I CAN...:
EMPOWERING LANGUAGE LEARNERS

A teacher's guide to using the Language Portfolio

Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers
Association canadienne des professeurs de langues secondes

Prepared for the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT) by the Second Language Research Institute of Canada (L_2RIC)

UNB
EST. 1785
UNIVERSITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK

Second Language Research Institute of Canada
Institut de recherche en langues secondes du Canada

IRLC
L2RIC

Principal Authors:

Paula Kristmanson

Chantal Lafargue

Layout and Production:

CASLT

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Canada

Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT)
1 877-727-0994
admin@caslt.org
www.caslt.org

caslt
acpls

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I Can…: Empowering Language Learners (A teacher's guide to using the Language Portfolio)

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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.

For more on **autonomy**, see p. 45

- 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.

For more on **diversity**, see p. 51

- 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**.

For more on **differentiation, diversity**, and **personalization**, see pp. 51–52

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

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 L_2RIC is available at **http://www.unb.ca/fredericton/second-language/research-publications/current-projects/schoolbasedlanguageportfolio.html**.

The **purpose** of the Language Portfolio is to promote:

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

For more on **Intercultural awarenes and plurilingualism**, see p. 50

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 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.

p. 10 **Sample 1: Module on Goal-Setting (cultural focus)**

p. 13 **Sample 2: Module on Self-Assessment and Goal-Setting**

p. 15 **Backward Design of Teaching Modules**

p. 16 **Orientation to the Teaching Module Template**

p. 19 **Sample 3: Teaching Module (A1)**

p. 26 **Sample 4: Teaching Module (A2)**

p. 32 **Sample 5: Teaching Module (B1)**

p. 39 **Sample 6: Teaching Module (B2)**

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.

For more on **assessment**, see p. 47

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

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.

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**.

For more on **authenticity**, see p. 49

For more on **tasks**, see p. 46

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.

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613 727-0994 • 1 877-727-0994 • admin@caslt.org • www.caslt.org