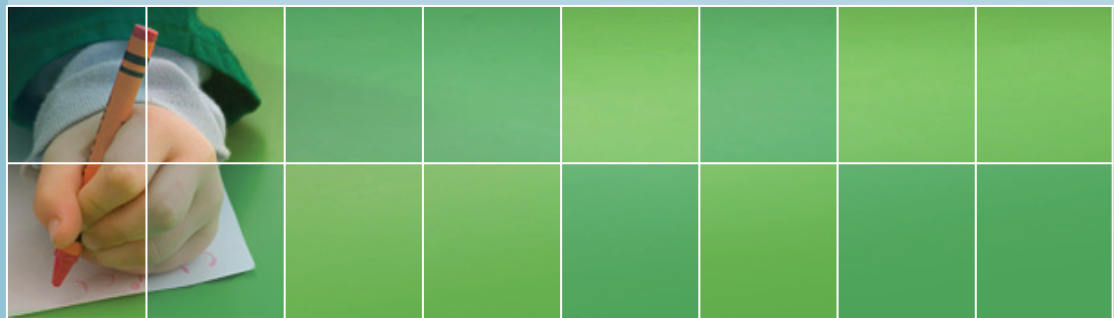**January 2010**

Working with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in the Canadian Context

Guide for policy-makers and curriculum designers

Foreword

In September 2006, at its 87th meeting, the Advisory Committee of Deputy Ministers of Education (ACDME) agreed to strike a working group to define the steps in developing a common framework of reference for language learning and to develop a reference framework for this project. In follow-up to the recommendations of the working group in October 2008, the steering committee recommended "the use of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) in the Canadian context as the framework of reference for the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), and jurisdictional projects, programs, and initiatives related to second and additional languages, as appropriate."

CMEC's decision to propose working with the CEFR in the Canadian context is well-founded. One of the merits of the CEFR, in addition to promoting a common understanding of the terminology associated with language teaching/learning and assessment for practitioners, is that it provides viable reference tools, intervention methodologies, assessment procedures, and reference levels. Referencing the CEFR must be done from a Canadian perspective.

This document is intended to generate reflection among ministries of education and local jurisdictions, such as school boards, universities, and research centres, with respect to the potential use of the CEFR in the Canadian context. It provides possible avenues of direction to policy-makers and curriculum designers with regard to the use of the CEFR in the Canadian context, taking into account Canadian concepts of language teaching, learning, and assessment, recent research developments, and innovative programs that have been implemented in Canadian provinces and territories for over 30 years. This initiative is part of an ongoing societal response shaped by citizen mobility and by increasing numbers of multicultural and multilingual newcomers to Canada.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

Currently, a number of reference frameworks are available in several countries, including Canada, relating to the development of language proficiency and the definition of competence levels to support the teaching, learning, and assessment of young and adult learners. In Canada, education partners, as well as a number of jurisdictions, are currently exploring the educational potential of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) as a reference tool.

A conceptual framework is desirable when one or several institutions want to have an unambiguous understanding of target objectives and the effective means of achieving them.

In his study, Vandergrift stated that:

A common framework of reference for languages could provide the provinces and territories with a transparent and coherent system for describing language proficiency. In addition to providing a measure for calibrating language proficiency for educational systems across Canada, a common language framework could foster a common understanding of what functional proficiency means.
(Vandergrift, 2006, p. 7)

In the case of language teaching in the Canadian context, the purpose of a framework of reference would be to define and specify the terms used in the development of language proficiency and of intercultural competencies in the school setting and, in so doing, establish a reference for describing proficiency levels.

The CEFR could serve as a reference tool for various stakeholders in order to facilitate their understanding of language competencies, even if they work in different settings. A framework would also be helpful to policy-makers, who would be able to draw comparisons among different areas, and to researchers, because it ensures the transferability of data collected in related initiatives or similar contexts. Such a framework would, therefore, limit the subjective interpretation of learning outcomes.

This document is targeted to policy-makers and curriculum designers who want to refer to the CEFR without losing sight of current language policies and innovative programs for language teaching in Canada. It comprises three main sections:

- an assessment of the CEFR as a framework of reference in the Canadian context;
- suggestions for working with the CEFR in the Canadian context; and
- aspects to consider for using the common reference levels and the language portfolio in the Canadian context.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and the Canadian Context

1.1 The Council of Europe and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)

The Council of Europe (COE) is the oldest political organization in Europe, founded in 1949 and headquartered in Strasbourg, France. It is active in its 47 member states and has five observer countries, including Canada. It was created to defend human rights and parliamentary democracy, develop continent-wide agreements to standardize the legal and social practices of member countries, and promote awareness of a European identity based on shared values and the respect for linguistic and cultural diversity. The programs under the umbrella of the Steering Committee for Education and the Modern Languages Section are coordinated by the Department of Language Education and Policy, comprising two complementary bodies, the Language Policy Division in Strasbourg and the European Centre for Modern Languages in Graz, Austria (Council of Europe, 2004).

The CEFR was developed in the early 1990s under the direction of the Council of Europe, the Council for Cultural Co-operation (Steering Committee for Education), and the Modern Languages Section. In 1994, the framework was released to member countries for wide-scale consultation, and was subsequently distributed across Europe beginning in 1996, to be officially published in 2001.

It is important not to lose sight of the mammoth task undertaken by framework developers in the early 1990s, given the diverse views on language teaching, learning, and assessment that existed in European countries. To its credit, the document presented a European vision that caused quite a stir, but which also stimulated further reflection, leading to the achievement of a consensus on the fundamentals and practices of language teaching, learning, and assessment.

The CEFR is the cornerstone of a series of documents developed since its release, aimed at clarifying the position of the CEFR and at tailoring it to reflect users' changing needs and new developments. The Council of Europe and the European Centre for Modern Languages regularly publish documentation that can be consulted in relation to the CEFR. Information can be found at the following Web sites: http://www.coe.int ; http://book.coe.int ; http://www.ecml.at ; and http://www.ecml.at/news/default.asp?&l=E .

1.2   The aims and objectives of the CEFR

"The Common European Framework provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. [Moreover, it] also defines levels of proficiency which allow learners' progress to be measured at each stage of learning and on a lifelong basis" (CEFR, p. 1). It "is intended to overcome the barriers to communication among professionals working in the field of modern languages arising from the different educational systems... It provides the means for [educators and] educational administrators… to reflect on their current practice…" (CEFR, p. 1). [It also] "enhance[s] the transparency of courses, syllabuses, and qualifications, thus promoting international co-operation in the field of modern languages" (CEFR, p. 1).

The goals of the CEFR

"CEFR serves the overall aim of the Council of Europe as defined in Recommendations R (82) 18 and R (98) 6 of the Committee of Ministers: 'to achieve greater unity among its members' and to pursue this aim 'by the adoption of common action in the cultural field'" (CEFR, p. 2).

The principles of the CEFR

- Represent the diverse languages and cultures in Europe (CEFR, p. 2).
- Facilitate communication and interaction among Europeans of different mother tongues through a better knowledge of European modern languages (CEFR, p. 2).
- Achieve greater convergence at the European level when developing national policies in the field of modern language learning and teaching (CEFR, p. 2).

Political objectives of the CEFR

The CEFR aims to:

- "…equip all Europeans for the challenges of… international mobility" (CEFR, p. 3)
- "…promote mutual understanding and tolerance…" (CEFR, p. 3)
- "…maintain and further develop the richness and diversity of European cultural life through greater mutual knowledge of national and regional languages…" (CEFR, p. 3)
- "…meet the needs of a multilingual and multicultural Europe… which requires a sustained, lifelong effort…" (CEFR, p. 3)
- "…avert the dangers [related to] the marginalization of those lacking the skills necessary to communicate in an interactive Europe" (CEFR, p. 4).

1.3 Comparative chart of the CEFR in the European and Canadian contexts

The chart below compares specific aspects of language teaching, learning, and assessment in Canadian and European contexts by addressing language status, language policies, mobility, curriculum, learning design, learning content, and assessment.

Figure 1: Comparative chart of the CEFR in the European and Canadian contexts

Fundamentals	CEFR — European context	CEFR — Canadian context
Language status	– More than 47 countries with 20+ foreign languages – Each country has one or two official languages	– One country – Two official languages – Recognition of Aboriginal languages – Consideration of diversity in international languages
Language policies: vision	– Recognition of "plurilingualism" and "pluriculturalism" as a competence that differs from multilingualism and bilingualism	– Recognition and promotion of bilingualism in an approach that factors in individuals' plurilingualism and multiculturalism; also, Canada wants to develop students' "linguistic capital" as "children of the world," given that young people are increasingly in touch with people representing a host of nations, even in their own community
Mobility	Main functions of the CEFR: – Facilitate mobility for individuals and create awareness among countries via better knowledge of national, regional, and foreign languages – Propose common levels of reference to enable European countries to recognize language competencies of individuals and to facilitate a common learning approach	– Interest in acknowledging student mobility by recognizing language competencies from kindergarten to grade 12
Curriculum	– A context in which curriculum typically falls under the purview of the national education ministries of each country	– A context in which curriculum and the granting of diplomas fall under the responsibility of the education ministries of each province or territory

Fundamentals	CEFR — European context	CEFR — Canadian context
Learning design	The CEFR: – aims to have students learn a foreign language for a few years at the primary or elementary level; – aims to have students "know" another foreign language in high school; – is based on the Canadian model of Canale and Swain (1980), Canale (1983), and on the US Bachman model (1990). – The "general competencies of an individual" are not considered for learning and assessment purposes.	– Aims primarily to have students learn the second official language and/or another language – Language learning typically begins in the early years of school, for example, grade 4 for core French and kindergarten for early French immersion. Jurisdictional curricula are usually designed for children in kindergarten through grade 12. – Canadian curricula usually have three components (linguistic, discursive, and sociolinguistic) aligned with the communicative language competence model of Canadians Canale and Swain (Canale & Swain, 1980; Canale, 1983); some curricula also include a cultural component. – The "general competencies of an individual," which are of an intercultural and cultural nature, are already defined in several immersion curricula and in Stern's Canadian multidimensional curriculum (1992).
Learning content	The CEFR focuses on two types of competence: – the development of "communicative language competencies" (linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic components) – the development of the "general competencies of the individual" (declarative knowledge, sociocultural knowledge, intercultural awareness, skills and know-how, existential competence, ability to learn).	– The Canadian second-language curriculum content covers the same concepts but uses a different nomenclature (linguistic, sociolinguistic, discursive, and strategic components). – Several programs define the competencies in terms of learning strategies (ability to learn), cultural competencies (cultural knowledge), general language competence (awareness), and intercultural competencies (knowledge, know-how, and existential competence).
Assessment	– The CEFR scales have six common reference levels. The scale descriptors were developed to report on learning in a working environment. Schools must adapt them for elementary- and secondary-level students. "One of the aims of the framework is to help partners to describe the levels of proficiency required by(…) standards(…) in order to facilitate comparisons between different systems of qualifications" (*CEFR*, p. 21).	– Several scales are in use across the country.

