



European Association for Computer-Assisted Language Learning

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ReCALL Journal

The forthcoming issue of *ReCALL* (Vol. 16, Part 2) will be distributed to EUROCALL members in November/December 2004. Please send articles, software reviews, details of relevant events or other items of interest for future issues to June Thompson, Editor, *ReCALL*, EUROCALL Office, The Language Institute, University of Hull, Hull HU6 7RX, UK, E-mail: d.j.thompson@hull.ac.uk.

All articles are considered by an international panel of referees. Notes for contributors can be found at:

<http://www.eurocall-languages.org/recall/contrib.htm>

Reports on EUROCALL Special Interest Groups

CORPUSCALL: A New Special Interest Group in EUROCALL

EUROCALL 2003 saw the renewal of interest in corpora and language learning and teaching in the association, with a pre-conference workshop organized by Martin Wynne and Ylva Berglund, Oxford Text Archive, and Pernilla Danielsson, University of Birmingham, a number of papers on corpora and language learning and teaching delivered in parallel sessions, and a plenary lecture on "Spoken corpora and methodology" by Professor Michael McCarthy, University of Nottingham. During the conference a meeting, chaired by Ylva Berglund and attended by approximately 17 people, was held to discuss the possibility of setting up a Special Interest Group. The application for the CORPUSCALL SIG was accepted by the Executive Committee at its meeting in Vienna in March 2004.

The aims of the SIG are:

- To enable members to share information on applications of corpora in language learning and teaching.
- To take advantage of the international membership of EUROCALL to share information on applications in as many languages as possible.
- To gather information on work in progress, projects and products of members of the SIG and disseminate it via the website of the SIG.
- To participate actively in EUROCALL conferences and contribute articles on this field to EUROCALL-related publications.
- To organise EUROCALL pre-conference workshops.
- To encourage invitations for members of the group to visit each other's institutions with a view to developing collaboration.
- To develop joint funded projects.
- To liaise with the BAAL Corpus Linguistics SIG on matters of mutual interest.

A pre-conference workshop will take place at EUROCALL 2004 on corpora organized by Ylva Berglund, and several members of the SIG have submitted abstracts of papers for the conference, 24 for 2004 as opposed to 16 in 2003. A meeting of the SIG will be held in Vienna in September 2004 to discuss future developments within the framework of the aims of the SIG.

A discussion list entitled CORPUSCALL has been set up using JISMAIL .

Angela Chambers
University of Limerick (Ireland)

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Projects

MALTED - a shared experience

Introduction

The story of MALTED (Multimedia Authoring for Language Tutors and Educational Development) (www.malted.org) goes back a few years to the acceptance by the European Commission of the MALTED project for European Commission funding under the Educational Multimedia Task Force programme. The result is the appearance of the MALTED authoring system as freeware, available to all under a GNU agreement. The appearance of the MALTED2 version has resulted from considerable post-project development work by the Spanish Ministry of Education (CNICE - Educational Information and Communications Technology Unit).

This article will examine how the system addresses the points discovered in the needs analysis and trialling phases of the project, which have contributed to the creation of the most powerful language authoring tool to appear so far. It will also explain how the system has been introduced and disseminated, especially in Spain, and finally will explain varied examples of applications created using the tool.

The needs discovered

In the early stages of the project work, evidence was accumulated as to the need for such an authoring system, and the nature of the requirements for the same. It was clear that, with the advent of web-based or so-called "e-Learning", there were far too many examples of poor pedagogical applications, and what seemed like the dominance of technology over sound instructional design based on well-documented research into cognitive learning and modern second-language acquisition theories. There was (and is) too much re-invention of the wheel, when re-use of materials, templates and techniques could result in huge economies of scale. Authoring tools available specifically for languages (we are leaving to one side more complex, generic tools which require a considerable learning curve), almost invariably create "one-off" exercises, with the need for a Learning Management System to place them into a coherent sequence. Those consulted also gave their account of the exercise/activity types which they felt should be covered in an ideal authoring system.

