



Fit 4 Digital Linguistic Education

DIDACTIC CONCEPT

Projectnumber: 2020-1-AT01-KA204-078098

Authors: bit schulungcenter + Babel Idiomas



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

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1 Introduction

Language is seen as the gateway to the world, as an instrument for better mutual understanding, exchange and as a basis for communicating and living common values and views. However, knowledge of the language of the respective country of residence is also the basis for survival in the job market.

“In 2016, over one third (35.4 %) of the working-age adults (defined here as 25–64 year-olds) in the EU reported that they did not know any foreign languages. A similar proportion (35.2 %) reported that they knew one foreign language, while just over one fifth (21.0 %) knew two foreign languages, and fewer than one tenth (8.4 %) of all working-age adults knew three or more foreign languages” (EuroStat, Foreign language skills statistics https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Foreign_language_skills_statistics#Number_of_foreign_languages_known).

Europe is confronted with immense challenges - many languages are available in a geographically very small area, which makes mutual exchange, the growing together of the individual countries and the transfer of knowledge and labour mobility more difficult.

The **digitalization of recent years has created opportunities to teach even complex content in online tools and courses**. Yet 40% of Europeans currently lack basic digital skills (Joint Research Centre, 2016, <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/sites/jrcsh/files/DIGCOMP-PAGE%2001-%20UPDATED%2002-06-2016.pdf>), that are needed for everyday life. The European Commission has therefore already developed f.ex. the tool DigComp, which will improve citizens digital competences. It shows different competences a person must have to be digitally competent. “**DigComp**” can be used for **assessing the current digital competence** level as well as the strengths and weaknesses of a person. The tool “**DigCompEdu**” specifies the **digital competences of educators**, so that all pedagogical staff can as well evaluate their digital skills. It is useful for teacher professional development to design training measures to develop the digital competences. For language educators in particular there are no special frameworks, tools or classification criteria.



Language learning is time and cost intensive and requires an incredible amount of resources. New ways of teaching language skills are therefore needed, to be able to teach languages online in a proper way.

In order to be able to use these efficiently in language teaching, teachers in this field also need the corresponding skills and the knowledge about their performance and know-how in the digital language teaching. This is precisely the subject of the "Fit4DigiLinE" project.

The present **didactic concept** was established for people dealing with these topics in language education, specifically language teachers, trainers and tutors but also person involved in the course development of language courses. The main objective is to **increase competences on digital language education**, to **encourage the use of digital learning and assessment tools by language teachers and trainers** and to develop a **European wide knowledge base of digital competences connected to personal and social competences** and thus ensuring the employability and further development of language educators in a digitalized world. Thus, the learning material supports discussing and consolidating the knowledge among language educators for everyday life application. The concept is covering the following sections:

1. Fit4DigiLine learning material – the project description
2. General access to training
3. Added value of e-learning for Fit4DigiLinE training
4. Use of teaching aids and teaching methods
5. Methodical-didactical structures of the units Fit4DigiLinE
6. Methodological-didactical implementation in the teaching of Fit4DigiLinE
7. The Online Learning Platform – MILES

2 Fit4DigiLine learning material – the project description

In the project proposal the following content-related and structural aspects were outlined, which should be adhered to in the learning material:

Target groups

- language teacher and trainer
- staff in language schools
- adult education provider with focus on language education
- researcher
- general educational sector

Elements of innovation

There are already a lot of existing learning materials about digital competences on a general basis as well as from an educational point of view. The innovation aspect in this output lies in fact, with this learning material we are specifically focusing on the language education, where a lot of different approaches are concluded. Additionally, we are not only tackling the digital competences, but also the connection to the personal and social competences as those play an immense role in language learning.

Dimensions

One learning unit has an approx. size of 15 pages text with illustrations and includes at least one video and one self-reflection assignment.

3 General access to the training

The competence-oriented project design is optimal for offering **individualised competence acquisition**. In addition to **technical competence**, this should also include an expansion of **learning competences** and **basic digital skills**. All contents are prepared in such a way that they are directly applicable and usable for every learner. In terms of **competence orientation**, the following overarching learning outcome is pursued:

- Learners are able to understand in what way they can use the newly acquired knowledge in their personal everyday life.
- They can apply the newly acquired knowledge in their everyday life.
- This sense of achievement leads to motivation, willpower and goal orientation and has a positive effect on learning performance and the success of learning and examination.
- Learners can independently acquire, structure, use and correctly interpret the knowledge and information necessary to solve a task. In this way they acquire the competence to develop and implement learning strategies (learning competence), which enables them to engage in lifelong learning.
- The learners are taught that they themselves can proactively influence the achievement of their goals and are able to shape the acquisition of knowledge by taking personal responsibility. This increases self-esteem and the ability for self-management, self-motivation and self-reflection.

4 Added value of e-learning for Fit4DigiLine training

E-learning enables **maximum individualisation**, as the participants only have to deal with the content exactly about which knowledge is required. Content that is already known does not necessarily have to be covered. This results in a high motivation and above all a satisfaction of the learning persons. The training also offers increased flexibility. There is no fixed length of stay per module and learning time is very flexible. Thus, the participants can deal with the individual contents over any period of time and at any depth and speed according to their individual needs until the learning success is actually achieved. This guarantees that even very heterogeneous groups can work well with the learning content and acquire it at a pace appropriate to their individual needs. Participants also acquire and expand their competences for self-organised and self-responsible learning and thus acquire a skill that is becoming increasingly important.



