

## Moodle-Based E-Learning Course Development for Medical Interpreters

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**Abstract :** According to the Ministry of Justice, 9,044,000 foreigners visited Japan in 2010. The number of foreign residents in Japan was over 2,134,000 at the end of 2010. Further, medical tourism has emerged as a new area of business. Against this background, language barriers put the health of foreigners in Japan at risk, because they have difficulty in accessing health care and communicating with medical professionals. Medical interpreting training is urgently needed in response to language problems resulting from the rapid increase in the number of foreign workers in Japan over recent decades. Especially, there is a growing need in medical settings in Japan to speak international languages for communication, with Tokyo selected as the host city of the 2020 Summer Olympics. Due to the limited number of practical activities on medical interpreting, it is difficult for learners to acquire the interpreting skills. In order to eliminate the shortcoming, a web-based English-Japanese medical interpreting training system was developed. We conducted a literature review to identify learning contents, core competencies for medical interpreters by using Pubmed, PsycINFO, Cochrane Library, and Google Scholar. Selected papers were investigated to find core competencies in medical interpreting. Eleven papers were selected through literature review indicating core competencies for medical interpreters. Core competencies in medical interpreting abstracted from the literature review, showed consistency in previous research whilst the content of the programs varied in domestic and international training programs for medical interpreters. Results of the systematic review indicated five core competencies: (a) maintaining accuracy and completeness; (b) medical terminology and understanding the human body; (c) behaving ethically and making ethical decisions; (d) nonverbal communication skills; and (e) cross-cultural communication skills. We developed an e-learning program for training medical interpreters. A Web-based Medical Interpreter Training Program which cover these competencies was developed. The program included the following : online word list (Quizlet), allowing student to study online and on their smartphones; self-study tool (Quizlet) for help with dictation and spelling; word quiz (Quizlet); test-generating system (Quizlet); Interactive body game (BBC); Online resource for understanding code of ethics in medical interpreting; Webinar about non-verbal communication; and Webinar about incompetent vs. competent cultural care. The design of a virtual environment allows the execution of complementary experimental exercises for learners of medical interpreting and introduction to theoretical background of medical interpreting. Since this system adopts a self-learning style, it might improve the time and lack of teaching material restrictions of the classroom method. In addition, as a teaching aid, virtual medical interpreting is a powerful resource for the understanding how actual medical interpreting can be carried out. The developed e-learning system allows remote access, enabling students to perform experiments at their own place, without being physically in the actual laboratory. The web-based virtual environment empowers students by granting them access to laboratories during their free time. A practical example will be presented in order to show capabilities of the system. The developed web-based training program for medical interpreters could bridge the gap between medical professionals and patients with limited English proficiency.

**Keywords :** e-learning, language education, moodle, medical interpreting

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