

Online Study Support For Business English Courses

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Abstract

The paper deals with the project called Online Study Support for the Subject of Business English within the Fund of Higher Education Development of the Czech Republic. It will be created in the form of a twelve-module course in the Moodle Learning Management System (LMS) on the B1 level of the Common European Framework of References for Languages. The course will be focused on the development of business and economic terminology, reading comprehension, listening comprehension and the work with up-to-date authentic audio-visual materials. The course will comprise the topics such as business and its basic terms, business letters, business organizations, macroeconomics and microeconomics, personnel management, marketing, email, accounting and finance etc. Single units will have the following structure: lead in, key words and definitions, specialist material, various activities such as filling in the gaps, multiple choice, matching, word formation, word order etc. Online support will be intended for students of all faculties and fields of study at the Czech University of Life Sciences (CULS) in Prague, including incoming Erasmus students and academic staff as well as the students of other universities.

Introduction

The paper deals with the project called Online Study Support for the Subject of Business English within the Fund of Higher Education Development of the Czech Republic [1]. It will be created in the form of a twelve-module course in the Moodle Learning Management System (LMS) [2] on the B1 level of the Common European Framework of References for Languages. A current trend in university teaching is the lowering of the number of contact lessons and a higher emphasis is put on e-learning method of studies. The project is designed in accordance with a long-term intention and key priorities of the CULS development that include the development of indirect teaching forms and methods, electronic teaching aids creation, enhancing the quality and effectiveness of studies and self-studies within the LMS Moodle which is the software with an open code, independent of the platform and is used for study purposes. The results of the project will be freely available on the university web pages for a period of at least two years after the year of commencing the solution of the project.

Objective

The main objective of the project is creating the complex online support for the Business English course intended for students of all fields of studies at the Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague, particularly for the students of the Faculty of Economics and Management [3] and for the Students of the Engineering Faculty [4] majoring in Trade and Business field of study. It is designed for at least intermediate students who mastered general grammatical principles and basic vocabulary in their previous studies. Online study material will support an interactive form of the teaching by means of multimedia application on the condition of the increasing of specialist demands for studies and of course the quality of studies. It concerns the usage of information and communication technologies for more effective access to education for a bigger number of learners at the qualitatively higher level. One of the basic prerequisites of this type of studies is the quality of study materials. They will



substitute, if the need be, immediate contact of teachers with full time students as well as with distance students.

Material and methods

At present, Business English is taught in the form of contact teaching (once in a week for 90 minutes) with the use of a textbook and additional audio-visual materials. The time that is available for the lessons does not enable to use the potential of authentic materials and current events in the field of studies. This can be effectively offset by the online study support which will also strengthen the motivation of the students and support them as autonomous learners. Moreover, the students of distance studies, which have a substantial support within university studies, have very limited opportunities to consult with the teacher owing to their jobs, time and distance limitations. This project and computer technology will enable them to control solved assignments and a feedback.

The way of solution follows from the following schedule:

1st phase: The gathering of material and its analysis from the methodological point of view as far as single phases of lessons of Business English are concerned and with regards to using knowledge in business and management spheres, in negotiations with foreign partners, in the sphere of research etc. The complete gathering of material will include specialist topics that are encompassed into online study support.

2nd phase: The processing and the arrangement of specialist texts with exercises, listening, videos, picture materials and independent tasks so that they would correspond with the requirements stipulated for self-studies within e-learning teaching.

3rd phase: Teaching material will be evaluated together with foreign colleagues from partner University of Plymouth and Slovak agricultural university in Nitra and then will be placed on web pages of the Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague within LMS Moodle.