5 Use of teaching aids and teaching methods

All needed is a digital device (PC, laptop, tablet or smartphone) and an Internet connection. The materials are also available for download, so learners can download and save the learning materials. This allows learning at anytime and anywhere.

The Fit4DigiLinE content is designed as self-learning content. The following aspects were considered when choosing this teaching method:

- learning via learning platforms enables self-organised learning with a high degree of autonomy
- self-competence, i.e. the ability to act responsibly for oneself - is encouraged
- trainers or teachers can optionally act as learning facilitators.
- due to the high degree of individualisation and flexibility, the contents are ideally suited for the target group of educators

6 Methodical-didactical structure of the Fit4DigiLinE units

The basis and foundation for the development of the learning materials was the compatibility of the contents for different learning platforms. The design of the learning materials is therefore aimed at being as easy to learn as possible in self-study and at the same time being well adapted, expanded, updated and used in different learning settings and digital environments. A second focus was on awakening and maintaining the self-motivation of the learners. Learning should be fun and the process of dealing with the learning material should be associated with enrichment.



In order to do justice to these two principles as far as possible, the units created for Fit4DigiLinE follow the following structure:

1. "The first introduction"

The aim is to motivate readers to continue reading, e.g. by establishing a direct link to typical life situations. It serves as a motivation, should give the learners a first insight into what it is all about but most importantly, this block serves to convince the readers that the following content will be interesting and exciting to read.

2. "The practical relevance"

At this point, readers learn what they need the knowledge and skills they have acquired as a result and where the concrete practical relevance of the topic lies.

3. "Overview of learning objectives and competences"

Here the learning objectives and competences are described in text form. This gives readers an overview of the content they will master after completing this unit.

4. "Knowledge building phases"

The knowledge to be built up is divided into several phases and taught in simple language and with many practical examples. Each line of text is used either to build up knowledge, to illustrate the practical aspects or to motivate students and is assigned to a specific learning objective. Graphics, examples and text containers with definitions, notes, mnemonics or excurses loosen up and prevent a long, tedious text.

5. "Apply knowledge phase with practical examples"

With the help of examples in different designs (e.g. assignments, multiple or single choice) the acquired knowledge is applied, repeated and consolidated.

6. "Secure knowledge phase"

A short and clear summary of the most important contents rounds off the unit and gives the learners another opportunity to consolidate and reflect on acquired knowledge.

In the learning material following aspects will be presented:

CONNECT	LEARN
EXPLORE	REFLECT

CONTENT PART	INFORMATION	QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED	IDEAS FOR CONTENT
Connect	Connect the topic to their own experience and previous knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what is this unit about? • how does this relate to my previous experience? • what can I gain from this? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quick overview of the chapter • case study / anecdote • reflexive questions
Learn	Learners take in new information in various ways (reading, discussing, seeing, hearing, reflecting).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learn new knowledge • learn new skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • text format • mind maps • videos
Explore	Learners actively practice the new skills, connect to their own professional environment and review what they've learned.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how can I apply this new knowledge / skills in my practice? • practical ideas / examples • inspiration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • case studies • real life examples • videos • testimonials (teachers and students)
Reflect	Learners summarize what has been learned, evaluate, create action plans of how to apply in their own environment and reflect on the impact that it will have on their students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what have I learned? • how will I apply this? • in what way will my classes change? • what effect will this have on my students? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reflection activity • quiz

7 Methodological-didactical implementation in the teaching of Fit4DigiLinE

In order to ensure that the learning contents are suitable for heterogeneous groups, can be learned in self-study and are completed with high motivation, the consortium has committed itself to the following principles when creating the contents:

- Each unit was designed according to the previously developed and tested **curriculum** to ensure consistency of content and the target-oriented sequence.
- The **learning objectives** of each unit have been defined and the contents have been developed in the sense of a competence orientation exactly according to these learning objectives.
- The units have a uniform **sequence** and **design**.
- The readers are addressed directly in order to establish a **connection to the readers' life world**. In this way the learners are to be encouraged to reflect, but above all to think actively.
- As the content is equally addressed to both genders, attention was paid to **gender-neutral language**, which should not impair the reading flow. Where possible, neutral wording was given preference.
- **Pictures** and **examples** were used to lighten up and explain the situation. Variety is important for the eye as well as for memory and motivation.
- The units are written in a **varied way** - this can be achieved, for example, by following explanations or theoretical content with examples or concrete situations from everyday life, which consolidate the knowledge.
- The text was intended to replace the personal component that trainers normally bring to the table. It is therefore written in a way that is **self-explanatory** and accessible, according to the motto "Write the learning content as if you were explaining it verbally".

8 The Online Learning Platform – MILES

Miles Learning GmbH will provide the learning platform for the planned online course.

MILES Learning GmbH is a start-up company founded in November 2016. The foundation was preceded by a two-year concept phase in which a detailed product philosophy was developed and the technical feasibility of concept and technology analysed.

MILES supports the implementation of education and learning concepts through the use of smart education technology as it is required nowadays. The platform uses new approaches for the provision of learning content, which can be dynamically linked via several metadata levels. Integrated authoring tools and content management support the didactic design of learning materials. The project leader bit schulungcenter GmbH (AT) has already been using this platform successfully for diverse national measures and has received a lot of positive feedback so far. On this platform, learning contents will be presented in a user-friendly design, and target-group specific didactic structure.