The response of MALTED

The project also quarried from a rich mine of previous work on authoring systems. As a response to the perceived need for re-usable assets, MALTED has the power to provide access to an Asset Base of materials of varying granularity. The need for any authoring system to be flexible, offer complexity, and yet be accessible to an "average" tutor-developer is a difficult juggling act. MALTED is not a "pick up and go" system, and does require some training, yet is sufficiently user-friendly to keep this at a minimum level. It can offer facilities which will satisfy the low-level user in terms of results, but others which are extremely powerful and can be used only by the more experienced.

The question of pedagogical applications was at the forefront of the design process. MALTED offers a flexible approach to the creation of learning designs in two ways. Firstly the templates themselves are capable of adaptation in many ways. Any screen can be enhanced by the easy inclusion of Media Objects associated with a wide range of Actions. Secondly, all templates, when populated with content and thus becoming "Frames", can be linked together in a variety of ways, with or without conditions and variables, to create a learning system of great power, which can also incorporate activities created outside MALTED. Thus the whole range of design experiences can be catered for, from simple, discrete exercises to whole courses, from a one-off multiple choice to an extensive conditional branching routine.

The question of feedback formed an integral part of the MALTED design process. Research had informed the early stages of the project that there were far too many examples in web-based programs, where exercises resulted in tests with a meaningless score, with no feedback to the user which would help them develop knowledge and skills. MALTED sought to avoid this. Whilst scoring can be applied where appropriate, there are facilities for the inclusion of feedback in all its forms, intrinsic or extrinsic, and in the full range of media types.

Whilst it is clear that many in the educational world prefer to consider applications available to HTML browsers, MALTED came to the realisation that the levels of interactivity required to create pedagogically sound learning routines could only be achieved outside the basic HTML framework. The system uses Java to create the templates, and outputs the results as .XML files, rapidly becoming an industry-wide standard. The compromise of having to install Java and the MALTED run-time system or an applet on the client-side machine, is more than compensated for by the flexibility and richness of the system, especially since all the components can be downloaded free of charge.

The MALTED system explained

The MALTED program, in its Developer, Run-time Editor and full Run-Time modes, comprises a series of Interactions. Advanced users can start from these basic interactions, using a "blank sheet" to create activities. However, most will take advantage of the templates provided, which are instantiations of the interactions with parameters. Here is a full list of the template types provided:

Association	Free writing	Multiple Choice	Recording	Transcription
Crosswords	Hangman	Memory Game	Spelling	Translation
Dialogues	Matching	Ordering	Gap filling	True/False

Some of these have more than one version, according to functionalities required (such as instant verification of input), and there are, very importantly, a blank template and a "one-Panel" template. Figure 1 shows how a Hangman exercise was created by adapting the original template to provide a motivating learning environment.



Figure 1

Fundamental to understanding how MALTED works is to view its granularity. At the basic level there are media objects, which in turn are held in containers. Figure 2 shows a container added to a blank screen and Figure 3 shows a container with a media object inserted.



Figure 2

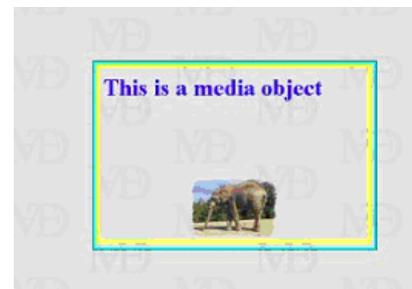


Figure 3

These are either already offered as embedded in a template, or can be added by the developer to any template type. When a developer creates an activity using a template, a frame is created, the properties of which can be set at frame, container or media object level, and containers or media objects can easily be copied from frame to frame. Figure 4 shows a dialogue box for setting properties.



Figure 4

In addition, part of the screen can be set aside for a panel, which will contain a set of cards. Whilst the rest of the screen is static, the cards inside a panel can change according to user input, useful for showing feedback, animations or menu structures. The "one-Panel" template exploits this. If what is required is not a specific template activity but a presentation or other activity not covered by the template list, then a "blank" template is also available, into which any combination of the other elements can be added.

