# Blended Learning Course Format on Moodle: A Model for Beginner Level Foreign Language Courses in Higher Education

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## Abstract

This article presents a pedagogically sound, user-friendly course model for teaching beginner level foreign languages on the Moodle platform, based upon a Turkish course developed and currently being taught by the author. The paper shows that an integrated course layout which combines monthly chronological units with thematic ones facilitates teaching and learning. Guidelines for designing an aesthetically appealing, uniquely tailored course website are given, which make a variety of pertinent and interesting educational materials easy to locate. An engaging and enriching course site of this kind raises the students' motivation and enhances learning. Foreign language teachers are encouraged to adopt this model in its entirety or with idiosyncratic adjustments to revamp their courses and achieve improved pedagogical outcomes. Likewise, instructors who do not have Moodle can adapt the concept of the integrated course layout to implement it with other learning management systems (LMSs).

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 The state of the art in foreign language instruction

How the Internet has revolutionized language teaching and language learning has been extensively covered in the literature (Blake, 2008; Jarvis & Krashen, 2014; Levy, 2009; Richards, 2015 among others), so that many foreign language teachers can no longer picture themselves teaching without the Internet in the classroom. Moreover, the advent of learning management systems (LMSs) such as Moodle has made the Internet a *sine qua non* of foreign language education.

In the past decade, numerous studies have been published on the implementations of the Internet for foreign language teaching at the tertiary level with special reference to online courses (Blake, 2008; Knutzen & Kennedy, 2012; Okuyama, 2005). For an online course to be successful, the teacher must understand the underlying pedagogy of e-learning (Govindasamy, 2001) and also acquire the skills necessary for effective online teaching (Compton, 2009). Blended learning courses, on the other hand, i.e. foreign language courses where a digital platform (e.g., Moodle, BlackBoard and others) is combined with face-to-face teaching, can be successfully taught by motivated, traditional teachers with little technological expertise, if the course has been duly designed by the course developer. Such courses are becoming increasingly popular, thanks to their positive learning outcomes, as recently attested in the literature (Rey, Garcia & Garcia, 2009; Sun, 2014; Tsai & Talley, 2013; Tsai, 2014)

### 1.2 The perspective of less commonly taught languages (LCTLs)

The advances in digital technologies have also affected the ways in which LCTLs can be taught. According to Robin (2013), the Internet has had a greater impact on the teaching and learning of LCTLs than commonly taught languages (CTLs). Although the resources available for LCTLs, especially those taught more rarely, are sparser than the tremendously rich variety available for CTLs (ibid), the persistent effort of the LCTL teacher in surfing the Internet can lead to a wealth of authentic materials adaptable for pedagogical uses. The availability of Web-based materials suitable for teaching both CTLs and LCTLs raises the important question of how these resources should be organized and used effectively for classroom instruction.

### 1.3 The original contribution of this article

In previous studies, the significance of course format and the suitability of the various Moodle course formats for foreign language

instruction have been largely overlooked. This article examines the intricate relationship between course format and language instruction, and attempts to fill an important gap in the literature.

The focus of this paper is the format of a beginners' Turkish course offered in the Division of Foreign Languages at Tel Aviv University. The course constitutes a model for blended learning foreign language courses at the tertiary level where Moodle is an integral part of face-to-face instruction. Course layout reflects the underlying pedagogical objectives of the course, and therefore is an integral part of curriculum design and has implications for teaching. An orderly and balanced arrangement of the course content displayed in a graphic format is an excellent anchor for teacher and student alike. Thus, it is clear that a pedagogically sound and user-friendly course layout is a prerequisite for effective language teaching and learning on a digital platform. The integrated design model created for beginners' Turkish can be implemented for any beginner level LCTL course and with LMSs other than Moodle, as well as on free platforms such as Edmodo or Google classroom. Accordingly, foreign language teachers in higher education are encouraged to develop their own custom made course sites that are tailored to meet the specific needs of their students.

## 2. Background

### 2.1 The switch from paper to digital teaching materials

While in the past teachers relied on commercial textbooks, authentic materials, and/or teacher-made materials for teaching foreign languages, today course books are being supplemented or supplanted by course websites. Teachers increasingly recognize the need to combine traditional teaching with culturally authentic, up-to-date online materials to enhance reading and writing, and engender meaningful communication in the target language. This approach has been appropriately coined "blended learning" and defined among others, as "the integrated combination of traditional learning with web based on-line approaches" (Oliver & Trigwell, 2005, p.17).

The integration of online materials into foreign language courses is a natural consequence of accessible high quality language resources on the Internet that can be adapted for language teaching. It is also the consequence of the availability of LMSs as a platform for managing and reintroducing these resources in ways that foster both teaching and learning.

