



ONLINE LANGUAGE LEARNING – MYTH OR REALITY?

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Research purpose. This paper aims to present an ongoing Nordplus Languages project, *Multilingualism as Key to Enhance Students' Employability* and share the results.

Keywords: intensive course, language competence, multilingualism, online learning

Research Methodology. Online learning is not a new phenomenon, and nowadays, online learning is gradually substituting the face-to-face mode of studying, including language learning. With globalisation and internationalisation in Europe, the natural demand for learning other languages than English evokes. One of the EU's multilingualism goals is for every European to speak two languages in addition to their mother tongue. There is a tendency in Lithuania and other Baltic states of establishing Nordic businesses and companies in the Baltic states. Young people find working in an international/ Scandinavian company more attractive as there are wider career ladder opportunities.

Higher education institutions might not have the means to offer education in less frequent languages and small groups of students. There might also be a lack of native teachers of less frequently taught languages such as Finnish in Lithuania. Thus, virtual studies in online environments can alleviate these problems and enable language learning regardless of time and space. Furthermore, online courses and materials might be more effective learning tools when designed or tailored for specific target groups.

Findings. This paper discusses a Nordplus Languages project, *Multilingualism, a key to employment that targets globalisation and internationalisation challenges to widen the range of students' language skills*. The primary goal is to create a virtual course in beginner Finnish targeted for Lithuanian students, and that can later be used by students of other nationalities. The other expected outcome of the project is an intensive course given in Finland's natural language surroundings as a follow-up for virtual learning. The paper gives first an overview of the project work and secondly, presents the process of creating and testing the virtual course.

Practical implications. The report summarises an ongoing Nordic cooperation project and presents the project result, an online 3 ECTS Moodle course of a Finnish language (A1). After piloting and testing the course, it will be offered as an elective course in KUAS Haaga-Helia UAS curricula.