



# COACH BOT

“Modular e-course with virtual coach tool support”

LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAMME  
LEONARDO da VINCI

Coordinated by FOR.COM

## NATIONAL FOLLOW UP REPORT

Country: ITALY



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## INDEX

<b>1. DESCRIPTION OF THE BILATERAL MEETING AND FOCUS GROUP SESSION.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2. MAIN RESULTS EMERGED IN THE BILATERAL MEETING AND FOCUS GROUP.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3. CONCLUSIONS.....</b>	<b>7</b>

## RESULTS OF THE NATIONAL FOLLOW UP

### 1. DESCRIPTION OF THE BILATERAL MEETING AND FOCUS GROUP SESSION

#### **Bilateral meeting with students of the control and the experimental group:**

Since most of the COACH BOT Italian students lived outside of Rome Municipality or in different Italian Regions and since not all the students were always available to participate in a plenary focus group (due to their discontinuous work shifts and their limited availability of time), FOR.COM. collected the students' feedback from control and experimental group through a bilateral communication, both face to face and virtually, following the main topics and questions suggested in the "COACH BOT Follow Up Guidelines".

Specifically, FOR.COM. collected a feedback from a total of **6 students out of 7 of the control group** and from **8 students out of 12 of the experimental group** that carried out the pilot e-course "Enhancing the European Home Healthcare professionals' Competences".

Here below the profession of the 6 Control Group users involved in the COACH BOT follow up evaluation bilateral meetings:

PROFESSION*	NUMBER
social/care worker/ other	4
nurse	2
physiotherapists	

**\*social/care worker/ other:** social and health care assistants, social and health care helpers, social workers, general practitioners, doctors, other professionals

**nurse:** practical nurses, registered nurses, other kind of nurses

**physiotherapists:** physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, other kind of physiotherapists

Here below the profession of the 8 Experimental Group users involved in the COACH BOT follow up evaluation bilateral meetings:

PROFESSION	NUMBER
social/care worker/ other	5
nurse	2
physiotherapists	1

#### **Number and profession of the participants involved in the mixed focus group session:**

A focus group session was held by FOR.COM. during the II COACH BOT National Exploitation Seminar on the 20<sup>th</sup> September 2010 in Rome, with a total of **6 students**, among them 2 students were from Control Group and 4 students from Experimental Group.

PROFESSION	NUMBER
social/care worker/ other	3
nurse	2
physiotherapists	1

## 2. MAIN RESULTS EMERGED IN THE BILATERAL MEETING AND FOCUS GROUP

During the Second COACH BOT Italian National Exploitation Seminar, arranged by FOR.COM. in Rome the 20<sup>th</sup> of September 2010, a mixed focus group was arranged with the Italian students of the control and the experimental groups in order to assess the chances to improve and replicate the COACH BOT e-course methodology.

The focus group was conducted by Mr. Luca Angelo Galassi (IT project manager FOR.COM.) and Ms. Barbara Quarta (project manager, FOR.COM.) following the main topics and questions suggested in the “*COACH BOT Follow Up Guidelines*”. A total of 6 students participated in the focus group, specifically 2 students from the control group and 4 students from the experimental group.

In particular, the following topics have been investigated during the focus group in order to stimulate the debate between the participants:

- Students' overall satisfaction about COACH BOT e-course
- Benefits of e-learning compared to traditional learning
- Benefits and opportunities offered by the e-course
- Opinions and suggestions about the e-course learning platform
- Opinions and suggestions about the e-course Virtual Assistant “Clara”

Here below the main results emerged from the focus group and from the previous bilateral communication with the control and the experimental users:

### 1) *Students' overall satisfaction about the e-course :*

The discussion showed that the overall level of satisfaction regarding the expectations of the course was positive. Most of the students affirmed that the online course met their expectations. In particular, the following aspects emerged:

- Good quality of the contents, also for the breadth of topics proposed in the e-course;
- Good and professional teachers, well structured lessons, clear and suitable examples;
- Contents of the course matched the student's training needs;
- Appropriate start-up quizzes to assess students' initial level of knowledge.