## 2.2 Moodle

Moodle is one of the most widely used digital platforms (Berns, Gonzalez-Pardo, & Camacho, 2013) with more than 70 million users around the world (Fenton, 2015). It enables the diversification of teaching in innovative ways. A late follower of technology, I had shunned it for many years, thinking it would put a barrier between me and my students. As an English teacher in the Division of Foreign Languages at Tel Aviv University, I adopted Moodle hesitantly, fearing I could never learn how to use it properly. However, I have discovered to my delight that basic computer literacy is sufficient to learn how to use Moodle and a lack of advanced computer skills does not constitute an impediment. Furthermore, a teacher need not master all of its applications in order to use it. Even the basic features provide ample diversity for teachers to enliven their courses. Jeff Stanford's book titled "Moodle 1.9 for Second Language Teaching: Engaging Online Language-learning Activities Using the Moodle Platform", although written for an older version of Moodle, is an excellent reference book for language teachers who would like to start using Moodle (Stanford, 2009). For a quick review of how Moodle can be used for language teaching see Brandl (2005). "Using Moodle for Language Teaching" is also a very good guide for novices (Warth-Sondheimer, 2011).

## 2.3 The context of beginners' Turkish

Beginners' Turkish is offered in the Division of Foreign Languages at Tel Aviv University as a yearly course with biweekly 90 minute classes; i.e. four academic hours per week for an academic year comprised of two 13-week semesters. The course population

mostly consists of B.A. or M.A. students in the Department of Middle Eastern and African History. Attendance is obligatory and students are required to attend approximately 80% of the classes. Therefore, this is a face-to-face course with the Moodle site as its "online course book". The term blended learning can be applied here in the sense that classroom instruction is complemented and augmented by online teaching materials, assignments, and quizzes to which students have remote access with a username and a password.

Having previously taught Turkish for several years through traditional methods only, I accepted the challenge to develop and teach beginners' Turkish (my mother tongue) with great enthusiasm. This was an opportunity to give creative expression to my knowledge and experience as a veteran language teacher. I wanted to design an inspiring and dynamic course by uploading my own materials to Moodle and developing tasks/activities around up-to-date resources freely available on the Internet. Since I had been using Moodle in my English classes for quite a few years, I naively thought I could develop my new Turkish course by simply mirroring the format of the English courses that I had co-developed or taught. I was in for a surprise.

## 2.4 Course format/layout and its significance

In the literature on foreign language teaching, the term "format" is generally used to denote the method of delivery: the terms blended learning format, traditional (face-to-face) format, or online format indicate the medium by which the course is taught. In the discourse of learning management systems, however, the term "course format" refers to the layout of the course site; that is, the way in which teaching materials are arranged and presented on the homepage. The layout can be described as an overview of the course. It is analogous to an implicit mission statement in which the teacher makes a commitment to teach the subject matter in a certain way.

The manner in which Web-based materials are organized is not a trivial question at all. Conceptualizing the course layout helps teachers envision how the underlying pedagogical objectives will be

mapped out. Thus, course layout is an integral part of curriculum design with direct implications for how the course will be taught.

Poor instructional design can have a negative effect on the learning experience (Collopy & Arnold, 2009). Unsurprisingly, excellent teaching materials are of little use in a poorly designed course website. For instance, if the pedagogical rationale of the layout is not transparent, if learners cannot find the various course components in a straightforward, intuitive manner or cannot comprehend the logic behind the design of the course materials, they may lose motivation and interest in the course. Technology by itself does not constitute a methodology, and it is the teacher with a clear pedagogy who plays the most crucial role in creating a successful Web-based language curriculum (Blake, 2008).

Language learning should be fun: a sensible, aesthetic and user-friendly layout will engage the students and promote learning. The layout of a foreign language course on Moodle should satisfy the needs of the students, while faithfully reflecting the teacher's approach and pedagogical objectives. A layout which is in harmony with the teacher's style will assist him/her in achieving the course objectives. Consequently, course developers and instructors should give careful consideration to the layout of their courses to enhance the quality of teaching and ensure effective learning. For different Moodle course formats see https://docs.moodle.org/29/en/Course_formats. For sample screenshots see https://kb.wisc.edu/moodle/page.php?id=45461. For more information on Moodle course formats another good option is http://super-moodle.com/moodle-course-formats-what-you-need-to-know/.

## 3. Course design considerations

### 3.1 The thematic layout of English courses

The Division of Foreign Languages at Tel Aviv University offers courses for academic purposes in approximately fifteen languages. Our English courses are content-based, in other words, "…language proficiency is achieved by shifting the focus of instruction from the learning of language per se to the learning of language through the study of subject matter" (Stryker & Leaver, 1997, p. 5). All our English courses have Moodle sites developed by course coordinators and the topics format has been adopted across the board. In each thematic unit texts and multimodal resources are accompanied by comprehension questions, vocabulary exercises, computerized quizzes, and other interactive activities (e.g., forums and polls) or performance tasks. Besides the thematic units, each English course site also has a block of resources that focuses on linguistic skills: reading strategies, grammatical structures, academic vocabulary development, writing processes, etc. Content and language are spiraled throughout the course.

