

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Potential Platforms for We Teach Well

Before continuing to the project, Group 27 initially did some researches on the potential platforms for We Teach Well. The criteria of the platform that will be chosen will be based on We Teach Well's requirements. The requirements that We Teach Well requested included the following functions and features:

- A paywall, so that the only users who can view and undertake courses are the ones who pay for it.
- Users should be able to log in to the online course platform, and continue where they last left off.
- The platform should be able to host formats such as video and PDFs. It should be possible for certain teaching material to be downloaded by the user, whilst other material cannot.
- The ability to customise the platform and courses with We Teach Well's branding.
- A section of the platform for community engagement, where users can interact with one another by discussing topics through a forum and live video discussions.
- The ability to provide Certificates/badges that are awarded to users once they have finished a course.
- The platform subscription cost must be less than AUD\$156 p/m (The price

- of a Kajabi subscription at the time of writing).
- Although they were flexible, We Teach Well expressed that they prefer to use a platform that is based in Australia.

A matrix that summarizes the criteria for the platform research that was carried is shown on Table 2.1, Table 2.2, and Table 2.3.

Table 2.1 Platform Matrix Assessment (1)

Platform	Paywall	Progress Tracking	Supporting multiple file formats	Customizable
GO1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Quitich	No	Yes	Yes	No
Teachery	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Podia	Yes	No (Per 9/19)	Yes	Yes
ISpring Solutions	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Thinkific	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Teachable	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mighty Networks	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not really
Kajabi	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Gumroad	No	No	Yes	No
Invanto	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
LearnWorlds	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 2.2 Platform Matrix Assessment (2)

Platform	Community Engagement	Certificate and Credentials	User Friendliness	Pricing
GO1	No	Yes	N/A	\$10 Per user p/m
Quitch	No	Future planned	Yes	Per user
Teachery	No	No	Yes	Starting from \$AUD 63 p/m
Podia	Yes	No	N/A	Starting from \$AUD 50 p/m
ISpring Solutions	Yes	Yes	Yes	Starting from \$AUD 100 p/m
Thinkific	Yes	Yes	Yes	Starting from \$AUD 50 p/m
Teachable	Yes	Yes	Yes	Starting from \$AUD 38 p/m

Table 2.3 Platform Matrix Assessment (3)

Platform	Community Engagement	Certificate and Credentials	User Friendliness	Pricing
Mighty Networks	Yes	No	No	Starting from \$AUD 30 p/m
Kajabi	Yes	Yes	Yes	Starting from \$AUD 156 p/m
Gumroad	No	No	No	Starting from \$AUD 13 p/m
Invanto	No	Yes	No	Starting from \$AUD 26 p/m / 1000 users
LearnWorlds	Yes	Yes	No	Starting from \$AUD 31 p.m

Out of the 12 platforms researched, nine of them did not make it to the top three. A more detailed explanation is provided below.

2.1.1 Go1

The Go1 platform originated in Australia and boasts of a large range of courses hosted on its platform. Since 2015 it has expanded to include offices around the world. (Go1, 2021) Experiences with the Go1 website found that it was quite confusing to navigate, and hard to find information. After researching it was decided that Go1 was more suited to Employers who were looking to provide in-house training to their employees. Other reasons why Go1 did not suit We Teach Well were that the pricing was based on the number of users accessing the course, rather than a monthly subscription fee like other options available. There was also no community feature available, which was a feature that had been requested.

2.1.2 Quitch

Group 27 attended a webinar which showcased the Quitch platform. Group 27 also tested the iOS app. Developed in Melbourne at Swinburne University, Quitch is an app that aids in classroom learning. It ‘gamifies’ learning by awarding points to students who answer quiz questions correctly. (Quitch, 2021) Students are then put into a leaderboard based on points. Students are encouraged to learn and participate with an incentive to rise up the leaderboard. It was the view of Group 27 that this app did not suit the needs of We Teach Well.

Reasons for this include Quitch being an app for mobile devices only. It also seems to be more a secondary learning platform used in the classroom, rather than the primary platform. The gamification of learning also doesn’t seem necessary as

the students in this case are adult teachers completing Professional Development would not have a need to beat others completing courses. As the app is designed for institutions, there is no paywall hosting, so all transactions of courses would need to go through the We Teach Well webstore. Fees were based on the number of students and duration of course, rather than the simple flat fee approach from other vendors.

