NCCA

Student language portfolio:
Guidelines for students

Leaving Certificate Mandarin Chinese

January 2022

Contents

Introduction

These guidelines have been created to support students in the development of language portfolios for Leaving Certificate language specification for Mandarin Chinese.

They aim to:

- explain the background to the language portfolio

- describe and clarify the purpose of the portfolio

- outline how the portfolio supports learning, teaching and assessment

- provide guidance and examples for students as they build their portfolio

- provide reflection templates to support students in setting goals and reflecting on using and learning the target language. These templates can be adapted to suit the learner's context.

The language portfolio: Background and rationale

The vision of senior cycle sees the student at the centre of the educational experience and aims to enable students to be resourceful, confident, active participants in society, who develop an ability to learn throughout their lives. At a practical level, this is supported by:

- learning and teaching approaches that motivate and interest students, that enable them to progress, deepen and apply their learning, and to develop their capacity to reflect on their learning

- a school culture that respects students, that encourages them to take responsibility for their own learning over time, and that promotes a love of learning.

The Leaving Certificate foreign language specification for Mandarin Chinese, aim to develop students' ability to

- use the target language for communicative purposes

- explore the interdependence between language and culture

- foster an appreciation of the value of languages

- develop their plurilingual and pluricultural competence.

A framework approach has been used to develop the specification for the learning and teaching of Mandarin Chinese. While the Leaving Certificate specification for Mandarin Chinese is available to all students, including those from a heritage language background who wish to improve some or all of their skills within their communicative repertoire, and those who have no prior experience of the language, the expectations for students articulated in this specification are at ab initio[1] level.[2]

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[1] Ab initio is a Latin term meaning from the beginning ('ab' meaning from and 'initio' meaning beginning).

[2] While the CEFR Companion Volume is not generally used in relation to Mandarin Chinese, for transparency and consistency with the ab initio pitch, the specification has been informed by the CEFR educational aims and outcomes. The expectations for students are broadly aligned with Pre-A1/A1 levels of the CEFR.

Guidance for students

What is a language portfolio?

The language portfolio is a space in which you, the student, can record the process and progress of your language learning experiences, a place which focuses on your language journey.

The portfolio for Leaving Certificate Mandarin Chinese is developed over two years (fifth and sixth year).