English as a lingua franca and the universal language of academia is the most widely taught foreign language in Israel. The main purpose of our English courses is to teach students who already have at least a basic knowledge of English, skills and strategies to cope with academic articles and tasks, while also improving their linguistic competence. In other words, discrete language skills are taught as a means to an end, geared to complement and enhance academic reading, writing, and presentation skills acquired through content-based instruction. Hence, the appropriateness of the topics format with a thematic layout for English courses.

### 3.2 An initial attempt at layout for beginners' Turkish

Following the thematic layout described above, nine months before the new Turkish course was due to begin, I started uploading materials to the Moodle site of the course. I chose interesting themes

such as Istanbul, Ottoman history, and Turkish culture. I uploaded links to websites and short video clips, rewrote paragraphs on topics related to the videos in simple Turkish, and prepared listening and reading comprehension questions. In addition, I started to develop a unit for grammar and one for vocabulary. After a sizeable amount of materials had been added and the site was beginning to take shape, I realized that this was not going to work. Firstly, the students would need at least two months of basic Turkish instruction to start handling the texts I had painstakingly written in simple Turkish. Next, a thematic layout entailed a separate grammar unit which would have to be prohibitively long. Furthermore, navigating back and forth between the thematic units and the grammar unit would be cumbersome. As an alternative to one very long grammar unit, annexing a grammar section to each thematic unit would create different problems, such as having to keep track of which grammar point could be found under which theme. The thematic layout was clearly not compatible with my teaching priorities. I had designed a nice course on Turkish culture, but not a beginner level language course.

The start of the academic year was only three months away, and I needed to create a more efficient layout for my beginners' Turkish.

### 3.3 Layout constraints on Turkish and other beginner level LCTLs

Beginner level foreign language courses aim to teach the basics of the language (sentence structure, grammar and vocabulary) to enable students who have little or no prior knowledge of the language, to understand simple texts and to express themselves with their basic knowledge, both in writing and in speech. Organizing and introducing the course contents in small, manageable chunks helps to progressively build the learner's competence in the language. To this end, the course site first and foremost requires structure. Appropriate scaffolding in the form of a good course format enables the teacher and the students to follow a path that leads to a desired

predetermined destination. The layout of the course has to lend itself to this goal by making this path clearly visible and easy to follow.

A learning management system facilitates the use of materials, whether they are developed by the teacher or freely available on the Internet. Web-based resources should be incorporated into the course curriculum in a way that will enhance language learning. These resources can be online newspapers, commercial or cultural websites, blogs, free language teaching websites, short videos and PowerPoint presentations, to name a few. They are a starting point for building a Moodle course for any language that has a wealth of materials on the Internet. Turkish being a LCTL cannot compete with CTLs such as French or Spanish in terms of the abundance and variety of online materials available, and nevertheless, it fares well.

Turkish, like many LCTLs, is a challenge for most learners, for it is genetically unrelated to any CTL. Beginners' Turkish students at Tel Aviv University who are usually native speakers of Hebrew, Arabic, Russian, or English have to acquaint themselves with a new sentence structure (SOV) and a completely alien vocabulary, as Turkish has few cognates that they can recognize from other languages. With the exception of some high frequency loan words such as *televizyon, turist, demokrasi, plan, rezervasyon etc.* they have little to hold on to. Furthermore, Turkish is a head-final language. The head-direction parameter classifies languages according to whether the head (e.g., the noun in a noun phrase, the verb in a verb phrase, etc.) precedes or follows its complements. Thus, Turkish is counterintuitive to native speakers of Hebrew, Arabic, Russian, and English which are head-initial languages, but quite "natural" to speakers of Japanese, a head-final language like Turkish.

One positive factor is that, notwithstanding the above linguistic/typological difficulties, beginners' Turkish students in Israel are fascinated by Turkish culture and are curious to learn about its various facets. According to Stenson, Janus, and Mulkern (1998) learning about culture is a key motivating factor for LCTL students. Consistent with this view, particularly in the first two months of the course when the teacher's priority is to introduce and drill basic grammar rules and vocabulary in context, culture can be a great

catalyst. A high level of motivation can be maintained by reading up-to-date newspaper headlines, interesting news items, the legend under images, easy-to-understand cartoons, posters, homepages of websites etc. Short video clips can be used to familiarize students with the way native speakers speak the language and to enhance listening comprehension. All the above resources should be gradually uploaded to the course site and made an integral part of classroom teaching in a user-friendly layout.