### Emerging critical aspects:

- The English language was too technical;
- Technical difficulties with the online platform: accessing the final quizzes, tracking the lessons;
- Not enough available time to complete the course and some difficulties in establishing the individual timing required for the completion of the course (as recognized by the participants themselves, probably due to lack of experience of e-learning environments).

## **2) *Benefits of e-learning compared to traditional learning***

Most of the students recognized the benefits of the e-learning course basically in the opportunity to study at home and at the time that suites them.

### Emerging critical aspects:

- Technical problems, especially in the recording of the audio-lessons timings;
- Lack of a paper document intended not to replace the contents of lessons, but to give an overview of the course, a sort of conceptual map of all the steps of the course and its overall structure;
- Absence of an online glossary of technical terms, especially for students of the control group;
- Lack of face to face relationship with the teacher;
- English language.

## **3) *Benefits and opportunities offered by the e-course***

The modular e-course has allowed the definition of individual learning paths that the majority of the participants perceived as truly "personalized" on the base of their training needs.

Some students highlighted the chance offered by the course to study some topics not strictly related to their professional profession. In particular they really appreciated the module focused on the Home Healthcare workers legislation and the module on cultural differences in help relationship.

## **4) *Opinions and suggestions about the e-course learning platform***

The majority of the control and experimental group students appreciated the online course. The login procedure and platform tools were also highly appreciated. Some of the students considered forum and chat as tools not really useful, despite they admitted the fact that they did not use it because they have not enough available time.

The main students' suggestions were the following:

- Improve the graphical design (enlarge the text character and make the graphics more appealing with different visual inputs);
- Improve the path to access final quizzes and improve the tracking of the lessons;
- Provide a paper document with an overview of the course and a conceptual map of all the steps to be followed by students during the course;
- Provide an online glossary of the technical terms, especially for students of the control group;
- develop podcasts of the lessons that can be downloaded by students;
- lengthen the total duration of the course.

### **5) Opinions and suggestions about the e-course Virtual Assistant “Clara”**

The majority of the experimental students affirmed that Clara represented a good and useful tutor during the online training, although they also highlighted the need of a more active and stimulating virtual assistant, especially in supporting the training activities during the audio lessons.

Some students stated that It would have been more useful if Clara had introduced each lesson with a short summary and supported students during the lessons (pills concerning the main issues and connections with other topics). The virtual assistant should make the navigation within the platform more straightforward providing more messages to orient the user even if not asked explicitly by the latter.

Other suggestions:

- The Virtual Assistant should provide more messages to encourage and motivate students all along the course;
- The Virtual Assistant should have a more active role in supporting students on the definition/programming and monitoring of the timing of study;
- The Virtual Assistant should have a more active role as a Teacher.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

The bilateral communication with the COACH BOT students and then the focus group organized with both the experimental and control group students, have been an important opportunity to actively involve the project target group (home healthcare professionals with different levels of experience and different kind of works) in the follow up evaluation of the COACH BOT pilot training course.

The COACHBOT online course was considered to have met the expectations of most of the Italian students in term of knowledge and skills they expected to acquire. Furthermore, most of the students considered that the modules presented in the online course helped them to build a personalized learning path that was relevant to their daily needs.

The course lessons were considered to be well structured as most of the control and experimental students offered a positive evaluation. The modular e-course has allowed the definition of individual learning paths that the majority of the participants perceived as truly "personalized" on the base of their training needs.

All the students involved in the follow up bilateral meetings and in the final focus group, considered that the e-learning course is more convenient than traditional learning since it offers the benefit to study at home and according their available time.

The main difficulties encountered by the students were related to the English language and some technical problems during their learning process, especially in accessing the final quizzes and in the recording of the audio-lessons timings.

Some of the tools offered were not used by the students (e.g. forum and chat). The main reasons mentioned about not using these two tools were concentrated on time shortness, no interest and no need.

Most of the students appreciated the e-course, however, some of them believed that the e-learning platform could be improved in some of its aspects (please see the paragraph 4 "opinions and suggestions about the e-course's learning platform" at page 6).

The majority of the experimental students believe that Clara's presence represented an added value to the e-course, since it was a good and useful tutor during the online training. Some of the students also believe that Clara's role and functions could be improved (please see the paragraph 4 "opinions and suggestions about the e-course's virtual assistant Clara" at page 7).