

# The European Language Portfolio as an Educational Innovation in Primary and Secondary Schools: You Have to Catch Them Young?

Urška Sešek and Janez Skela

*English Department, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana*

## **Abstract**

*The paper presents a study of the implementation of the European Language Portfolio, an innovative material aimed at boosting learner autonomy and development of multilingual communicative competences in learners of all ages. The monitoring of the piloting of the ELP in Slovenian primary and secondary school over several years included a survey of 1,634 students aged 10 to 17. The survey is analysed with a view to presenting the often overlooked perspective of the end-users of educational innovation, focusing on how learner age affects their patterns of use of the new material as well as their attitudes towards and perceptions of it. The results suggest that age definitely played a role in the learners' reception of the ELP; the levels and types of engagement with the material and the learners' perceptions of its difficulty, enjoyability and value for their growth as (language) learners were lower among secondary students than among primary students almost across the board. Age probably played a role in this via two related factors. Greater cognitive maturity seems not to have contributed to a better reception of the innovation; the poorer results in primary schools probably reflect the common decrease of motivation for schoolwork through the teenage years.*

**Key words:** *age; educational innovation; learner autonomy; learner characteristics; materials; pilot study.*

## **Introduction**

Innovation is a constant in today's world and, by extension, in educational systems, where it could be defined as "... planned application of ends or means, new or different

from those which exist currently in the classroom, school or system, and intended to improve effectiveness for the stakeholders” (Marsh, 2004, p. 80). Literature on educational innovation tends to focus on different aspects: curriculum, organization of schools, system-level management (Kirkland & Sutch, 2009), the role of teachers, methods (mostly with reference to specific subjects, e. g. the introduction of problem-based teaching in science), materials etc. Over the past decades, the phrase ‘educational innovation’ has also come to be strongly associated with the introduction of ICT technologies (see e.g. Nachmias, Mioduser, Anat, Tubin, & Forkosh-Baruch, 2004).

Each of the factors of educational innovation can either drive or inhibit the process of its implementation. It is a fact that teachers are mediators of planned innovation in schools; their motivation for its implementation is crucial (Benveniste & Mc Ewan, 2000), and they also need to be trained for it (Goodlad, 1991). The importance of support by school principals is also well documented (Fullan, 2007). Some researchers point out that significant improvements cannot be achieved without changes in school organization (timetable structure, teacher-student ratios, assessment methods) (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Factors external to the school (educational and general authorities, parents and the broader public) have also been considered; Hirsch (1998), for example, discusses the role of the ‘community’ in the process of educational change. Time is a key factor in any process; it is widely acknowledged that for an innovation to take root on a broader scale it has to be implemented over a period of time; according to Leithwood, Aitken, and Jantzi (2001), it takes more than five years for effects to unfold at classroom level, and according to Fullan (2001), between three and eight. One determining factor which is often overlooked or taken for granted is the nature of the innovation itself. Orafi (2013) discusses some of the effects of its complexity and degree of divergence from existing practices and paradigms.

It is interesting that most of the literature on educational change and innovation pays little attention, at least directly, to the ‘beneficiary’ – the student. However, students are not merely passive recipients of an innovation, and even if they were, the success of educational change surely depends – among the other, undeniably important factors - on the plethora of student variables ranging from age, background and motivation to attitudes, cognitive ability and learning styles. Not a lot of research work can be found to date into these dynamics. Bates, Manuel, and Oppenheim (2007), for example, cite a detailed list of characteristics determining who will respond well to an innovation, but, as in most literature on educational change where the term ‘early adopter’ has been applied, it refers to teachers, not learners. Fullan asks in the 2001 edition of his seminal handbook: “What would happen if we treated the student as someone whose opinion mattered in the introduction and the implementation of reform in schools?” (p. 151). In the fourth edition in 2007, he finds that the question is still relevant. In this paper, the authors wish to address the lack by exploring students’ perceptions - after one to three years of exposure - of a broadly conceived, complex and well-known innovation in language learning materials and approaches, the European Language Portfolio.

The ELP is a unique educational material developed as a part of a broader movement at the level of the European Union aimed at a flexible, multilingual and multicultural society. According to the 'M+ 2 policy' each individual should develop communicative ability in at least two foreign languages (European Commission, 1995). The ELP is one of the two key educational projects of the Council of Europe in the area of languages. The first one was the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR; Council of Europe, 2001), a comprehensive document to aid the development of new language curricula, materials and tests. Parallel to CEFR and based on its descriptions of language competence, the ELP was developed.

The ELP is essentially a workbook for users to record their formal and informal language learning and self-direct their development of linguistic and cultural skills over a period of time. It consists of three components: *Language Passport*, *Language Biography*, and *Dossier*. The former two contain worksheets encouraging the learner to record and reflect on their language learning process and achievements, while the Dossier is the true portfolio component, where the learner collects evidence of their language proficiency. The ELP is not limited to any one specific target language, but encourages the learning of several languages and broadening of intercultural experience.

As Ushioda and Ridley (2002) point out, the ELP has a twofold function. The first one is documentary: it can supplement certificates as it allows the owner to document their language learning and achievement in ways which are based on the CEFR and thus recognized around Europe. Its second function is educational/pedagogical. The ELP encourages the user to continuously assess their language skills, set their own goals, reflect on their processes of language learning, find materials and activities that will move them forward, and evaluate their progress. All the tasks, grids and checklists that serve this purpose are adapted to the user's age and context. Learner autonomy and promotion of life-long learning are thus the key features of the ELP (Stoicheva, Hughes, & Speitz, 2009, p. 4; Little, Goullier, & Hughes, 2011).

It may be that in some contexts, even the ELP's underlying view of language not as a system of grammar rules but as a set of specific competences which are developed through authentic practice has been a cause of cognitive dissonance for both teachers and learners, but hopefully such contexts were not many. Arguably, two of the previously mentioned features make the ELP a considerable innovation in European schools. The first one is its cross-curricular reach: it is designed to link together a learner's experience from different - primarily foreign language and mother tongue - classes. In current mainstream school practice, while there have been increased calls for and attempts at more integration (such as CLIL in the area of languages), this is still an exception rather than the rule. The next (and related) innovative aspect is the ELP's firm grounding in the principles of learner autonomy (Council of Europe, 2006). Learner autonomy essentially means the ability to set one's own goals, select and pursue pathways towards those goals and evaluate one's progress and achievement. This is encouraged by various elements of the ELP, for example, by

providing room for the learner to evidence their language learning outside of school, but “Perhaps the biggest challenge that the ELP poses to traditional pedagogy is the central role it assigns to learner self-assessment...” (Little, 2012, p. 9). It is in relation to self-assessment and the ELP’s learner autonomy orientation that Sisamakias, in his dissertation based on a longitudinal impact study of the ELP, repeatedly refers to the ELP’s ‘subversive potential’ (2006).

Since its inception in 1991, the ELP project has unfolded in several stages. By 2000, different versions of the ELP were produced and piloted in 15 EU member states at all levels of education with over 30,000 learners and 2,000 teachers. The summary of results (Schärer, 2000) showed that the ELP was a well-received tool that can successfully be used towards the intended aims. After 2001, the Council of Europe supported large-scale implementation through international seminars, publications for ELP developers and users (e.g. Schneider & Lenz, 2001) and a formal validation procedure. By 2011, 118 ELPs from 32 member states had been validated, and it was estimated in 2007 that 2.5 million copies had been distributed (Schärer, 2007).

The ELP has had a considerable impact on different aspects of foreign language learning and teaching across Europe, recorded by several studies, for example, Sisamakias (2006), Stoicheva, Hughes, and Speitz (2009), Esteve, Trenchs, Pujola, Arumi, and Birello (2012). The insights of each study, however, are partly limited to its context, and few so far have focused primarily on the learners’ perspective and the role of learner factors in the reception and impact of the ELP.

Slovenia was among the first countries to join the Council of Europe’s ELP project. Four ELP models have been validated so far for different age groups of Slovenian users:

- lower primary level (ages 6-10), validated in 2011 (Čok, Šečerov, Skela, & Zorman, 2011);
- upper primary level (ages 11-15), validated in 2004 (Skela & Holc, 2006);
- secondary level (ages 15-19), validated in 2006 (Puklavec, Enčeva, & Mulej, 2006);
- adult learners (16+), validated in 2010 (Amič, Jelenc, Muster, Petek, Škorjanc Braico, & Žlindra, 2010);

Two earlier versions of primary school ELPs for Slovenian primary learners (Čok, Šečerov, Jelušič Godina, Kragelj, Mlakar, & Šergon Omahen, 1999; Skela, Šorli, & Holc, 2000) were used in the first two pilot projects in Slovenian schools. One was carried out 1998-2000 with 634 students and 20 teachers (Schärer, 2000), and the second in 2001 (Godunc, 2012). The results of both were used in the generation of the overall European reports and supported the same conclusions. In sum, the ELP was considered an interesting and beneficial tool by both learners and teachers. Learner self-assessment was considered an important innovation and there were positive effects on learner motivation. The main issue of concern was how to integrate the ELP into the curriculum and formal assessment, especially given the existing teacher workload. Also, it showed that both learners and teachers needed training for fully effective and efficient ELP use.

