

MELIA France

Language Training



Good Practice Executive Summary

Melia stands for *Modèle d'Évaluation Linguistique Informatisée Adaptable* (adaptable, computer-based language assessment model). It can be accessed at <http://priam.ac-bordeaux.fr/melia>. Partner institutions have a number and trainees and tutors have a login and a password. Once logged in, they have access to their data. The server is that of the Aquitaine region division of the French ministry of education. Melia is grounded in the Common European Reference Framework of Languages. It builds on the European Language Portfolio. As such, it utterly reflects current EU and regional policy on multilingualism.

The aim of Melia is to help learners keep track of their progress and make a direct relationship between objectives, which are often implicit, their learning and competencies. Learners' levels in all competencies are displayed with the list of partial competencies which remain to validate to complete their competency and to attain the next competency. They may then choose some items and request their tutor to confirm that they have actually achieved the partial competency in question. Tutors then decide to accept or reject the request, with or without any justification. Melia includes incentives to enhance and sustain language learner motivation and employment by offering learners a tool to have their progress and newly-acquired partial competencies validated by their tutor. The obtained validation can then be mentioned to employers, in a Europass language passport for instance. As such, it reflects the EU strategy for employability and intercultural benefits.

Melia addressed all languages and migrant community language. Its interface is in French but the items can be used in the learning of any language. An interactive development of the Annexes part of the European Language Portfolio, it provides for international networking and/or mobility.

The concept behind Melia can be readily and usefully implemented. The only needed adaptation concerns the rewriting of items to fit the learning context (teaching language and target language). Partial competencies require adapting for instance to the language of a given professional environment.

1. The needs analysis is based on a complete, up-to-date conceptual framework.

Melia is based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. It encourages teachers/trainers at all levels of the vocational or educational system to adopt or make easier the task-based approach of the CEFRL. Even the most recent language manuals, although they indicate what CEFRL level they aim at on their cover, are still actually organised along broad themes rather than competencies or sub-competencies. On the other hand, teachers and trainers have developed an awareness of the work of the Council of Europe and of the CEFRL, thanks to extensive presentations at educational institutions and effective communication through multilingual websites (for instance, that of the Council of Europe on the European Language Portfolio). Although the principles of the CERFL are understood and accepted by the vast majority of language teachers, particularly as it does not pretend to replace any existing teaching method, teachers may find it puzzling to combine it or to add it to their own approach. One of the means to incorporate the Common reference framework, for instance, is to encourage learners to use the European Language Portfolio, available mostly in its paper version. However, the most recent Council of Europe reports, particularly the 2007 report and the report of the 2009 ELP conference (available on the Council of Europe ELP website as of January 2010) seem to admit that ELP use on a large scale over an extensive period of time has not given out the expected results. Research at university level shows that the bulk of the paperwork involved in using such a complex tool as the ELP deters learners from delving into it on a regular basis.

Melia, on the contrary, makes easy to use and attractive, as it is internet-based, the descriptor of levels of the ELP for learners and instructors. The generated data can be exploited by teachers and researchers.

Melia helps acquire needed competencies identified through needs analysis.

Learners may at any time request for a validation of their level. They are presented with a list of items of various levels, so they can go back and seek to acquire, or brush up, on competencies of a lower level, which is a common language learning practice. At the end of one or several training periods, learners can ask for validation of any item which correspond to competencies they deem to have acquired.

Here is a screen capture of a learner's choice of items to request for validation.



The choice of target language can be made top right. The left column contains buttons which, when clicked on, lead to a request for validation. The right column describes the next target competencies at the learner's level.

The tutor has access to a page recapping the competencies their learners consider they have. The following table shows what a tutor sees of an individual learner's requests for validation.

PHOTOLOGIE
CEB MANN

M. Prof TEST
enseignant

Melia Prof

le lundi 24 janvier 2020 à 02:50:28
10133 130241 (web)

Connexion

Alto Study Attitude Assessment

Liste des messages en cours :

