Blended Learning
Using the Akelius Digital
Language Learning Course

TEACHER GUIDANCE MANUAL

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Blended Learning Using the Akelius Digital Language Learning Course
Teacher Guidance Manual

The material that is presented in this manual aims to guide teachers in order to approach blended learning and to familiriaze themselves with the best practices that have emerged from the use of the Akelius course in the field of language teaching. This manual has not been designed, neither is intended to train teachers in the teaching of languages. Its aim is to provide guidance so as to make easier the teaching of languages that are supported by the Akelius course.

This first edition of the teachers guidance manual was developed by the Refugee and Migrant Response Team in Greece and in collaboration with NGO Ana Aqra and NGO ELIX based on the experiences in Lebanon and Greece. The manual has been devised by Amina Kleit and Nayla Halabi of NGO Ana Aqra together with the support of a team of experts such as Naoko Imoto, Giorgos Simopoulos and Antonios Alexandridis of the UNICEF Refugee and Migrant Response in Greece, Judith Wunderlich-Antoniou and Irini Pathiaki of NGO ELIX, and Philippe Testot-Ferry Global Project Manager of the Akelius Digital Learning Project.

The exercises of the Akelius course that appear in this guidance manual are based on the latest edition of June 2019 and might change.

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Blended Learning and Teaching Approach Using the Akelius Digital Language Course

Teacher Guidance Manual

The material presented in this manual is for the purpose of guiding teachers on blended learning approaches and best practices using the Akelius Digital Language Course only. This manual is not designed or intended to train teachers on teaching languages but rather to provide guidance on how to facilitate teaching languages supported by the Akelius Digital Language Course.

The Akelius Digital Language Course features appearing in this guidance manual is based on the latest version as of June 2019, and is subject to change.

Contents

Introduction

Learning a foreign or second language presents various challenges for people in different contexts. There are many ways of approaching the task of learning new letters, vocabulary, new grammar rules, listening & speaking, reading and writing. A range of methods and approaches are often used to teach a new language, and a variety of techniques are employed to maximize practicing this new language.

Furthermore, in the context of a humanitarian crisis, many language teachers face several kinds of challenges in working with refugee and migrant children, whose education have been interrupted, or who have never been to school.

Not being able to communicate through a foreign language is a huge barrier to social and academic inclusion for learners. In the context of a refugee and migrant crisis, without language skills to interact outside the home, migrants and refugees struggle to integrate.

In order to help children and adults learn a foreign language better and more easily, the Akelius Foundation and UNICEF are co-developing a digital language learning Digital Language Course, in collaboration with UNICEF's implementation partners since early 2018.

The Akelius Digital Language Course offers rich interactive multimedia that is accessed through authentic video, audio, texts, visuals/graphics, songs and games providing meaningful content relevant to learners' needs and interests, either pre-selected by the teacher (for lower level learners) or discovered by learners when surfing digitally (higher levels). This rich, interactive input is one of the major elements which helps students' motivation, and teachers to devise a lesson that can respond to different learning styles and learning levels, as mentioned above, not leaving out the face-to-face learning.

"The Akelius Digital Language Course is an alternative and interactive tool that enriches lessons, and empowers students, including those with learning difficulties."

- Teacher, ELIX

This manual focuses on the benefits of **blended learning** using the technology in a classroom-based approach, and how to use the Akelius digital language learning Digital Language Course, in teaching a foreign language especially for refugees and migrants. The manual offers suggestions to teachers on how to prepare the classroom environment for face-to-face and digital learning and how to differentiate the teaching according to the different learning styles and levels. The manual focuses on using a holistic approach to language learning through integrating technology using the Akelius language learning Digital Language Course.

1   Language Acquisition and Blended Learning

1.1   *Language Learning*

What are the key principles in teaching?

This section presents the principles of language learning, the holistic approach to second language learning as well as a brief introduction to the blended learning approach that will support teachers and students during their teaching and learning journey in the blended classroom.

1.1.1   *Key Principles of Language Learning*

As teachers we understand that to serve the needs of our learners, we need to create an optimal learning environment and have various resources and tools available to help achieve language acquisition.

What can teachers do to help children develop their language skills, feel safe and further their education?

Below are key principles of a language class that support learning:

- **Provide a welcoming and safe learning environment.** For an environment to be safe, students must feel comfortable taking risks learning with their peers and learning an unfamiliar language. In a safe learning environment, students are more open and motivated to share thinking, ask questions, and participate in conversations naturally and thus, in the educational process. A safe learning environment is an engaging environment. It is student-centered and responds to different students' needs. In such an environment, students feel connected to and supported by their teachers and each other's.

- **Modulate the level of the targeted language.** The level of the content of the targeted language used with and among children must be modulated and comprehensible. Teachers can do this through techniques such as the use of visual aids, modeling, demonstrations, graphic organizers, vocabulary previews, prediction, cooperative learning, multicultural content and native language support.

- **Focusing on communication and task based.** Teachers are advised to use communicative methodologies and techniques that are task based and providing real-life situations in which students try to solve everyday problems. Lesson plans are adapted on topics of communication (e.g. providing information and presenting oneself, seeking information for transportation, describing a problem, etc.), using techniques for active participation (role plays, simulations, debates, small-group work). *The main goal is communicative competence development: using the language – not learning about the language.*

- **Scaffolding.** Teachers are advised to use scaffolding (e.g., paraphrase, give examples, provide analogies, elaborate student response) to facilitate individual student comprehension and participation in discussions where otherwise the discourse might be beyond their language proficiency level (Bruner, 1978). Another way is by adjusting instructional tasks, so they are incrementally challenging (e.g., pre-teach vocabulary before a reading assignment) and students learn the skills necessary to complete tasks on their own (Applebee & Langer, 1983). The following are some scaffolding strategies:

  - **Modeling**
  To explicitly show and demonstrate. Students need to be given a clear example of what is expected of them.
  - **Bridging**
  To activate prior knowledge to build connection. New concepts need to be built on previous knowledge and understanding.
  - **Contextualization**
  Surrounding new concepts with a sensory environment thus clarifying them. Using pictures, manipulatives, film (without sound) and real objects will support understanding.
  - **Schema Building**
  Clusters of patterned concepts from past experiences. Students need to see the connections to build meaning.