The overall numbers of ELP users in Slovenia after the pilot studies grew to 2,150 in the 2003/2004 school year (Schärer, 2004), and teachers who adopted the innovation were supported by a number of training seminars organized by the Ministry of Education. In 2006, a large-scale research project was launched to conduct a thorough and objective empirical evaluation of the ELP in Slovenia over a three-year period (Holc, 2012). The project 'Introduction and Evaluation of the ELP in Primary and Secondary Schools' included 72 primary schools in the years 2006-2009 and 42 secondary schools in the years 2007-2010 (Holc, 2012). The objective of the study was to find out how the ELP was being used, how it was received by learners and teachers, what kinds of practical constraints and issues arose in its implementation, and its perceived impacts. This large-scale evaluation project was the background for the study presented in this paper.

### ***Aim of the Study***

As shown in the introduction, studies on educational innovation often overlook the role of its end-users, the students. For this reason, while the project evaluating the ELP in Slovenian schools explored a variety of issues, our study focuses exclusively on those sections of it that show how the new materials were used and perceived by the learners. As age is one of the key learner variables, and the study involved primary and secondary learners of ages 10 to 17, i.e. on both sides of one of the most challenging transitions in every individual's education (see e.g. Zeedyk et al., 2003; Mackenzie et al., 2012), the main research question was: *What is the role of learner age in the reception of the ELP in Slovenian schools?*

This was tackled by asking three more specific questions:

- Were there significant differences between the primary and secondary learners in the patterns of ELP use?
- Were there significant differences between the primary and secondary learners' affective responses to the ELP?
- Were there significant differences between the primary and secondary learners' perceptions of the effects of the ELP?

### **Methodology**

The data used in the study is drawn from several large-scale surveys which were part of an evaluation of the implementation of the ELP in Slovenia - we gratefully acknowledge the work of Tomi Deutsch and Suzana Kašnik at the National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia. The participation of individual schools and language teachers in the evaluation project was voluntary. The schools were provided with free copies of the ELP for their level (Čok et al., 1999, or Skela & Holc, 2006, for primary school, and Puklavec et al., 2006, for secondary school). To monitor all the participating users (the teachers and the classes they selected for the implementation of the ELP), the Ministry of Education chose primarily indirect methodology: teacher

focus groups and teacher and learner surveys. This was due to the complexity of the innovation represented by the ELP, whose impact could not be successfully measured by more direct or short-term methods such as experiments, classroom observation or external learner testing.

At the participating 114 schools, six surveys were carried out. Four involved teachers at different levels, with overall 73 respondents in primary schools and 53 in secondary schools. The two learner surveys were carried out in 2009 (primary schools) and 2010 (secondary schools), with 659 and 975 respondents respectively. (Secondary school classes are larger than primary school classes; this is why although fewer secondary school teachers volunteered to participate, the number of secondary students involved was larger than the number of the primary students). The data for the study presented in this paper is largely drawn from the learner surveys and only to a minor extent from the teacher surveys (Table 1).

The learner surveys were anonymous and carried out in class at the end of the school year. To enable comparisons, the questionnaires for primary and secondary students were almost identical (two age-specific items which were in the secondary school questionnaire did not appear in the primary school questionnaire and vice versa). As the questionnaires are in Slovenian, they are not provided as appendices to this article; they can be obtained from the authors on request. Both groups responded to 19 closed items eliciting a range of factual and attitudinal information.

Due to the scope of the project, a large amount of data was gathered which was presented to the Ministry of Education together with preliminary statistical analyses (Deutsch, 2009; Kašnik, 2010). The authors of the study then carried out further analyses for the purposes of this study, primarily involving compression of data, selection of subsets for comparison and establishing the presence and significance of differences.

### ***Study Population***

Of the 659 primary and 975 secondary students surveyed, the primary students were a more varied group in terms of age, while the secondary students were enrolled in three different types of programmes. 68.3% were in grammar schools, which, as in most countries, take academically stronger students to prepare them for university studies, 27.5% were in 4-year vocational schools, and 4.2% in lower vocational schools. (In the further statistical analyses, the latter two were considered a single category). As can be seen from Table 1, the typical primary school participant was a 13-year-old after two years of using the ELP, and the typical secondary school participant a 17-year-old after three years of using the ELP. Both groups were largely learning two foreign languages, with the average grade in the first FL class higher in the primary schools, particularly compared to the secondary vocational schools. In this respect the study groups, despite non-random sampling, were representative of the larger population of Slovenian primary and secondary school learners. Both groups largely

used the ELP in their first foreign language classes only, but the frequency of use was higher in primary schools.

Table 1  
Data on the study population

		PRIMARY SCHOOL LEARNERS (n = 659)	SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS (n = 975)
Age		10-15 (grades 6-9; 48% 9 <sup>th</sup> graders, 28% 8 <sup>th</sup> graders)	16, 17 (3 <sup>rd</sup> year, different types of programmes)
Number of foreign languages learned	one	51%	12%
	two (the rest 3 or more)	46%	80.2%
Grade achieved in the first FL (previous school year)	on a 1-5 scale	3.91 (SD 1.00)	3.23 (SD 0.97) (3.37 gram. schools, 2.92 voc. s.)
Number of FL classes with ELP use	one	70%	65.2%
	two	29%	34.4%
	(the rest 3 or more)		
Length of ELP use	one year	12%	1.4%
	two years	88%	12%
	three years	-	85.6%
Frequency of ELP use	once a week	7.4%	2%
	once a month	43%	14.9%
	once a trimester	35.5%	53%
	once a year	14.1%	30%
		(sign.diff. between grades; 6 <sup>th</sup> grades most frequent use)	(use significantly more frequent in vocational schools)

## Results

In order to answer the question ‘*Were there significant differences between the primary and secondary learners in the patterns of ELP use?*’, the authors looked at three sets of data: learners’ self-reported rates of completion of the ELP as a whole, and specifically of the Dossier section, and the learners’ perceptions of how independently they were able to work with the ELP.

Since the ELP is a workbook-type material, the extent to which learners filled it in, i.e. did the tasks it sets, could be used as a rough but tangible measure of each learner’s engagement with it. Since in both groups there were considerable differences in how long the learners used the ELP, Table 2 shows the rates of ELP completion relative to length of use.

As expected, the learners’ ELPs in general moved towards greater completion with time. However, the comparison between the overall responses of primary and secondary students is highly significant, the rates of completion being lower in



secondary schools. It is true that secondary teachers used the ELP in their classes less frequently than primary teachers (see Table 1), but they had also been using it for a year longer, which suggests that the difference is related to factors other than length of use.

Table 2

*Degree of completion of the ELP relative to length of use (learner responses by percentage)*

My ELP is ...	PRIMARY SCHOOL			SECONDARY SCHOOL			
	1 <sup>st</sup> year users	2 <sup>nd</sup> year users	OVERALL	1 <sup>st</sup> year users	2 <sup>nd</sup> year users	3 <sup>rd</sup> year users	OVERALL
... empty.	11.4	3.2	<b>4.2</b>	17.4	13.8	5.0	<b>6.4</b>
... partly filled in.	79.7	65.8	<b>67.8</b>	69.6	48.3	58.8	<b>57.6</b>
... is almost completely filled in.	7.6	26.9	<b>24.3</b>	13.0	34.5	32.4	<b>32.3</b>
... completely filled in.	1.3	4.1	3.7	0.0	3.4	3.9	<b>3.7</b>
	$\chi^2=24.99; p=0$			$\chi^2=23.33; p=.001$			
	$\chi^2=18.56, p=0$						

\* Note: in all the tables and explanations, the statistical tests were carried out using the numbers of respondents, not percentages, but only percentages are shown for the sake of clarity of presentation.

Because of the nature of the Dossier section of the ELP, which embodies a long-term open-ended task requiring from the learner the most self-directedness, the survey measured separately whether learners worked with this component of the ELP or not (*‘Did you insert any of your products or other materials into your ELP’s Dossier?’*). The study did not yield data on the type, amount and relevance of the inserted material, but completion rates provide additional insight into the learners’ response to the pedagogical innovation represented by the ELP. Another, related research question was *‘Can you use the ELP without the teacher’s help?’* As these two questions both refer to one of the key aims of the ELP project, encouraging learner autonomy, the responses to both are shown in Table 3.

As seen in Table 3, the rates of Dossier completion are quite high and significantly related to grade level as well as length of use. The proportion of learners who could use the ELP independently was also high in both primary and secondary schools, but significantly related only to age, not length of use. In sum, the comparisons shown here suggest that while the ELPs seem to be well designed and, logically, their use by learners increased with time, there are also other, age-related factors involved.

One such factor is probably cognitive maturity. Lower rates of Dossier compilation compared to the previously presented rates of engagement with the ELP as a whole (Table 2) suggest that the Dossier is indeed the most challenging part of the ELP; learners seem to compile it more readily as they mature and are more able to both appreciate its principles and direct their own activity.