The power of these elements is only realised when one sees that every element can be linked to an action. Actions can be called up as a frame loads, when the cursor is over or moves in or out of a hot area, and on clicking a button or hot spot. Available actions, many of which can have conditions associated with them, include:

- animation of cards in a panel
- linking to another frame or course (more on this later)
- execution of an external application
- opening a URL
- showing a pop-out text or full frame
- general navigation
- showing the result(s) in another area of the screen
- opening email facilities
- playing media such as audio or video
- recording student voice input

However, the most powerful feature of the system lies in the highest level of granularity - the course. Frames can be grouped together and linked to form an item of courseware, either in a simple linear mode, or with the complexity of added conditions to route learners according to, for example, performance, time or other variables. With the use of customised blank templates, this leaves

open the possibility of creating conditional branching programs, a pedagogically powerful technique which has been neglected over recent years.

Development, dissemination and training in Spain

In the final stages of the original project trialling was carried out. In Spain, where the major trialling took place, the evaluation programme consisted of a cascading solution, where key trainers were identified and given training to be imparted to others. Many hundreds of teachers thus had access to the system and were able to contribute to its improvement through evaluations. Currently, training is on-going in five of Spain's autonomous regions with others coming on-stream.

The trialling identified issues of navigation and other interface questions. But a major issue was the role of the asset base - the re-usable repository of content material which is to be one of the key elements of MALTED. In order to control the quality of assets uploaded, and to convince a wider audience of the benefits of the authoring system, it was decided to generate a critical mass of material of high pedagogic quality to populate the asset base, before it went "live". This is now under way.

There is another addition to the system, which the Spanish Ministry is finalising: a complete Learning Management System (LMS), which can track and store user input for evaluation, management or analysis. The current first-release version allows tutors and pupils to review the results of student interaction. The core of the system is a database with tables on users, pupils, teachers, administrators and exercises. The administrator associates a pupil to a tutor and to a set of exercises. After the user interaction, the system stores an .xml file, with data on times of entry and exit to each exercise, the answer selected by the user, the number of tries, and details of the user clicks, score and average on each. The pupil can access the database through a user-friendly interface, to check his/her performance, and the teacher can obtain information on each pupil or the average of a group of pupils in an exercise or set of exercises. The LMS, like the MALTED system, can work on-line, or on a school intranet, from a run-time system installed in each workstation, against a file server, without the need for an Internet connection. It is advisable, if bandwidth allows for it, to have the LMS and the MALTED units on-line, so that teachers, pupils and families can access from home, facilitating education beyond school walls. The freeware is being delivered either on CD-ROM or by download, along with the free JAVA programs.

In Spain, MALTED has certainly had a wider impact than elsewhere. It has been the tool selected for the creation of a major 9 CD English distance course. With the "Internet en la Escuela" programme, the Ministry is making available on-line interactive English learning materials, developed with MALTED, for secondary education. A key factor has undoubtedly been the flexibility of the system, enabling the tutor-developer to create courseware which can be used in many classroom configurations. Another factor in its acceptance has been the insistence on minimum conditions for those creating the early programs - such as good levels of feedback, and the creation of teachers' notes, which has been shown to foment a more careful pedagogic and instructional design phase on the part of the developers.

MALTED and collaborative learning in the OASIS project

The system has also been integrated into further initiatives, including the major new OASIS project, aimed at promoting collaborative learning. OASIS is an IST2000 project, funded by the European Commission to more than 3.5M€, and scheduled to end in August 2004. On the technological side, it is developing a school and zone architecture, together with a proposal for a European school interoperability framework which will allow the sharing of information between different platforms and applications. On the pedagogical side it is proposing a set of collaborative learning models enhanced by the support of technological services developed in the project architecture.

