



Content of “ELT Methodology for Nursery and Elementary School Learners” Course on the Moodle Platform

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Abstract

The target goal of the current paper is to cast a comprehensive light upon some key digital opportunities of MOODLE educational platform in the context of “Teaching English to Nursery and Elementary School Learners” methodological course. Designed for 3rd year BA students obtaining specialization of “A Foreign Language Teacher” at YSULSS this elective course provides learners with not only face-to-face classroom interaction, but also an opportunity to carry out their research projects in the virtual domain. So they get integrated in Blended learning.

The main idea is that the educational content is broken down into small chunks that can be used in various learning environments.

So, the current course consists of two modules, which have been elaborated and introduced, based on the curriculum requirements and embracing the following sections:

- *Module 1 - Methods for teaching English to preschool and elementary school learners:*
- *Module 2 - Teaching language knowledge and communicative skills at nursery and elementary school level.*

The topics and sections within each module have been elaborated and presented on the MOODLE platform with their corresponding material-resources (including all sorts of necessary and extra relevant audio, video PPT, textual, analytical, practical and theoretical resources) on the one hand, and task-activities, on the other.

The key factor is that “Teaching English to Nursery and Elementary School Learners” methodological course is designed as a combination of theory and practice, communication and collaboration, creativity and technology skills, creating a meaningful and successful learning experience and motivating communication and authenticity in the process of language teaching. We are trying to raise the level of professional education in foreign languages through innovative forms of e-learning and on the use of the MOODLE learning platform on the one hand, as well as the latest trends in information and communication technologies in foreign languages teaching on the other. We expect that this should help students acquire skills on the basis of information using new information technologies.

Keywords: content, nursery / elementary school, software educational tool

The current paper touches upon some key issues on MOODLE educational platform within the context of “Teaching English to Nursery and Elementary School Learners” methodological course. Designed for 3rd year BA students obtaining specialization of “A Foreign Language Teacher” at YSULSS this elective course provides learners with not only face-to-face classroom interaction, but also an opportunity to carry out their research projects in the virtual domain. So they get integrated in Blended learning.

The acronym MOODLE stands for Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment. Among its many users, however, Moodle has already become a term of its own synonymous with a software package designed to help educators create high quality online instruction.

This program serves as an effective and interactive educational platform, which offers the learners a wide opportunity for their on-line and off-line performances. According to Brandl “as a courseware package and learning system, MOODLE has great potential for supporting conventional classroom instruction, for example, to do additional work outside of class, to become the delivery system for Blended (or hybrid) course formats, or even to be used as a standalone E-learning platform” [3].

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The main idea is that educational content is broken down into small chunks that can be used in various learning environments.



This is the introduction section of “English Language Teaching Methodology for Nursery and Elementary School Learners” course on the MOODLE platform.

The system consists of a number of navigation tools with course administration, profile setting regulation functions. The interface also provides the students with the latest news, upcoming events and the recent activity updates. Using the opportunity of adding an **activity** the ELT teacher can select from a variety of assignment tasks, and design a number of online and offline activities, organize chats, forums, create glossaries, design Hot Pot self-assessment activities, Quizzes, Surveys, Video Conferences, Workshops, Wikis, etc. As for the **resources**, so the teacher can create informative lecture books, upload files, folders, PPT-s and IMS content packages, labels, recordings and URL links.

So, the current course embraces two modules, which have been elaborated and introduced, based on the curriculum requirements and covering the following sections:

Module 1 - Methods for teaching English to preschool and elementary school learners:

- Young children and language development: how young children acquire language?
- Children learn at different rates: how young children learn best?
- Creating the right conditions for language learning. What does a child-friendly, enriching play and learning environment look like?
- The classroom as a favorable learning environment for school children.
- Main functions of nursery and elementary school teachers.
- Problems in teaching English: how to enhance the English language learning?
- Teaching English through songs, stories, chants and rhymes.
- The importance of “Play” in supporting and extending language development.
- Play and language learning. Different types of play: children-led play, adult-led play, adult-initiated play.
- Developing language in context: meaningful learning and language development opportunities in different contexts.
- Teaching English vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation at elementary school.