The rates of independent use show a surprising result, which at first sight is illogically related to learner age. It seems that older students are less capable of working with the ELP independently than younger students. This result is due to the poor performance



Table 3

*Learners' Dossier compilation and independent use of the ELP (responses by percentage)*

		PRIMARY				SECONDARY					
		Total	Dossier yes: 77%	Dossier no: 23%	Without teacher's help yes: 87%	Without teacher's help no: 13%	Total	Dossier yes: 65%	Dossier no: 35%	Without teacher's help yes: 81%	Without teacher's help no: 19%
Relative to grade level / type of programme	6 <sup>th</sup> grade*	72%	23%	85%	15%	Grammar school:	57%	43%	84%	16%	
	9 <sup>th</sup> grade*	83%	17%	89%	11%	Vocational school:	82%	18%	76%	24%	
		$\chi^2= 11.39; p= 0.01$		$\chi^2= 5.95; p= .114$		$\chi^2= 54.95; p= 0$		$\chi^2= 8.55; p= .003$			
Relative to length of use	1 <sup>st</sup> year:	38%	62%	81%	19%	1 <sup>st</sup> year:	57%	43%	70%	30%	
	2 <sup>nd</sup> year:	83%	17%	89%	12%	2 <sup>nd</sup> year:	54%	46%	81%	18%	
	-	-	-	-	-	3 <sup>rd</sup> year:	67%	33%	81%	18%	
		$\chi^2= 77.46; p= 0$		$\chi^2= 3.11; p= .078$		$\chi^2= 7.99; p= 0.018$		$\chi^2= 2.03; p= .362$			
Dossier completion primary vs. secondary: $\chi^2=28.88, p= 0$											
Independent use primary vs. secondary: $\chi^2= 9.18, p= .002$											

\* Because of the large amount of data analysed, only the results for 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade are presented.

of vocational school students in this category not only compared to their peers but even to primary school learners (the latter is confirmed by a separate comparison;  $\chi^2=7.95, p=.005$ ). The result should be interpreted in light of the fact that the ELP, while it was actually used more frequently in vocational schools (Table 1) than in grammar schools, was thus used with more teacher guidance and supervision. As vocational school students are older than primary students and had comparably high rates of completion to their grammar school peers, their lower independent use of the ELP probably does not reflect cognitive maturity or motivation, but simply more need for teacher support, which is related to other learner characteristics such as self-image and learning style.

Several items in our survey were aimed at exploring the affective aspects of the learners' reception and use of the ELP, primarily their enjoyment in using the ELP and whether they wished to continue using it. Primary students were also asked whether they were proud of the ELP as their product, but the secondary students were not, so this item was excluded from our analysis. Table 4 shows the answers to the questions 'Do you like using the ELP?' and 'Would you like to continue using the ELP in the future?'

As seen from Table 4, between a half and two thirds of learners reported liking the ELP, but the proportion is somewhat lower in older learners – both within primary school and between primary and secondary school, the latter difference being highly significant. Length of use seems not to be a significant factor. It can be concluded that, directly or indirectly, age plays a role in learners' enjoyment of the materials, and that they reach a plateau in this respect by primary school leaving age. The learners'

Table 4

Learners' enjoyment in using the ELP and desire to continue use (responses by percentage)

		PRIMARY				SECONDARY				
Total		Like using ELP: 61%	Not like using ELP: 39%	Continue using ELP yes: 56%	Continue using ELP no: 44%		Like using ELP: 50%	Not like using ELP: 50%	Continue using ELP yes: 46%	Continue using ELP no: 54%
Relative to grade level / type of programme	6 <sup>th</sup> grade	75%	25%	80%	20%	Grammar school:	50%	50%	46%	54%
	9 <sup>th</sup> grade	62%	38%	50%	50%	Vocational school:	48%	52%	45%	55%
		$\chi^2= 10.69; p=.014$		$\chi^2= 33.42; p=0$		$\chi^2= 0.52; p=.470$		$\chi^2= 0.08; p=.767$		
Relative to length of use	1 <sup>st</sup> year:	53%	47%	50%	50%	1 <sup>st</sup> year:	58%	42%	61%	39%
	2 <sup>nd</sup> year:	62%	38%	57%	43%	2 <sup>nd</sup> year:	53%	47%	53%	47%
	-	-	-	-	-	3 <sup>rd</sup> year:	49%	51%	45%	55%
		$\chi^2= 2.41; p = .121$		$\chi^2= 1.19; p = .274$		$\chi^2= 1.33; p=.515$		$\chi^2= 4.59; p .100$		
I like using the ELP – primary vs. secondary: $\chi^2= 21.38, p=0$										
I would like to use it in the future – primary vs. secondary: $\chi^2= 15.31, p=0$										

responses concerning continued use of the ELP are a more pronounced version of the previous: approximately a half of the survey population would like to continue using the ELP, and the only factor that significantly affects this is age – up to a certain point. The difference between the numbers of students responding affirmatively/negatively across the two main groups is highly significant, confirming a negative trend directly or indirectly related to learner age.

Three items in the survey elicited the users' perceptions of the effects of the ELP on their language learning: first in general and then one specific question each about the two main functions of the ELP as a record of language learning and a stimulus toward more learner autonomy. The learners' answers to the question 'Does the ELP help you in learning the foreign language(s)?' are shown in Table 5.

As can be seen, less than a half of students in both primary and secondary school believe that the ELP helps them in their learning of foreign languages. In primary school, prolonged use seems to improve this ratio, but the difference is not significant, while in secondary school, the ratio drops significantly with time. There is also a significant difference between grammar and vocational school students; the latter tend to see the ELP as more useful. The slight drop between 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade is not significant, but the difference between primary and secondary students overall is. In short, secondary students found the ELP less useful in their language learning than primary students, the more so with prolonged use and if they were in the academically more demanding programme.

The next question in the survey related to the learners' perceptions of the effects of the ELP was 'Does the ELP enable you to record what you have learned in your foreign

Table 5

Perceived usefulness of the ELP in FL learning (learner responses by percentage)

		PRIMARY		SECONDARY	
Total		ELP helps my FL learning: 45%	ELP doesn't help my FL learning: 55%		ELP helps my FL learning: 34% ELP doesn't help my FL learning: 66%
Relative to grade level / type of program	6 <sup>th</sup> grade	48%	52%	Grammar school:	31% 69%
	9 <sup>th</sup> grade	46%	54%	Voc. school:	38% 62%
		$\chi^2= 2.33; p=.507$		$\chi^2= 4.15; p=.042$	
Relative to length of use	1 <sup>st</sup> year:	37%	63%	1 <sup>st</sup> year:	58% 42%
	2 <sup>nd</sup> year:	45%	55%	2 <sup>nd</sup> year:	45% 55%
	-	-	-	3 <sup>rd</sup> year:	31% 69%
		$\chi^2= 2.15; p = .142$		$\chi^2= 14.68; p = .001$	
$\chi^2= 117.65; p = 0$					

language class(es)?' The answers are shown in Table 6. There was one additional item each in the questionnaires given to primary and secondary students: 'Have your parents looked through your ELP?' and 'How appropriate do you think the ELP is as a record of your FL proficiency to show to potential employers (as compared to the Europass)?' However, as these two questions did not allow for comparison between the two groups, they were excluded from our analysis.

Table 6

Perceived value of the ELP as a record of FL learning (learner responses by percentage)

		PRIMARY		SECONDARY	
Total		ELP enables recording: 77%	ELP does not enable recording: 23%		ELP enables recording: 68% ELP does not enable recording: 32%
Relative to grade level / type of program	6 <sup>th</sup> grade	81%	19%	Grammar school:	64% 36%
	9 <sup>th</sup> grade	79%	20%	Voc. school:	76% 24%
		$\chi^2= 6.34; p = .096$		$\chi^2= 14.27; p = 0$	
Relative to length of use	1 <sup>st</sup> year:	64%	36%	1 <sup>st</sup> year:	83% 17%
	2 <sup>nd</sup> year:	78%	22%	2 <sup>nd</sup> year:	63% 37%
	-	-	-	3 <sup>rd</sup> year:	68% 32%
		$\chi^2= 7.91; p = .005$		$\chi^2= 3.77; p = .152$	
$\chi^2= 14.98, p = .0001$					

In primary schools, the ELP was seen as a useful language learning record by the majority of learners regardless of grade level, and prolonged use contributed to greater appreciation of this aspect of the material. In secondary schools, particularly in

grammar schools, the number of students who answered affirmatively was somewhat smaller, but, interestingly, length of use did not play a role. Comparing the two groups overall, the difference is highly significant - secondary students tended to be less appreciative of the ELP's recording function.

The third question (Table 7), aimed at eliciting the learners' perception of the value and effectiveness of the ELP, was: *'Does the ELP help you to assess your knowledge of the foreign language(s)?'*

Table 7  
Perceived effect of the ELP on self-assessment skills (learner responses by percentage)

		PRIMARY		SECONDARY		
Total		ELP helps me self-assess: 62%	ELP does not help me self-assess: 38%	ELP helps me self-assess: 59%	ELP does not help me self-assess: 41%	
Relative to grade level / type of programme	6 <sup>th</sup> grade	69%	31%	Grammar school:	58%	42%
	9 <sup>th</sup> grade	63%	37%	Voc. school:	60%	40%
		$\chi^2= 5.38; p=.146$		$\chi^2= 0.61; p=.435$		
Relative to length of use	1 <sup>st</sup> year:	45%	56%	1 <sup>st</sup> year:	78%	21%
	2 <sup>nd</sup> year:	63%	37%	2 <sup>nd</sup> year:	52%	48%
	-	-	-	3 <sup>rd</sup> year:	59%	41%
		$\chi^2= 9.08; p=.003$		$\chi^2= 5.92; p=.052$		
$\chi^2= 1.42, p=.2325$						

As seen in Table 7, about two thirds of primary students saw the ELP as improving their language self-assessment skills positively regardless of grade level, but this effect often needed more than a year to unfold. In secondary schools, length of use was not significant. Comparing the two groups overall shows that the difference is not significant. It seems that older learners do not derive more improvement of their language self-assessment skills from using the ELP - which could be expected considering their greater cognitive maturity.