1.4 Canadian expertise in language teaching and learning

For over 30 years, Canada has been recognized for its expertise in language teaching, learning, and assessment. Many countries look to Canadian models to develop their learning design, to choose language- and intercultural-competence models, to develop curriculum, and to introduce innovative teaching and assessment programs both for facilitating and supporting students and for developing proficiency scales. An example is the CEFR, which reflects Canadian views in several of its components. It follows, then, that many of the innovations listed below (see also Appendix I), which have emanated from research and practice in the Canadian context, will be part of the reflection process.

Five teaching, learning, and assessment approaches stemming from research and practices developed in the Canadian context have guided the implementation of second- and additional-language programs in this country.

a. **The difference between learning and acquisition**

Canada recognizes the importance of combining language learning in a school setting with language acquisition in a natural environment through authentic and socially interactive experiences. In 1967, Canada was the first country to introduce immersion programs in which students were taught in French, with the language becoming both the object and the medium of learning. In the late 1970s, Canada also implemented interlinguistic and intercultural exchange programs (Projet Hospitalité Canada) aimed at encouraging elementary and high-school student mobility in order for students to get to know one another better and have a better understanding of Canada as a whole.

b. **Language learning at a young age**

The studies on brain functions carried out in 1965 by Dr. Wilder Penfield, a researcher at McGill University, demonstrated the importance of starting language learning at an early age. Since then, the teaching of languages in Canadian jurisdictions have begun in elementary school.

c. **Bilingual education**

Dr. James Cummins (1981) of the University of Toronto is an eminent researcher who is recognized for his work on the cognitive processes at work in language learners. Research has demonstrated the interdependency of skills and transfers that occur from one language to another. Studies have debunked the myth of language deficit in bilingual people, and several bilingual school programs have been introduced in Canada. Moreover, there has been an increase in the number of bilingual and trilingual education programs, as well as international language programs.

d. **The Canadian model of "communicative competence"**

In Canada, the design of language teaching and learning is based on the first "communicative competence" model developed by two researchers from the University of Toronto's Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE),

Michael Canale and Merrill Swain (Canale & Swain, 1980; Canale, 1983). The model consists of four components: linguistic, sociolinguistic, discursive, and strategic.

e. The contribution of heritage languages to target-language learning

In the 1980s, several Canadian jurisdictions implemented heritage-language programs to promote better learning for students from immigrant backgrounds. These programs foster students' identification with their language and culture of origin, which encourages better integration into school. The programs also contribute to consolidating students' identity construction through the recognition of their cultures in the classroom. Bridging the gap between students' native language and culture and the target language and culture helps learners to maximize the linguistic transfers between these languages, and enhances school success.

1.5   The CEFR as a reference tool

Point 2.3.2 in the CEFR (CEFR, p. 18) clarifies the role of the framework, which "aims to be not only comprehensive, transparent, and coherent, but also open, dynamic, and non-dogmatic. For that reason, it cannot take up a position on one side or another of current theoretical disputes (…) it sets out parameters (…) which users may draw upon." A framework of reference is "open and 'neutral.'" The CEFR is a reference tool that presents what needs to be considered in the teaching, learning, and assessment process, and raises a series of questions to help educators determine what learners need to know and do with the language.

It seems appropriate to revisit excerpts from a paper presented by Daniel Coste, one of the authors of and driving forces behind the CEFR, at a June 2007 conference in Sèvres (France). This and other presentations by Coste and his colleagues were published in *Dialogues et cultures*, on the question of whether the CEFR could serve as an international reference. The discussions highlighted the fact that the CEFR is a reference document and does not set out to tell practitioners what to do or how to do it. It is a catalyst for methodological renewal and a contextualization tool. As the CEFR is not a standardization tool, it must, therefore, be context-amenable. It is "modulable, malleable, and multi-referential." It contains numerous adjustable parameters, and it is in context that each of the parameters is assigned a value, and that standards and indicative thresholds may be determined.

Coste also noted that the CEFR allows individual users to analyze their situation and make the choices they feel are best suited to their context, while respecting key values.

Possible Avenues for Working with the CEFR in the Canadian Context

A full analysis and understanding of the CEFR is essential before possible avenues for making the most effective and appropriate use of this framework in the Canadian context can be presented. It is also important to consider the work currently being done in various Council of Europe member countries and the fact that COE is increasingly aware that the contexts for language teaching, learning, and assessment vary from country to country according to institutional needs and target populations.

2.1 Summary table of the CEFR and its components

The diagram on the following page illustrates the priority given to the CEFR's Chapter 6: Language Learning and Teaching. This chapter, which is the cornerstone of the CEFR, focuses on language learners and what they are required to learn, given the European context in which they live and move about. On the one hand, learners are called on to develop communicative language competencies (Chapter 5) and perform tasks that will lead to their achievement (Chapter 7). They must master these competencies in different communicative contexts and situations in which they will be called upon and required to participate (Chapter 4). On the other hand, educators and education-system administrators need to rethink their approaches and education practices in terms of the adopted approach (Chapter 2). The development of curricula and teaching/learning methods should be based on an action-oriented approach (Chapter 8). Assessment of learning (Chapter 9) is unquestionably becoming more rigorous and transparent, and must meet the requirements and standards set out by the Council of Europe with respect to common reference levels (Chapter 3).

The oval text boxes present the language content to be learned, while the rectangular boxes present the parameters linked to the teaching of languages. Of course, there are other ways to represent the CEFR.

Overview of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment

Chapter 1 — The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages in its political and educational context

A reference tool that outlines elements to consider in the process of language teaching, learning, and assessment, and that raises a series of quesitons to guide educators (and learners) in knowing what learners need to learn and do with language.

Chapter 8—
Linguistic diversification and the curriculum

Chapter 9—
Assessment

Chapter 2 —
Approach adopted

Chapter 6—
Language learning and teaching
(what the learner needs to learn)

Language teaching to facilitate learning

Chapter 5—
The user/learner's competencies

Chapter 7—
Tasks and their role in language teaching

Chapter 4—
Language use and the language user/learner

Chapter 3—
Common Reference Levels

2.2   The CEFR chapters at a glance

This section highlights the key points of the CEFR chapters, as well as aspects to consider for effective CEFR use in the Canadian context.

CEFR users would benefit from reading Évelyne Rosen's *Le point sur le Cadre européen commun de référence pour les langues* (2007), which describes the uses of the CEFR and provides examples in the European context.

Chapter 1: The CEFR in its political and educational context

Chapter 1 situates the CEFR in its political and educational context, presenting its aims and objectives and noting that the framework is designed to meet the needs of a multilingual and multicultural Europe. In that sense, the CEFR promotes the learning of one of many *foreign languages* to foster an understanding of other national and regional languages and a greater knowledge of European modern languages, in order to build up a language repertoire. The CEFR aims to provide a common basis for developing modern-language programs to overcome communication and cultural barriers. The CEFR therefore focuses on European *plurilingualism*, in which "languages interrelate and interact," and distinguishes plurilingualism from multilingualism (i.e., the coexistence of different languages) (CEFR, p. 4). A number of the aims and objectives of the CEFR target enhanced understanding among European cultures/societies and mutual tolerance. This new dimension is particularly important in language education, which fosters awareness of and openness to other languages and cultures.

> **For consideration** — Canada has established policies to protect the two official languages (English and French) and recognize Aboriginal languages. Furthermore, the provinces and territories seek to value a mosaic of languages and cultures, with the implementation of programs such as welcome or reception classes. Would it be possible or desirable to envisage a comprehensive and integrative approach that considers learner pluriliteracy as a linguistic support to learning a second or third language, leading to greater openness to other languages and cultures and mutual empathy?

Chapter 2: Approach adopted

This chapter presents the learning approach advocated in the CEFR, namely, an *action-oriented approach*. This action-oriented perspective is described as one that views language users and learners as social agents who must accomplish tasks relevant to their life experiences. This perspective also takes into account the cognitive, emotional, and volitional resources, as well as the full range of abilities applied by the individual as a social agent (CEFR, p. 9).

> **For consideration** — The action-oriented approach poses no problem in the Canadian context since it was described in the Canadian model of Canale and Swain (1980). Moreover, *citizenship education* (Hébert & Sears, undated), a contribution of Canadian thinking in line with the evolution of education design for the past 10 years, complements the work done by Canale and Swain.
>
> *Citizenship education* brings a multidimensional orientation to language teaching/learning, as well as recognition of the linguistic and cultural diversity of Canadian society. With the globalization of communications and individual mobility, *citizenship education*

is recognized as opening a window to the world. It is based on the implementation of a critical pedagogy that fosters awareness of other cultures and other languages (Guilherme, 2002). *Citizenship education* supports Canada's vision of valuing the different cultures that make up the Canadian mosaic while respecting linguistic and cultural diversity, as well as individuals' values in their search for a Canadian identity.