Reporting on the findings of his organizational research, Albert Bandura remarks that personal efficacy is strengthened and performance attainments are enhanced when people see themselves gain progressive mastery (Bandura, 1993). Given the fact that mastery experiences contribute to a strong sense of efficacy, especially in the case of an LCTL such as Turkish, the texts read in the first months of the course should be simple and brief to foster positive learning experiences and promote the students' self-efficacy in this unfamiliar realm. Two-thirds into the semester, however, when students have acquired some vocabulary knowledge and have mastered basic grammatical structures, several thematically linked texts can be incorporated and a semester final exam can be given on a theme covered extensively in the weeks prior to the test. This can be achieved without recourse to a thematic course layout, as we will see shortly.

## 4. The design model developed for beginners' Turkish

As discussed above, the topics format with a linear thematic layout is not appropriate for teaching Turkish and other beginner level LCTLs. In an effort to find a better layout, I decided to supply the topics format with the structure it intrinsically lacked by submitting it to a chronological framework. Such a framework already exists in Moodle in the form of the weekly format. As an intuitive teacher, I find the strict time dictation imposed by the weekly format too limiting for my teaching style. My time frame would have to be one that allowed room for improvising based on the needs and preferences of my students. I found the golden mean in an integrated course layout combining monthly chronological units with a number of thematic and skills units. The course is thereby

divided into six chronological segments, three for each semester. Each chronological unit is composed of four sections: reading, video, grammar, and vocabulary. In addition, the course site has theme-specific units, and separate units for quizzes, online dictionaries, and auxiliary language learning websites. The methodology of the course and the components of the integrated course layout are presented in greater detail in Appendix A and Appendix B, respectively.

This model provides a beginner level language course with the structure it needs for efficient teaching and learning and can be implemented using either the topics or the grid format. The grid format is a graphic course format in which each topic is displayed by means of an icon with a short title. Clicking on the icon opens a 'lightbox' that shows the contents of that topic. The grid format is therefore another way of displaying the topics, but it is not merely a "topics format in disguise". It has the advantage of a rich interface which breaks the monotony of the linear topics format. Furthermore, the compact display of the images makes navigation very easy. An illustration of the grid format can be found at https://moodle.org/plugins/view.php?plugin=format_grid.

When our university Moodle did not yet have the grid format, the integrated course layout of beginners' Turkish was displayed in the topics format. Navigation was tedious, as one had to scroll down long lists until a desired resource was reached. Moodle has a collapsed topics format for courses with a lot of content, but it results in a monotonous display. As soon as it was a part of our Moodle platform, I switched to the grid format with its compact and aesthetic display which makes navigation easier. Screenshots of the homepage and sample section contents can be found in Appendix C.

As for the language of the course site, the target language should be used as much as possible. Thus, all the components of the course, including section titles, resource and activity labels, are displayed predominantly in Turkish. On rare occasions, Hebrew or English is preferred in the title of a resource, to avoid introducing complex terminology in Turkish. For instance, a worksheet to drill the "abilitative negative" verb form will have a title in English with

the corresponding form of "cannot" in Hebrew to make sure all the students understand what the structure means.

## 5. The pedagogical rewards of an integrated course layout

The following are some of the salient positive characteristics of an integrated layout:

- The monthly layout of the units composed of four sections labelled according to skill/content and chronological period makes the whole course site manageable and easy to navigate. Specific materials are easier to find than in a weekly layout where there are too many sections, or in a layout that has no chronological units at all. Students can easily locate a particular teaching point, text, activity or exercise within a monthly unit.

- Once the course site has been designed, the monthly chronological layout saves the teacher long preparation hours before each lesson. The materials within each section can also be linearly arranged to a certain extent. However, this is by no means a rigid layout and serves only as a guide to remind the teacher what to do next. Each section has a wealth of resources and activities to choose from, allowing room for the teacher to be creative and diversify lesson contents.

- A chronologically organized course site (both monthly and weekly) is an excellent guide for new teachers and teachers teaching parallel classes. It simplifies the task of the course coordinator in giving guidance, overseeing academic quality and ensuring a similar standard of instruction in all classes.

- In the monthly layout (as opposed to the weekly), the teacher does not have to adhere to a strict time-table that dictates covering a given amount of material within a week. He/She can therefore adapt his/her pace to the students' pace of learning, their capacity, level of motivation and interest. It gives the teacher flexibility to teach the subject matter without having to worry about lesson numbers or week

numbers. If there is not enough time to cover certain components in one month, they can be taught while working on the next unit of the course. It is therefore a more fluid course layout, where the transition from one chronological unit to the next happens smoothly, almost imperceptibly.