## Discussion and Conclusions

The analysis of the study results suggests several conclusions which will be presented by summarizing the findings of each of the three sets of related survey questions. When looking at the patterns of the use of the ELP as a new material, the logical relationship between length of use and degree of completion is confirmed. However, the younger students' rates of completion were higher, both of the ELP as a whole and the Dossier as one of its core components. Since secondary students had used the ELP for a year longer (even if less frequently) and are generally more cognitively mature, this is a surprising finding. Also, the generally academically weaker vocational students

actually engaged more with the Dossier than grammar school students, although the Dossier was obviously the challenging part (overall, there was less engagement with it than with the ELP as a whole). It seems that the challenge was not so much in the ELP's demands for learner autonomy, which might more easily be handled by the more academically able group. In fact, the data on the learners' independent use of the ELP and its perceived difficulty suggest that the ELPs piloted were high quality materials, enabling the majority of students at all levels to work independently with it from the first year onwards, with the exception of vocational school students, who needed more teacher support than all other groups. It can be concluded that the differences in the patterns of ELP use within the study population are related to age, but not in a straightforward way; there are probably two age-related factors at work: cognitive maturity and motivation.

The students' responses concerning the affective factors of ELP use confirm the finding that age is a determining factor, even if it is not clear by what mechanism. The majority of the learners surveyed enjoyed working with the ELP regardless of how long they had used it, and the majority said they wished to continue using it in the future, but in both cases this majority was significantly smaller in secondary than in primary schools.

The third group of survey questions referred to the perceived effects of ELP use. Here, again, the same pattern can be seen: primary school students' responses were more favourable than those of secondary school students. The recording function of the ELP was appreciated by the majority of the learners at all levels, but less so by the secondary students, who also tended not to appreciate the ELP more through prolonged use. Thirdly, most of the surveyed students appreciated the fact that the ELP helped them develop self-assessment skills. Here, there was no difference between primary and secondary students, but again, in secondary schools length of use did not increase the effect. It might be expected that with greater age and cognitive maturity users would derive more benefits from the ELP in this respect, but the results do not support this.

It is true that the students' perceptions of the ELP and the way they used it were affected also by factors not foregrounded in our study, for example teacher treatment. This, however, cannot account for the differences between the different age groups; although teacher surveys showed different approaches, they also confirm that since all participating teachers were trained volunteers, they presented the ELP to their learners with a positive attitude and a clear understanding of its aims regardless of level. Students' academic ability is another important factor. Stronger students can be expected to respond to educational innovations better on average, but this is not related to age, and in our study population, there was a representative mixture of stronger and weaker students at all levels. However, the authors took into consideration the divide between stronger and weaker students by looking separately at secondary grammar school and vocational school students of the same age, which helped formulate the overall conclusions.

The example of the gradual implementation of the European Language Portfolio in Slovenian primary and secondary schools shows that:

- the reception of the ELP was poorer among older learners, despite their greater cognitive maturity; the reason probably lies in the widely observed problem of student disengagement which tends to increase through the teenage years (discussed in, for example, Hung, 2014),
- age plays a visible role in the way learners perceive and receive an educational innovation,
- age affects the reception of an educational innovation through various age-related factors such as cognitive maturity, self-image and motivation,
- an educational innovation does not need less support, encouragement, exposure and learner training with older than with younger learners.

The authors believe that these findings offer an interesting insight into the often overlooked aspect of educational innovation – its reception by the learners - and offer points of departure for further research in several areas. The ELP with its focus on learner autonomy has been a carrier of paradigm change not only in language teaching but also in European education in general. A better understanding of how learner characteristics determine the success of an educational innovation is all the more desired as change, be it at a smaller or larger scale, and is becoming the only constant in the lives of educators and learners everywhere.

## References

- Amič, I., Jelenc, N. E., Muster, A. M., Petek, B., Škorjanc Braico, D., & Žlindra, T. (2010). *Evropski jezikovni listovnik za odrasle*. Ljubljana: Ministrstvo za šolstvo in šport RS in Založba Tangram.
- Bates, M. R., Manuel, S., & Oppenheim, C. (2007). Models of Early Adoption of ICT Innovations in Higher Education. *Ariadne*, 70/online/. Retrieved on July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2014 from <http://www.ariadne.ac.uk/issue50/oppenheim-et-al>
- Benveniste, L. A., & McEwan, P. (2000). Constraints to Implementing Educational Innovations: The Case of Multigrade Schools. *International Review of Education*, 46 (1/2), 31–48. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1023/A:1003922321999>
- Council of Europe (2001). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Council of Europe (2006). *European Language Portfolio: Key reference documents/online/*. Retrieved on July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014 from [http://archive.ecml.at/mtp2/Elp\\_tt/Results/DM\\_layout/Reference%20Materials/English/ELP%20key%20reference%20documents.pdf](http://archive.ecml.at/mtp2/Elp_tt/Results/DM_layout/Reference%20Materials/English/ELP%20key%20reference%20documents.pdf)

- Čok, L., Šečerov, N., Jelušič Godina, S., Kragelj, N., Mlakar, A., & Šergon Omahen, N. (1999). *Moja prva jezikovna mapa*. Ljubljana: Pedagoška fakulteta UL in Ministrstvo za šolstvo in šport RS.
- Čok, L., Šečerov, N., Skela, J., & Zorman, A. (2011). *Evropski jezikovni listovnik za osnovnošolce v starosti od 6 do 10 let*. Ljubljana: Ministrstvo za šolstvo in šport Republike Slovenije.
- Deutsch, T. (2009). *Evropski jezikovni listovnik v osnovni šoli: Poročilo*. Ljubljana: Zavod RS za šolstvo.
- Esteve, O., Trenchs, M., Pujola J.-T., Arumi, M., & Birello, M. (2012). The ELP as a mediating tool for the development of self-regulation in foreign language university contexts: an ethnographic study. In B. Kuhn, & M. L. Perez Cavana (Eds.), *Perspectives from the European Language Portfolio- Learner autonomy and self-assessment* (pp. 73-100). Oxon: Routledge.
- European Commission (1995). *White paper on education and training: Teaching and learning, towards the learning society*. Brussels: European Commission /online/. Retrieved on July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2014 from <http://aei.pitt.edu/1132/>
- Fullan, M. (2001). *The New Meaning of Educational Change* (3<sup>rd</sup>ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Fullan, M. (2007). *The New Meaning of Educational Change* (4<sup>th</sup>ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Godunc, Z. (2012). Evropski jezikovni listovnik v luči mednarodnih vrednot jezikovnega znanja. In N. Holc (Ed.), *Evropski jezikovni listovnik v Sloveniji* (pp. 60-69). Ljubljana: Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo.
- Goodlad, J. (1991). Why we need a complete redesign of teacher education. *Educational Leadership*, 49, 4–10.
- Hirsch, G. B. (1998). *A Model of Educational Innovation* /online/. Retrieved on July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2014 from <http://www.systemdynamics.org/conferences/1998/PROCEED/00055.PDF>
- Holc, N. (2012). Evropski jezikovni listovnik v slovenski šolski praksi – Rezultati projekta uvajanja in spremljave EJL v osnovni in srednji šoli. In N. Holc (Ed.), *Evropski jezikovni listovnik v Sloveniji* (pp. 69-99). Ljubljana: Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo.
- Hung, C.Y. (2014). The Crisis of Disengagement: A Discussion on Motivation Change and Maintenance Across the Primary-Secondary School Transition. *Multidisciplinary Journal of Educational Research*, 4(1), 70-100. doi:10.4471/remie.2014.01
- Kašnik, S. (2010). *Evropski jezikovni listovnik v srednji šoli: Poročilo*. Ljubljana: Zavod RS za šolstvo.
- Kirkland, K., & Sutch, D. (2009). *Overcoming the barriers to educational innovation. A literature review*. Bristol: Futurelab/online/. Retrieved on July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2014 from <http://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/FUTL61/FUTL61.pdf>
- Leithwood, K., Aitken, R., & Jantzi, D. (2001). *Making schools smarter: A system for monitoring school and district progress*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Little, D., Goullier, F., & Hughes, G. (2011). *The European Language Portfolio: The Story So Far (1991–2011)*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, Language Policy Division/online/. Retrieved on July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014 from [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/elp/elp-reg/Source/Publications/ELP\\_StorySoFar\\_July2011\\_Final\\_EN.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/elp/elp-reg/Source/Publications/ELP_StorySoFar_July2011_Final_EN.pdf)