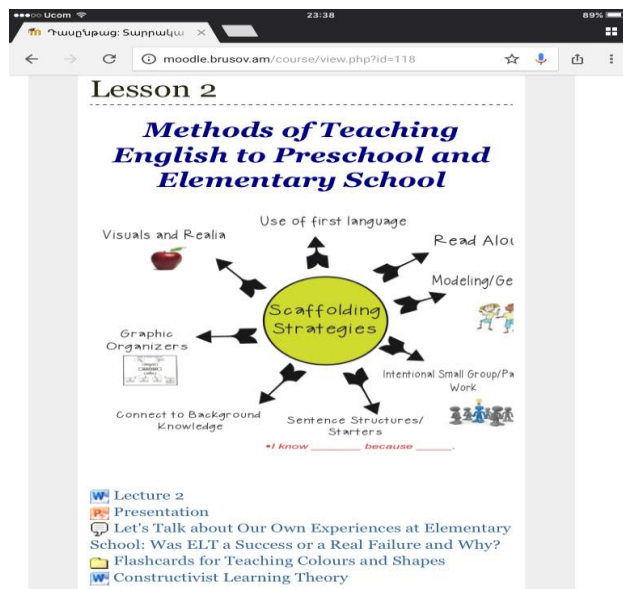
Module 2 - Teaching language knowledge and communicative skills at nursery and elementary school level:

- Teaching listening/speaking/reading/writing skills at nursery and elementary school
- Testing young learners: Large-scale tests. Reasons to use large-scale tests. Problems with large-scale tests.
- Purposes of classroom assessment: Why do we need to assess young learners?
- Assessment: “Fun not Fear”. Assessment and encouragement techniques. Assessment for learning
- Assessing the four language skills:
 - o Types of writing assessment tasks

- Types of reading assessment tasks
- Types of oral assessment tasks for young learners
- Types of tasks for assessing listening.
- CEFR and young learners' assessment, European Language Portfolio (ELP) for young learners
- Observation, assessment and planning:
 - Why is it important to take the time to celebrate children's achievements?
 - What is the best way of keeping track of children's progress?
- Devising and elaborating lesson plans. Types of Lesson Plans: Weekly lesson plan, Unit plan. The purpose and objectives of lesson planning.
- Supporting learning and development: a two-way conversation:
 - Why is it important for practitioners and parents to share information about a child?
 - What information might be useful for parents to share about the children?
- Providing resources and opportunities: "positive relationships" and "enabling environments".
 - Why is it important for a child to feel happy and safe in order to learn?
 - How does a strong partnership between families and early childhood settings contribute to an enabling environment?
- Entering the child's world: showing interest and building communication. The importance of building trust.
- Praising children: the importance of personal, social and emotional well-being.
- Safety considerations: safe, clean and age-appropriate toys, instructional objects, adequate supervision, model safe practice and behavior – as a primary concern for the language teacher.

The topics and sections mentioned above have been designed and presented on the **MOODLE** platform with their corresponding data/material resources (including all sorts of necessary and extra relevant audio, video PPT, textual, analytical, practical and theoretical resources, pictures, charts, tables and photos) on the one hand, and task-activities, on the other.

The key factor is that "Teaching English to Nursery and Elementary School Learners" methodological course is designed as a combination of theory and practice, communication and collaboration, creativity and technology skills, creating a meaningful and successful learning experience and motivating communication and authenticity in the process of language teaching. Students are working in a virtual learning environment which is not only friendly to its users, but it is based on their characteristics, habits of learning, prior knowledge and learned methods. The use of various forms of learning increases the intrinsic motivation of students and hence promotes independent creation and dissemination of their knowledge horizon. This course specifies and observes the characteristics of English teaching



methodology for very young learners. It also introduces students the traditional, contemporary and alternative methods, approaches, principles and techniques for teaching foreign languages at an elementary level. A major emphasis in this course is the development of student-teachers' professional skills for teaching language knowledge and communicative skills at elementary school, based on the National Educational Standards of the Republic of Armenia and European plurilingual education policy documents - CEEFR, ELP [1, 4].

Actually the whole course located on MOODLE is designed, according to definitely elaborated lessons - observations, appropriate samples of charts, drawings, diagrams, recordings, video-clips, photos, pictures, sound effects, PPT-s, etc.