- **Activity-based, participatory teaching and learning.** Activity-based teaching and learning focuses on the idea that students are engaged through actions. The teacher engages the students directly, drawing them into a lesson so that they become a participant in their own learning. This is often accomplished through the creation of different activities and projects that students work on as they learn. Group work is quite common during activity-based teaching and learning, since it allows students to take on the role of a teacher and work together to better understand different topics.

- **Using blended learning in the language classroom.** Blended learning combines face-to-face and online learning. It allows increased flexibility, enhances student learning, optimizes the use of active learning strategies, and potentially improves student learning outcomes.

1.1.2 *Holistic Approach to Second Language Learning*

A holistic approach to second language sees language as a whole. It focuses on everything the learner needs to know to communicate effectively. The holistic approach focuses on communication. It selects on the basis of what language items the learner needs to know and genuine everyday language is emphasized. Its aim is to have students communicate effectively in order to complete the task. Speaking is given at least as much time as reading and writing. The holistic approach tends to be **student-centered** and resembles the natural language learning process by concentrating on the content / meaning of the expression rather than the form. (Nunan, David. CUP 1988).

This approach is the most widely used and accepted in classroom-based foreign language teaching today. It emphasizes the learner's ability to communicate various functions, such as asking and answering questions, making requests, describing, narrating and comparing. Task assignment and problem solving—two key components of critical thinking—are the means through which the communicative approach operates.

In the framework of communicative and task-based approaches, grammar is not taught in isolation. Learning happens in context; detailed error correction is de-emphasized in favor of the theory that students will naturally develop accurate speech through frequent use. Students develop fluency through communicating in the language rather than by analyzing it.

A communicative classroom includes activities through which students can work out a problem or situation through narration or negotiation, and thus establish **communicative competence**. Thus, some activities might include composing a dialogue in which the participants negotiate when and where they are going to eat dinner, creating a story based on a series of pictures or comparing similarities and differences between two pictures.

1.2 The What, Why of Blended Learning

This section of the teacher guide focus on what blended learning is, why teachers are advised to use blended learning as well as the benefits of blended learning. This section also presents a classroom pedagogy for learner autonomy through a framework that gradually shifts the responsibility from the teacher to the students, "the Gradual Release of Responsibility" framework.

1.2.1 What is Blended Learning

Blended learning is an education and instructional method that uses digital technology or a digital Digital Language Course in combination with face-to-face (or non-digital) classroom methods. It requires both teacher and student involvement, yet grants learners a more personalized approach to learning, giving them control over the time, place, path and pace of their learning.

Blended learning combines multiple teaching techniques, learning styles, and delivery methods. With blended learning, the classroom is transformed into an interactive learning environment where the teacher is continuously assessing, guiding, and reinforcing learners as they apply skills, strategies and concepts and engage creatively in learning. It's an outstanding way to reduce challenges faced in the classroom, such as student engagement and diverse student needs.

The key to a successful blended learning approach is to appropriately combine the two different learning environments (digital & face-to-face) in an integrated way so that each approach complements one another in order to enhance language learning objectives in a balanced way.

For example, the face-to-face such as introducing new topics, explaining important language points or for meaningful communicative activities could enhance the classroom environment and engage children in listening, speaking and writing activities, and the digital component being used for practicing listening, reading, spelling and reinforcing what has been learnt in class or for extra practice or assessment aiming at autonomous learners.

The Chapter 3 will guide you into how to blend face-to-face and digital learning in particularly while using the Akelius Digital Language Course in an integrated environment.

INPUT **OUTPUT**

SPOKEN
LISTENING SPEAKING

WRITTEN
READING WRITING

Figure 1 - Skills of Language Learning
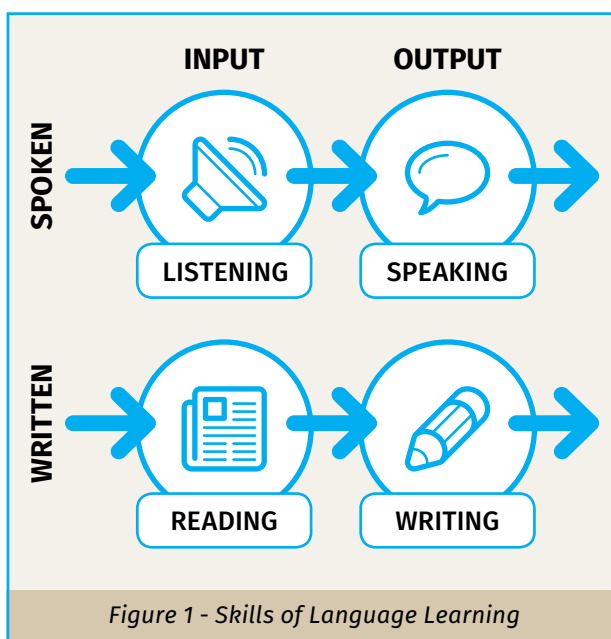
1.2.2 *The Benefits of Blended Learning*

Teaching cannot be defined separately from learning. 'It is guiding and facilitating learning, enabling the learner to learn' (Brown, 2000). The role of a teacher is therefore multidimensional: it is to facilitate learning, to support learners through their learning journey, to know when to intervene (with suggestions, explanations, encouragements), and when to stand aside and observe.

When the digital component within a blended approach is used accurately, it provides learners with rich interactive input. When the classroom environment within a blended approach is used accurately, it is an effective way for teachers to fulfil their multidimensional role, and to provide a **structured, comprehensive** learning experience for everyone involved. It gives teachers the possibility of becoming a facilitator and give more individual attention to learners.
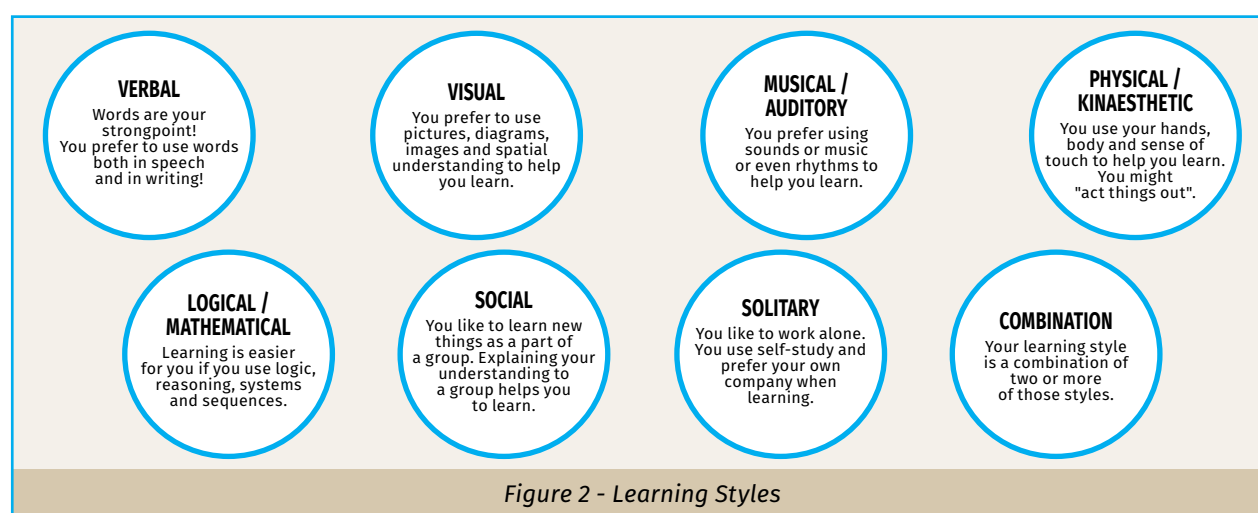
Below are main benefits of blended learning:

- Strengthen **learner engagement**

When you incorporate the use of technology in language learning, you strengthen learner **engagement** through an **interactive learning environment**. Second language learning through input only is not only ineffective but is also not successful at achieving learner's language development. A more effective way to learn something is through an interactive learning environment supported by technological tools and resources. For students learning a second language, it's key to 'do' things with language rather than just learning about language from their teacher. Technology makes it possible for students to **interact** with the language and gather a more effective understanding of all of the language components.

- Adjusting to **Individual learning styles**

Good teachers know that each learner has different learning styles. Technically, an individual's learning style refers to the preferential way in which the student absorbs, processes, comprehends and retains information. With blended learning, learners have the chance to work in a variety of ways that suit them. A blended approach also helps teachers respond more easily to learners' different styles by maximizing the strengths of each environment. It is easy for the teacher to prepare lesson activities that consider all the different learning styles including verbal, visual, auditory, kinesthetic, social, logical and many more. The figure below represents the different learning styles.

VERBAL
Words are your strongpoint! You prefer to use words both in speech and in writing!

VISUAL
You prefer to use pictures, diagrams, images and spatial understanding to help you learn.

MUSICAL / AUDITORY
You prefer using sounds or music or even rhythms to help you learn.

PHYSICAL / KINAESTHETIC
You use your hands, body and sense of touch to help you learn. You might "act things out".

LOGICAL / MATHEMATICAL
Learning is easier for you if you use logic, reasoning, systems and sequences.

SOCIAL
You like to learn new things as a part of a group. Explaining your understanding to a group helps you to learn.

SOLITARY
You like to work alone. You use self-study and prefer your own company when learning.

COMBINATION
Your learning style is a combination of two or more of those styles.

Figure 2 - Learning Styles

- Providing more **individual attention**

All teachers are familiar with having students with different language levels, different learning styles and different levels of cognition, in any classroom during a lesson. Having these different levels, having the various learning styles, and having curriculum or standards of learning, it is very challenging to attend the different learning needs of all learners. Most teachers gravitate to teaching the majority of the learners, or sometimes more capable students. Blended learning helps teachers give all learners the attention they deserve with a more individualized learning.

In blended learning the teacher plays a central role and needs to be always present throughout the learning process. Yet, now the teacher can work with focus group stations, give direct instruction to small groups, and monitor students' progress, while other learners are working independently on activities that matches their style or need or using technology.

- Expanding **social interaction**

Blended learning can increase social interaction in the classroom, when appropriately facilitated. Learners can communicate with their peers working through groups or pair work. This allows the teacher to be more of a facilitator and allot the proper time for each activity and each learner.
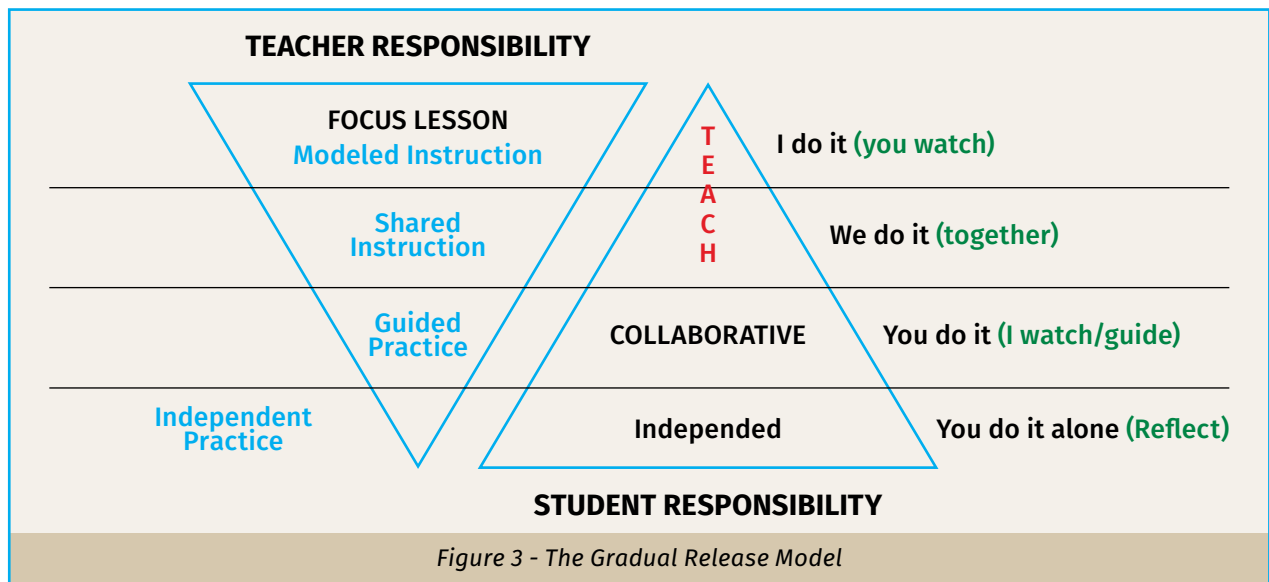
- Building **learner autonomy**

Blended learning improves **independent learning** and teacher's ability to scaffold its instruction. This scaffolded instruction could be done through the **Gradual Release of Responsibility** framework (GRR, further explained below)[1]. The GRR model is a framework of independent language learning skills and is broadly recognized as a successful approach for moving classroom instruction from teacher-centered, whole group delivery to student-centered collaboration and independent practice.