- Little, D. (2012). The European Language Portfolio: history, key concerns, future prospects. In B. Kuhn, & M. L. Perez Cavana (Eds.), *Perspectives from the European Language Portfolio-Learner autonomy and self-assessment* (pp. 7-22). Oxon: Routledge.
- Mackenzie, E., McMaugh A., & O'Sullivan, K.-A. (2012). Perceptions of primary to secondary school transitions: challenge or threat? *Issues in educational research*, 22(3), 298-314.
- Marsh, C. J. (2004). *Key Concepts for Understanding Curriculum* (3<sup>rd</sup>ed.). Oxon, New York: Routledge Falmer.
- Nachmias, R., Mioduser, D., Anat C., Tubin, D., & Forkosh-Baruch, A. (2004). Factors Involved in the Implementation of Pedagogical Innovations Using Technology. *Education and Information Technologies*, 93(3), 291-308. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1023/B:EAIT.0000042045.12692.49>
- Orafi, S. M. S. (2013). Effective Factors in the Implementation of ELT Curriculum Innovations. *Scientific Research Journal (SCIRJ)*, I: V.
- Puklavec, N., Enčeva, M., & Mulej, S. (2006). *Evropski jezikovni listovnik za srednje šolce v starosti od 15 do 19 let*. Ljubljana: Ministrstvo za šolstvo in šport, Založba Tangram.
- Schärer, R. (2000). *European Language Portfolio: Final report on the pilot project*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, Modern Languages Division.
- Schärer, R. (2004). *European Language Portfolio. From piloting to implementation 2001-2004*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, Language Policy Division/online/. Retrieved on July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014 from [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/elp/elp-reg/Source/History/ELP\\_report\\_2001\\_EN.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/elp/elp-reg/Source/History/ELP_report_2001_EN.pdf)
- Schärer, R. (2007). *European Language Portfolio: Interim Report 2007*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe /online/. Retrieved on July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014 from [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/elp/elp-reg/Source/History/ELP\\_report\\_2007\\_EN.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/elp/elp-reg/Source/History/ELP_report_2007_EN.pdf)
- Schneider, G., & Lenz, P. (2001). *European language Portfolio: Guide for Developers*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, Modern Languages Division.
- Sisamakris, E. M. (2006). *The European Language Portfolio in Irish Post-Primary Education: A Longitudinal Empirical Evaluation*. (Doctoral dissertation). Dublin: University of Dublin, Trinity College /online/. Retrieved on July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2014 from [http://archive.ecml.at/mtp2/Elp\\_tt/Results/DM\\_layout/Reference%20Materials/English/Manolis%20Sisamakris%20PhD%20Thesis.pdf](http://archive.ecml.at/mtp2/Elp_tt/Results/DM_layout/Reference%20Materials/English/Manolis%20Sisamakris%20PhD%20Thesis.pdf)
- Skela, J., Šorli, M., & Holc, N. (2000). *Jezikovni listovnik za osnovnošolce*. Maribor: Pedagoška fakulteta UL in Založba Obzorja.
- Skela, J., & Holc, N. (2006). *Evropski jezikovni listovnik za osnovnošolce v starosti od 11 do 15 let*. Ljubljana: Ministrstvo za šolstvo in šport, Založba Tangram.
- Stoicheva, M., Hughes, G., & Speitz, H. (2009). *The European Language Portfolio: An impact study*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, Language Policy Division.
- Tyack, D., & Cuban, L. (1995). *Tinkering Toward Utopia: A Century of Public School Reform*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Ushioda, E., & Ridley, J. (2002). *Working with the European Language Portfolio in Irish post-primary schools: report on an evaluation project*. CLCS Occasional Paper No.61. Dublin: Trinity College, Centre for Language and Communication Studies.

Zeedyk, S., Gallacher, J., Henderson, M., Hope, G., Husband, B., & Lindsay, K. (2003). Negotiating the Transition from Primary to Secondary School: Perceptions of Pupils, Parents and Teachers. *School Psychology International*, 24(1), 67–79. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0143034303024001010>

---

**Urška Sešek**

Faculty of Arts, Department of English, University of Ljubljana  
Aškerčeva 2, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia  
[urska.sesek@ff.uni-lj.si](mailto:urska.sesek@ff.uni-lj.si)

**Janez Skela**

Faculty of Arts, Department of English, University of Ljubljana  
Aškerčeva 2, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia  
[janez.skela@ff.uni-lj.si](mailto:janez.skela@ff.uni-lj.si)

# Europski jezični portfolio kao obrazovna inovacija u osnovnim i srednjim školama: *Uхватite ih dok su mladi?*

## Sažetak

*Rad prikazuje istraživanje o primjeni Europskog jezičnog portfolia, inovativnog materijala namijenjenog poticanju autonomije učenika i razvoju višejezičnih komunikacijskih kompetencija učenika svih dobnih uzrasta. Za praćenje probnog uvođenja EJP-a u osnovne i srednje škole u Sloveniji u razdoblju od nekoliko godina anketirana su 1643 učenika u dobi od 10 do 17 godina. Anketa je analizirana s namjerom prikazivanja često izostavljene perspektive krajnjih korisnika obrazovne inovacije, s naglaskom na način na koji učenikov uzrast utječe na uzorak korištenja novoga materijala, kao i na njihove stavove i njegov doživljaj. Rezultati ukazuju na to da dob učenika svakako ima ulogu u prihvaćanju EJP-a; razine i vrste angažmana s materijalom i učenička percepcija složenosti, uživanje i vrijednost za njihov razvoj kao učenika (jezika) bili su niži kod učenika srednjih škola nego kod učenika osnovnih škola u cijelom uzorku. Dob u tome vjerojatno ima ulogu s pomoću dva povezana čimbenika. Veća kognitivna zrelost, čini se, ne doprinosi boljem prihvaćanju inovacije; slabiji rezultati u osnovnoj školi vjerojatno su odraz uobičajenog smanjenja motivacije za školski rad tijekom tinejdžerskih godina.*

**Ključne riječi:** *autonomija učenika; dob; karakteristike učenika; materijali; obrazovna inovacija; pilot istraživanje.*

## Uvod

U današnjem svijetu inovacija je konstanta, pa tako i u obrazovnim sustavima u kojima može biti definirana kao »... planirana primjena načina, novih ili drukčijih od postojećih u razredu, školi ili sustavu, s namjerom da poboljša učinkovitost dionika.« (Marsh, 2004, str. 80). Literatura o obrazovnoj inovaciji ima tendenciju usredotočiti se na različite aspekte: kurikulum, organizaciju škole, upravljanje sustavom (Kirkland i Sutch, 2009), ulogu nastavnika, metode (uglavnom vezane uz određeni predmet, npr. uvod u problemsko poučavanje u prirodoslovlju), materijale itd. Posljednjih desetljeća

termin „obrazovna inovacija“ postao je vrlo blisko povezan s uvođenjem IKT-a (vidi npr. Nachmias, Mioduser, Anat, Tubin, i Forkosh-Baruch, 2004).

Svaki od čimbenika obrazovne inovacije može potaknuti ili spriječiti proces njezine primjene. Činjenica je da su nastavnici posrednici planiranih inovacija u školama; njihova motivacija za primjenu inovacija od iznimne je važnosti (Benveniste i McEwan, 2000), a za nju je potrebno i dodatno osposobljavanje (Goodlad, 1991). Literatura ukazuje i na važnost podrške ravnatelja (Fullan, 2007). Neki istraživači tvrde da značajna poboljšanja nisu moguća bez promjena u organizaciji škole (struktura rasporeda, omjer nastavnik – učenik, metode vrednovanja) (Tyack i Cuban, 1995). Vanjski čimbenici škola (obrazovna i opća upravna tijela, roditelji i šira javnost) također se uzimaju u obzir; Hirsch (1998), primjerice, govori o ulozi »zajednice« u procesu obrazovne promjene. Vrijeme je ključni čimbenik u svakom procesu; opće je prihvaćeno da inovacija mora biti primijenjena u određenom razdoblju kako bi zaživjela u širem opsegu; prema Leithwoodu, Aitkenu, i Jantzi (2001) potrebno je više od pet godina kako bi se učinci razotkrili na razini razreda, a prema Fullanu (2001) između tri i osam godina. Jedan odlučujući čimbenik koji se često izostavlja, ili se uzima zdravo za gotovo, je priroda same inovacije. Orafi (2013) prikazuje neke učinke složenosti inovacije i odstupanja od postojeće prakse i paradigmi.

Zanimljivo je da većina literature o obrazovnim promjenama malo pažnje, barem direktne, posvećuje „korisniku“ – učeniku. Međutim, učenici nisu samo pasivni primatelji inovacije, a čak i da jesu, uspjeh obrazovne promjene svakako ovisi – među ostalim, neupitno važnim čimbenicima – o obilju učeničkih varijabli počevši s dobi, porijeklom, motivacijom do stavova, kognitivnih mogućnosti i stilova učenja. Vrlo je malo istraživanja do sada provedeno u vezi s tom dinamikom. Bates, Manuel, i Oppenheim (2007), primjerice, navode detaljan popis karakteristika koje određuju tko će na inovaciju odgovoriti pozitivno, ali kao i u većini literature o obrazovnoj promjeni u kojoj se koristi termin „rani usvojitelj“, on se odnosi na nastavnike, a ne na učenike. Fullan u svojem priručniku iz 2001. postavlja pitanje: “Što bi se dogodilo kada bi se prema učeniku odnosilo kao nekome čije je mišljenje bitno kod uvođenja i primjene reforme u škole?” (str. 151). U četvrtom izdanju 2007. otkriva da je to pitanje još uvijek aktualno i bitno. U ovome radu autori se žele osvrnuti na taj nedostatak, istražujući percepciju učenika – nakon jedne do tri godine izloženosti – široko koncipiranoj, složenoj i vrlo dobro poznatoj inovaciji u materijalima i pristupima učenja jezika, Europskom jezičnom portfolio.

Europski jezični portfolio je jedinstveni obrazovni materijal stvaran kao dio šireg pokreta na razini Europske unije ciljano za fleksibilno, višejezično i višekulturno društvo. Prema politici «M + 2» svaki pojedinac trebao bi razviti komunikacijsku sposobnost u najmanje dva strana jezika (European Commission, 1995). Europski jezični portfolio jedan je od dva obrazovna projekta Vijeća Europe u području jezika. Prvi je bio Zajednički europski referentni okvir za jezike (ZERO) (Council of Europe,

2001), sveobuhvatan dokument koji potpomaže razvoj novih jezičnih kurikula, materijala i testova. Usporedno i na osnovi deskriptora jezičnih kompetencija iz ZEROJ-a razvijen je i Europski jezični portfolio.

Europski jezični portfolio u osnovi je radna bilježnica u koju korisnik upisuje svoje formalno i neformalno učenje jezika te usmjerava svoj razvoj jezičnih i kulturnih vještina kroz neko razdoblje. Sastoji se od tri dijela: *Jezična putovnica*, *Jezična biografija* i *Dosje*. Prva dva dijela sadrže radne listove koji potiču učenika na to da bilježi i razmišlja o vlastitom procesu učenja jezika i o vlastitim postignućima, a *Dosje* je uistinu mapa u koju učenik ulaže dokaze o vlastitom znanju jezika. EJP se nije ograničio ni na jedan ciljni jezik, ali potiče učenje nekoliko jezika, kao i širenje interkulturalnog iskustva.