Citizenship education is based on the following:

- respect for the linguistic and cultural diversity of Canadian society;
- seamless integration for everyone into Canadian society;
- a pluralist society that is open to contributions while honouring democratic values;
- English and French as common languages of public life;
- knowledge of Aboriginal languages and respect for Aboriginal rights and cultures;
- the learning of heritage languages for immigrant populations and respect for their languages and cultures;
- the learning of international languages to facilitate understanding among learners;
- openness to other cultures and preparing learners to live in an evolving world.

Chapter 3: Common reference levels

The CEFR presents criteria for defining the descriptors of language competencies and the common reference levels of proficiency. The latter are broken down into three broad user levels (basic, independent, and proficient), each of which has two sub-levels, for a total of six levels. The proposed reference levels were developed and validated, taking into consideration methodological requirements. They are used to segment "the learning process for the purposes of curricular design, qualifying examinations, etc." (CEFR, p. 17). Scales are useful for self-assessment and for guiding students in their goal-setting related to language learning; however, it is important to keep in mind that they are but one of the many components of the framework.

> **For consideration** — The levels reflect a vertical dimension (learning products) and need to take into account the fact that language learning involves the progression of multiple learnings over several years. These levels should, therefore, report on learning in students from kindergarten through grade 12, using themes that are appropriate for learners aged 5 to 18. As indicated in the CEFR (p. 22), "[a] scale, like a test, has validity in relation to contexts in which it has been shown to work." The descriptors must be tailored to young learners in a school setting. Once defined, these descriptors and the number and reference levels must be validated to ensure that they work in the Canadian context and that they adequately reflect what young students are learning. It should be noted that these scales, although they are useful for self-evaluation and for the setting of language and communication learning objectives, are but one of the framework's components.

Chapter 4: Language use and the language user/learner

Chapter 4 presents the context for language use (domains and communication themes), communication activities, and communicative tasks for productive, receptive, interactive, and mediative skills, as well as the operations linked to language communication. This chapter is highly relevant, since there were considerable gaps in the teaching approaches widely used in various European countries, which hindered individual mobility and the validation of learning. Introducing planned communication activities in terms of "tasks" means that knowledge can be applied to skills and know-how. Generally speaking, this

chapter is aligned with Canadian practices.

> **For consideration** — The teaching domains and learning situations must take into account the age of learners in Canadian schools.

Chapter 5: The user/learner's competencies

This chapter presents the language competencies that the learner/user needs to acquire or develop.

General competencies

These competencies include: a) declarative knowledge (*savoirs*): knowledge of the world, sociocultural knowledge, and intercultural awareness; b) skills and know-how (*savoir-faire*): practical skills and know-how, and intercultural skills and know-how; c) "existential" competence (*savoir-être*): attitudes, motivations, and so forth; and d) the ability to learn (*savoir-apprendre*): the ability to integrate new knowledge and develop language awareness. This chapter reviews the familiar aspects of knowledge and skills and those that are often underdeveloped in European language teaching, namely, existential competence and the ability to learn. In Europe, the concept of developing "cultural knowledge" is defined in terms of "knowledge of the world," which embraces the so-called culture of civilization (big "c" culture). Moreover, the general competencies are defined outside the scope of language competencies. Therefore, they become complementary to teaching, without becoming an essential part of it.

> **For consideration** — The term "aptitude" in the French version is not appropriate and is likely a translation error, since the English version uses the terms "skills" and "ability to." A future common Canadian framework will need to include a glossary to clarify certain terminology.

> **For consideration** —The issues related to social interaction among learners of different languages and cultures linked to individual mobility and the globalization of communications should be taken into consideration to reflect research findings since the CEFR was developed in the 1990s. Moreover, several aspects of existential competence and the ability to learn are currently learning objects in Canadian curricula.

Communicative language competencies

Communicative language competencies include linguistic competencies, sociolinguistic competencies, and pragmatic competencies (divided into discourse and functional competencies).

> **For consideration** — The CEFR's language-proficiency model can be used as a common reference in the Canadian context, as it includes aspects already covered in language teaching and learning in Canada.

Sociolinguistic competence is always included in communicative-competence development because of the importance of language-learning aspects that deal with politeness conventions, differences in register, and the various communication parameters, such as situational context, speakers, etc. (Canale & Swain, 1980). However, research in language education highlights the importance of understanding the issues surrounding social interaction. According to Van Dijk (1997), the study of social interaction and discourse is needed to understand the construction of the mental representations articulated in messages. No other semiotic code is as explicit as language

for expressing opinions and beliefs and for understanding the roles of social actors. Therefore, it is important to reconsider sociolinguistic-competence development in light of new semiolinguistic developments that include the study of cultural signs (e.g., the "us" and "them" articulated in oral and written messages).

Cultural and intercultural messages

Canadian research has developed a conceptual framework for building *intercultural communicative competence* (Lussier, Auger, Clément & Lebrun-Brossard, 2004), which includes the learning of culture and interculturality in a logical coherence, since it is no longer enough to simply align practices to increase students' knowledge and develop their intercultural communicative competence.

This framework was used in two research coordination projects of COE's European Centre for Modern Languages. The first project was on mediation (Zarate et al., 2003). The second study provided avenues for developing and assessing intercultural communicative competence (Lussier et al., 2007), and included descriptors and competence levels for developing intercultural communicative competence, as well as prototypes of assessment tasks for the three areas involved: knowledge, skills and know-how, and existential competence.

Chapter 6: Language learning and teaching

This chapter deals with the differences between learning and acquisition, variations in learning objectives, target users, methodological options, and errors and mistakes. It also explores plurilinguistic and pluricultural competence as a changing and differentiated competence and linguistic awareness. It refers to language learners and what they are required to learn, given the European context in which they live and move about. Like Chapter 4, Chapter 6 is extremely relevant, since there were considerable gaps in the teaching approaches widely used in various European countries, which hindered individual mobility and the validation of learning in assessment for certification purposes and for comparing education systems.

For consideration — With the arrival and evolution of new immigrant populations, learner groups are increasingly diversified, and the differences in their levels of education (or lack thereof) are often very great. For classes integrating these new students, educational approaches must be tailored to the diversity of school populations and learner plurilingualism, and must include the following:

- the recognition at school of the pluriliterate competencies of immigrant children (Moore, 2006);
- the importance of a new vision of teaching to reflect language alternation in children from immigrant backgrounds (Castelloti, 2001);
- the importance that should be given to literacy development in children with learning delays (D'Anglejan, Lussier & Dagenais, 1990);
- learner implementation of the reanalysis methods related to knowledge of more than one language and, consequently, to the transfer of discursive competencies from one language to another;
- the importance given to the characteristics of learners who speak at least two languages (Grosjean, 1993);

- the learning of meta-cognitive strategies as a condition for ensuring development of academic skills and the promotion of socialization and autonomy in the classroom (D'Anglejean, Lussier & Dagenais, 1990);
- implementation of integrated learning approaches (Candelier, 2005);
- learning and teaching through inquiry: Inquiry is an investigative process that shapes the organization of teaching and learning. This pedagogical approach promotes a deep understanding of a topic or subject, based on students' personal experiences, interests, and curiosity. It encourages students to become actively engaged in a personal, collaborative, and collective process while developing a sense of responsibility and independence, and allows them to incorporate their prior knowledge and native linguistic competencies.

It is also important to consider an integrative teaching approach. Population mobility, cultural diversity, and the multiplicity of language contacts via the Internet have generated new relationships of power and influence. Mutual understanding, which leads to empathy, has become increasingly complex. The consideration of new competencies related to "intercultural" communication and the recognition of various driving factors of a social, rather than simply linguistic, nature are required. Accordingly, the domains of "language" and "culture" must be seen as interdependent and integrated, in tandem, when developing new curricula and educational intervention models.

From this perspective, the educational approach is *global* and focuses on the development of language competence in cultural and intercultural contexts. This educational approach is also *integrative*, which is to say that the learning activities proposed to students integrate language and culture and concentrate on tasks that students must perform individually or in groups. The ultimate goal of such activities is to integrate the development of linguistic and intercultural competencies within the same student task. In that sense, the educational approach is also *thematic* or *situational*. It must draw upon themes that reflect students' interests and needs in terms of the skills and knowledge to be acquired to develop competencies, while helping them make connections with the skills and knowledge in their current repertoire and the frames of reference they have with their native language and culture (Lussier & Lebrun-Brossard, 2009).

Chapter 7: Tasks and their role in language teaching

This chapter defines the learning task and addresses task performance in terms of competencies, conditions, and constraints. It also addresses strategies related to a task's degree of difficulty and the cognitive, affective, and linguistic factors that may make it difficult for the learner.

For consideration — This chapter is relevant for supporting the action-oriented approach and the communicative language-competence model outlined in the CEFR. It will be important to look at the various programs developed in Canada over the past 30 years (immersion, intensive teaching, welcome/reception classes, multi-dimensional teaching, etc.) that have focused on differentiated educational approaches based on competencies, strategies, project-based learning, authentic learning scenarios, and task-oriented learning.

Chapter 8: Linguistic diversification and the curriculum

This chapter presents options for curricular design and scenarios. It introduces the concepts of assessment and the portfolio, as well as in-school, out-of-school, and postsecondary learning. It also describes plurilingual and pluricultural competence in terms of "the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person viewed as a social agent has proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultures." The framework stresses a plurilingualism in which bilingualism is just one particular case (CEFR, p. 168).

This chapter is justifiably based on the linguistic and cultural diversity among the 47 European countries and the desire to protect the individual identities of each, which differs from the Canadian context. The multi-dimensional curriculum (Stern, 1983) is presented as a model to support the action-oriented approach adopted for language learning.

