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## USABILITY AND USER FRIENDLINESS ESTIMATION OF BUSINESS GERMAN COURSE ON MOODLE PLATFORM

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**Summary:** *the research is devoted to estimation of usability and user friendliness of Business German course on Moodle platform on basis of questionnaire among engineering Master's program students.*

**Key words:** *e-Learning platform, user friendliness, distance learning course materials, Business German course.*

The objective of the research is to determine most favorable for the technological university attractions in distance learning courses for students of engineering specialties. Language courses on e-Learning platform are especially unusual for students. It is difficult to inspire students to learn vocabulary and grammar in Moodle instead of reading aloud and translating texts in class. So the teacher should explain carefully each of many advantages and give examples of successful self-study.

The main body of the article includes the results of questionnaire about usability of Business German course on Moodle platform of Tavria University.

Moodle (Virtual Learning Environment) provides online support for educational courses of the Tavria University since 2012 (department of foreign languages of the university provided learners with access to the open German and English courses). Since 2014 all the instructional disciplines are presented online. Moodle provides a place where the academic staff creates web pages with information about their courses and posts clickable links to schemes, word documents, slides, and other resources. Moodle is also used to inform learners via e-mails and to provide links directly to the online resources that will be useful for students (dictionaries, e-library resources, glossaries, skills courses). There also are many tools that learners can use for collaboration within the group or faculty like chat and forums.

The students of the first year in engineering Master's program estimated user friendliness of available activities, feedback resource, learning material and self-test.

As an analysis object students considered their 6-credit Business German course with 2 terms length and Ukrainian default language. The course comprises 11 units in the first term and 14 units in the second term. The material includes readings, activities, assignments to be sent to the teacher and self-tests. Both courses also make use of video and audio which make learning more effective and diverse. There are two deadlines in each term course.

The study schedule of the course provides 46 hours in the first term and 32 hours in the second term regular classes to be attended and weekly tutorial in the department of foreign languages. There is also a set of print material which includes lexis and grammar tasks in reading, speaking and writing. By the end of this course students should be able to communicate with German speaking employers, partners

and clients on the main subjects relating manufacturing enterprise operation and to understand the interrelatedness of the German language system in terms of lexis, grammar and discourse.

Before the scientific and educational portal was put into educational process at Tavria University some students thought of distance learning course as of a correspondence course, where a set of print materials is given to learners who have to study on their own. In fact, distance learners at Tavria University can receive a full range of teachers' support and can benefit from regular interaction with university's academic staff.

The students of specialities agricultural engineering and power engineering have pointed to most important for them advantages of the Moodle course in Business German:

1. Opportunity to study from anywhere and anytime.
2. Quick feedback – teacher is available at evening time to provide assistance to students when necessary.
3. Distance learning course materials provided on the site are informative and up-to-date. They have been comprised of broad range of weighty subject areas of business, education and science important for Masters' future professional activity.

The uneasiness and disadvantages mentioned by the students are:

1. Students spend about 3-4 hours a week to complete a unit (average time according to the curriculum is 3 hours a week).
2. The deadlines in the middle of the term do not correspond with the students' pace of study.
3. The students may not register by themselves on courses (for example they have access neither to the past term course nor to the next term course).

The discussion of the questionnaire results with the respondents has proved that master's program students are satisfied with the proposed materials but do not approve the scheme of tracking their individual activities by tutors that influences their learning pace.

Comprehensive discussion with the course tutor has revealed that students do not pay attention to the introductory provisions of portal functioning: only few of them read course guide – the instruction to the course with all necessary course use recommendations. Secondly, the learners do not browse the course materials by looking through study units. Thirdly, they do not customize the interface according their needs.

In order to make an e-Learning course on Moodle platform work effectively tutors should instruct the learners carefully in advance. The lack of experience can annihilate learners' wish to study online. Whatever course it may be, the difficulties in study routine put end to students' enthusiasm in their exploratory activity. But correctly edited Moodle course guide will help both teachers and students benefit most from its advantages in setting and customization.