Kako ističu Ushioda i Ridley (2002), EJP ima dvostruku funkciju. Prva je dokumentiranje: može nadopuniti svjedodžbe jer omogućuje vlasniku dokumentiranje učenja jezika i postignuće na načine koji se zasnivaju na ZERO-u te su priznati diljem Europe. Njegova druga funkcija je obrazovna / pedagoška. EJP potiče korisnika da stalno procjenjuje svoje jezične vještine, postavlja vlastite ciljeve, razmišlja o vlastitom procesu učenja jezika, pronalazi materijale i aktivnosti koje će ga pogurati dalje i procijeniti vlastito napredovanje. Svi zadatci, tablice i provjere koji imaju tu vrhu prilagođeni su korisnikovu uzrastu i kontekstu. Autonomija učenika i promoviranje cjeloživotnog učenja stoga su ključne karakteristike EJP-a (Stoicheva, Hughes, i Speitz, 2009, str. 4; Little, Goullier, i Hughes, 2011).

Moguće je da u nekim kontekstima čak i temeljna perspektiva EJP-a o jeziku, ne kao o sustavu gramatičkih pravila već kao o skupini specifičnih kompetencija koje se razvijaju putem autentične vježbe, uzrok kognitivnog nesklada i za nastavnike i učenike, ali takvih je konteksta nadajmo se malo. Nedvojbeno, dvije od spomenutih karakteristika čine EJP važnom inovacijom u europskim školama. Prva je njegov poprečni kurikularni pristup: stvaran je da poveže iskustva učenika iz različitih predmeta, a poglavito stranih jezika i materinskog jezika. Trenutno, u glavnini školske prakse, unatoč povećanju poziva i pokušaja za većom integracijom (kao što je CLIL u području učenja jezika), to je još uvijek iznimka, a ne pravilo. Sljedeći (povezani) inovativni aspekt je čvrsto uporište EJP-a u principe autonomije učenika (Council of Europe, 2006). Autonomija učenika u osnovi znači sposobnost postavljanja vlastitih ciljeva, biranje i pronalaženje puteva za ostvarenje tih ciljeva, zatim evaluacija vlastitog napretka i postignuća. Upravo to poticano je različitim elementima EJP-a, primjerice, ostavljajući prostor za učenika za dokaze o vlastitom učenju jezika izvan škole, ali „Vjerojatno najveći izazov koji EJP predstavlja tradicionalnoj pedagogiji je centralna uloga koju pripisuje učenikovoј samo-procjeni...“ (Little, 2012, str. 9). Upravo vezano uz samoprocjenu i orijentaciju EJP-a na autonomiju učenika, Sisamakīs, u svojoj disertaciji zasnovanoj na longitudinalnoj studiji utjecaja EJP-a, opetovano navodi „subverzivan potencijal“ EJP-a (2006).

Od samog početka 1991. projekt EJP-a razvio se u nekoliko faza. Do 2000. nastale su i pilotirane različite verzije EJP-a u 15 zemalja članica EU za sve stupnjeve obrazovanja,

pokrivajući više od 30 000 učenika i 2 000 nastavnika. Sažetak rezultata (Schärer, 2000) pokazao je da je EJP dobro prihvaćeni alat koji se može uspješno iskoristiti za postavljene ciljeve. Nakon 2001. Vijeće Europe podržalo je obimnu implementaciju putem međunarodnih seminara, publikacija za tvorce EJP-a za korisnike (npr. Schneider i Lenz, 2001) i procesa formalne provjere valjanosti. Do 2011. 118 EJP-a iz 32 zemlje članice bilo je valorizirano, a u 2007. procijenjeno je da je distribuirano 2,5 milijuna primjeraka (Schärer, 2007).

EJP je imao važan utjecaj na različite aspekte učenja i poučavanja stranih jezika diljem Europe, što je potvrdilo nekoliko istraživanja, npr. Sisamakīs (2006), Stoicheva, Hughes, i Speitz, (2009), Esteve, Trenchs, Pujola Arumi, M. & Birello, M., 2012. Uvidom u svako od navedenih istraživanja, međutim, uočeno je da su djelomično ograničena kontekstom, a tek ih je nekolicina bila usredotočena na perspektivu učenika i ulogu čimbenika prihvaćanja i utjecaja EJP-a kod učenika.

Slovenija je jedna od prvih zemalja koja se priključila projektu EJP-a Vijeća Europe. Četiri modela verificirana su do danas za različite dobne skupine slovenskih korisnika:

- Niža osnovna razina (dob 6 – 10), verificirano 2011. (Čok, Šečerov, Skela, i Zorman, 2011);
- Viša osnovna razina (dob 11 – 15), verificirano 2004. (Skela i Holc, 2006);
- Srednjoškolska razina (dob 15 – 19), verificirano 2006. (Puklavec, Enčeva. i Mulej, 2006);
- Odrasli (16+), verificirano 2010. (Amič, Jelenc, Muster, Petek, Škorjanc Braico, i Žlindra, 2010);

Dvije ranije verzije EJP-a za osnovnoškolce u slovenskim školama (Čok, Šečerov Jelušič Godina, Kragelj, Mlakar, i ŠergonOmahen, 1999, i Skela, Šorli, i Holc, 2000) korištene su u prva dva pilot projekta u slovenskim školama. Jedan je proveden od 1998. do 2000. sa 634 učenika i 20 nastavnika (Schärer, 2000), a drugi u 2001. (Godunc, 2012). Rezultati oba projekta korišteni su u generaciji cjelokupnih europskih izvještaja i podržala su iste zaključke. Jednom riječju, i učenici i nastavnici doživjeli su EJP kao zanimljiv i koristan alat. Samoprocjena učenika smatra se važnom inovacijom, a pozitivni učinci uočeni su kod motivacije učenika. Glavni problem bio je način na koji EJP treba integrirati u kurikulum i u formalno vrednovanje, uzimajući u obzir postojeće opterećenje nastavnika. Nadalje, za potpuno učinkovito i uspješno korištenje EJP-a i učenici i nastavnici moraju biti odgovarajuće osposobljeni.

Ukupan broj korisnika EJP-a u Sloveniji nakon pilot projekta porastao je na 2150 u 2003./2004. školskoj godini (Schärer, 2004), a nastavnici koji su usvojili tu inovaciju imali su podršku putem mnogih seminara za osposobljavanje koje je organiziralo Ministarstvo obrazovanja. U 2006. pokrenut je veliki istraživački projekt kako bi se provela temeljita i objektivna empirijska evaluacija EJP-a u Sloveniji u razdoblju od tri godine (Holc, 2012). Projekt „Uvođenje i evaluacija EJP-a u osnovne i srednje škole“ pokrio je 72 osnovne škole od 2006. do 2009. godine i 42 srednje škole od 2007. do 2010. godine (Holc, 2012). Cilj istraživanja bio je saznati kako se EJP koristi, kako

ga prihvaćaju učenici i nastavnici, koje praktične poteškoće i problemi proizlaze iz implementacije, koji su učinci uočeni. Taj veliki projekt evaluacije bio je povod za istraživanje prikazano u ovome radu.

### **Cilj istraživanja**

Kao što je prikazano u uvodnome dijelu, istraživanja o obrazovnoj inovaciji često zanemaruju ulogu krajnjih korisnika, učenika. Upravo zbog tog razloga, dok je projekt evaluacije EJP-a u školama u Sloveniji istražio nekolicinu tema, naše se istraživanje usredotočilo isključivo na one dijelove koji pokazuju kako su se novi materijali koristili i kako su ih učenici percipirali. S obzirom na to da je dob jedna od ključnih varijabli učenika, a istraživanje je pokrilo učenike osnovnih i srednjih škola u dobi od 10 do 17 godina, tj. jedno od najosjetljivijih tranzicijskih azdoblja u obrazovanju pojedinca (vidi npr. Zeedyki sur., 2003, Mackenzie i sur., 2012), glavno pitanje u istraživanju bilo je: *Koja je uloga dobi učenika kada je riječ o prihvaćanju EJP-a u školama u Sloveniji?*

To pitanje realizirano je postavljanjem tri specifična pitanja:

- Postoje li značajne razlike među učenicima osnovne i srednje škole u obrascima korištenja EJP-a?
- Postoje li značajne razlike među učenicima osnovne i srednje škole s obzirom na afektivne reakcije na EJP?
- Postoje li značajne razlike među učenicima osnovne i srednje škole u percepciji učinka EJP-a?

### **Metodologija**

Podaci korišteni u istraživanju dobiveni su iz nekoliko velikih anketa koje su bile dio evaluacije same implementacije EJP-a u Sloveniji – uvelike smo zahvalni na radu Tomija Deutscha i Suzane Kašnik u Nacionalnom centru za obrazovanje Republike Slovenije. Sudjelovanje individualnih škola i nastavnika jezika u procesu evaluacije bilo je dobrovoljno. Škole su dobile besplatne kopije odgovarajuće razine EJP-a (Čok i sur., 1999, ili Skela i Holc, 2006, za osnovnu školu, i Puklavec i sur., 2006, za srednju školu). Kako bi se promatrali svi sudionici – korisnici (nastavnici i odabrani razredi za implementaciju EJP-a), Ministarstvo obrazovanja odabralo je indirektnu metodologiju: fokus grupe za nastavnike, ankete za nastavnike i učenike. To je učinjeno zbog složenosti inovacije koju predstavlja EJP, a čiji se utjecaj ne može uspješno mjeriti direktnim i kratkoročnim metodama poput eksperimenta, promatranja u razredu ili vanjskim vrednovanjem učenika.

