Sabine Ophelia Blake

Teaching in English

Internationalisation of teacher training at home:
A blended learning programme on ILIAS

Overview

Teaching in English is a newly developed programme preparing trainee teachers for school placements and internships abroad.

The content heavy didactic language course will be offered in a blended learning[1] format on ILIAS to facilitate the provision of substantial course material, thus maximising the efficient use of teaching and learning time in the live sessions. This will be achieved by introducing flipped learning[2] elements in the digital pre- & post- live session phases.

The range of additional features available on ILIAS allows for improved student collaboration and interaction as well as self-assessment and independent learning, which can be more effectively guided in the pre- and post- session phases. This should significantly improve students´ motivation and performance in terms of learning progression as well as overall achievement.

Key words

E-Learning, ILIAS-course, Blended Learning, Flipped Classroom, Micro-teaching, Internationalisation of teacher training

---

[1] So far there seems to be no conceptual consensus among scholars how to define "blended learning". cf. Hrastinski (2019), Graham, C.R. (2006) & Garrison, R., & Kanuka, H. (2004) Thus, here the term is to be understood as a learning approach that combines instructor-led sessions with digital learning (self-guided/assigned) phases pre/post sessions.

[2] Here "flipped learning" is not synonymous with "flipped classroom" but rather defined as "… a pedagogical approach in which direct instruction moves from the group learning space to the individual learning space, and the resulting group space is transformed into a dynamic, interactive learning environment where the educator guides students as they apply concepts and engage creatively in the subject matter" Flipped Learning Network (FLN) (2014). The Four Pillars of F-L-I-P™ Reproducible PDF can be found at www.flippedlearning.org/definition
.

1   Idea, pre-planning and contextual framework

Teaching in English is part of the wider national initiative "Internationalisation of teacher training" („Lehramt.International") and was developed for academics, teachers and in particular trainee teachers using English as medium of instruction and communication in school settings abroad. It is run by the ZLF (Zentrum für Lehrerbildung und Fachdidaktik) in collaboration with the Language Centre (Sprachenzentrum).

There are two components to the course:

- The English speaking classroom

Practical aspects of teaching in English, e.g. everyday classroom language, effective questioning and feedback methods, setting up learning tasks, lesson planning are being practised (micro teaching, learning games, group discussions, presentations, case studies) and then critically assessed (whole group, peer and self-evaluation). Integral to this practical component are weekly observation tasks completed by the students individually. The practical component is based on main educational concepts which will be reflected upon in the theoretical element of the course Teaching and Learning.

- Teaching and Learning

A key aspect of this component is the presentation of authentic material in the form of videos, scientific literature, educational articles and reports relating to comprehensive and inclusive school systems abroad where the dominant teaching language is English.

2   Practical implementation of the learning media project

2.1 Learners and learning objectives

The course is aimed at a wide range of teachers, trainee teachers and academics:

- student teachers who are preparing for a scholarship or teaching placement abroad and practising teachers and lecturers who want to build on their teaching skills in English

- academics and students who are interested in educational systems worldwide and in teaching and learning from a global perspective and who

would like to acquire the linguistic skills and vocabulary necessary for accessing academic literature in this field in English

Overall, the heterogeneous mix of learners is quite significant, as course participants are at different levels in their various study programmes and come from a wide variety of academic backgrounds with a wide range of abilities and divergent course expectations.

By the end of the course participants are expected to have

- gained more confidence in teaching in English in an international context
- started to develop their own linguistic/didactic resources bank
- been able to reflect in English on key concepts in education from a more global perspective
- gained a "first glimpse" of the classroom abroad and educational systems worldwide
- become familiar with current global educational trends, e.g. curriculum for the 21st century, global citizenship education, issues of inclusion
- started to develop practical self-evaluation and peer feedback skills in English set to evidence-based teaching standards

The course is currently offered in a blended learning format on STUD.IP and ZOOM, meaning that weekly teaching sessions (online via Zoom / or in-class) are preceded by approx. 1 hour individual preparation (flipped learning) and consolidated by approximately 1 hour observational and reflective tasks.

In total there are 15 learning modules: 10 sessions dealing with educational concepts relevant to teachers followed by 5 sessions of teaching "practice" where participants present their teaching projects. The first ten modules are accompanied by a glossary of educational terms.

2.2 Didactic concept, planned implemenation

Currently all teaching and learning material is still made available via E-mail and on Stud.IP; additionally Stud.IPad and Wiki are used for research projects, student collaboration and reflection tasks.

ILIAS does offer a much easier to navigate and much more attractive course layout and a range of additional features which enable the course to be in line with the current technological advances in distance learning and teaching in Higher Education. The process of independent learning can be more effectively guided in

the pre-& post- session phases through an easy to navigate course layout and formative assessment opportunities.