- The teacher has to plan ahead one month, at a time. This is an excellent time frame to work with, without pressure. Every month, the materials under each section can be reviewed in order to plan how to combine and introduce the different resources. In addition, up-to-date news items can be collected on a weekly basis and integrated with materials on relevant topics. The monthly units divided into sections make teaching more focused and more structured than the topics format with a thematic layout and ensure important pedagogical goals are not missed.

- The sub-section titled "at leisure" allows the students to distinguish between primary course materials and optional materials to be covered for remedial work or extra practice. Teachers can gradually upload to this section exercises on subject matter which most students find challenging, and additional resources based on student requests.

- The topic of the semester final and that of the course final are introduced in two separate thematic units with all the relevant resources (texts, forums, and related links on the same theme) compiled under each. This ensures more goal-centered teaching and learning. Thus, the teacher and the students can systematically cover all the essential materials in preparation for these major exams.

- A separate unit for Moodle quizzes allows the students to easily keep track of what they have already completed and no quiz goes unnoticed within other sections.

- The grid format of the home page is neater and easier to navigate than the topics format, with its disagreeably long lists to scroll down. The compact nature of this format allows the

teacher to keep the entire course visible to the students at all times. Alternatively, the teacher can hide the second semester for a less crowded course homepage. The pictures in the grid format are appealing to the eye and the cartoons are fun. Moreover, they have a pedagogical purpose and are not randomly placed in the sections. The text in the icons can represent a theme, a grammatical structure, or new words that appear in that section. Altogether this format sends a positive message to the students: you will have fun while learning this language.

- The students find the course site engaging and enriching. They are happy to explore its contents and upload resources which they find useful to the forum for sharing resources. They contribute to the language learning experience by sharing songs, cartoons and catchy news items. The course is thus more interactive and student-centered. The general atmosphere in class is one of motivation and enthusiasm. This is in line with Tsai (2014) who claims that "…the success of e-learning depends largely on student acceptance of the system and willingness to use it" (ibid, p.167). Beginners' Turkish students embraced the integrated course layout on Moodle and felt at home with it immediately. This has no doubt contributed to their motivation to persevere and succeed in the study of a highly challenging language.

## 6. Students' comments regarding the course site

In the academic year that ended in June 2015, 11 participants were enrolled in beginners' Turkish and all passed the course with brilliant grades except for one person. That particular student missed a lot of classes due to personal reasons, rarely did the assignments, and barely got a passing grade. The requirements of the course and the grade breakdown are shown in Appendix D.

Regarding the course site, students expressed orally, on many occasions, how one feature or another helped them. Some praised the sub-section titled "at leisure", others commented on how the theme-specific forums helped them learn to express themselves in

Turkish, and yet others emphasized the usefulness of the forum for sharing fun resources.

To ascertain that the positive remarks above were not made merely for the sake of politeness, we can look at anonymous feedback collected by the university. At the end of every course, Tel Aviv University students are asked to complete an anonymous online teaching evaluation survey. The survey has 7 items to evaluate different aspects of the course and the instructor.

In June 2015, 8 students completed the online survey resulting in a response rate of 73%. This is a very high response rate compared to English courses, for instance. The last item in the survey reads: *The course website contributed to learning.* All the students who completed the survey evaluated this item as 7, which is the highest mark.

The same online survey also has a rubric for additional comments. The rubric is titled: *Regarding the teaching: what did you find satisfactory?* In answer to this question students wrote many positive comments about the course in general, and the following comments about the course site specifically. Each comment below was written by a different student and has been faithfully translated from the original Hebrew:

- "The website is of a very high standard. It is well-organized, neat and clear. It has hundreds of interactive contents that contribute greatly to the understanding of the language."
- "…An amazing investment in a course website that I have never seen…"
- "…The course site is very elaborate. It contains excellent exercises, explanations, video clips, pictures, and songs that lead to a high quality learning experience, most efficient and enjoyable…"
- "I liked the fact that I could contribute to others and also benefit from others. One who wants to get the best out of the course can use the forums and other tools…"

- "…The course is exceptionally well-organized. It has rich and diverse materials. The website is magnificently built, orderly, and thorough…"
- "[I enjoyed] the Turkish language itself, the exercises, the use of the Moodle site, the participation of all the students both in class and from home on Moodle."

## 7. Conclusion

A Moodle site is not a closed, finished product like a textbook: one can always add, delete, modify, update, move contents from one section to another and thus improve the course site continuously. Moreover, learners and not just teachers can contribute to the educational experience by uploading songs, poems, and cartoons to forums for sharing resources, as well as by writing on theme-specific forums. A learning management system such as Moodle also has the added bonus that one does not need to carry textbooks and other course materials, since the course site can be accessed anywhere and anytime.