You may use your language portfolio to regularly describe your language learning goals, to record what you observe about the language and to reflect on your progress and on the cultures of the target language country/countries and communities. You might also describe the steps you must take to make further progress as a language learner and a language user.
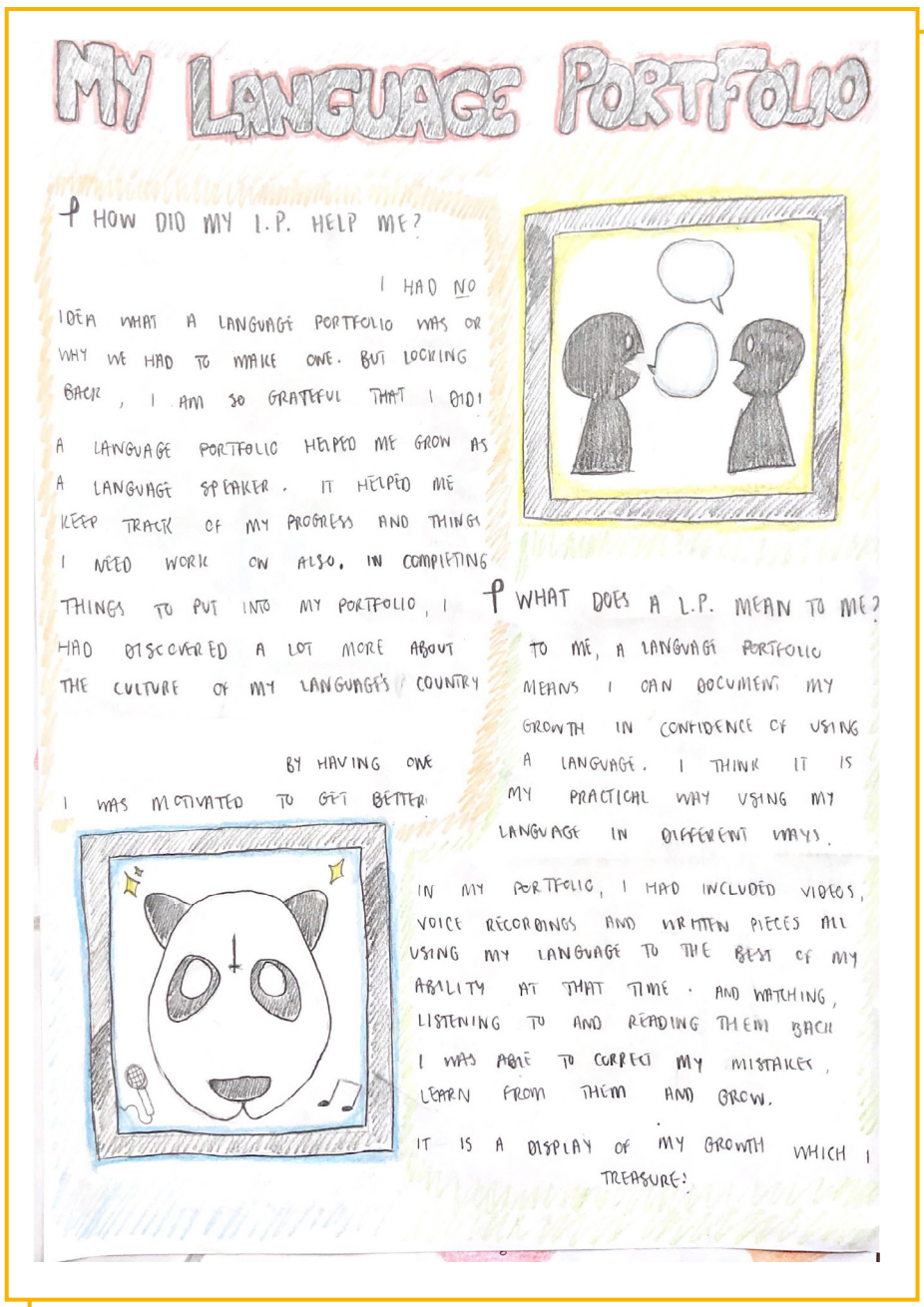
Example of a student's reflections on their experiences of using a language portfolio

What is the purpose of the language portfolio?

The purpose of the language portfolio is to create a space in which you can record and reflect on your growing language proficiency and your plurilingual and pluricultural competence. This means thinking about the progress you are making as a language learner.

Language portfolios support you in developing as an independent, lifelong language learner. You can do this by using the portfolio to:

- ✓ **Set language learning goals/goals for improvement**
- ✓ **Collect a variety of texts [3]**
- ✓ **Collaborate with others**
- ✓ **Assess your own work**
- ✓ **Reflect on how you learn and use the language**
- ✓ **Document and celebrate your achievements**
- ✓ **Connect with parents, teachers and the target language community**
- ✓ **Evaluate your language proficiency**

As part of your normal classwork, you will have lots of opportunities to notice and record how you learn and use languages and what you are learning about language communities.

Language portfolios also encourage a positive, collaborative language learning environment which celebrates your individuality, creativity, and your own plurilingual and pluricultural identity.

The language portfolio allows you to pursue your interests through the medium of the target language and to reflect on your own language learning experience. This involves an approach to learning and teaching which centres around you, the student. Creating and developing a portfolio is a hugely motivating experience as it allows you to express your identity.

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[3] Definition of Texts: All products of language use - oral, written, visual, or multi-modal - can be described as texts. Multi-modal texts combine language with other systems for communication, such as print text, visual images, sound and the spoken word.

What does a language portfolio include?

The language portfolio will include a broad range of items, such as:

✔ **Learning goals**

✔ **A wide variety of texts in different formats (handwritten, typed, multi-modal, spoken, etc.) – this might include various drafts of a text. ⁴**

✔ **Projects**

✔ **Audio-visual materials**

✔ **Learner reflections (for an example, see appendices 4-7, pages 26-31)**

✔ **Learning logs ⁵ (for an example, see appendix 8, page 32)**

It is recognised that in this context your created texts may be presented in different formats — handwritten, multi-modal, and so on. A definition of texts is available on page 20 in the Frequently Asked Questions section.