> **For consideration** — In Canada, the language curricula of various jurisdictions are based on the multi-dimensional curriculum and the communicative approach. How can we go beyond what already exists to foster a plurilingual approach in Canada?

Chapter 9: Assessment

This chapter presents the CEFR as a necessary resource in a meta-system of international assessment. It includes descriptions of various assessment types and learning-assessment criteria. A meta-system in education is equivalent to a "meta-language" in language teaching. The approach focuses on the system as a whole, adopting a more encompassing perspective to better enable comparisons across education systems and ensure consistency in language teaching in a context of professional and social mobility.

For the CEFR, learning assessment is based on the fundamental concepts of validity, reliability, and feasibility, and must meet the requirements and standards set out by COE in terms of common levels of reference. This chapter is essential for all countries, as it defines the values of fairness, equity and equality, thoroughness, and transparency.

> **For consideration** — For Canada, a framework of reference would serve to ensure that learners obtain recognition of the required language education. The document "Principles for Fair Student Assessment Practices for Education in Canada" (Joint Advisory Committee, 1993), developed in Canada, addresses the fundamental values in assessment.

Appendix A: Developing proficiency descriptors

This appendix specifically targets education-evaluation specialists who are responsible for developing reference-level scales and descriptors and validating them in a variety of school settings.

Appendix A lists methodologies for scale development and discusses descriptor formulation. Because this section addresses the technical aspects of language assessment, it is especially appropriate for measurement and assessment specialists. It details a rigorous process for achieving the fundamental and instrumental assessment values, as well as for providing descriptors for general-competence levels.

For consideration — This section stresses the importance of avoiding the tendency to simplify due to the costs inherent in generalization for vast numbers of people; of making choices best suited to the context; and of validating descriptors in line with the objectives related to their use in a variety of settings. Moreover, as European descriptors do not place a competence at a specific point on a single scale, the more subtle nuances must be introduced by more specific descriptors (Coste, 2007, p. 22).

Appendix B: The illustrative scales of descriptors

The illustrative scales stemming from a Swiss research project are very useful for educators because they provide descriptors for reception, interaction, and production skills. This project was validated by some 300 teachers and 2,800 learners, representing roughly 500 lower-secondary, upper-secondary, vocational, and adult-education classes that were involved in developing the proficiency scale.

Appendix C: The DIALANG scales

This section focuses on the self-assessment of independent adult learners. The scales cover the six CEFR levels of reference and enable teachers to use concrete and observable performance criteria in the classroom or in learners' productions.

The DIALANG project is "an assessment system intended for language learners who want to obtain diagnostic information about their proficiency" (CEFR, p. 226). The primary users are learners who study languages independently or in formal language courses. The system comprises self-assessment, language tests, and feedback available for a number of European languages.

For consideration — The project is an important reference source, primarily for the self-assessment and self-directed learning statements. The statements described on pages 231 to 243 of the CEFR should be adapted for the Canadian kindergarten-to-grade-12 context, as they enable both students and teachers to determine the degree of proficiency in terms of what the learner "can do."

Appendix D: The ALTE "Can Do" statements

The ALTE (Association of Language Testers in Europe) statements are user-oriented and available in different languages. The project is based on "Can Do" statements that describe what learners can actually do in a foreign language. The "Can Do" scales consist of approximately 400 statements organized into three general areas: social and tourism (shopping, eating out, accommodations, etc.), work, and study. The scale, which comprises six sub-levels, corresponds broadly to the CEFR levels of reference.

For consideration — These statements were developed for adults. It would be necessary to rethink the communication domains and validate them with young learners in schools to include appropriate communication themes.

SECTION THREE

Aspects to Consider for Using the CEFR Common Reference Levels and the European Language Portfolios in the Canadian Context

The common reference levels are what initially drew a number of stakeholders to the CEFR. Teachers are always interested in pinpointing the proficiency level of their students, and they look for guidelines and benchmarks with a broader application than their own classroom. Clearly, a list of descriptors for behaviours observable in the classroom that could be calibrated according to reference levels would be extremely useful for teachers in justifying their judgments and decisions when it comes to their teaching and assessment of the learning progress of their students.

In the Canadian context, common reference levels will need to be used to report on students' language learning from kindergarten to grade 12, using themes that are appropriate for learners aged 5 to 18. If the six common reference levels of the CEFR are to be used in the Canadian context, they will need to be validated to ensure that they are fair for young learners. Also, sub-levels and specific descriptors will need to be developed and validated for young students who are learning in a school setting. It goes without saying that exemplars will derive from the validation process.

3.1 Common reference levels

The CEFR presents six common reference levels that were developed from three broader user levels: basic, independent, and proficient.

Basic User	– Breakthrough level (A1)
	– Way-stage level (A2)
Independent User	– Threshold level (B1)
	– Vantage level (B2)
Proficient User	– Effective operational proficiency (or competent) level (C1)
	– Mastery level (C2)

The most widely known scales from the CEFR are:

Table 1: Common Reference Levels — global scale (CEFR, p. 24)

Table 2: Common Reference Levels — self-assessment grid (CEFR, p. 26)

Table 3: Common Reference Levels — qualitative aspects of spoken-language use (CEFR, p. 28)

The CEFR also includes 54 other scales related to communicative activities, communication strategies, working with text, and communicative language competence. They were developed and validated as part of the Swiss research project in the 1990s and early 2000s.

The CEFR continues to evolve. For example, the authors of the assessment grids (presentation by Brian North at the ALTE-CIEP conference, April 2008) have mentioned the possibility of adding levels D and E to the competence scale. Moreover, the directors of the Assessment Branch of the *Centre international d'études pédagogiques* (CIEP), which oversees the *DELF* (*Diplôme d'études en langue française*) [diploma of French-language studies] and the *DALF* (*Diplôme approfondi d'études en langue française*) [diploma of advanced French-language studies] French-as-a-second-language proficiency tests, have developed a new certification exam for students who have completed 200 hours of instruction. The *DILF* (*Diplôme initial de la langue française*) [initial diploma in French] was expected to be offered in 2009 as a diploma of basic-level French. This exam is aimed at satisfying the requirements of CEFR sub-level A1.1 to meet the demand of European and non-European countries. This certification should bridge the current gap between "zero" and level A1 competencies.

The CEFR outlines the following considerations with respect to the use of levels and the integration of descriptors appropriate for specific user contexts:

- "The establishment of a set of common reference points in no way limits how different sectors in different pedagogic cultures may choose to organize or describe their system of levels and modules. It is also to be expected that the precise formulation of the set of common reference points, the wording of the descriptors, will develop over time as the experience of member states and of institutions with related expertise is incorporated into the description" (CEFR, pp. 23–24).
- "… a very important issue in discussing scales of language proficiency is the accurate identification of the purpose the scale is to serve, and an appropriate matching of the formulation of scale descriptors to that purpose" (CEFR, p. 37).

In the Canadian context, reference levels must be specific to the kindergarten-to-grade-12 school context. Accordingly, it would be desirable to develop sub-levels for the six common CEFR reference levels and appropriate descriptors, based on the target objectives and the communication domains corresponding to the language corpora that learners are expected to develop over the course of their school experience. "The possible existence of such narrower levels may be of interest in *learning* contexts, but can still be related to the broader levels conventional in *examining* contexts" (CEFR, p. 31). A rigorous approach will also involve validation of the sub-levels and their descriptors, possibly at the same time as the broader levels.

A common framework scale must not be linked to any specific curriculum developed by provinces and territories. By transcending the curriculum, a common framework scale could, in future, be used as a linking guide. It should, therefore, be context-free (jurisdictional) in order to accommodate "generalizable results from different specific contexts" (CEFR, p. 21). This means that the categories used to describe what learners can do in different contexts must be relatable to the contexts of learners within the overall target population (CEFR, p. 21).

As indicated in the CEFR, descriptors must be relatable to, or translatable into, each and every relevant context. To use the six CEFR levels in the Canadian school context, it initially will be important to ensure that the descriptions and categorization are based on a common theory of learning design, language proficiency, and individual cultural competence. The CEFR descriptors will then need to be elaborated upon to meet target objectives and ensure unambiguous understanding in any given context (e.g., English as a second language in a minority or majority setting, French as a second language in a minority or majority setting, Aboriginal languages, international languages, context in which the learner may or may not be part of a linguistically and culturally rich community).

Development and validation procedure

Implementing a development methodology will require the participation of experts in test design and language teaching and assessment to ensure that the process is rigorous (i.e., reliable, valid). Feasibility — or what is actually achievable given the human, material, pedagogical, technical, financial, etc. resources — is another key point to consider. The methodology for developing and validating common reference levels and descriptors will involve the following steps.

1. **Determine the theoretical framework**

   Questions for consideration:
   - Which language-competence development model should be used, for example, the communicative model of Canale and Swain and of Bachman presented in the CEFR?
   - What updates to the "general competencies of an individual" are required in order to include cultural and intercultural competencies?
   - Which linguistic skills (oral comprehension, oral production, oral interaction, written comprehension, and written production) will be included in the reference levels?
   - What should the reference levels contain?

   It would be useful to include sub-levels with more specific descriptors along with the general descriptors to take into account the language competencies to be developed in a K–12 context. The proficiency scales typically have two axes. The vertical axis contains the levels, arranged in bands, that express degree of complexity. This dimension plots the difficulty continuum of proficiency levels and the measurement values, thereby ensuring the reliability of results, which must be stable and constant. The horizontal axis describes the learner's communicative performance. It contains categories and descriptions based on a proficiency model (language and/or intercultural), the components of which are used to specify the proficiency-level descriptors. This dimension ensures the content and construct validity of the tasks that track learner performance.

   Procedure:
   - Identify the learning theories and the cultural and intercultural language-competence models that will form the basis for language teaching, learning, and assessment in Canadian schools.
   - Identify the aims of the scale and the types of information that it should contain to meet the objectives.
   - Determine the appropriate number of common reference levels (and sub-levels) required to report on the competence of young learners in a school setting from kindergarten to grade 12.