The second phase of the project is now under way, in which experimentation in 20 schools in 4 different Spanish provinces will assess the validity of the technically supported pedagogy proposed. It was felt that earlier didactic units developed with MALTED lacked more ambitious "classroom" proposals:

- Multimedia learning
- Personalised feedback from the system
- Internet navigation to extend information
- Pupil-tutor communication via email
- Access to resources through a metadata template
- Community of teachers sharing lessons and examples of good practice (alongside common concerns and difficulties)

Now the classroom proposals are pedagogically enhanced through the collaborative models developed in OASIS. The project architecture creates a collaborative space for learners, providing at the same time a cost-effective set of networked solutions for the operation and maintenance of school workstations and servers. This had been identified in earlier MALTED trials in Spanish schools as one of the main concerns of teachers when planning classroom practice. The pedagogical models benefit from the former to include:

- collaborative learning projects with learners of different countries
- involvement of families and extended school community actors
- interdisciplinarity
- pupils as authors on the Internet
- parents closely involved in pupils' education
- enhanced communication (not purely digital) between parents and teachers
- empowerment of out-of-school learning

One of the projects proposed by the English department of the Rey Fernando VI School near Madrid, envisages the study of the conditions of pupils' lives: their houses, transport, cultural environment, sports, leisure time, habits, prices - comparing them with those of a secondary school in Grenoble, France, also participating in the OASIS project. It will use materials developed with MALTED for English. Parents and grandparents will provide information on what life was like when they went to school. OECD statistics will be used to compare national and regional parameters with those obtained by pupils. The area of Mathematics will collaborate in the processing of information and comparing data. History will contribute with information on the history and geography of Spain, and vice-versa. Pupils of both schools will create a web site with the information gathered, with pictures taken to assist in the description of both places. Families are invited to participate in the collaboration between both schools. Examples of good practice will be disseminated to the teaching community.

In parallel, the Spanish Ministry's programme "Internet en la Escuela" (<http://www.cnice.mecd.es/recursos.html>) will widen experimentation on this model in Spanish schools, with the collaboration of the Spanish regional Autonomous Communities, working in particular on the area of English, using the contents developed with MALTED (<http://malted.cnice.mecd.es/ingles/>).

Where MALTED goes from here

The next step for MALTED is to extend its use, whilst collecting feedback as to any future enhancements which might be required of subsequent versions. At the same time, and as mentioned earlier, a programme of materials creation is under way in both Spain and the UK. This will create a critical mass to populate the asset base, which will then be opened up from the MALTED system and

should make a major contribution to avoiding re-invention of wheels. Once this is under way, developers will be able to access the asset base and re-use the projects found there, adapting as necessary. It is even possible to re-version the same structure into other languages with the minimum of effort, especially if items such as text are maintained as external text files rather than embedded on the screen. Subject to arrangements for quality control, the asset base should then grow exponentially as more practitioners come on stream.

At a wider level, the global aim is to influence for the better the production of multimedia learning routines. Many features can easily be used in disciplines other than foreign languages. Above all, MALTED allows for a flexible approach - it can appeal to the small-scale tutor-developer, as well as the commercial course provider, and can offer a tailored approach to individualised learning. But its flexibility goes even further, as it can cater for a range of pedagogic approaches without ever becoming subordinated to the technical imperative, and can thus offer a seamless and pedagogically sound integration of Information and Communications Technology into the language classrooms of the world.

Paul Bangs, Language Technology Consultant (UK)
Agustín Quintana, Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte (Spain)

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Recommended website

EUROPEAN RESOURCE AND LANGUAGE CENTRE NETWORK
eLanceNET
<http://www.elancenet.org/index.php>

eLanceNET - European Resource and Language Centre Network - is an EU Socrates Lingua 1 project that promotes learning languages in general, as well as advocating the learning of less widely used, taught and studied languages, such as Dutch, Greek, Irish, Italian, Lithuanian, Norwegian and Romanian. EuroEd Foundation, the institution which coordinates the project, is based in Iasi, Romania. The other promoter countries are Belgium, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania and Norway.