The four instructional arrangements[2] within the GRR model includes:

1. *Modeled lessons:* it is the time of having a clear purpose/ objective taught by modelling and think aloud by teachers while students are observing and noticing the **what, how and why**;

2. *Guided/shared instructions:* prompting, cueing and questioning students through small groups or individual conferencing;

3. *Collaborative learning:* students working together to consolidate what they learned;

4. *Independent learning:* at this stage the transfer of responsibility from teacher to student is happening and the student is assuming the main active role in practicing the skill independently to master it and transfer it into different situations.

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[1] The Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) framework was initially described by Pearson & Gallagher (1983) as an approach of gradually shifting the cognitive load from teachers to students (Fisher & Frey, 2008; Grifith, 2010).
[2] The four instructional arrangements in the GRR framework incorporates Piaget's (1952 as cited in Fisher & Frey, 2008) focus on cognitive structures and schema, Vygotsky's (1962, 1978 as cited in Fisher & Frey, 2008) zones of proximal development, Bandura's (1965 as cited in Fisher & Frey, 2008) focus on attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation and finally Wood, Bruner, and Ross's (1976 as cited in Fisher & Frey, 2008) work on scaffolding instructions.

	TEACHER RESPONSIBILITY		
FOCUS LESSON Modeled Instruction		T E A C H	I do it (you watch)
	Shared Instruction		We do it (together)
	Guided Practice	COLLABORATIVE	You do it (I watch/guide)
Independent Practice		Independed	You do it alone (Reflect)
	STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY		

Figure 3 - The Gradual Release Model

"Show me, help me, let me"

*Within this short phrase lies several many of the pedagogical "best practices" that simply work in learning, most fundamentally **modeling** (show me), **scaffolding** and **support** (help me), and **transfer** (let me, though it's true you can "let a student" without requiring transfer).*

In the classroom, this model can help frame a unit–towards the beginning of the unit, there is a focus on exemplars and modeling, and towards the end, there is a focus on individual performance. It can work daily too–a lesson or activity structured in a way that moves from teacher (or expert)-centered to student-centered.

Mentoring Roles & Responsibilities (with or without the Akelius Digital Language Course)

	Teacher	Student
Pre - Organize	• Seeks pre-existing knowledge (face-to-face or using Akelius Digital Language Course) • Helps students use existing skills related with the new topic • Make connection to the Digital Language Course content	• Responds to questions • Interacts (with teacher – with other students) • Make connections from the Akelius Digital Language Course
I do it **Direct Instruction**	• Provides direct instruction • Establishes goals and purpose • Models (face-to-face or using Akelius Digital Language Course) • Think aloud	• Actively listens /or follows on the Akelius Digital Language Course as instructed • Takes notes • Asks for clarification
We do it **Guided Instruction**	• Interactive instruction (using Akelius Digital Language Course) • Works with students • Checks, prompts, clues • Provides additional modeling (face-to-face or using Akelius Digital Language Course) • Meets with needs-based groups	• Asks and responds to questions • Works with teacher and classmates (hands-on activity or using Akelius Digital Language Course) • Completes process alongside others (hands-on activity or using Akelius Digital Language Course)
You do it **independently** **Independent Practice**	• Provides feedback • Evaluates • Determines level of understanding	• Works alone (hands-on activity or using Akelius Digital Language Course) • Relies on notes, activities, classroom learning to complete assignment • Takes full responsibility for outcome
You do it together **Collaborative Learning**	• Moves among groups • Clarifies confusion • Provides support	• Works with classmates, shares outcome (hands-on activity) • Collaborates on authentic task (hands-on activity or using Akelius Digital Language Course) • Consolidates learning (hands-on activity or using Akelius Digital Language Course) • Completes process in small group (hands-on activity or using Akelius Digital Language Course) • Looks to peers for clarification

1.3 Before using blended learning

We have considered what blended learning is and why a blended approach is exceptionally beneficial to language learning. The next section will consider how to put theory into practice. But **before** adopting a blended approach, let's first remind ourselves with basic principles, which remain as a key when using a blended approach. Please remember – without these key principles, a blended learning approach cannot be effective.
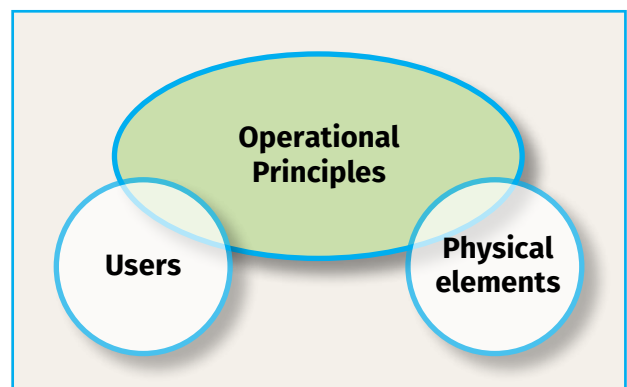
1.3.1 The Classroom Environment

Classroom management has the purposes of supporting effective teaching and meaningful learning with a positive learning climate, encouraging developmental areas of learners, and increasing their self-esteem and achievement levels. Positive classroom environment minimizes time on behavior correction and maximize time on learning and developing appropriately.

The classroom environment should be influenced by: (i) the operational principles, (ii) its users (the teacher and students), and (iii) its physical elements. Effective teachers expertly manage and organize the classroom and expect their students to contribute in a positive and productive manner.

Classroom management strategies help create an organized classroom environment that is conductive to teaching. When the class is well organized, students know the expectations in different types of learning situations and feel safe. There are a number of ways to manage a classroom to make it conducive to learning.

Operational Principles

Users

Physical elements

A very effective example of this strategy is to develop classroom rules with students, and display them on the wall, so that they can be easily reminded when necessary.

Classroom organization focuses on the physical environment. Effective teachers organize a safe classroom environment. They strategically place furniture, learning centers, and materials in order to optimize student learning and reduce distractions.

A **print-rich environment** is where a **classroom** is maintained by providing and encouraging educational cues that compliment **classroom** instruction.