2.1.3 Teachery

Teachery comes across as a well-made and straight forward online learning hosting platform. Using the free trial it was found to be quite relatively easy to move around the site, however it did seem a little confusing at times, with many different pages that could have easily been consolidated into one, which may lead to navigational problems. The site had a small but comprehensive support site which would be important for We Teach Well for adding courses in the future.

The site had excellent customisation features, and made customisation of branding quite easy to do (Zook 2021). The reasons why Teachery was not recommended to We Teach Well was that it lacked important features that were requested, including a community section for users to have discussions, and the ability to present certificates to users once they had completed a course.

2.1.4 Podia

From looking at the Podia website, Group 27 saw that this platform may be a good choice to look into further for We Teach Well. It had reviews of being user-friendly and had the option for Stripe payment (Fry 2021). However, when Group 27 tried to make an account to test a free trial it didn't work. Group 27 tried using

different browsers and incognito windows but unfortunately when clicking the sign up button nothing happened. Group 27 sent an email to the Podia customer service team and they said nothing was wrong and it should work. Due to this issue Group 27 decided not to go with the platform as they were unable to do testing themselves to see if it had everything We Teach Well wanted for their platform.

2.1.5 iSpring Solutions

When Group 27 started to look into iSprings Solutions it was looking like a top contender in making the top three. It allowed for branding to be customisable, it also accepted many different forms of multimedia to be added to the courses. It had many types of payment methods that could be used such as PayPal and Stripe. It has high security features and a certificate function (iSpring 2021).

However the two main downfalls for this platform is that it did not allow for much customisable colours. Group 27 found that the navigation bar was the only part of the platform that could be colour customised. The second downfall and the biggest one is that it only allows for 10 users to create an account. This would be a big issue for We Teach Well as they would want to expand their business and have more than 10 users signed up to the platform and getting access to their professional development courses. For these reasons Group 27 decided to rule out iSprings Solutions from being a platform to recommend for We Teach Well to use.

2.1.6 Mighty Networks

Mighty Networks is an online platform that aims to be a tool for online membership building. Users can create online course platforms and share content using said platform (Mighty Networks, 2021). Group 27 did research on Mighty

Networks as well as signing in for a free trial. Mighty Networks has a reasonable price that fits within We Teach Well's budget. It is also able to create posts, polls, as well as topics for discussions (Mighty Networks, 2021). Perfect for community engagement.

A downside of Mighty Networks is that it is quite hard to navigate and understand, and Group 27 found Mighty Networks to be not user friendly, which can make it difficult for Group 27, We Teach Well, and even customers to navigate. Mighty Networks also offers less customization features compared to the top three platforms, and it is not able to issue credentials or certifications (Shambora, 2020). These reasons made Group 27 to not recommend Mighty Networks to We Teach Well.

2.1.7 Kajabi

Kajabi is a business platform that makes creating and selling online courses easy. Kajabi can construct landing pages, launch campaigns for marketing, and design websites (Kajabi, 2021). At first glance, Group 27 saw that Kajabi might be a strong contender for the top three platform, because it has a lot of features desired by We Teach Well, such as third-party integration, website builder, and it even allows selling multiple products (Courses, Coachings, Community).

However when doing more research and signing up for free trials, it turned out that Kajabi was simply too expensive compared to other platforms. The cheapest option, which is around \$156 AUD per month, only allows hosting for 3 products (Kajabi, 2021). This reason alone made Group 27 drop Kajabi as one of the potential platforms for We Teach Well.

2.1.8 Gumroad

Gumroad is an online marketplace based in the US where creators of different fields such as arts or business can sell their products. Group 27 began researching the platform by browsing around it as a user. Group 27's first finding was that the platform doesn't allow for exclusive access and ownership, which Group 27 concluded will give the impression of unprofessionalism. Upon further research, Group 27 discovered that Gumroad lacked many of the requirements such as certificates, tests and quizzes, secure and private community forums, and customizability. Gumroad only fulfilled the requirement to support different file formats. Based on the findings, Group 27 decided to rule Gumroad out of the selection.

2.1.9 Invanto

Invanto is an online platform consisting of several smaller products such as CoachRack, MemberFactory, and more. CoachRack is Invanto's sub-product where creators can create, design, and sell their courses. CoachRack allows users to create multiple schools with multiple courses, allowing for an almost limitless expansion potential.