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⁴ For more examples of texts, see 'Selecting and Creating Texts for the Portfolio' on page 10 of this document

⁵ A learning log is a planned, purposeful, follow-up written response to a learning experience. These logs can be kept in a portfolio (online or written). They can help the students and teacher on the learning journey. In some cases they might be shared with another student or in a small group

LANGUAGE Portfolios

THE PURPOSE OF A LANGUAGE PORTFOLIO ALLOWED ME TO TAKE OWNERSHIP OF MY LEARNING THROUGH GOAL-SETTING AND REFLECTION.

TO START YOUR LANGUAGE PORTFOLIO YOU CAN LOOK THROUGH WRITING SAMPLES AND DRAFT COPIES FROM KEY LEARNING AREAS.

EXPECTATIONS OF A LANGUAGE PORTFOLIO: - ATTRACTION TO THE EYE. - LEGIBLE & MISTAKE FREE. - ORGANISED MIND AND WORK METHOD.

MY LANGUAGE PORTFOLIO WAS A GREAT WAY TO EXPLORE THE PROFOUND WAYS OF LEARNING A LANGUAGE.

TEACHER'S FEEDBACK CAN GUIDE YOU TO CREATE AN IMPECCABLE ROLE PLAY, WRITTEN PIECE OR AUDIO CLIP ETC.

UNDERGOING A LANGUAGE PORTFOLIO SUPPORTED MY MOTIVATION TO LEARN AND ENGAGE WITH MY LANGUAGE IN A FUN AND ENTERTAINING WAY.

MY LANGUAGE PORTFOLIO HELPED ME GAIN A GREATER FONDNESS OF GERMAN AND GERMANY AS A COUNTRY.

TO ME A LANGUAGE CONSISTS OF A BODY OF WORK THAT ENABLES STUDENTS TO RECORD AND REFLECT ON THEIR LANGUAGE LEARNING AND CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE / EXPERIENCES OF THAT COUNTRY.

PORTFOLIO

MY LANGUAGE PORTFOLIO HELPED ME TO IMPROVE MY VOCABULARY, GRAMMER AND WRITING SKILLS OF MY LANGUAGE.

How will I build up my portfolio?

You will build up your language portfolio over the two years of senior cycle with guidance and direction from your teacher.
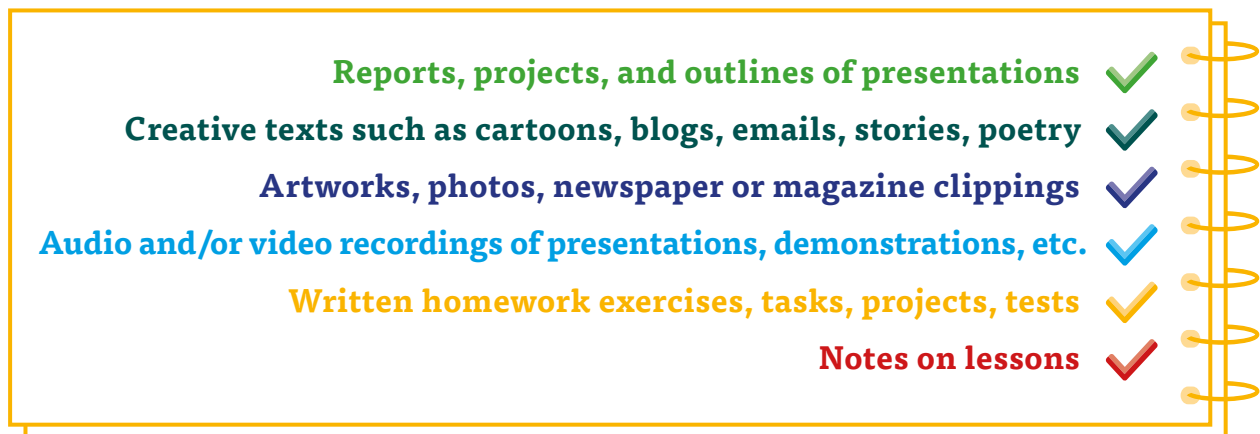
It is important to look at the language portfolio as a very important part of your learning which will support you in learning and in using the language you are learning.

Selecting and Creating texts for the portfolio

The focus of activity will be on the creation of a range of texts relating to your own world and to the target language community.

