

What is the theoretical framework and research that support the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements?

Too often learners are seen as subjects of assessment, not users of assessments. To become the primary users of assessment information, learners must make what they learn part of themselves. One important means for involving learners in their own learning process is by having them participate in a goal setting process to monitor their own progress to determine how well they are accomplishing their learning targets. Learning goals form the foundation for motivation in an instructional setting and for where working memory is being allocated. Motivation is critical to learning because, “without sufficient motivation even the brightest learners are unlikely to persist long enough to attain any really useful language” (Dörnyei, 2010, p. 74). It is vital to understand motivation in order to promote learner autonomy which is key to the continuation of language learning beyond the classroom.

Learning targets, expressed in terms of Can-Do Statements provide an important venue for setting learning goals to provide language learners the opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning through the establishment of positive short-and long-term learning goals and to monitor their own learning experiences to ensure accomplishment of these goals. SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time bound) goals, such as the Can-Do Statements, provide a clear direction to focus learners’ language learning efforts that will help them meet these goals. Such a constructivist, or sociocultural worldview, regards learning as an ongoing process where learners are continually involved in self-assessment and self-reflection about their own learning ultimately aimed at developing self-regulation and self-efficacy.

The impact on learners and learner achievement of Can-Do Statements, as evidenced in LinguaFolio® (LF®) and its European predecessor, the European Language Portfolio (ELP), has been investigated through a growing body of research. LinguaFolio® was designed to help language educators develop autonomous learning and learner empowerment. Research at the classroom level has revealed that goal setting, which is at the heart of LF® and ELP, promotes self-regulated learning, increases language and academic achievement, enhances motivation and task value, and improves self-assessment when implemented regularly and frequently (Burton & Swain, 2014; Ciesielkiewicz & Coca, 2013; Little, 2009; Little, 2003; Little, Goullier, & Hughes, 2011; Moeller, Theiler, & Wu, 2012; Ziegler, 2014; Ziegler & Moeller, 2012; Clarke, 2013; Moeller & Yu, 2015). Learners who experienced LF® as an

intervention in the world language classroom achieved higher academic outcomes as measured by cumulative GPA and ACT scores in math, science, reading, and English in comparison to students who were not exposed to LF[®] (Clarke, 2013).

These studies have shown that the major components of setting goals, documenting progress, and self-assessment of learning are critical in developing learner autonomy and self-regulation in language learners that contribute to increased motivation, higher language achievement, and academic success.

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