Results

The course will be focused on the development of business and economic terminology, on reading comprehension, listening comprehension and the work with up-to-date authentic audio-visual materials. Online study support for Business English will be in the form of a 12 module course in the learning management system (LMS) Moodle with the following topics:

- Business and its basic terms
- Business letter: layout, content, style
- Business Organizations
- Company profile
- Macroeconomics, microeconomics
- Enquiries, replies, orders
- Personnel management
- Curriculum vitae, letter of application, job contract
- Marketing
- Email
- Accounting and finance

- Invoicing, quotation, payment

Module structure

Single thematic units will be of the following structure with respect to the principles of e-learning teaching:

- Lead-in
- Key words and definitions
- Specialist material – reading/audio-visual
- Various activities
- Resources

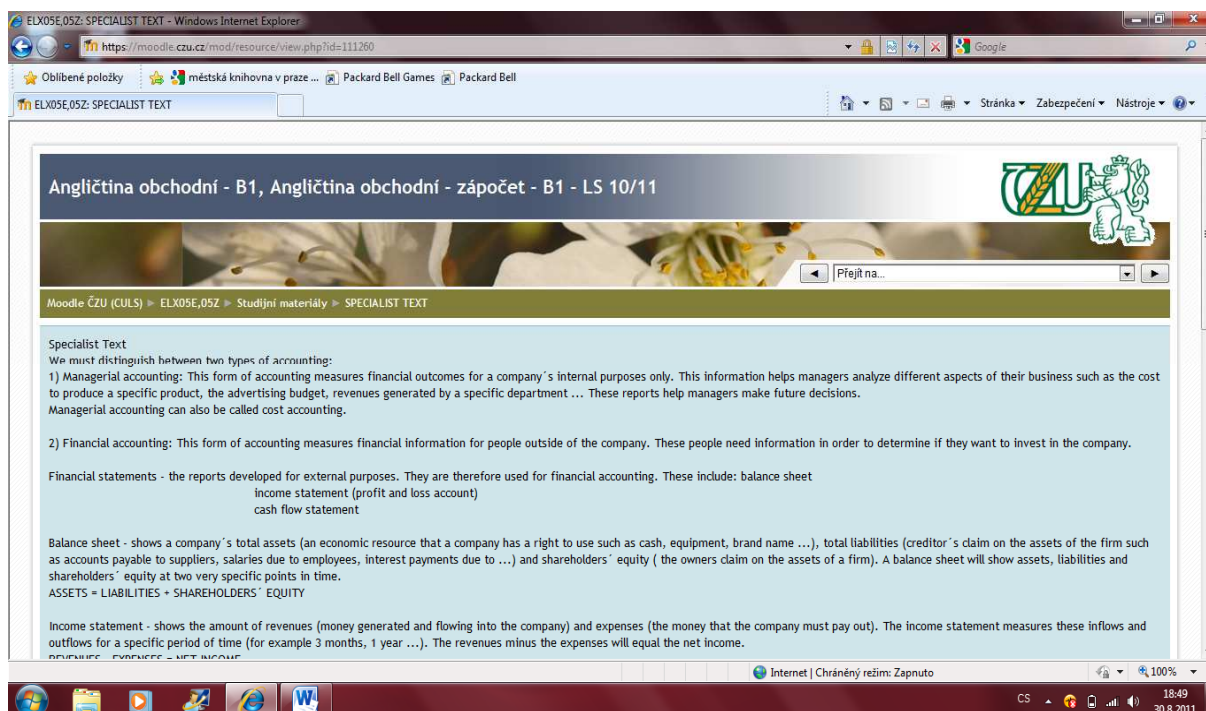
The course will be focused primarily on:

- development of specialist vocabulary
- reading comprehension
- listening comprehension
- work with authentic and up-to-date audio-visual language materials

(web pages and presentation of firms, products, services, business chambers, specialist journals).