In the majority of cases, the work in your portfolio will arise from normal classwork. You might write a blog entry or an email, or might make a short video, and then select that piece of work for inclusion in the portfolio. If, at a later date, you consider another piece of work to be of better standard, then that piece can be added to or can replace the earlier piece of work.

Your portfolio should include many different types of texts. Here are some examples of texts you may wish to include. They are just examples and there are, of course, other formats that you may wish to create.

Reports, projects, and outlines of presentations ✓

Creative texts such as cartoons, blogs, emails, stories, poetry ✓

Artworks, photos, newspaper or magazine clippings ✓

Audio and/or video recordings of presentations, demonstrations, etc. ✓

Written homework exercises, tasks, projects, tests ✓

Notes on lessons ✓

Using your language portfolio to support reflection

Whilst most people engage in reflection on a daily basis, much of this occurs in quiet moments by ourselves. The portfolio also offers a space for reflecting on your learning in a more structured way.

Reflection helps you to better understand yourself as a learner. It will help you to identify how you learn, what you enjoy as a language learner and what you find difficult, so you can set goals for improvement.

Here are some ideas for reflecting on your learning: you could

- set goals and targets you are working towards
- reflect on your personal experience of using the language
- reflect on things you notice about the language and cultures
- reflect on your achievements in the language.

One particular aspect of reflection that is very important in your language portfolio is self-assessment. Self-assessment allows you to evaluate your own progress as a language learner.

You and your teacher will discuss what the expectations are for your language learning in general and for any unit of learning in particular. Being clear about the expectations will allow you to evaluate your work against these expectations. You can then reflect on what you have achieved, set targets for improvement and see how you are progressing in the learning over time. Here are some examples of self-assessment:

- discussing expectations with your teacher
- co-creating success criteria with your teacher
- setting goals and targets that are linked to the learning outcomes of the specification
- evaluations of a piece of work you have done.

How is the portfolio is used for assessment?

In using the language portfolio, you are encouraged to set goals for your learning, to make logs/records of your learning and to monitor your progress by reflecting on progress achieved. You will also be encouraged to self-assess your work and peer-assess the work of classmates.

By reflecting on your learning and assessing your work or the work of others, you will

- become more aware of the knowledge and language skills that you have developed

- identify specific areas of strength and difficulty that you have in language learning

- develop and action plan for future language learning

- gain a greater understanding of yourself and how you learn

- take more responsibility for your learning.

In summary: The process of creating your portfolio

Create   **Select**   **Reflect**
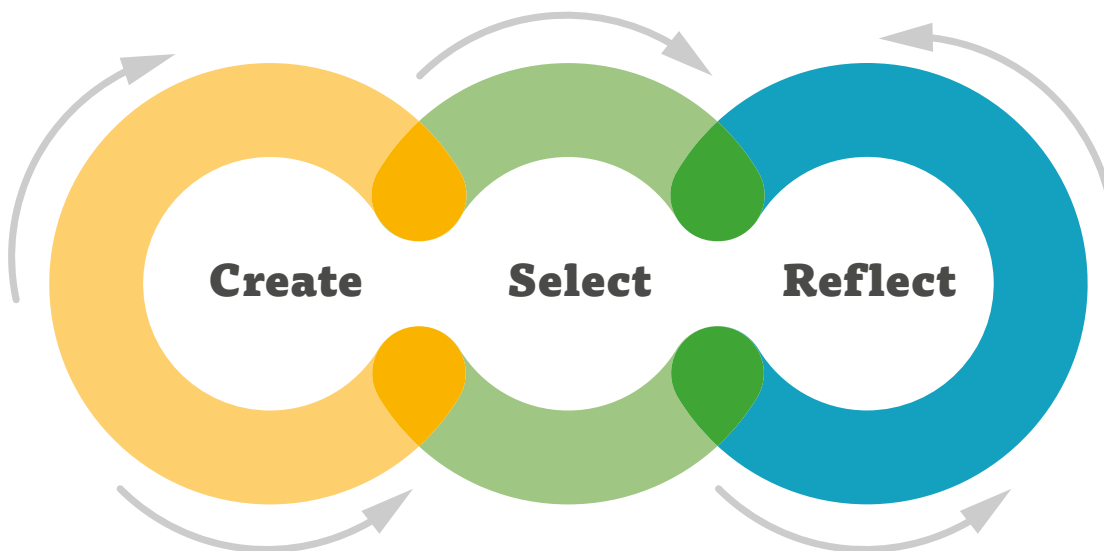
Key skills