U 114 škola sudionica provedeno je šest anketiranja. Četiri ankete odnosile su se na nastavnike na raznim stupnjevima, točnije na 73 sudionika iz osnovnih škola i 53 iz srednjih škola. Dvije učeničke ankete provedene su 2009. (osnovna škola) i 2010. (srednja škola), sa 659, odnosno 975 ispitanika. (Razredi u srednjim školama brojčano su veći od onih u osnovnim školama; zbog toga, premda je broj nastavnika volontera iz srednjih škola bio manji, broj učenika srednjih škola bio je veći od broja učenika



iz osnovnih škola.) Podaci iz istraživanja koji su prikazani za potrebe ovoga rada uvelike su dobiveni iz učeničkih anketa, a tek manjina podataka dolazi od anketa za nastavnike (Tablica 1).

Učeničke ankete bile su anonimne te su provedene u razredima na kraju školske godine. Kako bi se omogućile usporedbe, upitnici za učenike osnovnih i srednjih škola bili su gotovo identični (dvije dobno-specifične čestice koje se nalaze u upitniku za učenike srednje škole nisu bile uključene u upitnik za učenike osnovne škole i obrnuto). S obzirom na to da su upitnici bili na slovenskom jeziku, nisu uvršteni u dodatak ovoga rada; od autora se mogu dobiti na zahtjev. Obje skupine odgovorile su na 19 pitanja zatvorenoga tipa kojima je postignut raspon činjeničnih informacija i stavova.

S obzirom na opseg projekta, dobiven, velik, broj podataka predložen je Ministarstvu obrazovanja zajedno s preliminarnim statističkim analizama (Deutsch, 2009; Kašnik, 2010). Autori istraživanja napravili su daljnje analize za potrebe ovoga istraživanja, uglavnom sažimajući podatke, izabirući podskupine za usporedbu i uspostavljajući prisutnost i značajnost razlika.

### ***Uzorak ispitanika***

Od anketiranih 59 učenika osnovnih škola i 975 učenika srednjih škola učenici osnovnih škola bili su raznolikija skupina s obzirom na dob, a *učenici srednjih škola bili* su upisani u tri različita programa. 68,3 % bilo ih je u gimnazijama, koje, kao i u većini zemalja, uzimaju akademski jače učenike koje pripremaju za visoko, sveučilišno obrazovanje, 27,5 % pohađalo je četverogodišnje strukovne škole, a 4,2 % pohađalo je niže strukovne škole. (U daljnjim statističkim analizama potonje kategorije spojene su u jednu kategoriju). Kao što Tablica 1 prikazuje, tipičan ispitanik iz osnovne škole imao je 13 godina nakon dvije godine upotrebe EJP-a, a tipičan srednjoškolac iz uzorka imao je 17 godina nakon tri godine upotrebe EJP-a. Obje skupine uvelike su učile dva strana jezika, a prosječna ocjena za prvi strani jezik bila je viša u osnovnim školama, posebno u usporedbi sa srednjim strukovnim školama. S tim u vezi, unatoč nenasumičnom uzorkovanju, to su predstavnici veće populacije učenika slovenskih osnovnih i srednjih škola. Obje skupine uvelike su se koristile EJP-om samo na satima prvoga stranoga jezika, ali učestalost korištenja bila je veća u osnovnim školama.

Tablica 1

## **Rezultati**

Kako bismo odgovorili na pitanje *‘Postoje li značajne razlike između učenika osnovnih i srednjih škola u uzorcima korištenja EJP-om?’*, autori su proučili tri skupine podataka: učenička samoprocjena ispunjenja EJP-a u cjelini i posebno dijela *Dosje*, percepciju učenika o mogućnosti samostalnog rada na EJP-u.

S obzirom na to da je EJP materijal sličan vježbenici, postavlja se pitanje jesu li zadani zadaci mogli biti korišteni kao grubi, ali opipljivi mjeraci učeničkoga angažmana. S

obzirom na to da su u obje skupine uočene značajne razlike u duljini korištenja EJP-a, tablica 2 pokazuje omjer ispunjavanja EJP-a s obzirom na duljinu korištenja.

Tablica 2

U skladu s očekivanjima s vremenom je EJP učenika uglavnom imao veću ispunjenost. Međutim, usporedba ukupnih odgovora učenika osnovnih i srednjih škola vrlo je značajna s obzirom na to da je omjer ispunjavanja niži kod učenika srednjih škola. Točno je da se nastavnici u srednjim školama koriste EJP-om na svojoj nastavi manje od nastavnika u osnovnim školama (vidi Tablicu 1), ali ih istodobno koriste gotovo godinu dana dulje, što ukazuje na to da ta razlika nije vezana samo uz vrijeme korištenja nego je povezana s nekim drugim čimbenicima.

S obzirom na prirodu *Dosjea* EJP-a, koji sjedinjuje dugoročan zadatak otvorenoga tipa i od učenika zahtijeva najviši stupanj samousmjerenja, upitnik je posebno mjerio rade li učenici na tome dijelu EJP-a ili ne (*Jesi li u Dosje uvrstio/la neki od svojih uradaka ili drugih materijala?*). Istraživanje nije dalo podatke o vrsti ili stupnju važnosti dokumentiranog materijala, ali je stupanj ispunjenosti dao uvid u odgovore učenika vezane uz pedagošku inovaciju koju predstavlja EJP. Drugo, povezano, pitanje u istraživanju bilo je *Možeš li se koristiti EJP-om bez pomoći nastavnika?* S obzirom to da oba pitanja upućuju na jedan od ključnih ciljeva projekta EJP-a, odnosno na poticanje autonomije učenika, njihovi odgovori na oba pitanja prikazani su u tablici 3.

Tablica 3

Kao što je prikazano u tablici 3, stupanj ispunjenja *Dosjea* prilično je visok i značajno povezan s razredom/godinom u školi i duljinom korištenja. Omjer učenika koji su samostalno mogli koristiti EJP također je bio visok i kod učenika osnovne i kod učenika srednje škole, ali značajno je bio povezan ne samo s dobi nego i s duljinom korištenja EJP-a. U konačnici, prikazane usporedbe ukazuju na to da unatoč dobrom dizajnu EJP-a i tome što se njime, logično, učenici s vremenom sve više koriste, postoje i drugi, dobno vezani čimbenici.

Jedan takav čimbenik je vrlo vjerojatno i kognitivna zrelost. Niži stupnjevi slaganja *Dosjea* u usporedbi s rezultatima angažmana s EJP-om u cjelini (Tablica 2) ukazuju na to da je *Dosje* uistinu jedan od izazovnijih dijelova EJP-a; učenici ga spremnije dovršavaju kako sazrijevaju i spremnije prihvaćaju njegovu vrijednost i principe, čime i na taj način usmjeruju svoje aktivnosti.

Stupnjevi samostalnog korištenja pokazuju iznenađujuće rezultate koji su u prvi mah nelogično povezani s dobi učenika. Čini se da su stariji učenici manje sposobni samostalno raditi na EJP-u od mlađih učenika. Taj rezultat odraz je slabijeg postignuća učenika u strukovnim školama u navedenoj kategoriji, ne samo u usporedbi s vršnjacima nego i u odnosu na učenike osnovnih škola (potonje je potvrđeno zasebnom usporedbom;  $\chi^2=7,95, p=,005$ ). Rezultati bi trebali biti tumačeni u svjetlu činjenice da je EJP, unatoč tome što se češće koristi u strukovnim školama

(Tablica 1) nego u gimnazijama, zapravo koristi uz veći nadzor i vodstvo nastavnika. S obzirom na to da su učenici strukovnih škola stariji od učenika osnovnih škola i da su usporedne vrijednosti ispunjenja EJP-a veće od vršnjaka u gimnazijama, niži stupanj samostalnog korištenja EJP-a vjerojatno nije odraz kognitivne zrelosti ili motivacije, već jednostavno veće potrebe za podrškom od nastavnika, što je povezano s nekim drugim karakteristikama učenika kao što su slika o sebi i stil učenja.

Nekoliko čestica u našem istraživanju usmjereno je na istraživanje afektivnih aspekata recepcije i korištenja EJP-a od učenika, prije svega njihovo zadovoljstvo u radu na EJP-u, kao i želja za njegovim daljnjim angažmanom. Učenike u osnovnoj škole također smo pitali jesu li ponosni na EJP kao proizvod, što nismo pitali učenike srednjih škola. Zbog toga je ta čestica izostavljena iz analize. Tablica 4 prikazuje odgovore na pitanja 'Voliš li se koristiti EJP-om?' i 'Bi li se nastavio koristiti EJP-om u budućnosti'?

#### Tablica 4

Kao što je prikazano u tablici 4, između pola i dvije trećine učenika izjasnilo se da im se EJP sviđa, ali taj je omjer nešto manji kod starijih učenika – kako u osnovnoj školi tako i između osnovne i srednje škole, s time da je razlika kod potonjeg vrlo značajna. Vrijeme korištenja, čini se, nije značajan faktor. Može se zaključiti, direktno ili indirektno, da dob ima ulogu u zadovoljstvu učenika pri korištenju materijala i da učenici dosegnu vrhunac, u tom vidu, u dobi kada napuštaju osnovnu školu. Izjave učenika vezane uz daljnje korištenje EJP-om malo su naglašenije od prethodnih: otprilike polovina ispitanika željela bi se i dalje koristiti EJP-om, a jedini čimbenik koji značajno utječe na to je dob – do određene točke. Razlika između broja učenika koji se dali pozitivne izjave / negativne izjave unutar dviju glavnih skupina vrlo je značajna, što potvrđuje negativan trend, direktno ili indirektno, povezan s dobi učenika.

