



VIRTEACH

*A Virtual Solution for a comprehensive and coordinated
training for Foreign Language Teachers in Europe*

TOOLKIT

PRESENTATION

Cultural diversity and geographical distance can be overcome by a multi-national alliance of higher institutions. A Virtual Learning Environment may facilitate cultural adaptation and foster international communication. A reflective and critical training oriented towards social commitment implies the construction of a critical teaching identity among the candidates during their training process. Future language teachers must know how to manage and apply to their teaching the digital technologies that best adapt to their teaching-learning objectives. The main goal of this online course is to learn essential concepts in the teaching of a foreign language with a special focus on a communicative, digital and intercultural approach. The 21st Century Foreign Language Teacher Training Course is aimed at future teachers of foreign languages who wish to obtain a high-quality training from a critical and international perspective. This course is a result of the Erasmus+ VIRTEACH project, a team formed by outstanding and experienced scholars from Spain, Poland, Romania and Portugal. It is a free and online tool and it is available at:

<http://virteachproject.eu/virtual-learning-environment/>

STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE

A welcome section presents the general aims of the course, its structure, contents, requisites and assessment, followed by a “Meet our team” section, where students can know more about the experts who designed the course.

The course is organised in seven units, each one addressing fundamental issues concerning the teaching of languages. These are as follows:

- Unit 1 - Second Language Acquisition
- Unit 2 - How to teach vocabulary
- Unit 3 - How to teach grammar
- Unit 4 - How to teach oral interaction
- Unit 5 – How to teach pragmatics and discourse
- Unit 6 - How to teach English for Specific Purposes
- Unit 7 - How to teach intercultural communication

All units are designed in a progressive and practical way. All of them are organized similarly and include audiovisual materials, practical exercises and a final questionnaire. Also, further reading, extra resources, and bibliographical references are provided.

Duration: The course takes 14 weeks approximately (2 weeks per unit), with an average investment of 10 hours per week. Total amount of hours: 140h

Requirements: For optimal monitoring of the course, students should have a B2-C1 level of the foreign language (as stated in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages).

Assessment: In order to assess progress, each unit can score up to 100 points. Hence, students may sum up a total of 700 points. Students will be awarded a certificate after successful completion of the course (at least 70%).

Utility: This free online course can be used separately or as a complement to foreign language teacher education programmes. It is easy to use and intuitive.

Extra tools: This course offers an Interactive Digital Notepad, a dynamic and collaborative tool that will help you fully develop your Practicum at any educational institution. The content-related dimension seeks to develop the student teacher's content pedagogical competencies, which include his/her teaching ability and his/her mastery of the foreign language. The metacognitive dimension promotes the student teacher's understanding of the broader contexts of education. Procedural and conceptual demands are contemplated too, and socio-political teacher beliefs and attitudes are examined.

For the Practicum to be successful, the teacher student, engagement of the teacher students, their respective mentors from the educational centres, and their academic tutors is essential. All these agents must be involved in the process.

This Interactive Digital Notepad is organized in six lists:

1. Diary
2. To do tasks
3. In progress tasks
4. Done tasks
5. Critical reflection on advancement and cooperation
6. Evaluation

They function as checklists that any of the three participants can check once the goals are met. The intuitive, progressive and dynamic nature of this digital and interactive notepad ensures its versatility for most Practicum projects. It is important to highlight its reflective orientation, which invites future teachers to reflect on their training experience in the classroom and to develop critical thinking skills.

Objectives and competences can be matched with specific tasks and the participants can make comments including their considerations about how they have been achieved. The aim is to review, comment and link the tasks with their corresponding objectives and competences

This process encourages active teaching and develops long-term reflective skills. With this digital and interactive notepad, the Practicum will prove to be a collaborative, constructive and meaningful experience for future language teachers.

This collaborative setting is an innovative deployment of technology in foreign language teacher instruction and an optimal solution for close monitoring and teaching awareness enhancement.

All in all, the 21st Century Foreign Language Teacher Training Course has been designed to cover all phases in the training of prospective teachers of languages. The different modules it contains can be used separately or as a whole. This ensures usability and practicality.

SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO USE THE 21ST CENTURY FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHER TRAINING COURSE

Foreign language teacher educators may find the 21st Century Foreign Language Teacher Training Course a useful tool. They can use the whole course or parts of it in their classrooms. They can also assign some of the suggested tasks to their students. They can even benefit from the further sources and readings suggested in each unit. The course is a free online tool that allows total or partial use of its contents, so educators can focus on content-based units, traineeship, or both. In any case, the best way to get familiar with the course is to enroll and browse its contents. Feel free to explore all its possibilities.

Student teachers can enroll this course free of charge and learn from its contents. They can practice with its exercises and expand their knowledge with the extra readings and further sources provided. If completed successfully, candidates will be awarded a certificate.

The 21st Century Foreign Language Teacher Training Course is also a very useful tool for long life learning. **Experienced teachers** may find it interesting to update some concepts and implement new ideas into their teaching practice.

Finally, this course can be used as the basis of a larger and more complete course that may take the form of a joint Master degree. This ultimate goal would mean that convergence of education programmes has been achieved and that would be beneficial for the language teaching profession at an international level and for European cohesion in general.

VIRTEACH, A VIRTual Solution for a comprehensive and coordinated training for foreign language TEACHERs in Europe, is an Erasmus+ funded project to create a digital tool to improve the postgraduate certificates on Masters on Education (Foreign Languages) and to provide teachers, researchers, student teachers and policy-makers with open-source tools and resources.

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