The project has developed a web portal where information about foreign language services, courses, resources, funding opportunities and language learning events are made available to language learners, including those with specific needs. The information is accessible in the seven European languages listed above and in English, the lingua franca of the portal.

The portal is divided into two main sections depending on the user profile, i.e. language learner or provider of language courses or resources. The visitor can use the search mechanisms to access any language provider registered on the database, locate courses, resources, relevant events and funding opportunities. In addition, information about a range of cultural aspects and linguistic games and activities, which give a taste of the languages and cultures of the partner countries, are also available on the portal. The section of the portal which focuses on the quality evaluation of linguistic services is aimed at both course providers and learners and is available in English. The eLanceNET forum is open to contributions on specific topics relating to language learning or general opinions, as well as being a means of providing technical support.

eLanceNET course search engine

For further information contact admin.ro@elancenet.org

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Working with portfolios

1. Background

Nowadays, young professionals are asked not only to possess knowledge but they need to be able to communicate, to collaborate, to solve problems etc., in short, they need to be able to function independently in a professional manner. As a result of the shift from knowledge to skills, the emphasis in higher education curricula is on the development of competences and skills. This in turn resulted in a need for instruments to visualize and evaluate the individual development.

The acquisition of competences can be divided into phases or levels: on a first level one knows. On a second level one knows how to use this knowledge when carrying out tasks. The third level means that one has the skills, one acts adequately in a simulated environment both on the basis of the knowledge one has and because one knows how to use this knowledge. Being competent can

be defined as doing something well as a result of the combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes and personal characteristics. Competences can be developed by participating in cognitive learning activities (such as theoretical classes) preceded or followed by reflecting on concrete experiences and learning from them.

It is becoming more and more common practice in institutions of higher education to use competence profiles, expressed in global descriptions, which in turn are specified in a list of analytical or concrete criteria of what a student should be able to do: can-do-statements.

Per competence rubrics are composed. Rubrics are positive descriptions of what can be expected of a beginner, a competent professional and an expert. When a student can show by means of a portfolio that his/her actions comply with the description of what a competent professional can do, the student meets the requirements of the training.

2. What is a Portfolio?

In artistic circles the portfolio is used to show one's own work to which possibly pictures and reviews are added. In the business world a portfolio refers to the package of products and services offered. For educational purposes the word is used for an instrument that helps a student reach his or her learning objectives by means of learning activities that are carried out in a learning environment. Reflections and self-assessment are also part of the process reflected in the portfolio. An educational portfolio consists mainly of overviews, materials and reflections. The instrument illustrates the depth and reach of the competence of a student, the learning process and the growth and development of this learning process.

The **overviews** are meant to show in which contexts a student has worked on which competences or skills. The educational and professional background and skills already acquired somewhere else can be listed. The level of the competences and skills, is also indicated. The personal study plan fits into this part.

With the **materials** a student shows the quality of his/her performance and the degree of proficiency with which he/she already masters the skills and competences. Materials can be written texts such as reports, articles, website entries, etc. A caption is added to each document to situate the context in which the material came about and why it was added. Impressions of one's activities can be provided with pictures or videos. Documents such as diplomas and certificates are included as proof of past efforts. Students select and organise the materials themselves.

In the **reflections** a student reflects on his own competences and skills compared to the objectives mentioned in the academic or professional profile he is reaching for. Reflections on classes, remedial work, tasks and assignments, the learning process etc. can be noted down in a logbook. Self-assessment is central in working with portfolios.

In electronic portfolios, hyperlinks can link materials to reflections, overviews to materials, etc. Teachers can set assignments that contain a 'do' part as well as a reflective part. On the basis of these reflections, a student supported by the tutor can draw up a long-term agenda. They also form the basis of the student counselling.

The European Language Portfolio is divided into three parts: the passport which contains the self-assessment tables in which the level of competence can be indicated, both in a global and analytical way, plus reflections. In the biography the learning objectives are stated and the learning path followed up to then illustrated and reflected upon. The dossier contains the materials with the captions and reflections.

