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**EMPOWERING ENGINEERING STUDENTS'
SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING IN
PROFESSIONAL ENGLISH COURSES
THROUGH E-PORTFOLIO**

19/10/06

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1. Background to our study
2. Portfolio courses in Engineering studies
3. Initial stage problems
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5. Users´(=students and teachers) feedback
6. Conclusions and recommendations

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- Need for **integration** with professional studies
- More **meaningful language learning** through integration
- More integrated **learning material** in English available in professional subjects
- **Changes** in the surrounding society, needs of working life
- Limited **financial resources** → less contact classes
- To gain benefits for both professional and language studies

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→ Introduction of portfolios



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Portfolios in Engineering Studies

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- Portfolios first introduced in Professional English courses at the School of IT and the School of Engineering and Technology
- **Language learning portfolio** is a folder of learning achievements of an engineering student in language programmes; **Learning passport** containing details of his/her personal development in a language

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Portfolios defined

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- Portfolio represents for us a flexible method to learn and the engineering students have an active role in learning and applying their skills and knowledge
- Ownership of one's own learning important for us!

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Our portfolio model

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- **Mixed e-portfolio** model: contact lessons, self-study, creating the learning portfolio
- **Assessment** based on: portfolio work, self- and peer assessment, teacher's assessment, presentations in class, oral tasks/tests, vocabulary tests, active participation in lessons
- **Further tasks:** summaries, project reports, meetings, even poems and short stories (creativity), company visits, e-mails

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Initial stage problems

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- Teachers' lack of knowledge on portfolios in classroom action and as an assessment tool → massive learning of the method
- Language teachers' computing skills
- New learning platform (R5:Finnish platform)
- Difficult to estimate the workload for both students and teachers
- Opposition from professional teachers

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Recipe for portfolio success

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- Both students and teachers should be aware of the aims and purposes of the portfolio course.
- Deadlines should be set and met.
- Teachers should: have good organisational skills, know their curricula and course contents, be innovative, commit themselves to work WITH students, and be willing to take risks.

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Users' Feedback on Portfolios

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- Student response very positive thanks to more freedom in choosing the topics
- → Increased motivation
- No tests, no meaningless rote learning
- The mixed model worked well for everyone
- Extra-curricular learning, e.g. shooting and editing videos of meaningful topics

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- Excellent method for both teachers and students
- Learning to learn will benefit the students their whole lives → **life-long learning**
- Even old dogs can learn new tricks...

E-portfolio and languages click!



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QUESTIONS?

THANK YOU!

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