After approximately seven years combining face-to-face teaching with Moodle, I consider technology a friend. It does not replace but assists the teacher and makes language teaching more diversified and more fun. Moodle enables teachers to pre-organize significant and pertinent materials, so they can be shown in a timely manner, without wasting precious class time looking for them. They are already there, in the right place, at the right time, waiting to be opened. I love the fact that we can look at the front page of a Turkish newspaper on the same day people in Turkey see it at newspaper stands. I enjoy showing cartoons and laughing with my students.

A successful language course can be attributed to a combination of factors such as good quality teaching materials, an appropriate instructional pedagogy and an enthusiastic teacher. This paper suggests that in the era of blended learning, course site layout deserves special attention as a new parameter that can contribute to the success of blended learning language courses. The principles of

the integrated course layout developed for Turkish can be applied for teaching other beginner level LCTLs. This assertion becomes all the more significant when we note that Turkish is included among the 30 "*much* less commonly taught languages" in the USA (Brecht & Walton, 1993).

This paper relies on the feedback received from a small number of students which is a characteristic of LCTL classes around the world. Future research should assess the advantages and the disadvantages of the integrated course layout with larger populations and for different foreign languages based on the evaluations of course teachers, in addition to the perceptions and the actual performance of learners. The interplay between course layout and foreign language instruction also warrants further investigation: How does the layout of a blended learning course impact language teaching? Is a particular layout more appropriate for some languages than others? Are different course layouts needed for different language proficiency levels?

After having successfully taught the beginners' Turkish course with Moodle and having received unanimous positive feedback from the students regarding the course and its website, I recommend CTL and LCTL teachers to incorporate Moodle in their classroom instruction in line with the integrated format described in this paper. This model should be taken as a conceptual framework which constitutes a basis for further development according to teachers' imagination and preferences, as well as students' needs. The journey may be arduous at times. However, it should not be given up. The sweet fruits of your hard work will prove this a worthwhile investment.

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## *Appendix A:* Methodology of the course

The layout described in Appendix B below, infused with a variety of interesting resources and tasks under each section, aims at developing not only the students' reading comprehension ability, but also their basic writing and listening skills. Lessons and homework assignments mostly focus on reading and writing, with occasional listening activities taken from the video sections. The exit level of students who succeed in the course would be equivalent to A2 in CEFR terminology. With the help of a dictionary, students are able to read texts that may even contain long sentences and some subordinate clauses, and answer open-ended as well as multiple choice questions. They can understand basic written instructions in Turkish. In the second month, they are able to write a paragraph to introduce themselves based on a model provided by the teacher. Towards the end of the first semester they can write an essay about an imaginary trip to Istanbul, collecting information from the internet, but using their own sentences. Last year, as a result of weekly conversation sessions that we held in addition to the regular classes, many students showed significant progress in their ability to talk about familiar topics -- what they have done, where they have been, their plans for the future, their work and hobbies etc. At the end of the year, each student prepared an original contribution to the course on a topic that s/he chose and gave an oral presentation using what s/he had written and visual aids such as PowerPoint. Although their comprehension of spontaneous spoken language remains limited, they are able to communicate with native speakers, if their interlocutor makes an effort to speak slowly.

## *Appendix B:* The composition of the integrated course layout

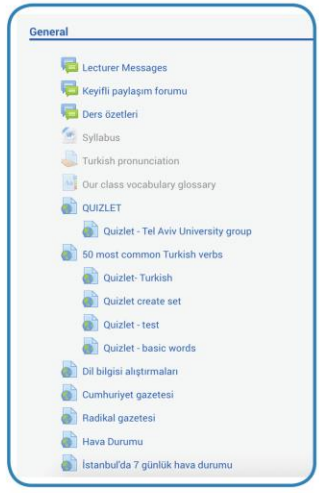
***General***: The top block in Moodle is titled "General". It comes with "lecturer messages" and can include anything the teacher thinks should be under "general": the course syllabus, a forum for lesson summaries posted by students, a forum for sharing fun resources (cartoons, pictures, news items and songs), links to online newspapers, etc. This block is helpful, if it is not too loaded and is devoted to components of the course that are used extensively. The teacher may also move a task temporarily to this block to make it conspicuous and for ease of access during the weeks the students are engaged in the task in question.