2. **Select the validation methodology**

The methodology used to develop the common reference levels, sub-levels, and their descriptors must be rigorous. For the CEFR, a systematic combination of intuitive, qualitative, and quantitative methods was employed (CEFR, p. 22):

- Intuitive methods "do not require any structured data collection, just the principled interpretation of experience" (CEFR, p. 208).

- Qualitative methods "involve small workshops with groups of informants [teachers, consultants] and a qualitative rather than statistical interpretation of the information obtained" (CEFR, p. 209).

- Quantitative methods "involve a considerable amount of statistical analysis and careful interpretation of the results" (CEFR, p. 210).

Procedure:

- Identify the target population (representative sample) for the validation.
  - Experts put together a list of descriptors to be submitted for approval by subject-area specialists (see point 3 below).
  - The subject-area specialists and future users group the descriptors according to each of the reference levels selected (see point 4 below).
- Determine which statistical analyses will ensure descriptor progression, by reference level (see point 5 below).
  - Identify the final document type and content.

3. **Analyze the content of existing scales (ALTE, jurisdictional curriculum scales, etc.) in relation to the CEFR categories and descriptions and develop descriptors for the sub-levels in the Canadian school context.**

Questions for consideration:

- Are the six CEFR reference levels appropriate for the Canadian context or should sub-levels be added?

- What are the target goals in terms of the type of information the common reference levels should contain: a global scale (CEFR, p. 24), a self-assessment grid (CEFR, pp. 26–27), or qualitative aspects of spoken-language use (CEFR, p. 28)?

- Could other scales be more relevant (Swiss scale, ALTE scale, etc.) or should a combination of specific scales be considered?

- Are the descriptors aligned with the theoretical framework?

Procedure:

- Determine the procedure for writing or adjusting the descriptors.
- Formulate descriptors as "Can Do" statements appropriate for learners in a school setting, so that they reflect each of the reference levels, drawing from a range of existing scales. Descriptors (CEFR, pp. 205–207) must be:
  - positive
  - definite, describing "concrete tasks"
  - clear, as in "transparent, not jargon-ridden"
  - brief
  - independent, or describing a fundamental behaviour

The writers involved in this process should be very knowledgeable about the target competencies and the students in the various types of programs (immersion, core French, welcome/reception class, intensive English, etc.), with regard to each of the five linguistic skills. Some writers could be involved in more than one skill. The writers could work together on the reference levels in English, French, or another language, which would expedite the process and the validation stages.

- Draw up a list of descriptors (selected or created) for each of the reference levels and sub-levels selected.
- Develop a questionnaire (see point 4 below) to give to teachers and subject-area experts (English, French, other languages) selected from the target population sample, irrespective of the levels for each of the linguistic skills.
- Validate the questionnaire with a number of people to ensure unambiguous understanding of the information (questions or statements) it contains.

4. **Administer the questionnaire in the schools of participating jurisdictions to identify reference levels for the descriptors it contains**

The descriptors formulated by the writers are submitted in the form of a written questionnaire to as many future users as possible (teachers, education consultants, etc.) for each participating jurisdiction (cf. sampling methodology), to select the descriptors that receive the highest level of consensus. Users should be asked to place each of the descriptors on one of the selected reference levels.

Procedure:
- Determine the sample for each participating jurisdiction.
- Administer the written questionnaire.

5. **Analyze and validate the data collected**

According to Brian North, the author of Chapter 9 of the CEFR, it is difficult to establish the construct validity of a reference model using the classical quantitative analysis methods such as correlations, factor analysis, and multi-trait multi-method analysis. Accordingly, experts use a modelling approach that positions the descriptors and the respondents on a common rating scale. They use a graded response model of the Item Response Theory (IRT or Rasch's multi-faceted model), which takes a broader definition of construct validity to include relevance or usefulness and social-value implications, and which provides information on how various learner groups from the system as a whole are distinct, interpret information, and interact, in terms of how the competence is described (CEFR, pp. 210–211). The process is used "to identify statistically significant variation in the interpretation of the descriptors in relation to different [programs], language regions, and target languages in order to identify descriptors with a very high stability of values across different contexts" (CEFR, pp. 218–219).

Procedure:

- Input the data.
- Calibrate the descriptors by reference level using statistical analyses.
- Eliminate the descriptors that do not fit the model (infit, outfit, and misfit).
- Adjust the scale's reference levels and descriptors as required.

6. **Validate the descriptor formulations**

Before deciding on the final version of the descriptors, it is important to verify the descriptors' clarity and congruence, the discrimination between levels, the relevance of the description elements, and overall coherence.

Procedure:
- Write the final version of the descriptors.
- Produce the final report on common reference levels in the Canadian context.

In conclusion, it bears mentioning that the descriptors set benchmarks to which teachers and learners can refer to plot learning progress. However, it is important to remember that the reference-level descriptors are subject to the changing nature of language and cultural competencies and the diversity of the setting in which they are developed. Such benchmarks have the advantage of serving as a common reference without interfering with the independent educational development efforts of individual jurisdictions. Moreover, they cannot replace curricula as they lack the comprehensiveness expected of a complete curriculum with specific learning objectives. Nevertheless, they could be useful for curriculum-review purposes, particularly in the case of learners changing schools or moving to another level. The descriptors ultimately become a rigorous baseline for assessment. They provide operational precision on learners' competencies beyond the specific characteristics of a program or a specific learning process. As a result, some may feel that they favour certain types of education or settings with a richer linguistic environment. These are some of the issues inherent in the attempt to have a common reference tool across Canada. Whatever decisions and choices are ultimately made, it is essential that the development of a reference scale go hand in hand with the development of assessment instruments that reflect learner competencies, regardless of learning context and factors of influence.

3.2 The language portfolio

In Canada, the word "portfolio" has a number of meanings in the context of education, be it in the school system or at university. In most cases, it does not have an official status.

The European Language Portfolio (ELP) and the CEFR

The European Language Portfolio (ELP) can be seen as the next logical step after the CEFR, with its focus on developing a consistent and coherent tool that has a learner-centred approach, transparency, and flexibility. The ELP guidance and models available from the Council of Europe provide the basic tools required by institutions and entire education sectors to help teachers and learners define their language-learning levels and projects. Rules for the accreditation of ELP models were set out in an agreement, and the European Language Portfolio Validation Committee was established under the authority of the Steering Committee for Education of the Council of Europe. The ELP was launched during the European Year of Languages 2001. More information is available on the Language Policy Division's Web site, at http://www.coe.int/portfolio .

Definition

The European Language Portfolio is defined as an organized collection of documents that individual learners can assemble over a period of time and systematically present a record of their qualifications, achievements, and experiences in language learning, together with samples of their work. The ELP uses the common reference levels and descriptors both to indicate levels pertaining to certification obtained by the learners and to guide their self-assessment.

Aims

As it becomes increasingly interactive, European society wants to take into consideration *personal mobility* due to work, studies, or personal enrichment and leisure. While not everyone travels, communication extends across language barriers and is becoming omnipresent through technologies like the Internet. Young people have enriching learning experiences for which they seek official recognition. The ELP must, therefore, meet this growing need for qualifications that are transferable among countries and provide a complete record of the owner's language-learning experiences.

The ELP also seeks to support the notion of "European democratic citizenship" by recognizing all the languages that learners know and helping them to develop an awareness of their cultural heritage and build on the knowledge (*savoirs*), skills and know-how (*savoir-faire*), and attitudes (*savoir-être*) they need to become mature citizens of 21st-century Europe. This process involves replacing prejudices and intolerance with understanding and acceptance, working with people from different backgrounds to negotiate objectives and strategies, and managing disputes to solve conflicts peacefully, without violence or anger (Council of Europe, 1997, p. 3).

The European Language Portfolio is aimed at motivating people to learn languages both in and out of formal education. It is part of a learning strategy to develop learner autonomy and accountability. It should provide a clear record of a person's language proficiency and intercultural experiences that can support their job applications, entry into educational establishments, and so on. It should, therefore, facilitate recognition by employers, education officials, or related organizations because its documentation is simple and transparent from a transnational perspective, and has the same value across Europe (Council of Europe, 1997, p. 4).

Parts of the ELP

The portfolio is a personal document, held and regularly updated by the learner, which contains three parts: the *passport*, the *biography*, and the *dossier*.

The *passport* section contains assessments produced by the teacher, school, or institution, which attest to the recognition of learning and mastery of skills by the learner, support a job application or offer of services, and report on the granting of credits for specific courses. This official aspect is part of the summative function of the assessment. The passport may

include national and/or international recognition of language proficiency at a given stage in the student's language learning.

The *biography* section records learning progress and encourages self-assessment by learners, giving them the opportunity to learn and recognize personal strengths and areas to improve with respect to the tasks and strategies they are asked to perform and implement. It encourages them to reflect on the various aspects of their language learning and use. This dimension serves a formative function in the assessment process. As the pedagogical component of the ELP, the biography is a bridge between teaching and learning. Learners can use the biography to describe their significant and less formal experiences of contact and interaction with other languages and cultures (CEFR, p. 175).

The *dossier* section of the portfolio contains samples of the learner's own work that illustrate knowledge, competencies, and attitudes in relation to the learning processes (Council of Europe, 1997, p. 8). The dossier can document the objectives set by certain curricula, learning experiences and significant samples of learners' progress in terms of additional-language proficiency, and intercultural experiences.

Each part of the portfolio has a purpose, depending on how it is used and on the age of the user. The importance of each of the parts varies according to the learning stage.

Feedback on portfolio use in the European context

Most learners seem to recognize the value of self-assessment. However, the ELP, initially considered to be a self-assessment tool, tends to clash with traditional school assessments and official testing. D'Alessio, Womi, and Stoks (2003), in their discussion of the major pilot project "imposed" on the Ticino canton in Switzerland, came to the following conclusions:

• Despite its weaknesses, the ELP is potentially very useful for modern-language teaching and learning and should, therefore, be developed further.