As well as developing your language proficiency, building up a language portfolio will help you to develop the key skills of senior cycle. These skills will help you during your time in school and into the future, when participating in society, including family life, the world of work and lifelong learning.
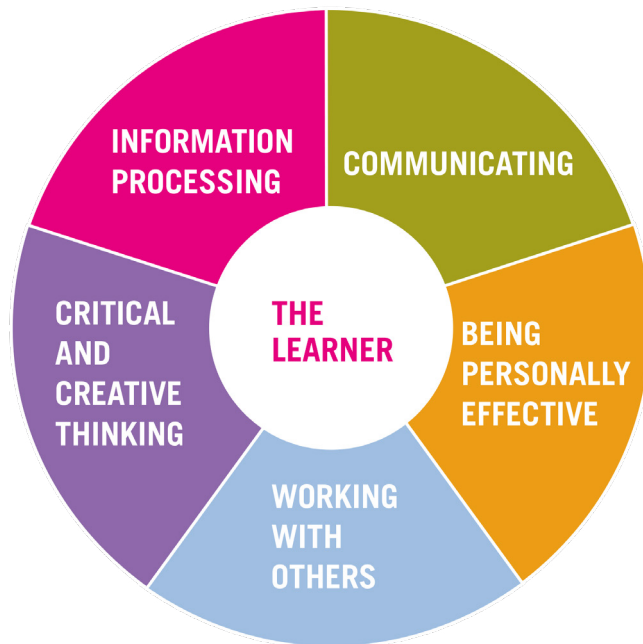
Assessment for certification

Assessment for certification in the Leaving Certificate specification for Mandarin Chinese will be administered and assessed by the State Examinations Commission (SEC).

The language portfolio is a stimulus for conversation and discussion during the oral examination, however, the portfolio itself will not be assessed for certification purposes.

What role does the portfolio play in the oral examination?

As outlined in the specification for Mandarin Chinese

" **the oral examination will assess language proficiency. It will focus in part on discussion about the Language Portfolio.**

The oral examination will assess student's ability to:

- use the target language with accuracy, fluency and complexity consistent with the requirements of the specification, while engaging in spoken reception, interaction, production and mediation

- demonstrate an awareness of the target language communities and cultures

- discuss a sample of texts from their language portfolio which reflect the plurilingual and pluricultural dimensions of their language learning journey.

This means that you will have the opportunity to talk about some of the texts in your portfolio which best reflect your learning and engagement with the learning outcomes. You will also be able to speak about how your experience of developing your portfolio contributed to your growing understanding of language, plurilingual and pluricultural dimensions.

For example you might be asked to use short, very simple language to:

- describe an interaction that you chose to include in your portfolio (e.g. an audio or video recording of a conversation, an interview, a role play etc.) where you collaborated in a simple, practical task with another person/ other people (CLC18) [6]

- talk about a text which shows how you were able to "research aspects of the diverse cultural heritage, for example cuisine…" (PPC11)

- discuss a text which shows how you researched and learned about "aspects of the target language country/ countries, communities and cultures, for example a significant historical event…" (PPC10)

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[6] Any references to PPC and CLC refer to learning outcomes in the specification. All learning outcomes can be found in the relevant specification document at https://www.curriculumonline.ie/Senior-cycle/Senior-Cycle-Subjects/

- have a conversation about a piece you developed and improved, based on feedback you received (PPC8)

- describe a text that you created which shows that you recognise and understand the similarities and differences between the language you are learning and other languages you know.

This list is not exhaustive and you might be asked to talk about other aspects of your portfolio.

NB: You will not bring your portfolio or individual pieces from your portfolio with you into the oral examination.

The role of the teacher in supporting students in developing their language portfolio

Assessment in senior cycle takes different forms and is used for a variety of purposes. As well as varied teaching strategies, varied assessment strategies will support student language learning by helping them to identify the next steps in the learning and teaching process, to highlight specific areas of difficulty or strength and to test and certify student achievement.

Formative Assessment

The Student Language Portfolio is part of the formative assessment process which takes places throughout fifth and sixth year.