Group 27 looked for resources regarding CoachRack and its features, but there was a lack of resources containing the desired information. Group 27 found that CoachRack is a good standalone product to sell professional development courses in as they track students' progress on a course and allows for tests and quizzes. However, some features such as tests and quizzes are not integrated to CoachRack, and instead were available on another sub-product called Testnia. There was also

missing information on the availability of discussion forums and certificates, prompting the group to sign up for a free trial. However, Invanto does not offer a free trial, which limited Group 27's research efforts. Lastly, Invanto is not well-known among the teaching community, and had bad reviews on peer review sites such as G2 and Trustpilot claiming that it's a scam (Hallur, 2021).

Based on the reasoning above, Group 27 decided that Invanto is too decentralized as a platform, which may prove to be a challenge to manage due to this not-user-friendly nature. Additionally, Invanto's bad reputation made Group 27 reluctant to recommend the platform to We Teach Well.

2.2 Top Three Platforms

After extensive research and trials, Group 27 came up with the recommendations for the top three platforms. These platforms were Thinkific, Teachable, and LearnWorlds. The reasons why these three platforms were selected are as follows:

2.2.1 Thinkific

Thinkific is an online hosting platform that enables entrepreneurs to create, market, sell, and deliver their own online courses (Thinkific 2021). It was founded in 2012 and based in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. Group 27 found that Thinkific is the most suited platform for We Teach Well to publish their online professional development courses. Through the free trial and research, Group 27 saw that Thinkific had all the features We Teach Well were looking for. It was cheaper than most other platforms that Group 27 researched and it was user-friendly and very customisable. It has high security features and has Stripe payment. It offers

Convertkit integration and the ability to use tags which is what We Teach Well wanted for the integration of the online hosting platform. Overall, Thinkific ticked off all the criteria that was needed for a platform to be considered for We Teach Well to use. A snapshot of Thinkific’s dashboard is shown on Figure 2.1.

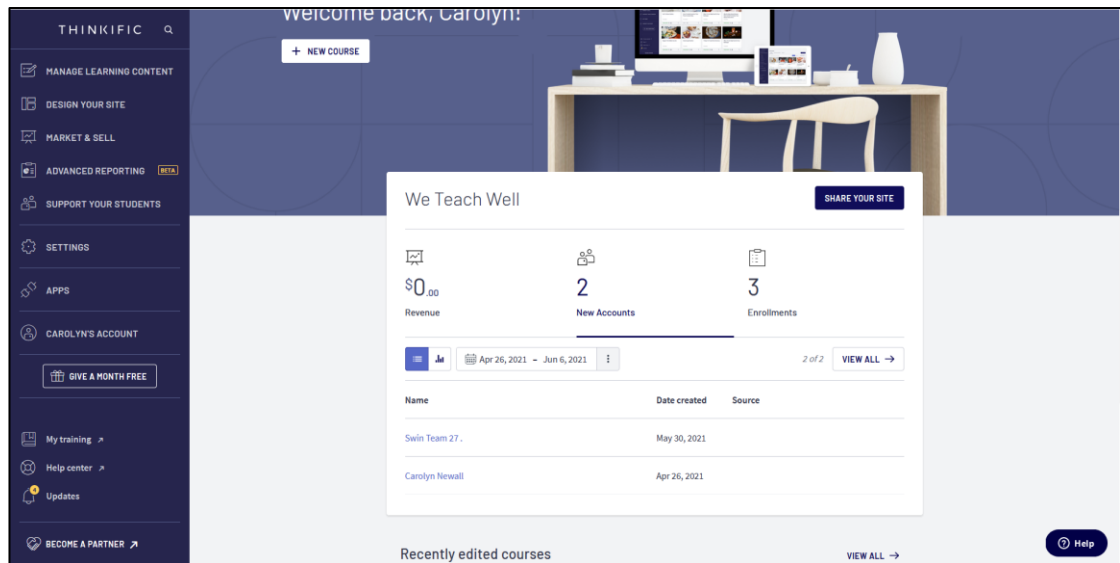


Figure 2.1 Thinkific dashboard

2.2.2 Teachable

Teachable is another platform that enables people to create and sell whatever they want and promote it online (Teachable, 2021). It was founded in the USA in 2014. Teachable allows users to control all aspects of their market, and it also offers many features such as third-party integration, issuing of certificates, and a customizable website (Teachable, 2021). A snapshot of Thinkific’s dashboard and settings is shown on Figures 2.2 and 2.3.

