



## Extending the Portfolio Concept to Teacher Education: a 2009 project

By Miles Turnbull

The language portfolio – based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the European Language Portfolio (ELP) – has hit Canada! Much work has been done to raise awareness and begin implementation in the K-12 context. However, less work has been done at the post-secondary and teacher education levels. As a result, CASLT established an Advisory Committee chaired by past-President, Miles Turnbull to accomplish the following overall goal:

### Overall goal

To increase the awareness of the CEFR and ELP amongst Canadian teacher SL educators and to develop a Canadian document or tool to be used by pre-service teacher educators and their students. Ultimately, future teachers would continue to use this tool to maintain and develop their language proficiency throughout their professional career.

CASLT is grateful to members of the Advisory Committee: Krystyna Baranowski (MB), Gail Phillips (ON), Joe Dicks (NB), Bill Dunn (AB).

### Features of the ELP for teacher education

The Advisory Committee seeks to create a user friendly document that will help student and practising teachers develop

their linguistic and intercultural competencies in a non-threatening way. We also aim to create a tool that will be program and context neutral. We therefore anticipate that the resource will be useful and usable for student teachers with varied skills in the target language.

In year one, the Advisory Committee has worked to create a draft resource in French. We believe that this document will be useful for pre-service teachers who aim to work in Core, immersion and intensive French programs.

Future plans include the creation of a resource for English, Spanish, and other languages based on available funding and member needs.

### The components of the resource

Modeled after many versions of the ELP created in Europe and the Linguafolio in the United States, the Canadian resource for teacher education will include the following four components:

1. **The passport** – Users reflect on their overall proficiency in French. The resource asks users to reflect not only on everyday life situations, but also on professional contexts such as university classes, practice teaching, in the classroom with real, live students, and in professional development sessions for French teachers. Users document special certification or exams

completed in French as well as exchanges or intensive periods spent in a French speaking area.

2. **The auto-biography** – Users document the role that the French language and culture play in their lives.
3. **“Mes compétences en français”**. This includes detailed self-assessment grids that allow users to do regular self-assessment of their skills in French. These grids have been modified from a variety of existing versions of the ELP. They have a particular focus on the French classroom and on professional contexts for pre-service and in-service French teachers. Users are also encouraged to identify priorities for their language work.
4. **“Mon dossier”** – Users choose artifacts that confirm language practice and illustrate how and why they have achieved specific levels on the assessment grids. It also includes reflections on language learning strategies and goal setting.

### Timelines and next steps for the project

A draft resource now exists and feedback will be collected in a variety of contexts from May to August, 2009. In the fall of 2009, a fieldtesting project, coordinated by Joe Dicks at UNB will begin. Revisions based on feedback obtained from participants will lead to further refinement of the resource, with a final product to be distributed in the fall 2010. Stay tuned! \*\*\*\*\*

## LACS Project: Language Associations Collaborative Support

By Nicole Thibault

CASLT is participating in a multinational project of the European Centre of Modern Languages (ECML) to increase collaborative support among international language teacher associations and to increase awareness and the dissemination of ECML publications through their networks.

This greater collaboration will better support language professionals across Europe through more effective dissemination of new

language pedagogies, including teaching and learning methodologies, as well as language policies and curricular models appropriate to the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

For 2008-2011, the ECML (Web site: [www.ecml.at](http://www.ecml.at)) is coordinating over 20 projects of interest to second language educators, divided into four thematic areas: Evaluation, Continuity in Language learning, Content and Language Education, and Plurilingual Education.

### Canada and the ECML

Canada has permanent observer status at the Council of Europe since 1996.

Researchers, educators and Canadian experts have participated on a regular basis in various projects and activities of the Council of Europe in the area of language teaching and learning. Conversely, European researchers have been invited on many occasions to participate in conferences, symposiums and workshops organised in Canada.

With the creation of the European Centre for Modern Languages in 1995, cooperation initiatives between Canada and Europe in the area of languages have increased considerably.

