing learning needs within a class, to design individualised activities and procedures and to place a higher proportion of responsibility for learning on the shoulders of the learners themselves.

In classroom procedures choices can be made about, for example: *speed* (how fast or slowly each individual may work), *level* (tasks may be presented in easier or more difficult versions), *topic or language skill* (when a learner may choose to work on a completely different aspect of language – for example listening, grammar or reading literature).

Case studies

A case study involves following an individual student or a selected group of students through some relevant work or educational experience in order to determine the characteristics of that situation and to provide suitable action.

Suggested illustrative material

As in the previous charts, describe the artefacts/sources of evidence you wish to include in your portfolio, explaining why you have chosen them and reflecting on the didactic implications. Choose, add or delete as you think appropriate.

Artefacts / sources of evidence	Rationale	Reflections/comments
Activities/materials according to different learning styles (VAKOG)		
Examples of students' work		
Differentiated tests		
One or more case studies		
Other		

V. Developing students' skills – linguistic and cultural

In order to express themselves in any spoken language and understand other people, learners have to be able to read, write, speak and listen in the target language. Therefore you, as a teacher, have to dedicate time to make students practise and use these skills. Consider the following questions:

- Which activities have you developed in particular?
- What is their purpose?
- What have you found out in implementing them?

Suggested illustrative material

As in the previous charts, describe the artefacts/sources of evidence you wish to include in your portfolio, explaining why you have chosen them and reflecting on the didactic implications. Choose, add or delete as you think appropriate.

Artefacts / sources of evidence	Rationale	Reflections/comments
Listening activities (e.g. authentic recordings, non authentic/didactic recordings, video, radio or TV programmes, news)		
Speaking activities (e.g. roleplays, interviews, presentations, free discussions, debates)		
Reading activities (e.g. messages/notices, leaflets, newspapers/magazines, stories, literary extracts, poems)		
Writing activities (e.g. cards, letters, instructions, essays, compositions, reports, arguments)		
Grammar – Reflection on linguistic forms		
Other		

VI. Monitoring and Assessing

Assessment is part of the whole educational process of teaching and learning. It is undertaken for different purposes:

- pedagogically motivation, i.e. *formative assessment*
- measurement of learner achievement, i.e. *summative assessment*
- formal certification (by an external organisation)

Different forms of assessment mainly include:

- teacher assessment
- self-assessment
- peer-assessment
- portfolio (see *The European Language Portfolio*)

Consider the following questions:

- How do you personally feel about assessing students?
- Have you any experience of the above?
- How valid or useful were/are they in your opinion?

Suggested illustrative material

As in the previous charts, describe the artefacts / sources of evidence you wish to include in your portfolio, explaining why you have chosen them and reflecting on the didactic implications. Choose, add or delete as you think appropriate.

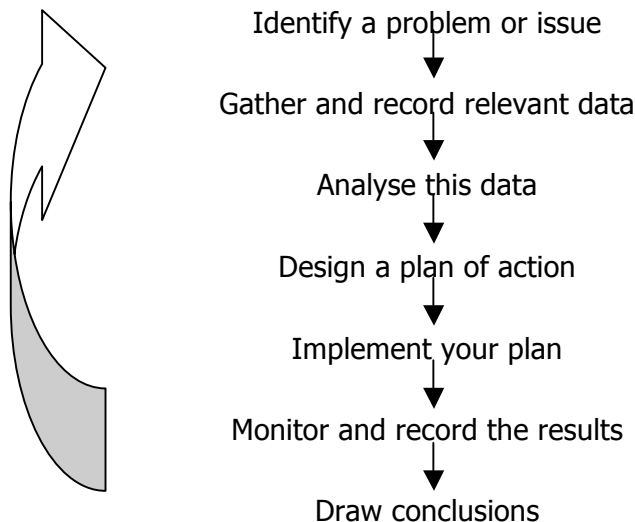
Artefacts / sources of evidence	Rationale	Reflections/comments
Types of tests (e.g. entry, diagnostic, progress or achievement, proficiency)		
Test activities (e.g. multiple choice, true/false, cloze, grammar exercises, reports, letters, essays, compositions)		
Student portfolio of language competences (check lists/grids/descriptors)		
Correction, peer-feedback and self-correction		
Samples of assessment procedures used with learners		
Students' achievements in external examinations (standardised tests)		
Other		

VII. Reflecting upon and developing your own professional skills (Action Research)

Professional development as a teacher may be brought about by breaking one's own teaching rules or norms as a way of challenging what is taken for granted. It may involve trying out new ideas or changing the ways you use old ones. It may involve investigating something that puzzles you or that you do not know about. But in all these cases the teacher's intention is not only to improve his or her own performance, but also to learn more about teaching and about himself or herself.

How reflective and developing a teacher do you think you are?

