

## Belgium: The Use of Portfolios for the Assessment of Languages

### Introduction

**Title:** Portfolio

**Country:** Belgium, Flanders

**Type of tool:** Portfolio as a tool for assessing reading and writing skills

**Target group:** Any individual engaging in a foreign language course or in a Dutch course for foreigners, organised by the Centres for Adult Education in Flanders

**Potential transferability:** It is now actively applied in the context of formal and non-formal education

### Organisation and description of the tool

A portfolio can be described as a “binder” developed and updated by the learner during the course period with the overall aim to provide a reliable view on a learner’s progress. For the learner, it is a means of organising and reflecting upon his/her own learning process. For the teacher it is a feedback tool allowing for permanent monitoring of the learning. Because of its continued use during the year, it offers more reliable and valid assessment.

At CVO the portfolio consists of different parts. First of all, at the start of the school year, the learner has to create a Europass Language Passport (<https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/nl/documents/european-skills-passport/language-passport>).

Along with this, the learner has to write his/her “language biography” explaining where the learner has learnt the language before, what items the learner wants to focus on, etc. During the year, the portfolio is updated with tasks and tests. The teacher gives feedback on all these, the learner uses this feedback to reflect on his/her learning path and ideally repeats the tasks. The tests are corrected according to standard matrixes. The tasks are often coming from an innovative language toolbox developed by the Flemish government which is called “doos op rollen”. This toolbox has been developed in the framework of the project “role-based customised education for starting L2 learners in Dutch”

### Implementation

A portfolio is used for all levels of language learning. In parallel, more traditional grammar and vocabulary tests are also used, especially for the lower levels. However, attention is paid to the fact that these need to be context-related and concrete.

Portfolios are used from the very beginning until the end of the year. They are a means of continuous evaluation, not only focussing on the final learning outcomes but also on the learning process and the personal growth of a learner.

## Description of the target group

The target group of CVO is a mix of Belgians wanting to learn a foreign language and foreigners wanting to learn Dutch. A lot of them are jobseekers or people who want to change job direction. Most learners are there upon their own initiative. Some are sent by their employers.

## Policy context

In general employers react very well to degrees that are obtained at a CVO. Each CVO uses the same criteria and assessment methods. The learning goals are defined by the government. The Government has obliged the centres to split oral and written competences although this goes against the vision of a lot of centres. The centres are very much focussing on personal development while the government is more market-oriented.

## Impact for assessees

Portfolios work very well for learners that are motivated to learn and willing to reflect upon their own learning process, their mistakes and their areas for improvement. Thanks to the fact that portfolios are a form of continuous evaluation from the beginning, a learner knows what to work on and what is needed in order to reach the level to obtain the certificate.

Link: <http://www.cvo-bec.be/>

## Personal comments

The video clearly explains more in detail how a portfolio can be used for learning languages. It also contains an interesting example of a learner and the impact this method had on him.

## Interviewee

Caroline Cajot, teacher Dutch for foreigners and teacher English.  
(see also video interview)