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- Agree on dates for meetings for the year (usually 3 to 5). Agree to try new practices between meetings and come back to the group for the report. Document the effects on student learning qualitatively and/or quantitatively.
- If possible, invite another group member to your classroom as you put your research into practice. Peer coaching and side by side teaching go hand in hand with collaborative inquiry and are extremely powerful strategies for professional learning. Share your findings as a group! Celebrate and start again! .....

### For Further Reading on Collaborative Inquiry

Atwell, N., 1991. *Side by Side: Essays on Teaching to Learn*. Heinemann.

Anderson, B., Carr, W., Lewis, C., Salvatori, M., Turnbull, M., 2008. *Effective Literacy Practices in FSL: Making Connections*. Pearson Education Canada.

Black, P., Harrison, C., Lee, C., Marshall, B. & William, D. 2004. "Working Inside the Black Box: Assessment for Learning in the Classroom" Phi Delta Kappan. Vol 86 (1)

Carr, W. 2007. *Canada's Bilingualism Ideal: A Case Study of Intensive French in British Columbia. Doctoral Dissertation*. Simon Fraser University.

CASLT, 2009. *A Common Framework of Reference and a Portfolio for Languages in Canada: Information Kit*. www.caslt.org

### ASK OUR EXPERTS!

Do you have a topic of interest you would like discussed in this column? Send your questions to [communications@caslt.org](mailto:communications@caslt.org).

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In fact, in 2008, the ECML and the University of Ottawa, represented by the Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute (OLBI), signed a Memorandum on Cooperation and Liaison, with the objectives of increasing contacts between the ECML and Canadian language experts, disseminating the ECML's work in Canada, and proposing Canadian experts to take part in the ECML projects and activities.

In its role as the national contact for the ECML in Canada, the OLBI identified the following six projects within the medium-term program (2008-2011) of the ECML entitled « Empowering Language Professionals » that were closely related to priority areas of research in Canada, and proposed the candidacy of Canadian experts as team members or as resource persons:

*Encourage the culture of evaluation among professionals (ECEP):* **Alister Cumming**, Modern Language Centre, University of Toronto, resource person.

*The European Language portfolio in whole-school use (ELP-WSU):* **Marnie Beaudoin**, Edmonton Public School Board, resource person.

*Developing online teaching skills (DOTS):* **Aline Germain-Rutherford**, Official

Languages and Bilingualism Institute, University of Ottawa, team member.

*Content-based teaching + plurilingual/cultural awareness (ConBaT+):* **Peter MacIntyre**, Department of Psychology, Cape Breton University, resource person.

*Minority languages, collateral languages and bi-/plurilingual education (EBP-ICI):* **Diane Dagenais**, Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University, resource person.

*Language associations and collaborative support (LACS):* **Nicole Thibault**, Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT), resource person.

#### The LACS Project

In April 2009, Nicole Thibault participated in a planning meeting in preparation for a two-day workshop in December 2009. To bring together representatives of up to 33 European countries to discuss how language associations support their own networks of members through practical interventions (workshops, publications, newsletters, websites, etc.) as well as through opportunities to have an impact on policy reform (both within their own institutions, locally and nationally). The primary focus is on bringing together national multilingual and international monolingual teacher associations who

are members of the World Federation of Modern Language Associations (FIPLV).

The workshop will encourage reflection on language associations and their methods of planning and prioritizing activities and events, how they disseminate information and communicate within their teacher networks, and encourage closer ties between their activities and the support and publications offered by the ECML, enabling larger numbers of teachers in all sectors to benefit from them.

Through such collaboration, it is intended that the language associations will be empowered to support teachers more effectively, who in turn will be empowered by the increased opportunities to develop their competence and confidence.

#### The CASLT Role

CASLT will liaise with the Canadian experts involved and will communicate the results of the workshops and publications from each of the six identified projects through our online newsletter updates and in featured articles within *Réflexions* magazine. CASLT will also identify pertinent topics and web links to share with our members on projects of significance for a Canadian context such as the common framework and portfolio for languages, intercultural awareness and plurilingual education initiatives. ....

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

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