• The ELP has a number of strengths to build and areas to improve upon in terms of project organization and the model used. The project should be pursued on a voluntary rather than mandatory basis.

• Most of the project reports stressed the key role of initial and in-service teacher training for the successful introduction of the ELP. There was a general awareness of the absolute necessity for appropriate teacher training and support. As a result, initial and in-service teacher training related to the ELP increased, and are increasingly a part of current training programs. However, it is not easy to define or provide the appropriate support. It is still felt that the ELP is a time-consuming tool, at least when it is introduced. Therefore, teachers and learners understandably have concerns about work overload.

• To be manageable, the gap between program requirements and ELP principles must not be too great.

• Some reports and current research available for consultation suggest that the initial investment is worth it in the long term. However, it is not easy to convince teachers and learners of long-term advantages when they are trying to finish a program or prepare and pass an exam.

- Implementation projects that take into consideration the challenges related to the inherent tension between long- and short-term objectives are more credible and achievable.

- Teachers and learners tend to rate the ELP's effectiveness based primarily on short-term educational benefits, while education authorities are more interested in its long-term impact on the global education system. If major implementation projects are to be successful, a balance must be struck between these different interests.

- An additional challenge was recently identified: the repeated use of the same ELP model over several years can produce an unfortunate sense of déjà vu. This comment goes back to the fundamental issues regarding the extent to which ELP models should be adapted to the annual curriculum or, alternatively, how smaller-scale ELP models could be enriched so that they are sustainable for several school years.

The language portfolio in the Canadian school context

In the Canadian school context, a language portfolio would target learners from kindergarten through grade 12. The portfolio's characteristics should be specific to its purpose, structure, users, and learner's age group, and will be different for each learning stage. Many different portfolios are already approved for use across Europe and Canada for students of different age groups. These could be used as examples or starting points.

Age of learners

For young learners, the portfolio could be used more as a motivational tool than as a tool to indicate level of achievement. It would contribute to giving meaning to the learning process, since learning objectives and educational interventions would change to mirror a student's cognitive and emotional development. The portfolio would contribute to the development of an awareness of identity, society, language, and culture. To do this, it would be used to encourage learners to take a closer look at themselves and at others, fostering a positive attitude toward other languages and cultures (Council of Europe, 1997, p. 25).

The interface between schools (elementary/secondary; secondary/college or university) must be determined so that receiving institutions can be informed about students' learning trajectory, in order to build on their knowledge and skills base.

Clearly, a language portfolio that reflects the age and abilities of young students in the school context must be designed to meet the specific needs of learner groups and must be drafted in language that can be understood by the target users. It is generally accepted that students can be taught about self-assessment and the reflective process early in their education.

Functions of the portfolio

The school-based portfolio could have two functions:

- a *pedagogical function*, presented in the biography and dossier, aimed at helping learners to reflect periodically on significant language and cultural experiences and on their learning progress, in terms of language and cultural skills involving knowledge, know-how, and experiential competence;

- a *reporting function*, in the form of a report card in the passport, aimed at documenting the language proficiency (linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic) and cultural competencies aligned with jurisdictions' curriculum requirements.

Structure

A few Canadian jurisdictions have already begun the process of developing a language-portfolio model for their learners. Like the ELP, a Canadian language portfolio could have three similar components: a passport, a biography, and a dossier.

Portfolio users

In the school context, the portfolio could be a tool for learning, assessment, communication, and management that involves the collaboration of a number of actors, including the student, teachers, parents, and other institutional stakeholders.

The student

The portfolio would actively engage learners in their learning process by highlighting their language proficiency, taking stock of their production, and helping learners to plan their continued learning and to reflect on their learning and self-assessment process. The portfolio would also be a communication and cooperation tool for the classroom, since it enables students to continuously document the progress of their work and motivate themselves to improve.

Teachers

The portfolio would enable teachers to negotiate learning objectives with their students to stimulate their motivation. It would facilitate the planning of learning situations and encourage joint teacher-student assessment to identify learning strengths and challenges in order to prepare appropriate remedial, reinforcement, or enrichment activities. At the end of a school grade or level (primary/elementary/secondary), teachers could verify the acquisition of competencies using the proficiency scale and make judgments accordingly.

Parents

The portfolio could be a tool to foster communication with parents, who would monitor their child's performance and progress through the significant productions included in the dossier. In some cases, parents could even help their child address challenges in learning. Seen in this light, the portfolio could strengthen the ties between schools and families.

Various stakeholders

The portfolio could be valuable for various stakeholders, such as remedial teachers, to help learners with their learning progress. It would also be useful for educational consultants who need to profile the learning difficulties of a number of learners to better target alternative educational interventions for improved quality of learning in schools.

Conclusion

An analysis of the CEFR shows that its recommended approaches for language teaching, learning, and assessment closely align with Canadian practices and curricula. Indeed, for the past 30 years, Canada has been recognized for its language-teaching expertise, which is reflected in the CEFR's pedagogical approaches. The common reference levels for assessing language proficiency are an added value that could benefit language learning in the Canadian context. However, it would be necessary to validate the levels, sub-levels, and descriptors in a school context, that is, from kindergarten to grade 12. In fact, it would be desirable that further reflection be undertaken in order to clearly define the scope and structure of such a validation exercise to ensure its rigour and effectiveness.

A number of education partners and jurisdictions hope to see the establishment of common reference levels:

- to report on student achievement and learning;
- to be used as a reference in the Canadian context;
- as the basis for developing a self-assessment portfolio for students from kindergarten to grade 12.

Given these needs, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, proposes that the CEFR occupy a central place in the Canadian context and be used as a reference tool to promote the establishment of local and regional initiatives to support language learning and encourage a growing number of students to learn another language. Thus, the CEFR could guide jurisdictions in delineating the rationale, including common reference levels, related to the teaching, learning, and assessment of language and intercultural competencies according to their context.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What is the Common European Framework of Reference: Learning, Teaching Assessment (CEFR)?**

    The CEFR is a reference tool developed by the Council of Europe to provide a common basis for the development of modern-language curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. The CEFR is a guide that allows individual users to analyze their situations and make the choices they feel are best suited to their context, while respecting key values. It is modulable, malleable, and multi-referential and contains numerous adjustable parameters.

2. **What approach is recommended in the CEFR for language teaching and learning?**

    The CEFR advocates an action-oriented approach whereby learners use language by performing tasks to communicate in a variety of contexts. This is the communicative approach outlined in the Canadian model of Canale and Swain (1980).

3. **What language-proficiency assessment methods are proposed in the CEFR?**

    In the spirit of a formative assessment, and to support the summative assessment of language proficiency, the CEFR outlines six common reference levels. These levels are scales developed for reference-measurement purposes in a metasystem (i.e., goes beyond one particular system). They facilitate comparison between the education systems in different countries (or regions within the same country) in order to eliminate the gaps between assessment procedures and outcomes that may exist between the various systems.

4. **How can a country use these common reference levels to assess its target population?**

    Countries use the common reference levels to develop proficiency sub-levels as recommended by the CEFR, which they calibrate and validate with their target population. Then, countries may develop one or more measurement tools that are also validated with the target population and subsequently administered to learners to determine their proficiency level via a progress report at the end of a significant learning sequence. The *Diplôme d'études en langue française* (*DELF*) [diploma of French-language studies] is an example of a reference tool that France has linked to the CEFR's common reference levels.

5. **Can the global scale (CEFR, p. 24) and self-assessment grid (CEFR, pp. 26–27) of the CEFR's common reference levels be used "as is" for learners in kindergarten through grade 12, within a given jurisdiction or across Canada?**

    Initially, the common reference levels and their descriptors must be verified, through validation, to ensure their relevance and accuracy in the Canadian kindergarten-to-grade-12 context.

6. **Would this validation of the common reference levels for the Canadian context compromise the international recognition of a given language-competence level?**

    While it cannot be confirmed at this stage, steps may be taken to align the Canadian reference levels with the CEFR levels. It will be important in the development of the validation tool to include descriptors that relate specifically to the Canadian context and to ensure their calibration for statistical analyses.

7. **Can the descriptors of the CEFR common reference levels be used to guide the teaching, learning, and assessment process on a day-to-day basis?**

    The common reference levels included in the self-assessment grid (CEFR, pp. 26–27) give a global idea of what learners are expected to learn for each of the levels in the scale. For day-to-day use in the classroom, the general descriptors must be accompanied by more specific descriptors identified when sub-levels are developed, using the branching system set out in the CEFR.

8. **Can exemplars be collected using the common reference levels expressed as global descriptors?**

    Student exemplars are typically collected from specific descriptors linked to the target population. These exemplars are then assessed by experts (Angoff method or other) in order to attribute a specific level of proficiency to each exemplar. Hence, they serve as a guide to help educators in a given jurisdiction or country develop an unambiguous understanding of what given descriptors mean in terms of observable behaviours.

9. **Is it necessary to validate the reference levels, their sub-levels, and their descriptors?**

    Where learning-assessment values are concerned, societies must be accountable for the accuracy and reliability of the assessment tools they use in making judgments about learner proficiency and decisions that affect curricula in school, university, or other programs. Fundamental values, such as fairness, equity, and equality for students, and instrumental values, such as assessment coherence, rigour, and transparency, must be upheld (Joint Advisory Committee, 1993).

    From an ethical perspective, learning assessment leads to decisions with potentially important implications for learners. Accountability gives effect to a collective responsibility to ensure assessment quality vis-à-vis given aims and the learning contexts in which students are subjected. Any variance can affect the credibility of the assessment and may be challenged.

