



Erasmus+ project „Key Skills for European Union Hotel Staff”

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Technical report on the choice of Moodle platform

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This project addresses the specific objective of the Erasmus+ programme in the field of education and training by improving the level of key competences and skills of staff in the hospitality industry and improving the teaching and learning of languages and promoting EU's broad linguistic diversity (11 EU languages are targeted, plus Russian as one of the most widespread languages in Europe and the world).

In order to achieve the above aim the project envisages the design and development of an ICT-based course available for everyone wishing to improve their language competence and consisting of two parts:

- 1) Learning programme in 12 languages meant for everyday interaction in the industry and suitable for lower language competence levels (A2/B1);
- 2) 6 modules in English (levels B2/C1) related with work in tourism and hospitality industry

The target group consists of a wide range of audience - staff employed in hotels, students studying tourism and hotel and catering management, teachers teaching languages and tourism and hospitality industry courses, university students and vocational students.

Consequently the task was to design a learning management system (LMS) that handles all aspects of the learning process. An LMS is the infrastructure that delivers and manages instructional content, identifies and assesses individual and organizational learning or training goals, tracks the progress towards meeting those goals, and collects and presents data for supervising the learning process as a whole. They provide platforms for teachers to manage enrolment, share classroom materials, assignments and grades.

Bearing the above mentioned information in mind we compared different possible web platforms which are quite popular. The most popular and common LMS is Moodle because of its accessibility. Its open source nature makes it very easy to customize and brand. Its advantages are free and simple use and as the most popular tool among teachers and students it is well-known in the learning and teaching field. Moodle enables fast searching for web content and materials connected to the learning topics or subjects. It integrates interactive activities combining simulations, short videos, virtual experiments, games and more, in order to enhance interactive learning based. It offers multiple forms of data retention, communications and course delivery and enables designers to use a whole array



of learning models that overcome the classic training routines and obstacles. It features a completely customizable wiki system, forums, resource indexes, and multimedia course

models that can be completely reshaped depending on the style and materials the instructor wishes to use.

Teachers can design and manage courses to meet various requirements. Classes can be instructor-led, self-paced, blended or entirely online. Teachers are able to include assignments and teaching materials from other sites and you can easily search for and insert video and audio files in your courses with Moodle's built-in media support.

It is also possible to share courses and work in a team. Peer and self-assessment is possible and workshops and surveys encourage learners to view, grade and assess and work as a group.

When solving different tasks learners can monitor their progress by checking their score of points and track their progress and success with a variety of options for tracking individual performance. The score of points can be also checked by teachers so they can monitor the students' progress. Grades are automatically tallied, tracked and logged as well.

Furthermore, it is an open-code system which enables the programmer to adapt the appearance and functions to the users' needs and it enables administrators to clearly define roles to specify and manage user access as a teacher, learner or administrator. Administrators can assign various roles to other users, such as as guest, registered user or teacher which enables them to access materials easier and for guest, for example, without registration. Administrators can also keep track of enrolment. Moreover Moodle runs without modification on Unix, Linux, FreeBSD, Windows, Mac OS X, NetWare and any other systems that support PHP and a database, including most webhost providers. And last but not least, it is adaptable to mobile phones and tablets. Moodle has a modern, easy to use interface which is easy to navigate on both desktop and mobile devices. It needs a server, though, but weighing up advantages and disadvantages of this platform made it easy to choose.

Taking into consideration the teachers' and project partners' suggestions, such as preparing online blended courses with materials that can be downloaded, preparing guided dialogues to listen with different tasks concerning hotel and catering situations for different accommodation and facilities, preparing tasks to enrich the professional vocabulary and



similar tasks it was only reasonable to adapt and design the Moodle platform to provide for language learning in this particular project.

Siminars is another web and mobile platform with different advantages and disadvantages. One of the advantages is that no server is needed. Another is the monitoring of a student's progress with graphic analysis. It is also adaptable to mobile phones and tablets. On the

other hand, users have to register if they want to use the platform. It is not an open source platform, which means there are limited possibilities regarding any adaptations of appearance, templates and similar. Some functions are also payable.

Udemy is another web platform which does not need a server. It is easy to use for beginners and the creating of subjects is free. It is also adaptable to mobile phones and tablets. However, there are some disadvantages with this platform. It is not an open source platform, which means, similar to Siminars, there are limited possibilities regarding any adaptations of appearance and templates. Furthermore, users have to register if they want to use it and some of the functions are payable. Beside that there is a compulsory time limit of courses, meaning that the length of a course has to be at least 30 minutes.

We also checked on other available learning platforms such as Siminars and Udemy as can be seen from the above descriptions but in the end we decided on the Moodle platform because of all the listed advantages.