The content of the course will be the following:

1. authentic materials concerning the topic (a follow-up to the contact lesson and the work with a textbook)
2. autocorrective exercises such as filling in the gaps, multiple choice, true/false, word formation, matching, synonyms/antonyms etc.
3. on-line handing in of written assignments (translations, letters) in some modules
4. test (it can be for training purposes with limited or unlimited number of possibilities or it can be a credit test with just one try and a time limit)
5. other additional activities



ELX05E,05Z: SPECIALIST TEXT - Windows Internet Explorer

https://moodle.czu.cz/mod/resource/view.php?id=111260

Obilbené položky městská knihovna v praze ... Packard Bell Games Packard Bell

ELX05E,05Z: SPECIALIST TEXT

Stránka Zabezpečení Nástroje

Angličtina obchodní - B1, Angličtina obchodní - zápočet - B1 - LS 10/11

Moodle ČZU (CULS) » ELX05E,05Z » Studijní materiály » SPECIALIST TEXT

Specialist Text

We must distinguish between two types of accounting:

1) Managerial accounting: This form of accounting measures financial outcomes for a company's internal purposes only. This information helps managers analyze different aspects of their business such as the cost to produce a specific product, the advertising budget, revenues generated by a specific department ... These reports help managers make future decisions. Managerial accounting can also be called cost accounting.

2) Financial accounting: This form of accounting measures financial information for people outside of the company. These people need information in order to determine if they want to invest in the company.

Financial statements - the reports developed for external purposes. They are therefore used for financial accounting. These include: balance sheet
 income statement (profit and loss account)
 cash flow statement

Balance sheet - shows a company's total assets (an economic resource that a company has a right to use such as cash, equipment, brand name ...), total liabilities (creditor's claim on the assets of the firm such as accounts payable to suppliers, salaries due to employees, interest payments due to ...) and shareholders' equity (the owners claim on the assets of a firm). A balance sheet will show assets, liabilities and shareholders' equity at two very specific points in time.
 ASSETS = LIABILITIES + SHAREHOLDERS' EQUITY

Income statement - shows the amount of revenues (money generated and flowing into the company) and expenses (the money that the company must pay out). The income statement measures these inflows and outflows for a specific period of time (for example 3 months, 1 year ...). The revenues minus the expenses will equal the net income.

Internet | Chráněný režim: Zapnuto

CS 18:49 30.8.2011

Fig. 1: A page from the Moodle Business English course showing a specialist test intended for reading comprehension practice



The screenshot shows a Moodle course page in a Windows Internet Explorer browser. The address bar shows the URL: https://moodle.czu.cz/mod/hotpot/view.php?id=111964. The page title is "Angličtina obchodní - B1, Angličtina obchodní - zápočet - B1 - LS 10/11". Below the title is a navigation breadcrumb: Moodle ČZU (CULS) > ELX05E_05Z > Testy Hot Potatoes > Read through the following sentences and complete the financial terms. The main content area has a header "Read through the following sentences and complete the financial terms" and a sub-header "Gap-fill exercise". Below this is a text box with instructions: "Fill in all the gaps, then press 'Check' to check your answers. Use the 'Hint' button to get a free letter if an answer is giving you trouble. You can also click on the '?' button to get a clue. Note that you will lose points if you ask for hints or clues!". The exercise consists of six sentences with gaps and question marks: a) Many companies receive _____ [?] and other revenues from their numerous inventions used by other firms. b) Some developing countries are fortunate if the banks _____ [?] their debts. c) Payment is authorized only on presentation of a cheque _____ [?]. d) Many governments are offering companies favourable _____ [?]. e) Firms may attempt to reduce the risk of loss through _____ [?] by a variety of devices. f) When demand for their goods fall, it is difficult for small companies to reduce expenditure on _____ [?] such as rent and energy costs.

Fig. 2: A page from the Moodle Business English course showing a fill-in gap exercise intended for students' vocabulary practice

The screenshot shows a YouTube video page in a Windows Internet Explorer browser. The address bar shows the URL: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9REw-oh1NUU&feature=fvsr. The video title is "Advanced Business English Vocabulary Lesson for ESL - Accounting Vocab". The video player shows a video with the title "introduction" and the text: "GAAP rules also require conservative methods of calculating a company's value - for example, by using third parties to appraise assets whose value may be uncertain, by depreciating the value of fixed assets at a standard rate, and by recording capital gains and losses as they occur." The video has 63,891 views. The right sidebar shows a list of related videos, including "English Vocabulary Lessons for Business & Advanced ESL" and "Business English Vocabulary Lesson for ESL - A...".