10. **What is the European Language Portfolio?**

The European Language Portfolio (ELP) was initially created in the context of mobility between countries as a means for individuals to present certifications and official assessments of their level of attainment and proficiency in terms of language learning. It also enables users to record their more informal experiences with other languages and cultures and to develop learner autonomy in language learning. The ELP has three components. The passport documents the various assessments that attest to the recognition of learning and mastery of skills by the learner. The biography reports on linguistic and cultural experiences outside the institutional system, as well as on progress in learning and self-assessment. The dossier includes samples of a student's work, learning log, etc. that illustrate the learner's knowledge (savoirs), skills and know-how (savoir-faire), and existential competence (savoir-être) in relation to the learning processes.

11. **What are the parameters for developing a language portfolio?**

In the European context, portfolios were developed based on: (a) checklists for each self-assessment level; (b) the self-assessment grid for the five linguistic skills; and (c) the global scale used to describe levels of proficiency and achievements to facilitate comparison between different qualification systems. The portfolio was piloted in 1996 by several hundred learners at the postsecondary level in universities and adult-education institutions in the different language areas of Switzerland (Council of Europe, 1997, p. 76). For the European portfolio (Council of Europe, 1997, p. 11), the most difficult aspect is quality control in terms of other courses and diplomas seeking qualification status. It is a matter of equity for students and accountability of the system charged with protecting public interests.

12. **What qualities should a language portfolio have? Should it be a common instrument?**

The portfolio does not necessarily have to be a common instrument. As mentioned above, it may be beneficial to decide to use the same three sections as the European portfolio to facilitate transparency, coherence, and the trans-institutional scope of the information it contains. By providing identification that is immediately recognizable and clear, it becomes easier to manage. However, it must have the flexibility required to be used as an educational tool.

Diversity is an essential characteristic of Europe and inevitably leads to different implementations of identical principles. ELP models show considerable variety in design, form, and content, despite the common core and the initial agreement on principles. Nonetheless, the common core appears to serve as a viable guide during the production phase without stifling creativity. In the Canadian context, this aspect could be very useful.

13. **Who owns the language portfolio?**

The portfolio is the property of the learner. However, the younger the learner, the greater the involvement of the teacher in introducing students to the benefits of this tool and in helping them to gradually take charge of their personal, social, and academic enrichment.

References

Bachman, L.F. (1990). *Fundamental considerations in language testing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Canale, M. (1983). On some dimensions of language proficiency. In J.W. Oller, Jr. (Ed.), *Issues in language testing research* (333–342). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Canale, M. & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics*, 1, 1–47.

Candelier, M. (2005). L'éveil aux langues, Une approche plurielle des langues et des cultures au service de l'extension des compétences linguistiques. In L.F. Prudent, F. Tupin & S. Wharton (Eds.), *Du plurilinguisme à l'école : Vers une gestion coordonnée des langues en contextes éducatifs sensibles* (417–436). Bern: Peter Lang.

Castelloti, V. (2001). *D'une langue à d'autres : Pratiques et représentations*. Rouen: Collection Dyalang.

Coste, D. (2007). Le Cadre européen commun de référence pour les langues. Contextualisation et/ou standardisation? In *Le Cadre européen, une référence mondiale*? 2007 Sèvres proceedings, Dialogues et Cultures, 54, 19–29. Paris: Fédération internationale des professeurs de français.

Council of Europe. (1997). *European language portfolio — Proposals for development*. Strasbourg: Council for Cultural Cooperation, Education Committee.

Council of Europe. (2001). *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cummins, J. (1981). The role of primary language development in promoting educational success for language minority students. In California State Department of Education, *Schooling and language minority students: A theoretical framework* (3–49). Los Angeles: California State Department of Education.

Cummins, J. (2000). *Language, power and pedagogy* — Bilingual children in the crossfire. Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters.

D'Alessio, G., Womi, M., & Stoks, G. (2003). *Valutazione del Progette Portfolio Europeo delle Lingue, Rapporto finale*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

D'Anglejan, A., Lussier, D. & Dagenais, D. (1990). *Recherche-action sur le développement, la mise à l'essai et l'évaluation formative de nouvelles pistes d'intervention à l'intention des élèves non francophones analphabètes ou en retard scolaire dans les écoles françaises de Montréal*. Montreal: Quebec Ministry of Education.

Dijk Van, T. (1997). *Discourse studies — A multidisciplinary introduction*. London: Sage.

Grosjean, F. (1993). Bilinguisme et biculturalisme : Théories et pratiques professionnelles. Proceedings of the 2nd Symposium on speech/language therapy, *TRANEL*, 19, 13–41.

Guilherme, M. (2002). Critical citizens for an intercultural world. *Series ICE – Languages for Intercultural Communication and Education*. Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters.

Hébert, Y. & Sears, A. (n.l.n.d.). *Citizenship education*. Ontario: Canadian Education Association. http://www.cea-ace.ca/media/en/Citizenship_Education.pdf

Lazar, I., Kriegler, M., Lussier, D., Matei, G. & Peck C. (Eds.). (2007). *A guide for language teachers and teacher educators*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.

Lussier, D., Auger, R., Clément, R. & Lebrun-Brossard, M. (2004). *Représentations culturelles, identité ethnique et communication interculturelle chez les jeunes adultes*. Ottawa: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Lussier, D., Auger, R., Urbanicova, V. & Armengol, M. (2003). Representations of others and other cultures in the context of initial and ongoing training of teachers. In G. Zarate, A. Gohard-Radenkovic, D. Lussier & H. Penz (Eds.), *Cultural mediation and language teaching* (191–233). Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.

Lussier, D., Golubina, K., Ivanus, D. et al. (2007). Guidelines for the teaching of intercultural communicative competence. In I. Lazar, M. Kriegler, D. Lussier, G. Matei & C. Peck (Eds.), *Developing and evaluating intercultural communicative competence: A guide for language teachers and teacher educators* (25–43). Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.

Lussier, D. & LeBrun-Brossard, M. (2009). *Projet Héritages – Cadre de référence*. Rapport de recherche. Montreal: Commission scolaire de Montréal.

Joint Advisory Committee. (1993). *Principles for fair student assessment practices for education in Canada*. Edmonton: University of Alberta. http://www.education.ualberta.ca/educ/psych/crame/ files/eng-prin.pdf

Moore, D. (2006). *Plurilinguismes et école*. Paris: Didier.

Rosen, E. (2007). *Le point sur le Cadre européen commun de référence pour les langues*. Paris: Clé international.

Stern, H.H. (1983). *Fundamental concepts of language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Stern, H.H. (1992). *Issues and options in language teaching* (P. Allen & B. Harley, Eds.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Vandergrift, L. (2006). Proposal for a common framework of reference for languages for Canada. *New Canadian Perspectives*. Ottawa: Department of Canadian Heritage.

Zarate, G., Gohard-Radenkovic, A., Lussier, D. & Penz, H. (2003). *Cultural mediation and language teaching*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.

APPENDIX I

Examples of Innovative Programs and Specific Projects in the Canadian Context

Immersion Programs

Immersion programs first began in 1967 at the request of anglophone parents in the Montreal area. Already in 1962, studies carried out by Peal and Lambert of McGill University showed that bilingual students' results on oral and other tests were equal to or better than those of unilingual students. Studies led by Lambert and Tucker (1972) were able to demonstrate that students showed no cognitive delay in English and other subjects. In recent years, the implementation of different types of immersion programs has become a matter of interest for European countries, and the European Centre for Modern Languages has organized information sessions for interested countries (Hayworth, Marquardt, Medgys & Lussier, 1999).

Intensive Teaching English-as-a-Second-Language Programs in Quebec and New Brunswick

Intensive teaching English-as-a-second-language programs were developed by Montreal researchers Lightbown and Spada (1989) in response to the lack of immersion programs available to francophone students in Quebec, due to Bill 101. This model allowed for the teaching of English as a second language to be concentrated over a period of five months during one school year.

Intensive Teaching French-as-a-Second-Language Program

The intensive French program, which was developed by Germain and Netten (2004), uses similarities and differences with the multi-dimensional curriculum as its reference point, as well as the communicative approach. The object is to build on learning concepts applied in immersion and core French programs. It is, therefore, as much a matter of developing precision (the aim of core French programs) as it is a matter of developing fluency (the aim of immersion programs) in the same program, while stressing literacy development. It should be noted that the intensive period lasts five months at the very beginning of the course, followed by a more regular schedule, for example, one hour every two days instead of 30 minutes per day, for the last five months of the first year and of subsequent years.

"Welcome"/Reception Classes

"Welcome" or reception classes are transition classes designed to allow new immigrant students in a given jurisdiction to learn English or French in order to better integrate into regular classrooms after a period of time. Some jurisdictions have phase-in programs whose objective is the same as that of welcome classes. However, these students are part of the regular classroom for the entire duration of the phase-in period. In Quebec, D'Anglejan, Lussier, and Dagenais (1990–1993) have done action research to develop an education program for high-school immigrant students in welcome classes who have significant learning delays. The education approach and training objectives foster literacy development and writing literacy through educational means, while incorporating different school subjects. Elsewhere in Canada, similar projects have been developed or are being developed in response to the literacy needs of this group.

Heritage-Language Teaching Programs

In Quebec, heritage-language teaching programs have been implemented since 1978 to develop immigrant students' native languages and cultural identity, to promote better language learning. The programs' objective is to help build essential reference points for learning related to identity. These programs are offered within school divisions outside of the school curriculum.

Aboriginal-Language Immersion Program in Manitoba

Wanipigow School is part of the Frontier School Division in Manitoba. The people self-identify as Anishinaabe, Ojibwe, or Saulteaux. In 2007, the Anishinaabe-language immersion program was offered as a choice for nursery students who were beginning classes that school year. The selected immersion teacher was certified, fluent in the language, and from the community. This teacher would move each year with the same group of students, and a new nursery teacher would be hired with the next group. Currently, there are three classes: nursery, kindergarten, and grade 1/2. For the 2009–10 school year, there will be no additional grade/class added. Instead, a language-immersion resource person was hired to assist in programming and resource development. Once that is in place, the language-immersion classes will once again build year by year, with a new intake and a new teacher each year.