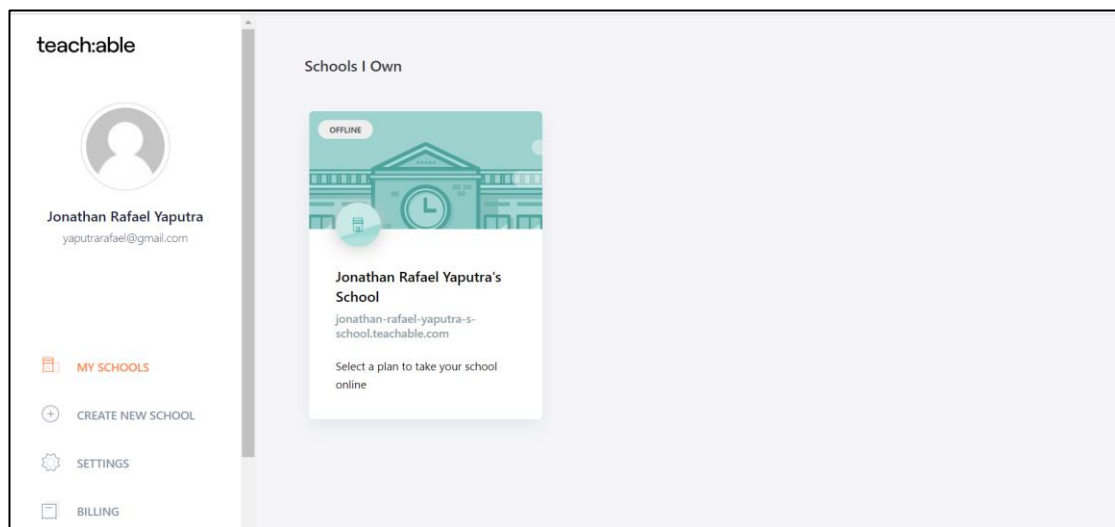


Figure 2.2 Teachable Dashboard

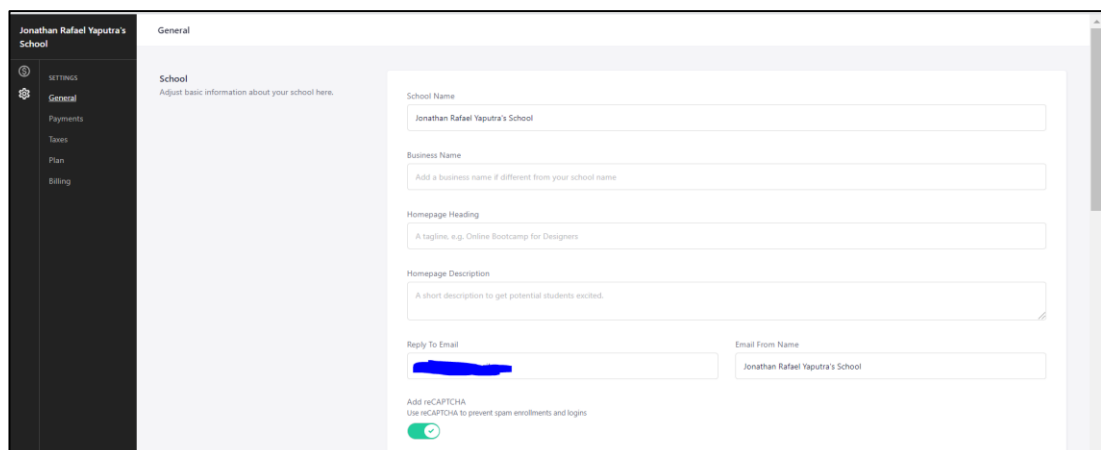


Figure 2.3 Teachable Settings

Group 27 initially did a free trial and researched on Teachable, and found it to be a good candidate for the potential platform due to it containing a lot of features desired by We Teach Well as well as an affordable price. However when compared within the top three it was evident that Teachable does not have a website preview feature (Thinkific vs Teachable (2021 Update). #1 Teachable Alternative, 2021), and this can be a difficult thing for We Teach Well as well as Group 27 when trying to design the platform. Teachable also only integrates with PayPal for customers

outside the USA, EU, and Canada, and this can pose a problem for We Teach Well as it uses Stripe to process payments. These reasons made Teachable being dropped from Group 27's ultimate recommendation for the platform of choice.

2.2.3 LearnWorlds

LearnWorlds is an online platform founded in 2014 and is based in London, United Kingdom that allows users to create and design their courses and webpage, as well as sell their courses to customers (Owler, 2021). LearnWorlds won several awards from peer-review sites such as Capterra and G2 for most trusted site and happiest user nominations.