The range of additional features available on ILIAS allows for improved student collaboration and interaction, as well as differentiation. Wiki, Forum and Etherpad can be displayed in a more attractive and accessible way and there is the option to include a glossary of educational terms which can be added to by the course participants.

Considering the extremely heterogeneous mix of course participants, the Ilias design features allow for the provision of differentiated learning opportunities in the pre –and post-session phases, as well as clearly signposting the various differentiation strategies employed.

A video library will, at a later stage, be added to offer differentiated observational tasks and the opportunity to upload and then peer-review micro teaching sequences. Currently a pdf with links to the videos has to be emailed to the course participants after each session.

Flipped learning elements can be delivered in a more interactive and sophisticated way, as the substantial amount of pre- & post- live session learning content can be chunked into short learning/reading/viewing sequences with frequent self-assessment opportunities. Vocabulary learning will be made more "fun" by including H5P elements, e.g. games and quizzes.

Consequently, by scaffolding, monitoring and assessing the individual learning process in the flipped learning phases with the help of ILIAS features, student motivation and participation will be increased.

More frequent formative teacher assessment and individual feedback (e.g. in the form of recorded and uploaded comments on students' shared observation, timely interaction on Wiki, Etherpad and Forum) and better monitoring of collaborative tasks should significantly improve students´ performance in terms of learning progression as well as overall outcome. In the long term, it is hoped that time consuming administrative tasks, e.g. emailing course material, reminding participants of course deadlines, can be automated.

2.3   Practical implementation, Design

As Teaching in English is a pilot project, the **homepage** endeavours to be welcoming by directly addressing the user, as well as giving a clear overview of the learning objectives and relevant course information in an accessible design (accordion panels).

To encourage student interaction from the outset, a poll invites the user to vote and thus influence optional learning/teaching content.

Interactive tools - Wiki, Glossary, Blackboard (Etherpad), Speakers´ Corner (Forum) – are easily accessible on the homepage to invite participation.

Collaborative Learning: Classroom Wiki

The teaching process is made visible by sharing a rationale for using "Wikis" as a learning tool in the coloured box.

The **course schedule** is made visible on the homepage by the session folder tiles.

Inside the **session folder** the blended learning phases (pre/post sessions & live session) are clearly signposted by the layout and icons to facilitate navigation and guiding the learning process.
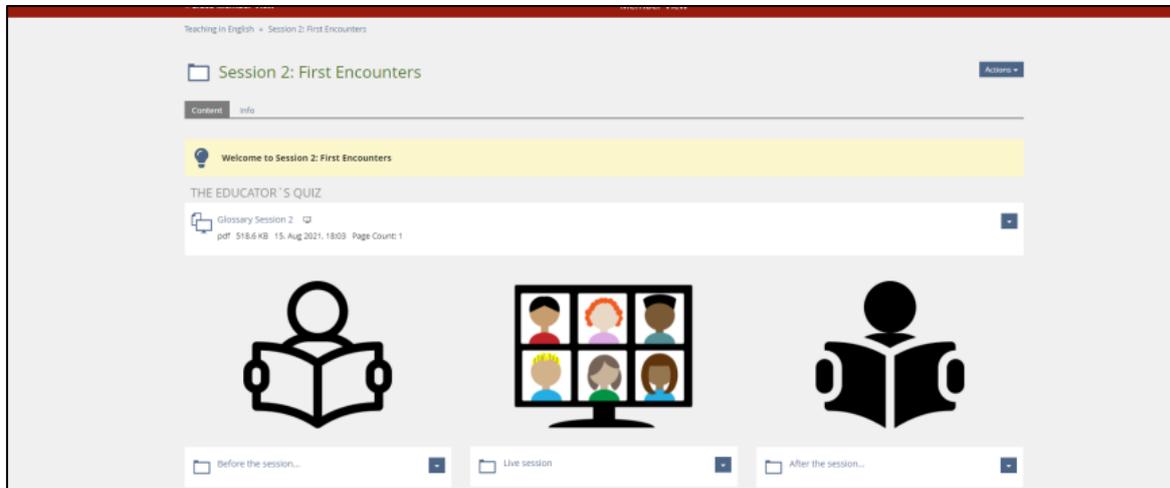
Entering the live session

