



Digital and Pedagogical Challenges in Teaching and Assessing Students of European Languages on their Year Abroad

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Abstract

As Lecturer in French and Francophone studies at the University of Edinburgh and e-learning coordinator for the Department of European languages and cultures, I oversaw the design, development and delivery of new online language learning courses designed specifically for our 3rd year students on their Year Abroad (NB: All students of European languages at the university spend their 3rd year abroad before coming back to Edinburgh to complete the fourth and final year of their degree).

These courses were launched for the first time in the last academic year. They constituted a first for the university – the first time students were asked to participate in an online course which was entirely delivered and assessed online, counting for 1/12th of their final degree mark.

The rationale behind the creation of these courses was to better prepare our students for the challenges of fourth year language courses which assess students on literary translation and language essay exercises at C1+ level. We aim to facilitate language revision work to help students consolidate the linguistic skills they acquired in their first two undergraduate years and to build on the level they attained at the end of year 2 by regularly revising and practising essential rules of morphology and syntax, and helping them to develop a self-reflective approach to their own language learning while keeping in mind the aims and learning outcomes of their final year.

I wish to report on the expected and less expected challenges my colleagues and myself encountered in the design, delivery and assessment of these courses, looking in particular into the promotion of self-reflective learning and teaching approaches through the development of innovative e-learning solutions, and at issues pertaining to online assessment especially in the context of access to online translation tools.

Keywords: *Year abroad, online course, teaching assessment.*