Examples of print that are encouraged are:

- Charts that reflects classroom rules and procedures
- Charts that reflect the class work on a range of topics
- Learners' work display (to increase self-confidence and feeling proud of what they accomplish)
- Interactive writing texts that include learners' contributions
- Labels and signs that have been written by the learners and placed around the classroom
- Illustrations or photographs to go along with the written text on charts so that learners who can't yet read can understand the meaning
- A word wall with pictures (sight words, most frequent words, flashcards reflecting the vocabulary from the Akelius Digital Language Course)
- Alphabet charts
- Classroom library

1.3.2 Set the learning objectives

Before preparing a lesson plan, teachers always need to remember to set the learning objectives and plan the lessons accordingly. Learning objectives are the basis of what you hope to accomplish in any given lesson *(see Annex: example of lesson plans)*. They focus the purpose of your lesson and guide you to an outcome. They can also help students understand the lesson purpose and set the foundation for students to discuss their learning. Combined with success (classroom assessment or test) criteria, learning objectives can help you and the students know when learning has happened. When planning your lesson, do make sure the classroom activities match the desired student learning objectives. Clear instruction and understanding of objectives through simple open dialogue, body language, illustration and pictures can help students in the second language classroom understand and take ownership of their learning. That ownership is a key way to focus on mastery. Having students take ownership of their own learning happens when they can understand **what** they are learning, **why** they are learning it, and how they will know **when** they are successful.

> ⊕ **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**
>
> **Objectives should be about skills and learning, not about the activities. Activities should be built around the lesson objective. Thus, when planning your blended lesson, activities on Akelius Digital Language Course should not be a result, but rather should be introduced as a tool to support achieving your targeted learning objectives as a result.**

## 1.3.3 Balance of language components or skills

Think about a balance of the four language components and skills within a lesson structure of blended learning.

A balanced pedagogy in language learning is one that focuses on the development of **speaking, listening, reading and writing skills** that are **integrated into thematic investigations** and which are grounded in **research-based understandings** of language and literacy development (Tyner, 2012).

It is best to encourage the deployment of a comprehensive mixture of activities, and a balance of lessons that will change in emphasis **as the learner develops**.

This balance will include a **focus on**:

- Oral language development
- Progressive practice in reading and writing
- An emphasis on developing knowledge and fostering identities

Figure 4 - Language components
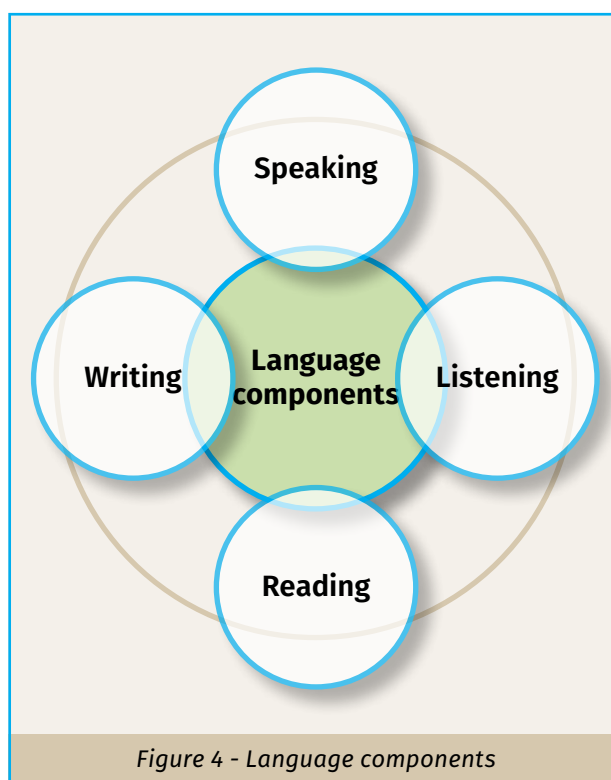
1.3.4 *Considering the Three E's when planning your blended lesson*

It is best to set the blended lesson on evidence-based core concepts that apply to any educational strategy like the Three E's:
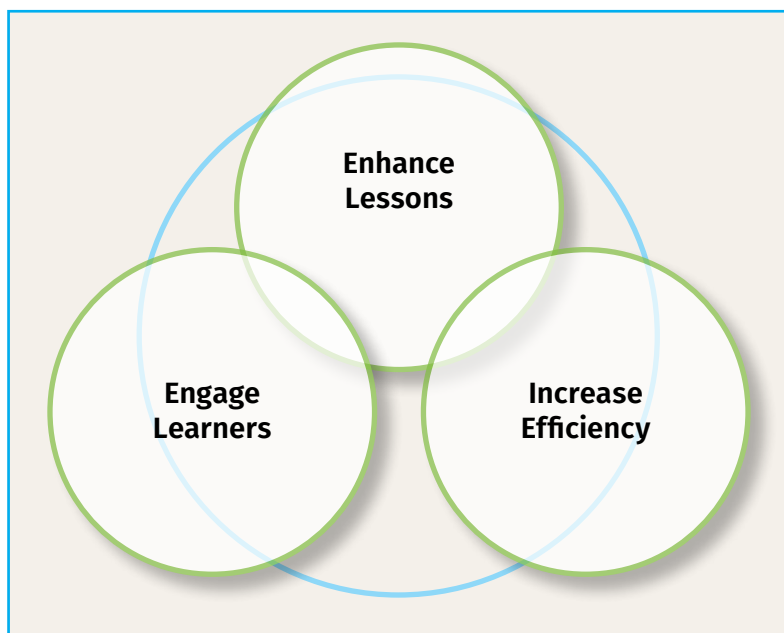
Engage learners,
Enhance lessons
and *Increase Efficiency*

The Three E's are excellent for keeping consistency within the classroom. They reward the teachers with the flexibility and the freedom to consider what works best for them and their students.

- **Engage Learners**

Student engagement is the most important element in the success of any blended learning program. If students aren't engaged, the program will not succeed. Engagement is crucial at all levels. The level of interaction between learners with the teacher, the curriculum, and each other. Therefore, the teacher must focus on strategies that encourage **active learning, communication**, and **collaboration**.

- **Enhance Lessons**

Enhancing lessons is not about completely changing the lesson, it is about enhancing and increasing opportunities for **interaction** and learning. Lessons can be enhanced through small adjustments and improvements like incorporating digital learning by working on activities from the Akelius Digital Language Course that matches the learners' level, interest or style. Learning new vocabulary words would be more fun and would make more impact, if it is embedded with videos, games, and songs.

- **Increase Efficiency Over Time**

When increasing efficiency over time, the teacher should try to increase learning opportunities, while decreasing the effort and time spent reaching the goal. Effective instructional time provides opportunities to teach smaller groups of students and promote individualized learning.