***The main blocks of the course***: Each semester is divided into three roughly one-month periods and each monthly period is treated as an independent mini course site. Since Turkish is a yearly course, there are 6 chronological periods. Each chronological period is called a unit and is composed of 4 sections: reading, video, grammar and vocabulary. Thus, the first chronological unit has Reading 1, Video 1, Grammar 1 and Vocabulary 1. The number following the section title indicates the chronological period. (See screenshots in Appendix C.) Materials are uploaded under each section making sure that the texts, the PowerPoint presentations, the videos etc. match to some extent the grammatical structures and verb tenses taught up to that chronological unit inclusive. The same process is repeated for all the units in the course. Everything that promotes reading is under "reading": PowerPoint presentations, pictures with captions, cartoons with simple language, maps, texts and links to interesting websites. "Video" includes YouTube clips, commercials, songs, film excerpts with transcripts of dialogues that I prepared, brief news items with comprehension questions, fill in the blanks and other tasks. The grammar section has grammar explanations, exercises and short texts that illustrate the related grammatical structures. The vocabulary section has links to websites with pictures and sound and vocabulary exercises prepared by the teacher. The amount of materials within each section does not have to be even. Some sections may be richer than others and can have a subsection called "at leisure" where there are additional exercises, texts and useful links for students who may wish to get more practice or read more on certain topics. The

integrated course layout does not preclude a thematic organization and is compatible with content-based instruction. Thus, thematically linked texts and videos can be incorporated in every chronological unit. Sample section contents can be seen on the screenshots in Appendix C.

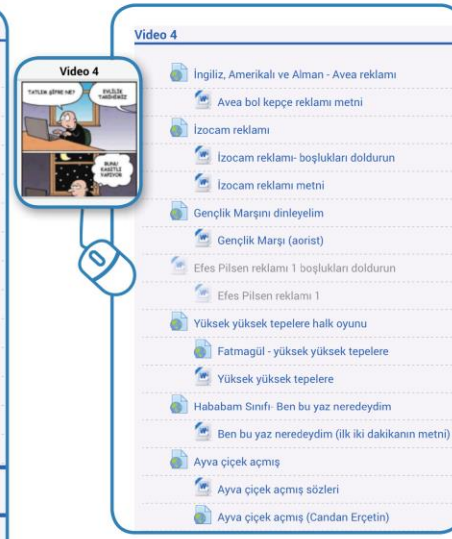
***Theme-specific units***: Certain materials are introduced in separate units where students can easily access them. Thus, there is a separate unit for online dictionaries and one for auxiliary language learning websites. Furthermore, themes that are extensively studied like "Istanbul" and "Turkish culture" are units of their own. Theme-specific forums to promote reading and writing can be located under the relevant theme (e.g., Istanbul) or under "General" for ease of access. Moodle quizzes are also displayed as a separate unit. In addition, it may be convenient to have a "storage" unit invisible to the students. Building a course site is a progressive process during which many potentially useful resources are found. Sometimes, the teacher cannot immediately decide where and how to integrate them. These can be kept in this hidden "storage" unit until they are incorporated into one of the units or discarded. Traditional paper and pencil tests can also be uploaded and stored in this unit for the convenience of the teacher.

## *Appendix C*: Screenshots


General
Lecturer Messages
Keyifli paylaşım forumu
Ders özetleri
Syllabus
Turkish pronunciation
Our class vocabulary glossary
QUIZLET
Quizlet - Tel Aviv University group
50 most common Turkish verbs
Quizlet- Turkish
Quizlet create set
Quizlet - test
Quizlet - basic words
Dil bilgisi alıştırmaları
Cumhuriyet gazetesi
Radikal gazetesi
Hava Durumu
İstanbul'da 7 günlük hava durumu

Okuma 1
Okuma 1
Ülkemizdeki doğal güzellikler
Ülkemizdeki doğal güzellikler ders planı
ç harfi
Türkiye haritası
Türkiye'nin coğrafi bölgeleri ve özellikleri
Türkiye bölgeler haritası
Türkiye coğrafi bölgeler haritası
Türkiye'nin sınır komşuları
Sözcü Gazetesi 6.5.2013
Kolay gazete başlıkları 9.11.13
Gaz Festivali
Gazete Manşetleri
Türk mutfağı
Türk Mutfağı ders planı
Milli saraylar sitesi
Sosyal bilgiler sitesi
Arçelik
Dyo posteri

Kelime Bilgisi 1
Kelime Bilgisi 1
Resimli alfabe
Yabancı dillerden gelen kelimeler
Sınıfta yararlı kelimeler
İsimler ve sıfatlar
Sıfatlara uygun isimleri seçin 1
Sıfatlara uygun isimleri seçin 2
Haftanın günleri
Haftanın günleri (sesli)
Sayılar, manav, saatler
Sayılar (sesli)
Sayılar -resimli
Ne - Kim (sesli)
Suşici
Hala mutsuzum
Keyifli keyifli


Video 4
Video 4
İngiliz, Amerikalı ve Alman - Avea reklamı
Avea bol kepçe reklamı metni
İzocam reklamı
İzocam reklamı- boşlukları doldurun
İzocam reklamı metni
Gençlik Marşını dinleyelim
Gençlik Marşı (aorist)
Efes Pilsen reklamı 1 boşlukları doldurun
Efes Pilsen reklamı 1
Yüksek yüksek tepelere halk oyunu
Fatmagül - yüksek yüksek tepelere
Yüksek yüksek tepelere
Hababam Sınıfı- Ben bu yaz neredeydim
Ben bu yaz neredeydim (ilk iki dakikanın metni)
Ayva çiçek açmış
Ayva çiçek açmış sözleri
Ayva çiçek açmış (Candan Erçetin)