If you look back at the path you have covered so far there may be questions you would like to analyse better and aspects of your teaching you would wish to improve. For these reasons you might think about carrying out your own small piece of *action research*¹, following the suggested model outlined below:



If the original problem or issue has been resolved or improved, you may start on another action research cycle; if not, then you will probably choose to redefine the issue and repeat the cycle.

Documents demonstrating your professional development could include, for example:

- a professional development plan for yourself;
- a report on any teacher group you belong to and your activities in relation to it;
- a report on how you think you have developed since you began teaching;
- an account of any classroom research you have conducted;
- an annotated list of courses and workshops you have undertaken in recent years;
- a report on a conference or workshop you have attended;
- an annotated list of books on methodology or research which you have read recently;
- an account of some journal articles you have read;
- other examples.

VIII. Concluding remarks

At the end of this process (observation, analysis, reflection, practical classroom work), refer back to the initial question in this section – ‘how do you see yourself as a language teacher?’ – which asked you to brainstorm your feelings, expectations, fears, perceptions, ideas and images as a teacher and reflect on the following:

- At this point in your professional development do you think you have changed (attitude, motivation, expertise)?
- How do you perceive yourself now as a teacher?
- What are your expectations and plans for the future?

¹ See bibliography.

What do you think you have achieved?

Areas of competence	What do you think you have achieved?	Areas of development
Professional values		
Observation		
Analysing students' needs		
Planning and implementing lessons		
Taking into account student diversity		
Developing students' skills		
Monitoring and assessing		
Reflecting upon and developing your own professional skills		

SECTION 4

CULTURAL DIMENSION/INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

Developing one's intercultural competence is an aspect of the lifelong socialisation process, or – to express it in more constructivist terms – a lifelong project.

*An interculturally competent person is quite simply one who is capable of living as a world citizen in this multicultural, globalised world! (Karen Risager in *The teacher's intercultural competence*)*

Aims:

- to explore your cultural knowledge
- to raise the awareness of your intercultural understanding

Consider the following questions. The prompts in the boxes below are intended as guidance.

I. How do I understand the concepts of "culture" and "intercultural competence"?

e.g. high- culture, popular culture, how we live, how we interact...

II. What are my intercultural experiences?

e.g. visits to the country, music, internet sites, food, religions, films, TV programmes, fashion, clothing, conferences, meetings, dinner parties, pub-crawling, sports, courses, tournaments, student-exchanges, stay at a host family, school visits, virtual (chat, discussion forum)...

III. What are my long term goals?

e.g. to develop a further awareness of my own culture (from two perspectives; my own and that of visitors); develop an increased awareness of the cultures of the foreign country/countries; continue to analyse my own expectations, fears and feelings in intercultural experiences; write and include in my portfolio different types of texts, questionnaires, interviews, diaries, reports...

IV. Discovering a new culture

When discovering a new culture, use the prompts in the chart below to guide you, add examples of artefacts (e.g. photos, theatre programmes, train tickets) and include your reflections.

	Artefacts / sources of evidence (e.g. photos, theatre programmes, train tickets)	Reflections and comments
Understanding of and insights into (politics, geography, history, social and economic conditions)		
Attitudes (opinions and feelings regarding general issues such as religion, environment, family relations)		
Behaviour: how people speak and interact with each other (linguistic and social conventions)		

V. Reflections after discovering a new culture

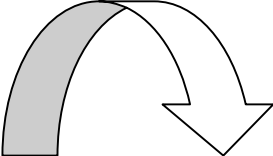
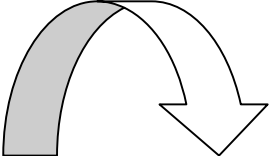
Summarise your reflections with respect to the following questions:

- What makes my culture distinctive?
- What makes the other culture distinctive?
- What differences and similarities do I find between my own culture and the other culture?

VI. What is my short term goal? (during the student teacher mobility visit)

During the two week student teacher mobility visit you should

- complete the chart above (IV) and
- summarise and reflect upon your findings below

How I see myself	How others see my country, culture, school and educational system and language teaching methodology	How I see my hosts, their culture, school and educational system and language teaching methodology
<p>Presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ myself ○ my institution ○ my educational system and school (e.g. how do we teach foreign languages?) ○ my country and my culture ○ surprises 	<p>Expectations How I think others see me and my culture?</p> <p>Evidence based on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ newspapers ○ films ○ TV programmes ○ books and articles <p>Reality Actual experiences</p> <p>Evidence based on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ questionnaires ○ interviews ○ informal meetings 	<p>Expectations How I think the others are? (stereotypes?)</p> <p>Evidence based on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ newspapers ○ films ○ TV programmes ○ books and articles <p>Reality Actual experiences</p> <p>Evidence based on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ questionnaires ○ interviews ○ informal meetings 

Reflections

Reflections

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