2 The Akelius Digital Language Course within a Holistic Second Language Teaching approach

2.1 *The Principles of the Akelius Digital Language Course*

The Akelius digital language cource has been co-developed by the Akelius Foundation and UNICEF in collaboration with UNICEF's implementing partners. Though still in the process of development, the digital language course offers rich interactive multimedia that is accessed through authentic video, audio, texts, visuals/graphics, songs and games providing meaningful content relevant to learners' needs and interests, either pre-selected by the teacher (for lower level learners) or discovered by learners when surfing digitally (higher levels). This rich, interactive input is one of the major elements which helps students' motivation, and teachers to devise a lesson that can respond to different learning styles and learning levels, as mentioned above, not leaving out the face-to-face learning.

Below are some key principles of the Akelius Digital Language Course:

- **Communication**

The Akelius Digital Language Course prioritizes on practical language understanding and communication. It aims for students to understand spoken and written language - the aim is to get users familiarized with conversational skills as a first step towards language acquisition. The student learns lexical items through interactions with the Digital Language Course and discovers how to form these into phrases and sentences while interacting with written text in a variety of formats—audio, visual and video, through games, songs, text and conversations.

- **Learning at one's own pace**

Within the Akelius Digital Language Course, the learner can choose their own way through the course components according to their own needs and interests, at their own pace, knowing well that they can go back to refresh their knowledge if need be before moving forward. When the learner is able to go through the components of the Digital Language Course, whether it is a video, or auditory or plain text, as many times as possible without feeling inadequate or taking his/her time to reflect on a text without feeling slow) makes for deeper learning. The teacher may also assign chapters or lessons based on learners needs, especially for beginner levels while advanced learners could navigate on their own or as needed.

- **State of the Art Digital Pedagogy**

The Akelius Digital Language Course is kept simple. There is no confusing terminology or grammar instruction. The Akelius A1 level language follows the 'lexical approach'. Lexis (words) and grammar are closely related, so the Digital Language Course uses vocabulary and small phrases to teach morphology and syntaxes at the same time. Students learn to produce language by learning words in groups commonly found together.

Students get a deeper understanding of grammatical structures through repeated interactions with these phrases. They will understand individual words as well as word order. Students will also get a stock of immediately usable phrases. Then, they can start to use those phrases to predict meaning and process new language content.

- **Thematic, Vocabulary-Focused Content**

The Akelius Digital Language Course is aimed at users of all ages. Therefore, vocabulary that is specific to particular age-groups has been avoided.

Vocabulary is grouped thematically into around thirty individual chapters. The Digital Language Course introduces language content gradually, in a logical and systematic way. There is a pre-defined thematic progression. Students should be able to understand and use basic phrases and expressions connected with each topic by the end of each chapter. They gain this understanding by following interactions linked to each theme or situation.

- **Immediate feedback and support**

An assessment/test is present within every lesson for learners and the teacher to monitor progress. Moreover, through the 'test' function of each lesson, learners can see their own scores, and choose to repeat the same 'test' until they reach satisfactory scores. This motivates and empowers the learners.

When using the Akelius Digital Language Course, the technology gives immediate feedback, allowing the learner to reflect and self-assess directly. When the learner is working through the chapter or performing the "test", he/she will get direct feedback of correct or wrong answers and can directly adjust answers. In addition, the teacher can support, guide and give direct feedback to the learners.

- **Thousands of Small Steps**

Each chapter has some seven lessons. Lessons introduce a few new words at a time. Teachers using the Akelius Digital Language Course should adopt a similar method to the one used in the teaching of the alphabet, keeping the number of unfamiliar items to a minimum. You progress from the most basic vocabulary to more complex structures and expressions. The user discovers new material gradually, moving from basic words and phrases to more dialog-heavy interactions. Each lesson lasts no longer than ten minutes and is focused on a particular communicative goal.

- **The Alphabet**

For the beginners, the beginning part of the Akelius Digital Language Course introduces letters of the alphabet and their most common sounds. The approach used to present the alphabet may be unfamiliar to teachers, so it is summarized below:

Upper case letters are not included in the first chapter. The user will learn to recognize and become accustomed to upper case letters by seeing and hearing them in context in later chapters - the alphabet is presented in groups of three or four letters at a time, with each group containing a minimum of unfamiliar letters - when an unfamiliar letter is introduced, we explain it as quickly as possible.

Example: In the first lesson, four words are used to present the letters 'b', 'n', 'a' and 't'. The word 'banana' introduces three new letters (b, a, n,), 'nut' two new letters, (u,t), apple three letters (p,l,e). When the final word is introduced, 'tea', the student has already encountered these letters. In the next group, only the first letter 'p' in 'pan' is unfamiliar. The purpose of this approach is to minimize the mental load on users by keeping the focus on one or two new items at a time.

- **Freedom to Choose Chapters**

Later chapters in each theme build on what students have learned in earlier chapters. However, while the progression of the course content is linear, there is nothing to stop students from following a different order. If they feel confident enough, they can move ahead. Equally, there are no barriers to prevent students from repeating content as they progress.

- **Choose Different Learning Methods**

People learn in different ways. The freedom to choose a learning method is also a key part of the Akelius concept. Chapters will contain a mixture of activities. There are games involving chance, time pressure, trial-and-error, memory and skill. There are also math activities, songs, puzzles, guessing- and bingo-type games. We have commissioned a story that will accompany the course. Students can follow a set of characters and a narrative that unfolds as they progress.

- **User Engagement, Interactivity and Fun**

A key principle is that learning should be fun. It should be active, inspiring and encourage a sense of discovery. Language content has therefore been presented in a way that is as varied, accessible and engaging as possible.

The course includes a range of multi-sensory inputs and outputs, involving sound, music and speech as well as a visual element. Moreover, the Akelius Digital Language Course includes multiple interaction methodologies such as: clicking, dragging, selecting, typing, prioritizing, interacting with photos and pictures, sequencing objects, such as months, weekdays, words, combining things, matching, filling crosswords and building images.

- **Blended Learning Environment**

The Akelius Digital Language Course shall function as a standalone product for individual user. At the same time, it is intended to be used in a blended learning environment.

Teachers will be able to supplement the digital course with direct instruction and analog supporting material such as study cards, memory cards, exercise booklets and printed books.

The course structure and thematic approach makes it easy for teaching professionals to link their own lessons to the course.

