I CAN...:
EMPOWERING LANGUAGE LEARNERS
A teacher’s guide to using the Language Portfolio
Prepared for the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT) by the Second Language Research Institute of Canada (L2RIC)

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CASLT recognizes and appreciates the work accomplished by teachers of the Council of Europe to establish and improve the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR). This document draws from the body of work related to the CEFR and the Language Portfolio. CASLT aims to support the teaching of languages across Canada. Benefits from the sale of the document by CASLT will be used to further advance this important work.

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CASLT encourages excellence in second and additional language teaching and learning throughout Canada by creating opportunities for professional development, by encouraging research, and by facilitating the sharing of information and the exchange of ideas among second language educators.

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Table of Contents

Terms, Abbreviations, and Icons .............................................................. 2
Introduction ........................................................................................... 3

Section 1: About the Language Portfolio ............................................... 4
  1. Passport ........................................................................................... 5
    1.1. The General Global Scale ......................................................... 5
    1.2. The Linguistic Profile ............................................................... 5
  2. Autobiography ................................................................................ 6
    2.1. Language Contact Scale .......................................................... 6
    2.2. Linguistic and Cultural Experiences, Certificates and Diplomas ....... 6
  3. Self-Assessment .............................................................................. 7
    3.1. The Reflection Scale ............................................................... 7
    3.2. The Self-Assessment Checklist ................................................. 7
    3.3. Logs for Language Learning Goals and Cultural Goals .............. 8
  4. Dossier ............................................................................................ 8

Section 2: Sample Teaching Modules ...................................................... 9
  Sample 1: Module on Goal-Setting (cultural focus) .............................. 10
  Sample 2: Module on Self-Assessment and Goal-Setting .................... 13
  Backward Design of Teaching Modules .............................................. 15
  Orientation to the Teaching Module Template ................................... 16
  Sample 3: Teaching Module (A1, Listening Focus) ............................ 19
  Sample 4: Teaching Module (A2, Spoken Production Focus) .............. 26
  Sample 5: Teaching Module (B1, Writing Focus) .............................. 32
  Sample 6: Teaching Module (B2, Reading Focus) .............................. 39

Section 3: Conceptual Background ......................................................... 45
  Autonomy: Roles of Learners and Teachers ........................................ 45
  Tasks .................................................................................................. 46
  Backward Design .............................................................................. 47
  Assessment (for, as, of) Learning ...................................................... 47
  Gradual Release of Responsibility ...................................................... 48
  Balanced Literacy ............................................................................ 49
  Authenticity ...................................................................................... 49
  Intercultural Awareness and Plurilingualism ...................................... 50
  Diversity .......................................................................................... 51
  Differentiation .................................................................................. 51
  Personalization ................................................................................ 52
  Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) .... 52
  Global Scale ..................................................................................... 53
  Self-Assessment Grid ....................................................................... 54
  The CEFR in Canada ........................................................................ 55
  References ........................................................................................ 56

Appendix A .......................................................................................... 59
  Template for a Teaching Module ...................................................... 59

Appendix B .......................................................................................... 63
  “WS” Graphic Organizer .................................................................. 63
Introduction

This resource is designed to help teachers understand the concept of learner autonomy as it relates to classroom practice that supports the principles and guidelines of the Language Portfolio.

- As the European Language Portfolio (ELP) is designed to “promote learner autonomy” (Council of Europe, 2004, p. 3), the purpose of this guide is to demonstrate how the Language Portfolio and its corresponding guiding principles relate to general classroom practice.

- This guide is targeted toward secondary school second-language teachers working in a variety of language learning contexts with diverse learner needs (e.g., French immersion, core French, intensive French programs, heritage language, English as an additional language, etc.).

- Teachers can use these materials and ideas as a starting point for lessons incorporating the Language Portfolio and/or its related principles. Sample lessons are included; these are intended to be adapted to the teaching context (e.g., language program and target culture) and to diverse learner needs and interests.

This guide is divided into three sections:

- **Section 1: About the Language Portfolio**
  Discussion of the Language Portfolio and its components.

- **Section 2: Teaching Modules**
  Sample teaching modules that promote learner autonomy and demonstrate application of the concepts in a classroom setting.

- **Section 3: Conceptual Background**
  Background information to introduce or refresh the concepts underlying this resource and discuss how the Language Portfolio and autonomy are related to the roles of the teacher and language learner.
Section 1: About the Language Portfolio

The purpose of the Language Portfolio is to promote:

- Learner autonomy
- Intercultural awareness and plurilingualism
- Life-long learning (formal and informal)

The Language Portfolio serves two functions:

- A pedagogical function: to “guide and support the learner in the process of language learning.”
- A reporting function: to allow the learner to “record proficiency” (Council of Europe, 2004, p. 4) and cultural experiences.

Both of these functions are anchored by the CEFR.

For your reference:
The images in this section are taken from the School-Based Language Portfolio (hereafter referred to as the Language Portfolio). The Language Portfolio developed by L2RIC is available at http://www.unb.ca/fredericton/second-language/research-publications/current-projects/schoolbasedlanguageportfolio.html.

For more on Intercultural awareness and plurilingualism, see p. 50

For more on the CEFR, see p. 52
Section 2: Sample Teaching Modules

Each section of the Language Portfolio has a specific purpose to assist the language learner to develop autonomy. No details are provided, however, about how a teacher might integrate the Language Portfolio into classroom practice.

This section contains six teaching modules aimed at demonstrating how teachers can enact the principles and guidelines of the Language Portfolio.

- **Sample 1: Module on Goal-Setting (cultural focus)**

  Because the portfolio approach sometimes requires a shift in the roles of teacher and learner, the first two modules are specifically aimed at addressing goal-setting and self-assessment, two important purposes of the Language Portfolio. These two modules are designed to help learners understand the broader notions of assessment and to situate themselves in this process.

- **Sample 2: Module on Self-Assessment and Goal-Setting**

  This section includes a walk-through designing modules and the module template followed by four samples of the template in use.

- **Backward Design of Teaching Modules**

- **Orientation to the Teaching Module Template**

- **Sample 3: Teaching Module (A1)**

  These four modules articulate how teachers can target various levels (A1 to B2), link the 5 skills in an integrated fashion, and use “can-do” statements to guide and support students in their language learning process.

- **Sample 4: Teaching Module (A2)**

  One of the goals of the sample modules was to demonstrate how to create authentic and relevant learning experiences that connect to real-world language tasks.

- **Sample 5: Teaching Module (B1)**

- **Sample 6: Teaching Module (B2)**

  For more on authenticity, see p. 49

A **blank template** is provided in Appendix A to allow for creating similar modules based on different “can-do” statements.
This resource is designed to help teachers understand the concept of learner autonomy as it relates to classroom practice that supports the principles and guidelines of the Language Portfolio. Its purpose is to demonstrate how the Language Portfolio and its corresponding guiding principles relate to general classroom practice. It targets secondary school L2 teachers working in a variety of language learning contexts with diverse learner needs. Teachers can use it as a starting point to develop lessons incorporating the Language Portfolio and/or its related principles. Sample lessons are included.