Tri čestice u upitniku pokazale su percepciju korisnika o učincima EJP-a na učenje jezika: prvo općenito, a onda jedno specifično pitanje o dvjema glavnim funkcijama EJP-a dokumentiranje učenja jezika i poticanje veće autonomije učenika. Odgovori učenika na pitanje 'Pomaže li ti EJP u učenju stranog (stranih) jezika?' prikazani su u tablici 5.

#### Tablica 5

Kao što je i prikazano, manje od polovine učenika iz osnovne i srednje škole vjeruje da im EJP pomaže u učenju stranih jezika. U osnovnoj školi dugotrajnije korištenje taj omjer malo poboljšava, ali razlika nije značajna, dok u srednjim školama omjer značajno opada s vremenom. Također, postoji značajna razlika među učenicima gimnazija i strukovnih škola; ona između šestog i devetog razreda nije značajna, ali razlika između učenika osnovnih i srednjih škola u cjelini jest. Ukratko, učenici srednjih škola EJP vide kao manje koristan u učenju jezika od učenika osnovnih škola, čak izraženije što se njime duže koriste i što su u akademski izazovnijem programu.

Sljedeće pitanje u upitniku povezano je s percepcijom učenika o učincima EJP-a 'Omogućuje li ti EJP dokumentiranje onoga što si naučio u nastavi stranog / stranih

jezika?' Odgovori su prikazani u tablici 6. Dodatna čestica u svakom od upitnika (za učenike osnovne i srednje škole) bila je: 'Jesu li tvoji roditelji pogledali tvoj EJP?' i 'Što misliš koliko je EJP primjeren kao dokumentacija tvog poznavanja stranoga jezika za moguće poslodavce (u usporedbi s Europassom)?' Međutim, s obzirom na to da ta dva pitanja nisu dopuštala usporedbu između dvaju skupina, isključeni su i iz naše analize.

#### Tablica 6

U osnovnim školama većina učenika, neovisno o razredu koji pohađa, EJP smatra korisnom evidencijom učenja jezika, a duže korištenje doprinosi većem uvažavanju tog aspekta materijala. U srednjim školama, posebno u gimnazijama, broj učenika koji je odgovorio u pozitivnom tonu bio je nešto manji, ali, zanimljivo, vrijeme korištenja nije imalo značajnu ulogu. Uspoređujući obje skupine u cjelini, razlika je vrlo značajna – učenici srednjih škola manje uvažavaju funkciju evidentiranja, odnosno dokumentiranja u EJP-u.

Treće pitanje (Tablica 7) ciljalo je na učeničku percepciju vrijednosti i učinkovitosti EJP-a: 'Pomaže li ti EJP u vrednovanju vlastitog znanja stranog/stranih jezika?'

#### Tablica 7

Kao što je prikazano u tablici 7, gotovo dvije trećine učenika osnovnih škola vide EJP kao pozitivno poboljšanje u samoevaluaciji jezičnih vještina, neovisno o razredu koji pohađaju, ali da bi se taj učinak iskristalizirao, često je potrebno gotovo više od godinu dana. U srednjim školama vrijeme upotrebe nije bilo značajno. Uspoređujući obje skupine u cjelini, razlika nije bila značajna. Čini se da stariji učenici ne napreduju u samoevaluaciji jezičnih vještina zbog korištenja EJP-a – što bi moglo biti očekivano s obzirom na njihovu kognitivnu zrelost.

## Rasprava i zaključci

Analiza rezultata istraživanja sugerira nekoliko zaključaka koji će se prikazati sažimanjem rezultata za svaku od tri skupine povezanih anketnih pitanja. Kod promatranja uzoraka korištenja EJP-om kao novim materijalom, logičan odnos između razdoblja korištenja i stupnja ispunjenosti je potvrđen. Međutim, stupanj ispunjenja EJP-a kod mlađih učenika bio je veći, i to EJP-a u cjelini i *Dosjea* kao jedne od ključnih komponenti. S obzirom na to da su se učenici srednjih škola koristili EJP-om godinu dana duže (iako ne tako učestalo), te su uglavnom kognitivno zreliji, to je vrlo zanimljivo otkriće. Također, općenito, akademski slabiji učenici strukovnih škola bili su više uključeni u rad na *Dosjeu* od učenika iz gimnazija, iako je *Dosje* vidno izazovniji dio (općenito je bilo manje uključivanja u rad na *Dosjeu* nego s EJP-om u cjelini). Čini se da izazov nije toliko zahtjev EJP-a za autonomijom učenika, što lakše mogu savladati učenici akademski jače skupine. Zapravo, podaci o samostalnom korištenju EJP-om i percepciji složenosti ukazuju na to da su pilotirani EJP-ovi vrlo visoko kvalitetni materijali koji omogućuju većini učenika, na svim razinama,

samostalan rad već od prve godine korištenja pa dalje, s iznimkom učenika strukovnih škola, kojima je trebalo više podrške od nastavnika nego ostalim skupinama. Može se zaključiti da su razlike u uzorcima korištenja EJP-om unutar ispitanika u uzorku povezane s dobi učenika, ali ne na izravan način; vjerojatno postoje dva čimbenika povezana s dobi: kognitivna zrelost i motivacija.

Odgovori učenika vezani uz afektivne faktore korištenja EJP-a potvrđuju nalaz da je dob određujući faktor, čak i kada nije posve jasno na koji način. Većina učenika, ispitanika, rado je radila na EJP-u neovisno o vremenu u kojemu su se njime koristili i većina je rekla da želi nastaviti s radom na EJP-u i u budućnosti. No, u oba slučaja ta je većina bila značajno manja u srednjim školama u odnosu na osnovne škole.

Treća skupina pitanja iz upitnika odnosila se na percepciju učinaka kod korištenja EJP-om. I ovdje možemo uočiti isti uzorak: odgovori učenika osnovnih škola bili su povoljniji od odgovora učenika srednjih škola. Uloga dokumentiranja EJP-a bila je uvažena od većine učenika na svim razinama, ali ponovno manje kod učenika srednjih škola kod kojih se javlja tendencija neuvažavanja EJP-a kroz dulje razdoblje. Treće, većina ispitanih učenika prihvatila je činjenicu da je EJP pridonio razvoju vještine samoprocjene. S tim u vezi nije uočena razlika između učenika osnovnih i srednjih škola, ali ipak vrijeme korištenja u srednjim školama nije povećalo učinkovitost. Moglo bi se očekivati da s većim uzrastom i kognitivnom zrelošću korisnici crpe više koristi od EJP-a, ali rezultati to ne potvrđuju.

Točno je da su na percepciju učenika o EJP-u i na način na koji su se njime koristili utjecali čimbenici koji nisu u središtu našega istraživanja, na primjer postupak nastavnika. To, međutim, ne može objasniti razlike između dviju dobnih skupina; iako je anketa za nastavnike ukazala na različite pristupe, ona također potvrđuje da su, s obzirom na to da su svi nastavnici u uzorku bili osposobljeni volonteri, oni prezentirali EJP svojim učenicima u pozitivnom svjetlu i s jasnim razumijevanjem njegovih ciljeva neovisno o dobnj skupini. Akademske sposobnosti učenika također su važan čimbenik. Od jačih se učenika može očekivati prosječno bolji odaziv na inovacije u obrazovanju, ali to nije povezano s uzrastom, a naš uzorak ispitanika bio je reprezentativna mješavina jačih i slabijih učenika na svim razinama. Međutim, autori su uzeli u obzir podjelu na jače i slabije učenika promatrajući odvojeno učenike gimnazija i učenike strukovnih škola iste dobi, što je pomoglo stvaranju općih zaključaka.

Primjer postupne implementacije Europskog jezičnog portfolia u slovenskim osnovnim i srednjim školama ukazao je na sljedeće:

- Prihvatanje EJP-a bilo je slabije kod starijih učenika, unatoč njihovoj većoj kognitivnoj zrelosti; razlog je vjerojatno u naširoko uočenom problemu učeničkog neuključivanja koje ima tendenciju rasta tijekom tinejdžerskih godina (raspravljeno, npr. u Hung, 2014),
- Dob ima vidljivu ulogu u načinu na koji učenici percipiraju i prihvaćaju obrazovnu inovaciju,

- Dob utječe na recepciju obrazovne inovacije putem različitih dobno povezanih čimbenika poput kognitivne zrelosti, slike o sebi i motivacije,
- Obrazovna inovacija ne treba manju podršku, poticaj, izlaganje ni osposobljavanje učenika kod starijih nego kod mlađih učenika

Autori smatraju da navedeni rezultati daju uvid u često zanemareni aspekt obrazovne inovacije – prihvaćanje od učenika – te nude polazne točke za daljnja istraživanja u nekoliko područja; EJP s usmjerenjem na autonomiju učenika postao je nositelj paradigme promjene ne samo u poučavanju jezika nego i u europskom obrazovanju općenito. Bolje razumijevanje načina na koje karakteristike učenika određuju uspjeh obrazovne inovacije jednako je priželjkivano kao promjena, neovisno o tome radi li se o promjeni manjeg ili većeg omjera, što postaje jedina postojanost u životima nastavnika i učenika u svim dijelovima svijeta.