The factual result is that the teaching/learning environment is active, colourful, interesting and enjoyable. The students interact in the classroom, as well as they are provided with an opportunity to

carry out their learning activities in virtual domain, associated with testing, assessment and self-assessment. So they get integrated in Blended learning, which in some situations redefines teaching roles: The word “**facilitator**” has emerged as an alternative to “teacher,” bringing with it a slightly different focus. The facilitator places an emphasis on empowering students with the skills and knowledge required to make the most of the online material and independent study time, guiding students toward the most meaningful experience possible. Facilitators focus on four key areas:

- Development of online and offline course content.
- Facilitation of communication with and among students, including the pedagogy of communicating content online without the contextual clues students would get in person.
- Guiding the learning experience of individual students, and customizing material wherever possible to strengthen the learning experience.
- Assessment and grading, not unlike the expectations for teachers within the traditional framework.

Research Paper

Dear students, prepare a Reseach Paper on the Methodology of Teaching a Single Thematic Unit at Elementary School level. It should include not only the topic of instruction, but also the methods and strategies of its introduction and consolidation.

Grading summary

Participants	25
Submitted	0
Needs grading	0
Due date	Thursday, 25 May 2017, 12:00 pm
Time remaining	44 days 1 hour

[View/grade all submissions](#)

The course assignments and tasks introduced on the MOODLE platform have fixed/flexible submission deadline with immediate teacher’s feedback opportunity. The uploaded files are specified with their diverse format, types and instructional needs.

While designing this course we used “**Resources**” and “**Activities**”. These are two necessary toolkits, making teaching/learning process more effective. Through “Resources” we provide students with learning material or data bases (on the MOODLE platform), as for the “Activities”,

we design tasks, exercises, tests etc.

As Robb states, MOODLE's functions allow to make different types of quizzes. Quiz types relevant to language teaching are: Multiple choice, True/False, Numerical, Matching, Description, and Cloze. A wide range of options allows to randomize the questions and multiple-choice items, specify a time frame for availability, choose whether the students receive feedback or not, decide if they are allowed to view the correct answers, and determine how many times they may take the quiz and how it is to be scored (first attempt, highest attempt, average of all attempts or last attempt) [Robb, 2004].

Results have shown that MOODLE is an effective educational domain, where teachers and students work and cooperate effectively. Study has to support the general and transferable skills in line with the priorities for higher education, that is, to teach students how to learn, to prepare them to perform their duties, but preferably not only within a single profession, but to equip their habits for variable employability and encourage the commitment of students to the educational process. Many authors stress the fact that blended teaching is much more effective. It means using e-learning classes and face-to-face work with students, which undermines traditional forms of teaching, that for today's students is not very attractive. They perform different tasks, get/exchange necessary information, send/acquire messages, participate in different kind of activities. The learners accomplish their tasks (in online or offline mode) and get corresponding feedback. They have an opportunity to upload their course papers or different individual/group projects as well.

Lesson 2 ...ool: Was ELT a Success or a Real Failure and Why?

**Let's Talk about Our Own Experiences at Elementary School:
Was ELT a Success or a Real Failure and Why?**

We all have once studied at an Elementary school. Let us remember this period , particularly the English Language teacher and the methods and strategies used by her.

[Click here to enter the chat now](#)

[Use more accessible interface](#)

[View past chat sessions](#)

A particular area of the platform is used as a kind of **Forum** where the students write their ideas or statements and the teacher gives explanation. They can also be encouraged to suggest the solution to the questions asked by others. As for the feedback, it is always thorough, constructive, and positive.

This kind of experience may contribute a great deal to the use of new technologies in language education, increasing learners’ language communicative digital proficiency as



well. The advantage of the MOODLE platform is that course participants and teacher can communicate through e-mails, chats and forums. Face-to-face teaching in the traditional way is supplemented by online course with prepared programme within the mentioned project.

Working and learning on the MOODLE platform emphasizes the active participation in the preparation and delivery of course content. We are working not only with independent thinkers and students, but also those who are interdependent in their work; students who rely primarily on themselves and become more responsible, integrated and competent.

Conclusion

After a period of testing and course evaluation, the mentioned contribution has proven to be successful. Most students reported greater satisfaction from engagement in and motivation for learning. Thanks to the innovative form, the students stimulate great interest and activation in this area. They recognize that the application of the latest technological achievements is very attractive and practical, because the language and communication meet and are used in everyday life. There is no doubt that in today's world openness, curiosity, dynamics and efforts to gain knowledge, pleasure in learning is essential. So our course's mission is more than obvious - through diverse interaction, collaboration, authentic task-based performances and real project completions increase students' language skill development and their professionalism.

References

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