Assessment is formative when either formal or informal procedures are used to gather evidence of learning during the learning process, and used to adapt teaching to meet student needs. The process permits teachers and students to collect information about student progress, and to suggest adjustments to the teacher's approach to instruction and the student's approach to learning. Assessment for learning covers all of the aspects of formative assessment but has a particular focus on the student having an active role in their learning.

Providing Formative Feedback to language learners

" **The most powerful single moderator that enhances achievement is feedback. The most simple prescription for improving education must be dollops of feedback. This does not mean using many tests and providing overprescriptive directions. It means providing information how and why the student understands and misunderstands, and what directions the student must take to improve.**[7]

Giving feedback to students is critical to improving learning as it both influences students' motivation to learn and their ability to do so. Quality feedback includes telling students what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. It also includes reminding students of what they were aiming to achieve (the learning intentions). High quality feedback is always given against explicit and agreed criteria for success.
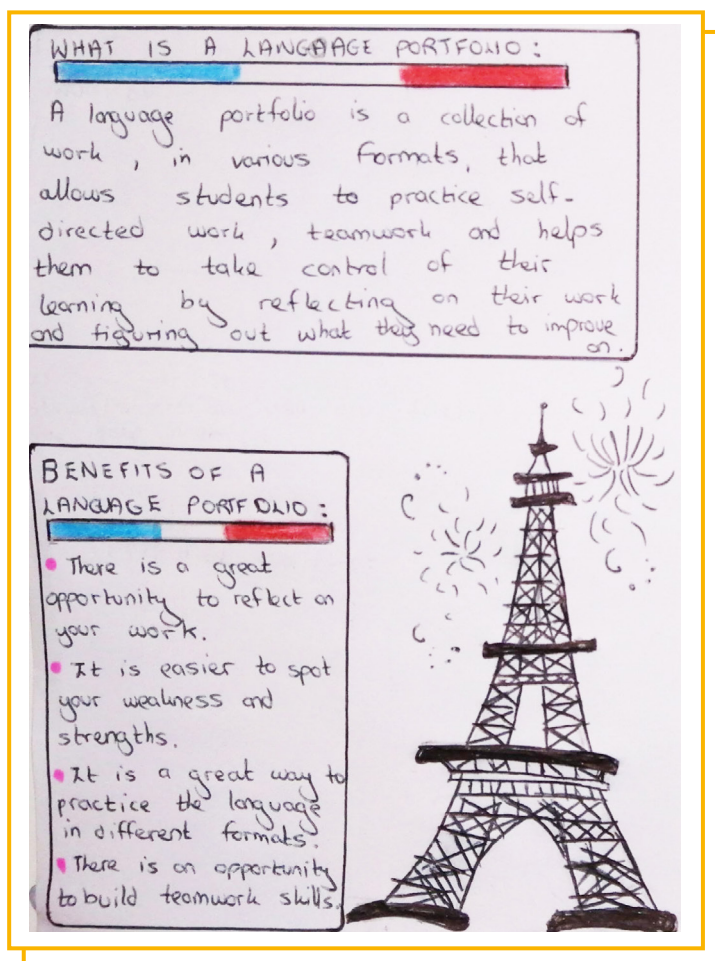
Example of a student's reflections on their experiences of using a language portfolio

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Effective feedback

✔ Focused on the quality of the student work

✔ Related to agreed success criteria

✔ Identifies success and achievement

✔ Indicates suggestions for improvement

✔ Prompts student thinking

✔ Allows time for improvement to take place

[8] Focus on Learning, Formative Feedback, NCCA, 2015, p.5.
Accessed at https://ncca.ie/media/1925/assessment-booklet-3_en.pdf

Encouraging Student Reflection [9]

Whilst most people engage in reflection on a daily basis, much of this occurs in quiet moments by ourselves. Most students are not used to reflecting on their learning in a structured manner. They will need some help to develop skills in reflective thinking and writing. This skill is taught in Junior Cycle so most students will be familiar with it and learn to develop it as they progress through Senior cycle.

Through reflection 'in' and 'on' learning students can

- become more aware of the knowledge and skills that they have developed

- identify strengths and areas for development

- develop and action plan for future learning

- gain greater understanding of themselves and how they learn

- take more responsibility for their learning.

