

# The Language Passport

Learning Through Can-Do Statements



## What is the European Language Portfolio (ELP)?

The ELP is an application of the Common European Framework of Reference (6 levels of proficiency). It is a project of the Council of Europe, which is comprised of 47 member states. The ELP is developed locally (by country or region) but is validated by the Council of Europe's Validation Committee. The ELP exists in many different versions for different age groups (from young learner through adult) and for different countries and regions. There are 1.25 million users so far and 70+ validated ELP models.

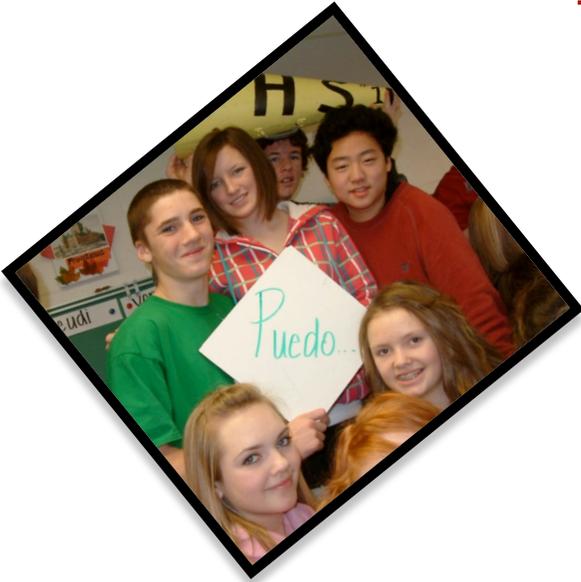
There are three key components to all portfolios. First, the Language Passport, which gives an overview of a learner's proficiency in different languages at a given point in time. Second, the Language Biography, which is a record of personal development in language learning. And third, the Dossier, which is a personal collection of materials that illustrates and documents a learner's language progress and achievement.

There are several guiding principles of the ELP that include the following: the owner of the ELP is the learner, competence is valued positively ("can do" statements), learning in and outside formal education is promoted, learning is a life-long perspective, the ELP is based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

The ELP also serves various pedagogical functions. The ELP makes the language learning process more transparent for learners. It helps them to develop capacity for reflection and self-assessment. The ELP enables learners to assume more responsibility for their own learning and thus impacts student motivation (use of the ELP ensures that what goes on in the classroom is relevant). Finally, the ELP emphasizes learning how to learn and developing critical thinking skills.

For more information on the Common European Framework of Reference or the European Language Portfolio, please see the Council of Europe website: [http://culture2.coe.int/portfolio/inc.asp?L=E&M=\\$t/208-1-0-1/main\\_pages/welcome.html](http://culture2.coe.int/portfolio/inc.asp?L=E&M=$t/208-1-0-1/main_pages/welcome.html) and the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT) website: <http://caslt.org/research/portfolio.htm>.

# The Fredericton High School Pilot Project



The creation of the Fredericton High School (FHS) Language Passport started as a Professional Learning Community (PLC) in January 2008. The first phase of the project, The FHS Language Passport Pilot #1, began in Fall 2008. Financial support for the project was received from the New Brunswick Teachers' Association (NBTA) via a Learning Team Grant, beginning Winter 2009. Then, FHS teachers began working in collaboration with the Second Language Research Institute of Canada (L2RIC) at the University of New Brunswick beginning May 2009, which provided further financial support for the pilot project.

**"I really like how this project celebrates the many cultures represented in our school." (FHS student)**

During and following this initial piloting of the Language Passport, feedback was collected from teachers and students by way of surveys and focus group interviews. Based in part on this feedback as well as on further collaboration with FHS teachers, a revised and revamped Language Passport was created in Spring/Summer 2009. The FHS Language Passport Pilot #2 began September 2009.

During both the first and second pilot phases of the project, the Language Passport was used in Core French, French Immersion Language Arts, Spanish, and English as an Additional Language (EAL) classes.

**"I like the idea of the passport because you can look back after you graduate and see what you've accomplished in learning languages." (FHS student)**

The FHS Language Passport Pilot is currently set to run through to June 2010. Next steps include looking at validation through the European Validation Committee and making contact with School Districts in Alberta and teachers in Europe who use passports in their classrooms.

**"I think it [the portfolio] was useful [for the teacher] because, I don't know if it was just coincidence or something, but a lot of our lessons seemed to fit in perfectly with the tasks that we needed to next accomplish." (FHS student)**

