

Hotpot with Moodles

In the past eighteen months or so you may have been vaguely aware of a certain M-word circulating around the staffroom, wafting through your course, or even making an appearance at the occasional dinner party – enter MOODLE – and I assure you this is not an Italian speciality.

Nonetheless, it might have seemed rather indigestible to you being as you felt this so-called spicy morsel could prove to be tasteless and, at the very least, involve culinary skills with which you were not au fait.

Moodle – a new teaching dimension

Moodle is, however, far from being the tough dish you assumed; it is in fact, an extremely helpful and useful on-line platform to enhance your lessons and bring a new dimension to your teaching.

It is also, despite your trepidation, easy to access and fun to use.

Those of you who have already grabbed the first version of *Great* (the new Klett A1 textbook for adult learners) hot from the press might already be aware that Klett is offering additional materials online to

underline the textbook materials; materials which can be used both within the classroom, or without.

For teachers, trainers and educators this means saying goodbye to scrappy pieces of homework completed as an afterthought and hello to Moodle's educationally-aligned tasks.

Although the content of the Klett Moodle pages are still in the infant stage, the plan is to extend the tasks on offer and give your teaching a second, third, or possibly fifth dimension.

Moodle tasks – the perfect extension to your teaching

Moodle tasks are self-correcting and, therefore, ideal for your course participants/students to work with at home.

Seen thus, they are an extension to your lesson plan at no extra cost, and at the press of a key. The platform can be used for revision purposes, as a self study element, as part of an active lesson, or just for fun.

In addition to the tasks for each unit, there is another aspect of the platform which can prove useful and revealing. Integrated into each unit is a forum discussion or a presentation task. Although in the early stages of A1 learning this might be rather a tall order, it can with constant practice prove to be a tool for controlling comprehension and improving communication flow.

Within the forum participants may correspond with you, or with other course members. This useful task will require very little extra effort on your part, but will provide you with invaluable

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Moodle-Kursraum zu *Great! A1, 1, Übung: Hi & Bye!*

able feedback on your past lessons and discussion points for future ones. You will be able to assess your students' strengths and weaknesses by simply reading their contributions to these forums.

Nevertheless, you should beware of being overtly critical and by no means correct individual errors online as this will hinder the free flow of the discussion. Rather it might be useful to make a collective error chart for discussion within the classroom without pinpointing individual errors or allotting them to one particular student. For example, if you find that the 's' in the third person singular is constantly forgotten, or if there is a frequently occurring spelling mistake, then by all means mention this in the course of the next lesson, or simply integrate it into your lesson plan.

A live lesson with the help of Moodle

A more modern way of using Moodle, depending naturally on the facilities available, is to actually integrate all the tasks into your live lessons. Easier said than done perhaps, but with an interactive whiteboard Bob's your uncle, or Moodle's your nephew. Simply and beam the tasks directly onto the board and get your students to write the answers on it, or freely discuss the possible alternatives. After having reached a consensus of opinion the correct answer can then be uploaded for monitoring purposes.

There is naturally no reason why the forum cannot also be used in this way, but you might find this could impede creativity and create inhibitions, so I would advise keeping this task at least as a self study element.

Moodling around might have aroused your curiosity as to the structure of



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such tasks and what other possibilities might be available for your own creative ideas. I will reveal that the tool behind Klett's Moodle platform is hot potatoes, or hotpots to the initiated, a freeware program which enables you to personally create tasks of your own for use within the classroom.

Hotpots – An easy tool for creating interactive tasks

Hotpots is not a program from which to shy away, or to give you the technical doldrums, as it is relatively user friendly and will provide you with the possibility to compile tasks in different categories: cloze sentences, quizzes, crosswords, mix and match exercises, multiple choice questions etc.

Simply download the program onto your hard drive and listen into the demo to see what it is all about. There is a demo explanation for each type of task with clear instructions as to how to create your own materials. These can then be tailor-made to fit your weekly lessons and used, as with Moodle, within the classroom on the interactive board, or for really clued-up educational institutes on their intranet system.

For those of you not equipped with such precious items of technology, it is possible to simply print out your exercises and impress your students with their professionalism.



Moodle-Kursraum zu *Great! A1*, 4, Übung: Home sweet home

It is always beneficial as educators to stay one step ahead of the game, so that your students do not relegate you to the copy-and-print brigade but realise, that what is being served for the dish of the day is not just a half-baked potato with no filling, but a delicacy second to none.

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INFOBOX

Die Moodle-Komponente zu *Great! A1* erhalten Sie kostenlos unter www.klett.de/moodle



› *Great! A1*
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Arbeitsbuch +
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