Differentiated learning objectives can be colour coded and shared with participants for every session. Session material, e.g. breakout room tasks and a script of the session presentation are made available to download.
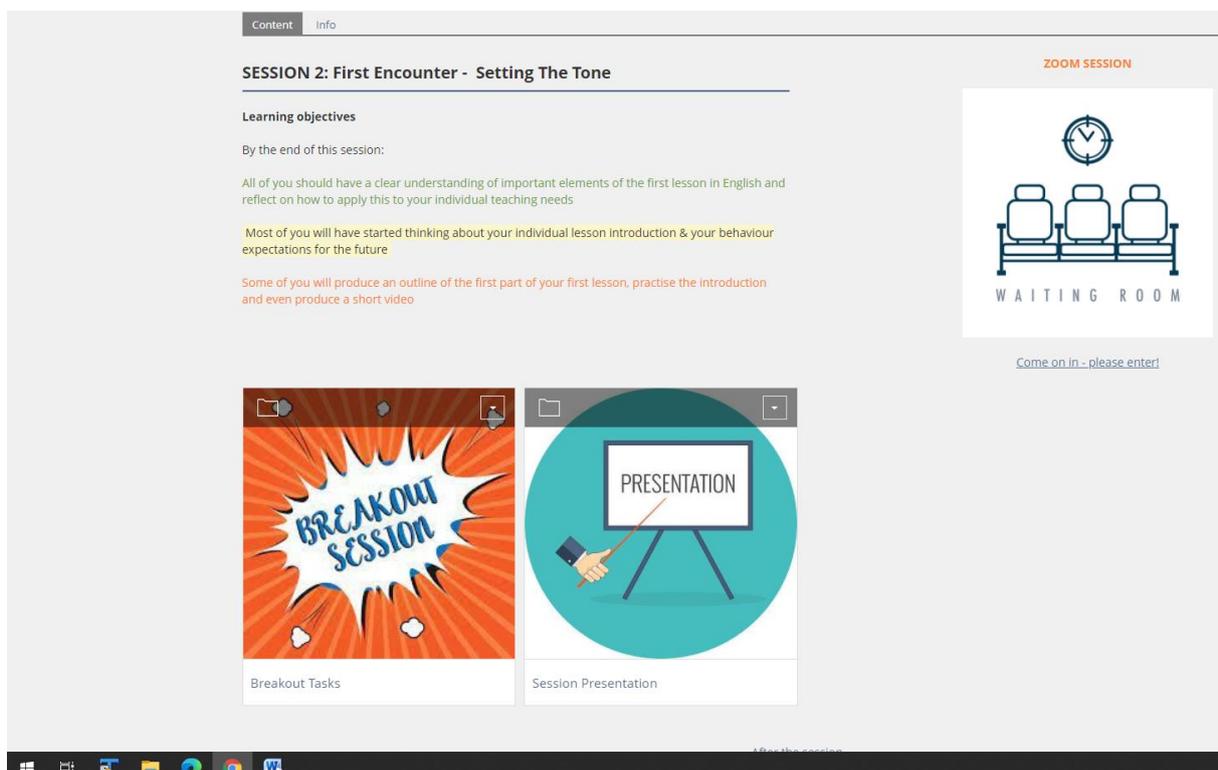
2.4 Practial Experience; Conclusion

Initially, working with ILIAS is certainly time consuming and using the building tools is often counter-intuitive. I would plan for this better in advance with less ambitious expectations allowing for a more generous implementation plan. Here the help of the tutor and other participants in the DLMP course were invaluable, as often answers could be provided straight away, avoiding lengthy research online. Once the initial structure of the online course concept was in place and all limitations and possibilities of the ILIAS tools were grasped, a more effective working pace and routine was achieved. At this stage building on the foundations and overall structure of the course and improving the design and learning phases was very enjoyable.

In an immediate next step, all images used on ILIAS will need to be checked for copyright issues. In the following phases it is planned to gradually extend the course by employing more features, starting with formative assessment features in reading tasks and extending this to assessment questions in observational tasks (videos) and quizzes (H5P).

As it was, up until now, too labour intensive to develop the entire course with all its envisaged features, it is planned to fully build one of the modules (Session 6: Resources in English) with the whole range of functionalities and test this with the students in the summer semester 2022 as part of the course syllabus: a small scale classroom based research project on digital learning and resources. Students will test, review and evaluate the ILIAS module against set criteria and in light of current theoretical literature on effective online learning tools. The findings and outcomes will then guide the remaining build of the online course and determine which added features to implement.

Literature

Hrastinski, S. (2019). What Do We Mean by Blended Learning?. TechTrends. 1-6

Graham, C.R. (2006). Blended learning systems: definition, current trends, and future directions, Handbook of blended learning: global perspectives, local designs.

Garrison, R., & Kanuka, H. (2004). Blended learning: Uncovering its transformative potential in higher education. The Internet and Higher Education, 7, 95-105

Laurillard, D. (2012). Teaching as a Design Science: Building Pedagogical Patterns for Learning and Technology. New York and London: Routledge.