The key components for the successful implementation of the Wanipigow-language immersion program are described as follows:

- The impetus for the program was community-driven, with Elders and community leaders gathering to advocate for its implementation.
- Parents of the students in the program were consulted and were fully supportive of the program.
- A key aspect of the language program's success is that the immersion teachers work alongside Elders/fluent speakers on a daily basis. They provide crucial guidance and support for teachers and students.
- The teachers/Elders/helpers are all from the community, and all have a vested interest in, and an ongoing commitment to, its successful implementation.
- All subject areas are taught using the Aboriginal language as the vehicle for instruction.
- The program is, first and foremost, based on the Anishinaabe culture and language, with traditional practices and values incorporated into the program.
- Above all, students develop a positive cultural identity and self-esteem. They all know that they are Anishinaabe and that their language is a key part of their identity.
- In a follow-up study of several of the students who switched to an English program for grade 2, it was found that they excelled in English. One student moved forward 20 levels in reading in English. These students have excellent problem-solving skills.

Novel Approach to Curriculum Revision in British Columbia

British Columbia has provincial curricula for six additional languages (French, German, Japanese, Mandarin, Punjabi, and Spanish.) Current curriculum documents support the communicative-experiential approach through learning outcomes that express what students who fully meet expectations should be able to do at the end of each grade level of study. A revision of the BC additional-language curricula is now under way, using the

Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) as a guideline and aligning BC's prescribed learning outcomes with the CEFR's proficiency scales.

BC students must study an additional language for at least four years. Under the new curriculum, boards of education will offer programs that allow BC students to acquire basic communication skills at a minimum of Level A2 after four years of additional-language learning. The CEFR levels are being subdivided to assist schools in implementing the concept of levels instead of grades. Differences between languages that use the Roman alphabet and those that use characters or scripts are taken into account when setting learning outcomes in the competencies of reading and writing. For example, at Level A2, a student of an alphabetic language should be able to write a short personal letter, while a student of a character-based language should only be required to write a simple message using familiar characters. By the end of the fourth year, a character-based-language student should reach Level A2, while an alphabetic-language student should reach B1.

The BC ministry of education has taken a novel approach to this curriculum revision. In previous curriculum development or revision, only one language was considered at a time, and the entire curricular cycle to revise all six additional languages would have taken up to 12 years. In order to bring the benefit of the CEFR to all additional-language learners, a summer institute was held in August 2008 at which a large group of teachers representing all six languages reached a general consensus to adapt the CEFR when reviewing BC's language curricula. Revision work on all the language documents will continue throughout 2009–2010.

Since 1996, BC has recognized the results of language exams administered by national or international education organizations. Students who pass these external exams at specific levels may earn credit toward secondary-school graduation. Currently, BC has approved external language exams in more than 50 languages, including the six languages for which the program has its own curricula. Among these language exams are some unique but popular languages, such as Arabic, Bulgarian, Czech, Hebrew, Hindi, Punjabi, Romanian, Swedish, Tagalog, and Urdu.

English-as-an-Additional-Language (EAL)/French-as-an-Additional-Language (FAL) Reception Centre in Prince Edward Island

The primary objective of the English-as-an-Additional-Language (EAL)/French-as-an-Additional- Language (FAL) Reception Centre is to welcome new EAL/FAL students and integrate them into the public school system in a timely manner, while providing linguistic support tailored to each student's specific needs. The EAL/FAL Reception Centre comprises an EAL/FAL Coordinator, two Assessment Specialists, an EAL/FAL Cultural Awareness Specialist, an EAL/FAL Counsellor/School Liaison, and 22 EAL/FAL teachers. The EAL/FAL Reception Centre follows an itinerant model, under the guidance of the Prince Edward Island Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, ensuring that appropriate services are available to all immigrants to PEI, regardless of where they settle in the province.

Integrated French Program in Nova Scotia

Some schools in a number of school divisions in Nova Scotia offer an integrated French program to students in anglophone schools who wish to develop a greater degree of competency in French. Integrated French begins in grade 7 and continues to grade 12. Students in this program take an accelerated French language-arts course and one other subject (usually a social-studies course) taught in French. The French language-arts course is designed to support the language needs of students in the second subject area taught in French. The department of education is presently developing integrated curricula for grades 7 and 8. These curricula integrate the language-arts and social-studies learning outcomes and foster the use of French-as-a-second-language learning strategies.

Alberta Programs

Alberta Education supports francophone, French immersion, and bilingual programming, as well as the instruction of French as a second language and First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and international languages. Programs of study as well as learning and teaching resources have been developed and authorized to support these programs and courses.

Alberta Education has initiated a correlation between the French language-arts and French-as-a-second-language programs of study, as well as the programs of study for Spanish language and culture courses, with the Common European Framework of Reference. This project will inform the department and school jurisdictions about programs of study in relation to the CEFR. Alberta Education has also initiated a correlation between the newly developed English-as-a-second-language benchmarks with the CEFR and the Cambridge Proficiency Scale.

Special Language Advisors in Alberta support the administration of international-language-credentialing examinations in German, Spanish, and Ukrainian. *Diplôme d'espagnol langue étrangère* (*DELE*) examinations for Levels A2 and B1/B2 are being written by students in both bilingual and language and culture programs in Spanish. German students are writing the Sprachdiplom A2, B1, B2, and C1. Ukrainian bilingual students are writing the B1 level of the Exam for International Students at the Ivan Franko National University in Lviv (Ukraine) for Alberta High School Students. Examinations in Chinese and Japanese, which have not yet been correlated to the CEFR, are also supported by the Special Language Advisors from China and Japan.

A number of school authorities have embarked on projects related to the training of teachers to administer the international-credentialing examinations, and are testing students in a number of languages. The DELF/DALF is one such language area.

APPENDIX II

Additional Resources (to be updated)

Web sites

• The Council of Europe: http://www.coe.int Language Policy Division: http://www.culture.coe.int/lang and http://www.coe.int/portfolio

• European Centre for Modern Languages: http://www.ecml.at/

• The following sites can be used to consult documents recently published by the Council of Europe and the European Centre for Modern Languages: http://www.coe.int ; http://book.coe.int ; http://www.ecml.at

• The following site provides access to the CEFR User Guide developed by the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe:
http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portfolio/documents/Guide-for-Users-April02.doc

• The following sites provide access to the home page of the Council of Europe's language-portfolio site (English and French versions). Readers can also access a data bank of self-assessment descriptors for learners that are linked to the six CEFR proficiency levels:
http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portfolio/?L=E&M=/main_pages/welcome.html
http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portfolio/?L=E&M=/documents_intro/Data_bank_descriptors.html

• A curriculum framework for Romani: This document contains "Can Do" statements for Levels A1, A2, B1, and B2 related to speaking (spoken interaction), understanding (listening and reading), and writing. It is available, in English and Romani, on the Web site of the Language Policy Division: http://www.coe.int/lang ("Minorities and Migrants" section).

• The following site of the European Centre for Modern Languages promotes the European Language Portfolio and its implementation: http://elp.ecml.at

• These sites provide information on a new feature, the Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters:
http://www.coe.int/t/DG4/AUTOBIOGRAPHY/default_en.asp ;
http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/autobiography/Source/AIE_en/AIE_introduction_en.pdf ;
http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/autobiography/AutobiographyTool_en.asp

- The Council of Europe's European Centre for Modern Languages is investing in the promotion of innovative approaches in the area of language education. Consult the Documentation and Resource Centre to find out more about research projects and recent developments, including:
    - Representations of others and other cultures in the context of initial and ongoing teacher training
    - Guidelines for the assessment of intercultural communicative competence http://www.ecml.at/doccentre/doccentre.asp?t=rescentre&l=E
- The following site provides templates, including Language Biography templates: http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portfolio/?L=E&M=/documents_intro/Templates.html
- A site on the European Language Portfolio, from piloting to implementation 2001–2004: http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portfolio/documents/Consolidated report rev 030904.doc

It is also helpful to read the 2007 interim report by Rolf Schärer, General Rapporteur at the Language Policy Division in Strasbourg. This report provides a concise summary of the European Language Portfolio (ELP) activities and their impact from 2001 to October 2007. It is based on information contained in earlier reports, as well as structured and unstructured feedback from a multitude of sources during that period. The focus in this report is on some of the key aspects of ELP implementation, considered as a common European endeavour. The examples of evidence include experience reported from a variety of contexts by individual, collective, local, regional, national, and international stakeholders. The report can be found at http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portfolio/documents/DGIV-EDU-LANG%20(2008)%201%20Eng%20Interim%20Report%20ELP.doc .

Print materials

- Information kit: The Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT) — *A Common Framework of Reference and a Portfolio for Languages in Canada*, 2nd Edition, Fall 2008, http://www.caslt.org/what-we-do/resources-common-framework-ref-lang-portfolio_en.php
- Androulakis, G., Beckmann, C., Blondin, C. et al. (2007). *Pour le multilinguisme*: *Exploiter à l'école la diversité des contextes européens — Résultats d'une étude internationale*. Liège: Éditions de l'Université de Liège.
- Beacco, J.-C., Lepage, S., Porquier, R. & Riba, P. (2008). Niveau A2 pour le français. Paris: Didier.
- Beacco, J.-C. & Porquier, R. (2006). *Niveau A1 pour le français*. Paris: Didier.
- Council of Europe. (1999). *Innovative approaches to the organisation and set-up of language education*. Graz: European Centre for Modern Languages.
- LeBlanc, R. (1990). *A synthesis: National core French*. Ottawa: Éditions M.
- LeBlanc, R. (1990). Le curriculum multidimensionnel. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 47 (1), 32–42.
- Legendre, M.F. (2000). Qu'est-ce qu'une compétence? *Revue Virage*, 3 (3), 4–6.
- Tremblay, R. (1990). Professional development for a multidimensional curriculum. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 47 (1), 93–105.