## 2.2 An overview of the Akelius Digital Language Course

2.2.1 Navigation

The Akelius Digital Language Course consists of themes such as; food, school, communication, family, groceries, colors and shapes, clothes, body, hobbies, transportation, numbers, time, professions, and days of the week. By clicking on a theme, learners can maneuver or navigate through to access different lessons, vocabulary, games, songs and tests.
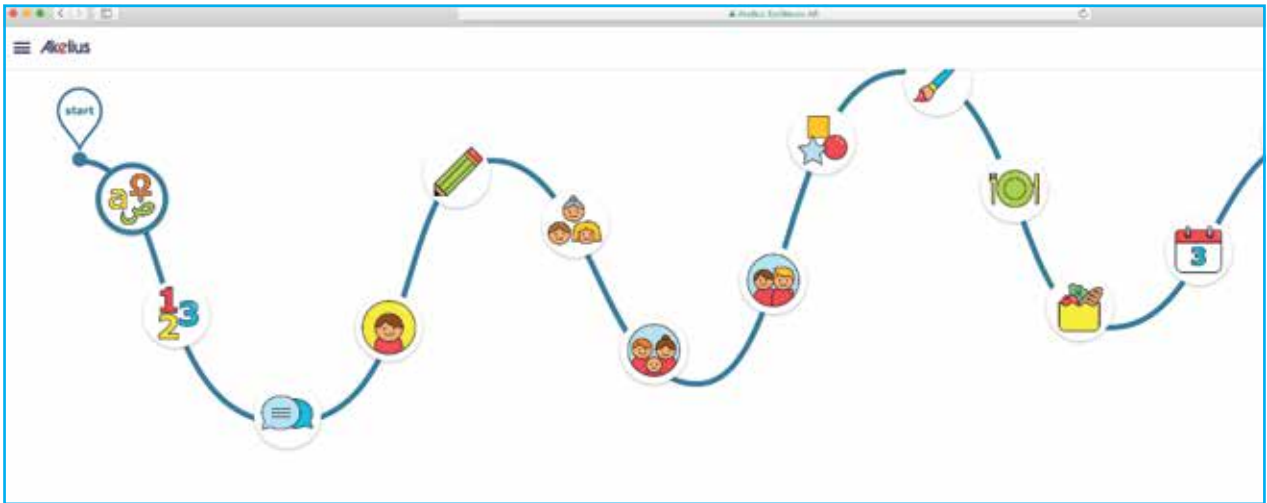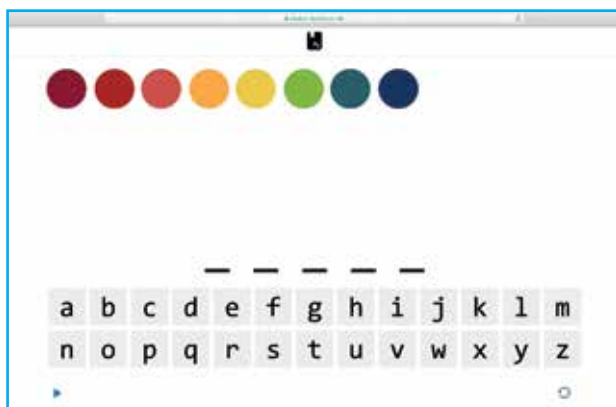

The lessons within each theme can be done in varying order. Every lesson begins with new vocabulary words with corresponding pictures and sounds of the words.
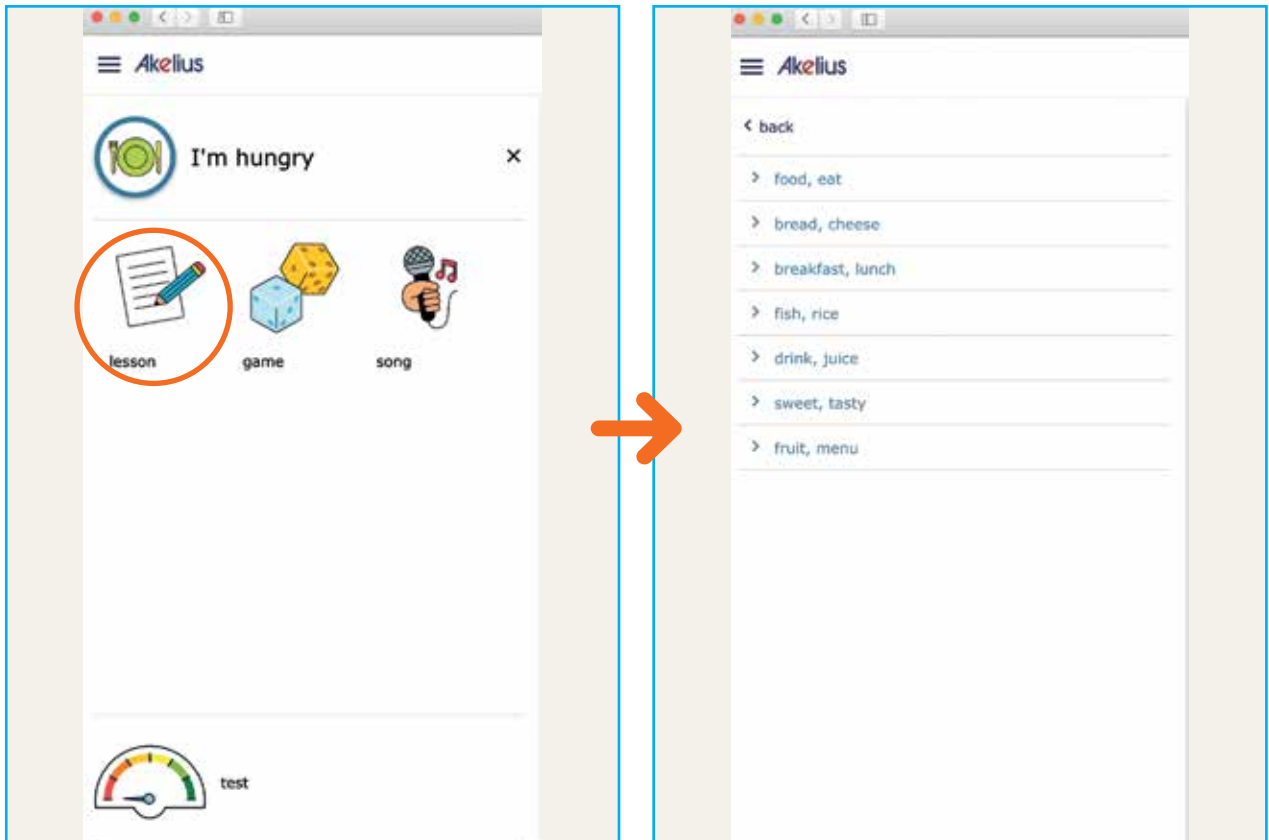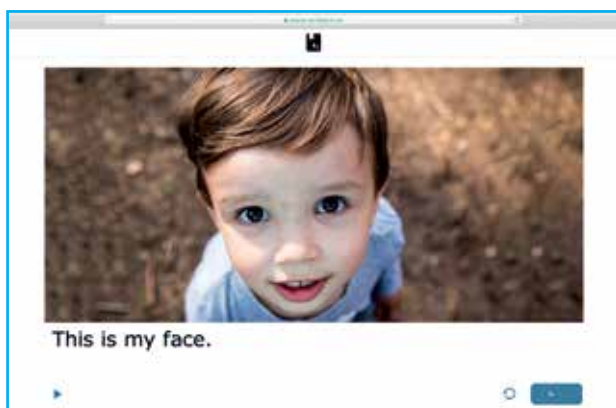
2.2.2 *Features, Methodologies*