A portfolio is a co-operative effort as it becomes part of what happens in class. Students will have to learn to select and organise materials, to reflect on their experiences, to express their thought in an adequate and efficient manner and to draw conclusions from their reflections in the form of personal development plans. Also peer-assessment has to be introduced, explained and exercised. Continuous guidance by the tutor will be necessary. In some institutions the line between lessons and evaluation moments becomes vague. If the methodology used involves case, project or problem based learning, students will have to work together quite a lot which corresponds to real-life situations where teamwork is important.

3. Function of a Portfolio

3.1 A portfolio has a pedagogical function:

- For the learner a portfolio has a pedagogical function: it is an instrument with which he or she can evaluate learning activities, reflect on progress and formulate and plan new objectives and activities.
- In a learning environment that allows learners to choose their own learning paths, for tutors the portfolio is an instrument to guide/ support the learning process of the learner, the basis for the counselling.
- In a more traditional learning environment, for teachers a portfolio is part of their teaching and evaluation.

3.2 A portfolio also functions as a proof of the level of proficiency of a person, it documents what he or she can do in specific situations. This is interesting for teachers providing follow-up education in the same school or in other schools and for employers.

4. Different kinds of Portfolios

4.1 A development portfolio.

Working with a portfolio helps a student to become conscious of his or her individual development. Emphasis will be on overviews showing the proficiency, on the logbook in which the student notes down statements of relevance and other thoughts, on self-assessment and on the personal development plan (PDP). In this PDP a student will examine what he or she is already able to do, what the learning objectives are and how these will be attained, by means of which learning activities.

This presupposes either a learning path in which the student functions autonomously both with regard to the choice of courses to be taken and the period in which this will happen or self-study that takes places parallel to more or less traditional education or something in-between.

Through this kind of portfolio the tutor gets an insight into the student's development and is consequently able to support and counsel the student. Together they can evaluate and draw conclusions, write new personal development plans etc. Asking the student to place the logbook entries and the materials in tables, shows in which phase of the development the experience took place. It also forces the student to prove his or her assertions and to discover whether the degree of proficiency is really already there. If not, the tutor will help to find solutions for these discrepancies.

The tutor shows the student to start either from the abstract competence profile and to find learning activities to acquire the competences mentioned in the profile and/or shows the student how to start from a concrete experience coupled to reflection as a way of acquiring the competences mentioned in the profile.

4.2 An evaluation portfolio

A portfolio can be used to evaluate a student either at in-between intervals or at the end of the study period. The emphasis will be on materials. Precautions must be taken to prevent falsification of documents.

A portfolio is not really an evaluation instrument, but a source of information, one of the sources of information on which the evaluation will be based. The advantage for the students is that they play an active part in the evaluation procedure because it is up to them to prove that they fit the criteria. Aspects to be evaluated are: organisation and selection of materials, autonomy of the student, sense of responsibility vis-à-vis the individual learning process, motivation ...

Dilemma: if the portfolio is not evaluated the student will not invest too much time in it. If the portfolio will be evaluated, the student will hesitate to show his or her weakest points.

Problem: if the tutor and the evaluator are the same person it is difficult to guarantee objectivity. If the tutor advises the evaluator, objectivity will be more assured.

Advantages and disadvantages of a portfolio as an instrument of evaluation:

- On the plus side there is the fact that a portfolio provides the evaluator with an authentic picture of the way the student acts. It also shows how the competences are interconnected. There is room for individual expression and it fits the demand-driven, competence oriented curricula. Validity is high as there are many materials over a longer period of time.
- For students, working with a portfolio is a form of continuous assessment that is very valuable for their growth as independent professionals. The formative evaluation that is provided prepares them for the final summative evaluation at the end of their learning path.
- On the minus side there is the fact that especially open portfolios are difficult to evaluate, it takes a lot of time, maybe not all the competences mentioned in the profile are there and there is a risk that lay-out will be taken more into account than content.

Training the evaluators solves some of these disadvantages, having more than one evaluator as well. Good in-between assessments will minimize surprises.