Group 27 signed up for a free trial and was granted access to most of the features available on the platform. Based on the findings, Group 27 was able to confirm the platform's ability to customize the site and proceeded with creating a mock website with its appearance matched as closely as possible to We Teach Well's website. Aside from that, LearnWorlds also offer other features that's part of the requirements such as the ability to host and engage in a discussion forum, allowing for private (group) and public discussions.

Course-wise, LearnWorlds saves and shows the student's progress in a course, allowing for easier progress tracking for both the student and the instructor. Lastly, LearnWorlds can also issue certificates, including issuing a custom certificate made by the owner. These reasons made LearnWorlds a strong candidate and was put in the top 3. A glimpse of LearnWorlds's dashboard and discussion forum is depicted in Figures 2.4 and 2.5.

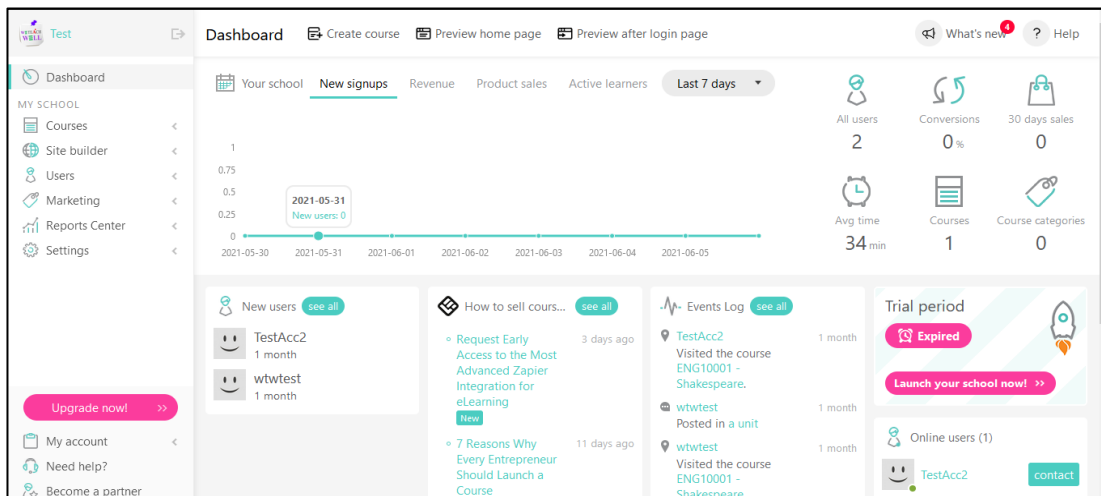


Figure 2.4 LearnWorlds' Administrator Dashboard

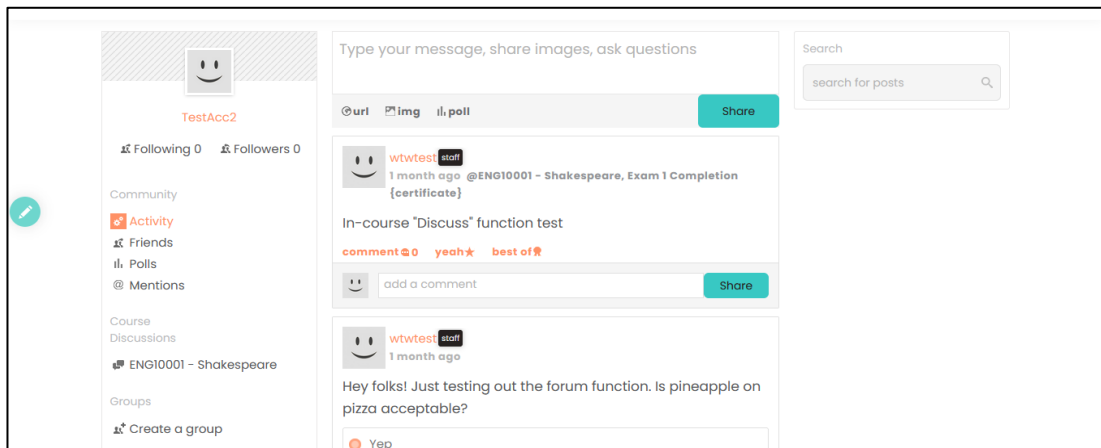


Figure 2.5 LearnWorlds' Discussion Forum

After further research, it was found that the website and course builder was not user friendly and rather complex to use, leading to LearnWorlds not chosen as our ultimate recommended platform.