Dil Bilgisi 4

- Okuma alıştırma (100-107): şimdiki zaman, emir
  - Emir-istek ppt
- Okuma alıştırma (108-109) השמטת תנועה -LIK, סיומת הגזירה
- Okuma alıştırma (110-113): şimdiki zaman ve emir
- Sevdiği - örnek cümleler
  - -DIK örnek cümleler
  - Cümleleri -DIK ile birleştirin
  - Cümleleri –DIK ile birleştirin (2)
- Okuma alıştırma (117-125): עבר מתמשך, מילות זמן -(i)yordu, -Cl
- Okuma alıştırma (126-129): gelecek zaman עתיד
  - Gelecek zaman örnekleri
  - Gelecek zaman (olumlu)
  - Gelecek zaman -olumsuz (negative)
  - Gelecek zaman worksheet
- İsmin eklerini tamamlayın יחס סיומות עם להשלים

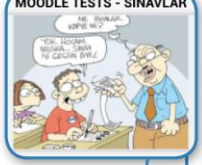
İstanbul

- İstanbul'da üç gün forumu
  - İstanbul seyahatinizi anlatmak için yararlı fiiller
  - İstanbul'da üç günüm
  - דוגמא - שלושה ימי באיסטנבול
  - İstanbul fotoğrafları
  - İstanbul gezisi - belgesel film
  - Istanbul website
  - İstanbul sinagogları
  - Tarihi Yarımada
  - Havalı Karaköy mekanları
  - İstanbul fotoğrafları ve bir şarkı
  - Eski İstanbul (müzikli fotoğraflar)
  - Boğaziçi Tanıtım Sunumu
- İstanbul için söylenen güzel sözler
- İstanbul - tanıtım
- İstanbul Seyahati - practice test
- İstanbul sınavı soruları
- İstanbul sınavı metni

Keyifli keyifli

- Fiilleri şimdiki zamanda çekin
  - Fiilleri şimdiki zamanda çekin 2
  - Şimdiki zaman soru cevap alıştırmaları (wh questions)
  - Şimdiki zaman soru cevap alıştırmaları
- Emir eklerini tamamlayın ציווי
  - Emir eklerini tamamlayın 2 ציווי
- -ki alıştırmaları
- İyelik ekleri, ismin halleri, şimdiki zaman ve emir kipi alıştırmaları
- Sorulara cevap verin.

MOODLE TESTS - SINAVLAR




MOODLE TESTS - SINAVLAR

- Kelime sınavı 1
- Dil Bilgisi Sınavı 1
- Kelime sınavı 2
- Dil Bilgisi Sınavı 2
- Kelime sınavı 3
- Dil Bilgisi Sınavı 3
- Kelime sınavı 4
- Dil Bilgisi Sınavı 4
- Kelime sınavı 5
- Dil Bilgisi Sınavı 5
- Kelime Sınavı 6
- Dil Bilgisi Sınavı 6
- Dil Bilgisi Sınavı 7
- Sene sonu sınavları hakkında açıklamalar
  - Sene sonu dil ve kelime bilgisi sınavı 1
  - Sene sonu dil ve kelime bilgisi sınavı 2
  - İsrail'de 'Muhteşem Yüzyıl' isyanı - sınav soruları
  - İsrail'de Muhteşem Yüzyıl İsyanı

## *Appendix D*: Course requirements and grade breakdown of Beginners' Turkish

| Course requirements | Mode of fulfilling requirements | Weighted grade |
|---|---|---|
| **Class Assignments** | Attendance, performance in class tasks/activities, written tasks submitted to the teacher, 15 grammar and vocabulary quizzes on Moodle, and a pencil and paper grammar test at the end of the first semester. | **40%** |
| **Forum Tasks** | Every student writes two/three original essays a year on theme-specific forums. | **10%** |
| **Lesson Summaries** | Every student gets to summarize about six lessons a year, sends the lesson summary to the teacher for corrections and posts the revised summary on the forum for lesson summaries. | **10%** |
| **Midterm Exam** | Reading comprehension exam on Moodle at the end of the first semester, based on a theme covered in course readings and forum essays. | **10%** |
| **Final Exams and Tasks** | **10%** grammar test on Moodle,<br>**10%** reading comprehension exam on Moodle based on a theme covered in course readings.<br>**10%** the student's original contribution to the course which includes written work submitted to the teacher and an oral presentation in class. | **30%** |