There is a tendency to standardise portfolios because that makes them easier to evaluate. But, portfolios are the individual instruments of students with which they can show what they can do.

Still, both for students and evaluators it is easier to work with an identical basic structure for everyone. Combining a global evaluation (general impressions) with an analytic evaluation (certain aspects/criteria are scrutinized) will reduce the teacher workload significantly.

4.3 A showcase portfolio

A portfolio can be used when changing schools, moving to another country or applying for a job, in both cases providing third parties with an insight in the competences and skills one possesses.

4.4 Portfolios can differ in other ways, e.g. reach: some portfolios only aim to show the development within one domain of competence or one part of the curriculum. Language portfolios are a good example of such portfolios. Other portfolios show the development of a student in all the different competences and skills mentioned in the school profile.

Portfolios can be closed or open depending on the number of restrictions a student has to adhere to. If there are many guidelines and instructions, the way in which a student can shape and fill in the portfolio will be limited. Students' portfolios will look alike and will be relatively easy to evaluate. An open portfolio on the other hand, will give the student a chance to shape the portfolio and fill it with content as he or she sees fit.

5. A paper portfolio versus an electronic portfolio

5.1 Advantages of an electronic portfolio

Compact, easy to copy on a cd-rom and easy to transport, hyperlinks can be used, appeals to students, different persons can have a look at it at the same time, more attention can be paid to structure and transparency and it increases the ICT-skills of students and teachers.

5.2 Disadvantages of an electronic portfolio and advantages of a paper portfolio

One will be tempted to print the portfolio anyway to check it through on paper. It puts at a disadvantage those with insufficient ICT-skills. A lot can go wrong with computers, networks and servers which will tend to put people off.

6. Portfolio methodology

- During the intake needs, learning objectives, proof of previous experience and present level of proficiency of the learner are collected and written down / included in the portfolio. What the school has to offer (courses) as well as the competence profile is discussed and a path is outlined. It stresses that both the learner and the coach will have to take their responsibility in the process.
- In a second phase, the acquisition of the objectives is documented, reflected upon and documents are selected and included in the portfolio. Progress is indicated in the overviews and self-assessment charts and reflection reports are included. A tutor guides the learner; teachers give assignments and evaluate them.
- The portfolio is then presented to the evaluator who checks whether the proofs collected by the learner correspond to the requirements of the school.
- Validation and certification are the final phases. This cycle can of course be repeated.

7. Are portfolios worth the time and energy that one invests in them?

Yes, if the curriculum is competence and skills based and a realistic academic/professional profile is formulated, if individual learning paths are a possibility, if a learning environment and the necessary infrastructure is in place and if students and teachers can function in it, if time is given for teachers to tutor and for students to work out the portfolio, if teachers and students can participate in the formulation of the evaluation criteria with which competences and skills are measured, if the management believes in the innovation, if a vision on innovative learning and teaching is in place and if the communication between work floor and management is good then the chances are that working with portfolios will be to the satisfaction of all parties involved.

Written in English by Marleen Coutuer based on:

- 'Werken met een elektronisch portfolio' (working with an electronic portfolio), J.v. Tartwijk et al, Wolters-Noordhoff, Groningen/houten, 2003 part of the series 'Hoger Onderwijs Praktijk' (Higher Education Practice).
- European Language Portfolio: <http://culture2.coe.int/portfolio>
- 'Testen en evalueren in het vreemdetalenonderwijs' (Testing and evaluating in foreign language education), Lies Serçu et al, Wolters Plantyn, Mechelen, part of the series 'Cahiers voor Didactiek' of the University of Leuven.
- 'Handleiding Portfoliomethodiek NT2' (Manual for a Portfolio methodology Dutch as a second language), Anne Kerkhoff en Ellie Liemberg, 2002, Bve Raad, De Bilt - <http://www.cinop.nl>

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Events Calendar

For information on events, please refer to <http://www.eurocall-languages.org/resources/calendar.htm>, which is regularly updated.

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