Student Self-Assessment and Peer Assessment

In using their portfolio, students will be encouraged to self-assess and peer-assess their work and this will help them to further develop as an independent language learner and user.

As outlined earlier in this document, students will be encouraged to set goals for their learning, to create learning logs and to monitor their progress through reflecting on progress achieved.

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[9] Focus on Learning, Formative Feedback, NCCA, 2015, p.5.
Accessed at https://ncca.ie/media/1925/assessment-booklet-3_en.pdf

Helping Students to get started on their portfolio

Below are some initial questions for a classroom discussion to help students get started on their portfolio

How can I create pieces that reflect the plurilingual and pluricultural aspects of my language leanring journey?

What should a piece of work look like?

How does the Langauge Portfolio help my language learning?

Will my pieces be in electronic format or on paper?

How do I get started?

Do I redraft pieces in the porftolio when I get feedback?

What is the best way to reflect on my language learning?

Note: This list is not intended as prescriptive, there will be many other questions that students will have when they are starting their portfolio and as they continue through the process.

Frequently asked questions

Does everyone create a portfolio?

Yes, all students who do Leaving Certificate Mandarin Chinese (Ordinary and Higher level) will develop a portfolio over the two years of senior cycle.

What is meant by 'texts'?

All products of language use—oral, written, visual, or multi-modal—can be described as texts. Multi-modal texts combine language with other systems for communication, such as print text, visual images, sound and the spoken word.

What do plurilingual and pluricultural mean?

In the specification for Mandarin Chinese plurilingualism is defined as

> **the dynamic and developing linguistic repertoire of an individual user/learner in which they draw on all of their linguistic and cultural resources and experiences in order to participate more fully in social and educational contexts [10]**

This means applying all of your language learning and cultural resources and experiences to help you use and learn other/new languages.

Pluriculturalism is defined as

> **In a person's cultural competence, the various cultures (national, regional, social) to which that person has gained access do not simply co-exist side by side; they are compared, contrasted and actively interact to produce an enriched, integrated pluricultural competence.**

This refers to when you use your understanding of various cultures to help you understand and appreciate other/new cultures, by comparing, contrasting and actively thinking about them.

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[10] Mandarin Chinese Curriculum specification, DES, 2020, P 3

What does the language portfolio look like?

The language portfolio will look different for every student as it will capture your individual language learning journey. It is important for you and your teacher to decide whether you will store your work digitally or whether they will use a paper version of a portfolio. You may also use a blended language portfolio, with some texts stored online and some work stored in paper format.

Where is the language portfolio stored?

Your teacher will discuss with you where your language portfolio will be stored. It will vary depending on the school context. It is very important that you have access to your portfolio so you can track your progress and reflect on your learning. Technology can be of great help here, as you can store soft copies online while keeping your projects/artefacts safe in one place.

Do I bring my language portfolio to the oral exam?

No, you will not bring the language portfolio to the oral examination. The language portfolio is a stimulus for conversation and discussion during the oral examination, however, the portfolio itself will not be assessed for certification purposes.

When do we start working on the language portfolio?

You will work on the language portfolio from the beginning of fifth year. You will gather materials, research, complete pieces of work and reflect on the work as part of the normal learning and teaching process. The language portfolio is an important part of your learning and will be developed over the two years of senior cycle.

Can tests be part of a language portfolio?

Tests may be a normal part of classwork. Tests can be used to 'document' your achievements and may also be used to reflect on what you have learned and help you to set targets for improvement.

What about other pieces of work that arise from normal classwork? Are written homework exercises, tasks, projects, or notes on lessons also part of the portfolio?

These pieces of work form part of your language learning experience and are part of the process of collecting work so they can be included. You may or may not wish to use them to 'document' your achievements, but nevertheless they are part of your own individual language learning journey.

Is the language portfolio used for reporting purposes?

Teachers and school management in your school will decide how progress is communicated to parents and guardians. It is not feasible to document every piece of work over two years so your teacher will discuss with you which pieces of work will be used to document progress.