Teacher la disponibilité	Date	Classe	Prénom	Nom	Message	Item
	toutes ▼	toutes ▼	tous ▼	tous ▼		tous ▼
	lun. 24 janv. 2020 à 02:50:28	Classe_Test	Steve	TEST	Où a-t-on les leçons en classe	[4] - Je peux comprendre le contenu du cours (à présent ou à l'avenir)
	lun. 24 janv. 2020 à 02:50:28	Classe_Test	Steve	TEST	C'est quoi ça ?	[5] - Je suis capable de comprendre quelqu'un qui explique une interdiction, une possibilité, une permission, un ordre, une consigne.
	mar. 18 janv. 2020 à 22:10:44	Classe_Test	Steve	TEST	aaaaa	[2] - Je suis capable de comprendre quelqu'un qui me parle de sa famille, de ses goûts, de ses loisirs.
	mar. 18 janv. 2020 à 22:10:44	Classe_Test	Steve	TEST	lululul	[1] - Je suis capable de comprendre le sujet, le prénom, l'âge et la nationalité, la description physique de quelqu'un qui se présente.
	mar. 18 janv. 2020 à 22:10:44	Classe_Test	Steve	TEST	AAAAA	[3] - Je peux comprendre les chiffres, les prix et l'heure.

What appears here is whether or not the request is still pending, the date when it was requested, the group ID, the first name and surname of the learner and the message of the tutor. The right hand column shows the sub-competency that the learner deems acquired.

The following table shows the items that are pending to be validated in a given group.

CEB Mann

M. Prof TEST
enseignant

Melia Prof

le lundi 24 janvier 2020 à 02:50:28
10133 130241 (web)

Connexion

Alto Study Attitude Assessment

Choisissez une classe

Etat des items en cours de validation dans la classe : 3A

Langue en cours

Compétence : être d'entraide valide dans le numérique
Compétence : au moins 5 items validés dans le numérique
Compétence : tous les items validés dans le numérique

28 élèves

Nom	Prénoms	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]	[7]	[8]	[9]	[10]
AUTEXER	Micolas										
CAUEN	Claudia										
CHAUSA	Nyssa										
DOGNETON	Rachel										
ERRACON	Yves										
GWENH	Caroline										

This table may prove useful to identify the exercises after which learners feel more confident requesting the validation of certain items. Melia thus helps learners make a direct relationship between objectives, which are often implicit, their learning and competencies.

1. Training objectives are realistic within the timeframe.

Melia can be used at any level, whatever the length of the training. It has a GPL license, which means it can be used and adapted to suit any learning context. Being a multimedia system, it is independent from any timeframe. However, it supposes that the learner has time to reflect on their language learning. Thus, it will be used with more impact over extensive periods of time.

2. Training is based on an updated didactic framework.

The didactic framework is the CEFRL. Items in Melia can be rewritten to adapt any training context, taking into account sector-specific needs and vocabulary.

One of the shortcomings of the CEFRL is that it does not take into account language for specific purposes at A and B levels. Melia allows to reformulate items and generate new ones based on realistic tasks. Thus, Melia is based on an updated didactic framework.

3. Training incorporates some element of retroaction.

Melia allows tutors to check whether language learning is actually perceived by learners as effective. If it is, provided learners are sufficiently familiar with IT, they will ask for items to be validated. Trainers may accept or refuse validation, justifying their decision or not. A grid, which is also a learning

management tool, allows them to see which competency is most requested for validation, or which has been validated the most.

Estimations of learners' acquire competencies are accessible to training managers, who can oversee them.

4. Training takes into account a maximal number of constraints: absence, diversity, time and place.

Trainees' diversity in terms of culture, level, gender, learning style, is taken into account. Using Melia to liaise with learners may give better indication of learners' linguistic and cultural profiles and of their learning styles.

Being an asynchronous, web-based application, Melia allows to deal with absenteeism due to colliding schedules, illnesses and diversity. Asynchronous learning environments may be an option. Trainers may check on learners' achievements and comment on them.

7. Transferability assessment

7.1. Evidence of transfer

To date, Melia has not been transferred yet. However, the principle of items from the Annexes of the European Language Portfolio that tutors may or may not validate will be implemented in the final version of the electronic European Language Portfolio of the Université Montesquieu-Bordeaux IV, to be developed starting from February 2010. Items will be re-written for university students. To be successful, transfer shall include translation of the instructions from the French.

7.2. Innovation

This LMS is truly innovative and has not yet been transferred. Potential barriers to transfer include translation from the French, the maintenance of what is actually an LMS over a period of time and the rewriting of items to fit the training context.

7.3. Dependence on political context

Melia is CEFRL-based. Therefore, transferability within the EU does not depend upon the political context. Of course, technical maintenance is closely linked to local financing, which may depend on the political context.

7.4. FIExibility

Melia is transferable across languages and sectors. It has been developed in French in the context of German teaching. It merely requires translation from French into any language.

7.5. Multi-region transfer

There is no obstacle to transfer at whatever scale, as Melia has a GNU license.