Fig. 3: A page from the Moodle Business English course showing a link with a listening comprehension exercise on the Internet

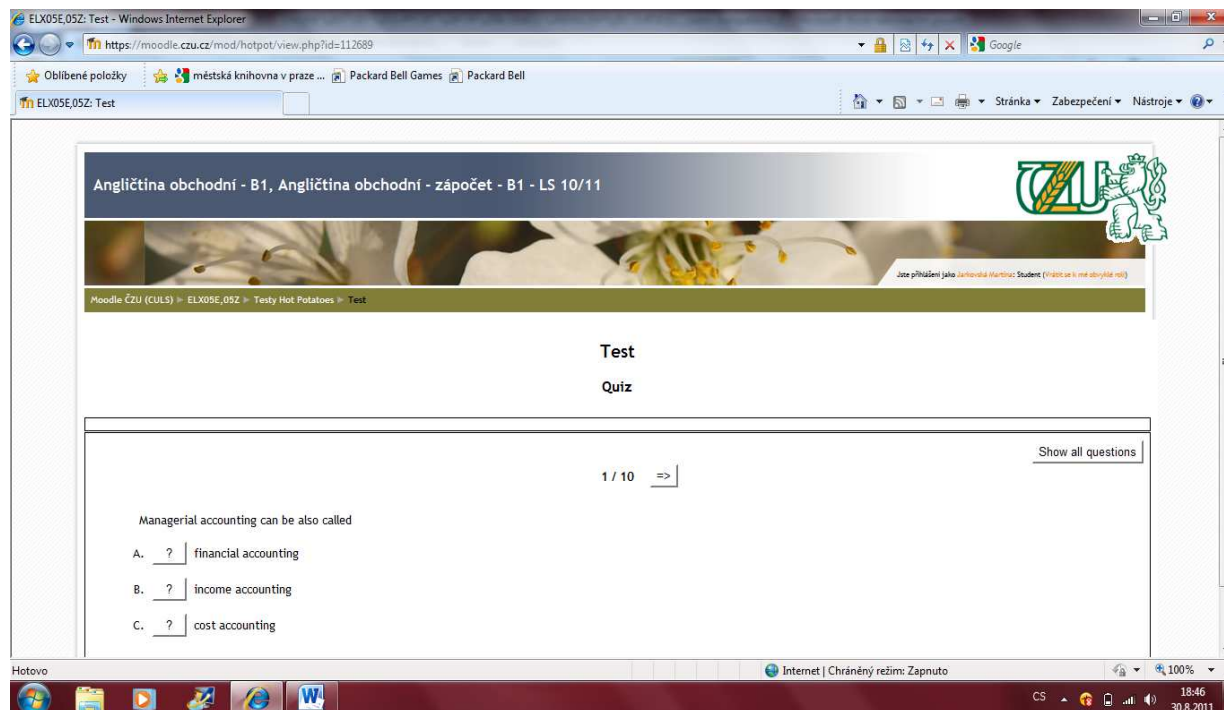


Fig. 4: A page from the Moodle Business English course showing a multiple choice test which can be used either for revision of the topic or as an assessment device

Conclusion

Online support will serve for students of all faculties and fields of studies at the Czech University of Life Sciences (CULS) in Prague, including incoming Erasmus students and academic staff as well as the students of other universities. It will be the advantage for the students to have this material, which can be used for improving the communication with foreign partners, extending the terminology for specialist literature studies, whenever available on the Internet. New online study support will be focused on business and economic vocabulary and will be available to all students in time that will be the most proper for their studies. They can return to it, practice it and enhance it whenever they need. Language teaching will correspond to a modern way of teaching based on using new didactic procedures and technologies in the lessons.

References

- [1] <http://www.frvs.cz/>
- [2] <https://moodle.czu.cz/>
- [3] <http://www.pef.czu.cz/en/>
- [4] <http://www.tf.czu.cz/en/>