总体信息、目标和成果

我的姓名	
我学习的语言	
我为什么学习这个语言	
我以后想用这个语言做什么	
我用这个语言1）什么时间、2）做了什么	

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[11]附录中的模板仅作说明用。您可以直接使用或根据需要进行调整。

我喜欢在语言课上做的事情	
我做得好的事情	
我的跨文化经历（和这个语言有关系）	
我觉得难的事情	

日期: __/__/__	我正在学习的语言:	
	我的下一个目标:	
	我做了什么	
	我的想法、我的学习、我学到了什么	

日期: __/__/__	我正在学习的语言:	
	我的下一个目标:	
	我做了什么	
	我的想法、我的学习、我学到了什么	

我想用这个语言做这些事情：

日期：	语言		
__/__/__		我想做什么： 我想怎么做：	
__/__/__		我想做什么： 我想怎么做：	
__/__/__		我想做什么： 我想怎么做：	
__/__/__		我想做什么： 我想怎么做：	
__/__/__		我想做什么： 我想怎么做：	

附录 4：
对任务的反思

我正在学习的语言：	
为什么这是一个好的任务？	
这个任务，什么最有意思？	
这个任务，什么最难？	
我学习了什么？ ● 这个语言 ● 语言社群 ● 我自己	
我怎么做这个任务？我需要什么？	
这个任务，什么做得最好？为什么？	
这个任务可以更好吗？为什么？	

附录 5:
对跨文化经历的反思

我正在学习的语言:			
我为什么学习这个语言			
我在哪儿学习这个语言	学校	家	其他场所 (请注明)
我在哪儿用这个语言: ● 国家/地区 ● 时间 ● 日期	1 个月	3 个月	3 个月以上

我为什么去这个国家/地区

☐ 学习　　　　　　☐ 旅游　　　　　　☐ 其他原因 _____

我还拥有与这门语言相关的以下经历:		
语言证书和水平 (Pre A1 - B2)	证书/考试的名字	证书/考试的时间

语言：

我这样体验了这个语言的文化（日期） **1**

我这样使用了这个语言（日期） **2**

我这样了解了这门语言的文化（日期） **3**

语言：

我这样体验了这个语言的文化（日期） **1**

附录 6：
对语言和文化的反思

语言		
材料/媒介/资源	__ / __ /20	日期:
我学习/体验/了解到的语言或文化		

材料/媒介/资源	__ / __ /20	日期:
我学习/体验/了解到的语言或文化		

材料/媒介/资源	__ / __ /20	日期:
我学习/体验/了解到的语言或文化		

附录 7：
对语言使用的反思

A. 除了语言课以外，我怎么使用或学习语言：

日期	语言	什么时间？在哪儿？和谁？	我的想法、我学到和什么

日期	语言	什么时间？在哪儿？和谁？	我的想法、我学到和什么

日期	语言	什么时间？在哪儿？和谁？	我的想法、我学到了什么

B. 我有时/曾经使用几个语言，帮助不同的人（不同文化、不同语言）：

- 了解/学习不明白的东西或者事情，

- 了解另一个语言的信息（听到的、看到的、读到的）

- 其他帮助

日期	什么地方	什么语言	我做了什么? 有什么困难? 得到的帮助?
__ / __ /20			
__ / __ /20			
__ / __ /20			
__ / __ /20			

附录 8：
对交际方式的反思

我正在学习的语言：	
最近，我在用/想用这个语言的时候，有一个问题	
对这个问题，我做了什么？	
最近，我在用/想用这个语言的时候，有一个问题	
对这个问题，我做了什么？	
最近，我在用/想用这个语言的时候，有一个问题	
对这个问题，我做了什么？	

附录 9：
对学习方法的反思

一般信息、目标和成果

日期：__/__/__	我正在学习的语言	
	为了学习这个语言，我找了哪些帮助？	
	这些帮助有用吗？为什么？	
	我还用了一些新的方法：	
	这些方法有用吗？为什么？	

Appendix 10: Further Supports

Focus on Learning Booklets

Materials have been developed to support a whole-school approach to developing effective, ongoing assessment practice. These materials include workshop booklets and slides on the best ways to support formative feedback and student reflection.

Portfolio Supports at Junior Cycle

JCT have a range of supports for Junior Cycle Portfolios which can be accessed on their website. While Portfolios are assessed differently at Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle, the spirit of the portfolio is at the same at all levels.

Publication

Inside the black box: Raising standards through classroom assessment (Black, P., and Wiliam D. 1998).