

## Teaching and Learning Latin via Moodle: the Junior University's Experience at University of Porto

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### Abstract

In Portugal, for the last century, Classical studies have been associated to hard, boring, old-fashioned and sometimes even useless subjects. It is not easy to understand this phenomenon not only because Portuguese language is a romance one but also because it is a strange way to deal with the languages and cultures that, in the western world, are the most ancient and productive ones. In consequence of this incomprehensible way of dealing with these subjects and also of the way of being of the new generations (they mostly prefer modern things as Play stations and also soft work), children and teenagers show no interest in learning it although they never tried it for their own... So, the study of subjects like Latin, Ancient Greek, Roman or Greek Cultures has almost disappeared. It is not easy to find high schools where those few illuminated who still want to learn it have the chance to achieve that goal. Even universities don't offer enough subjects especially to those who want to become language's teachers.

So, as a Latin teacher, as a Classical lover and as a mother, I realized that we must, in behalf of the youngest generations, try to increase their interest on those subjects. This school year, I decided to organize two activities - «Detective Aristos and the mysterious case of the lost mythological papyrus» and «Latin, a language full of live» - within the ambit of the 6th edition of the University of Porto's Junior University, which is associated to European Children's Universities Network. This is a project that bets on the promotion of culture, science and technology through the development and execution of learning programs and junior research projects aimed at young students from 11 to 17 years old. These programs are designed by university lecturers and executed by undergraduate and graduate students under the lecturers' supervision. During this period, the students can do elementary research, develop and work on small projects on different themes in science, engineering, humanities and the arts. Students are not only allowed to get a glimpse of everyday life at the University and perhaps choose their future university course, but also encouraged to regard acquisition of knowledge as a pleasurable activity.

In this paper, I intend to report the experience of the Latin activity - the only one of the kind in Portugal -, which will be supported by Moodle, an open source Learning Management System - LMS, (something that in Portugal is also unique for an ancient language), a tool that I also use in my Graduate Level Latin classes.