When learners navigate through each lesson, they will have access to different methodologies to learn new vocabulary and spelling.

- **Guessing** - to learn words in a playful way by trial and error.

- **Games** - to learn words, by connecting written words, sounds and pictures.

This is my face.

The knee is a part of the body.

There are different games you can play:

- *Memory Game:* Look at the cards faced down. Turn over any two cards. If two cards match you get a point.
- *Password Game:* Try to guess the word. Click on the letters given. With each wrong attempt one colored point on the top disappears.
- *Falling Leaves Game:* Look and listen to a written word. Different pictures are falling down on the screen. Click on the correct picture. You get points for every correct click.
- *Bingo Game:* Look at 25 pictures. Click on the pictures of the words you hear. If you have solved all the pictures in one row, you win the game.

- **Memory** - to learn words in a playful way, by connecting written word to picture.
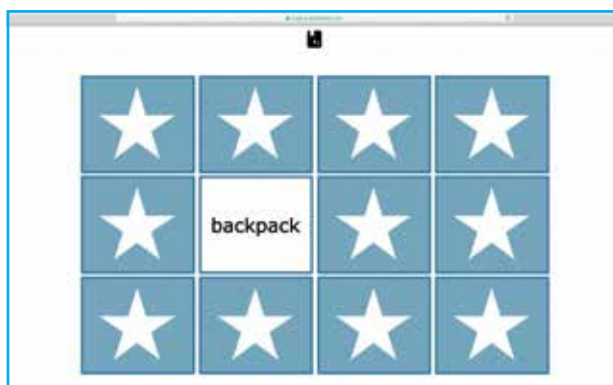
- **Songs** - Song to learn the alphabet, shape of letters and the sounds.

- **Drag and Drop** - to practice the spelling of new words.

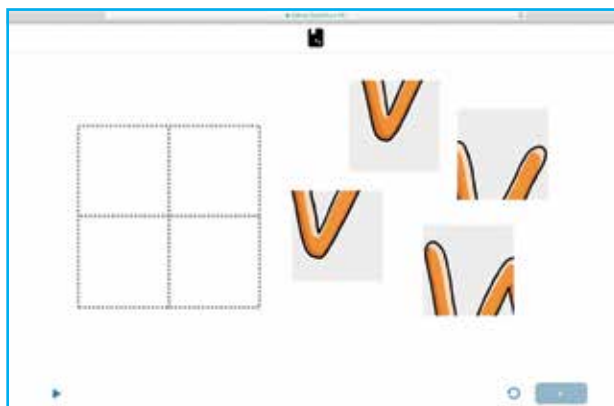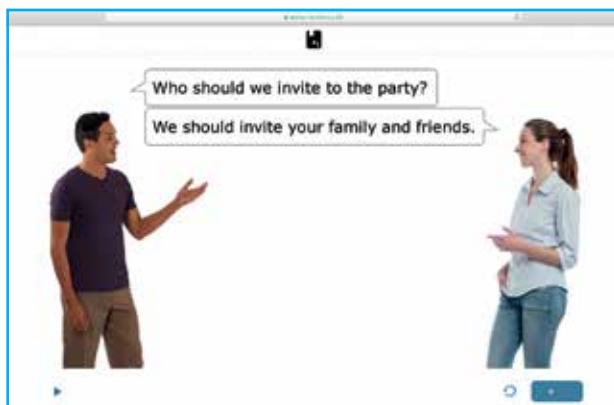- **Select the right picture** - to practice newly learned words and match the words to the picture, select the correct spelling of words.
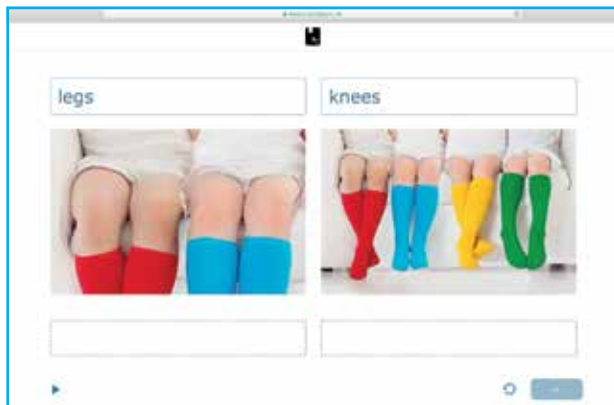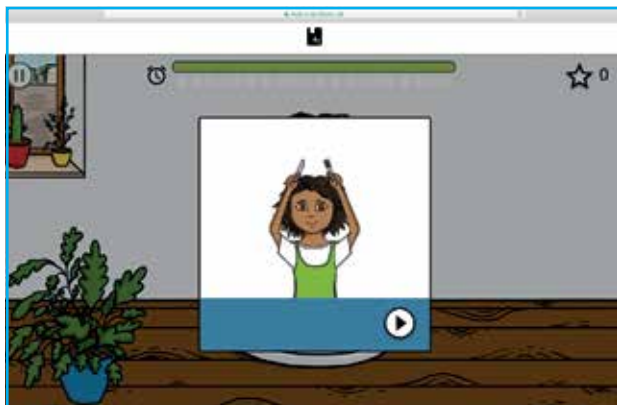
- **Select the right letter** - to learn the (handwritten) letters.
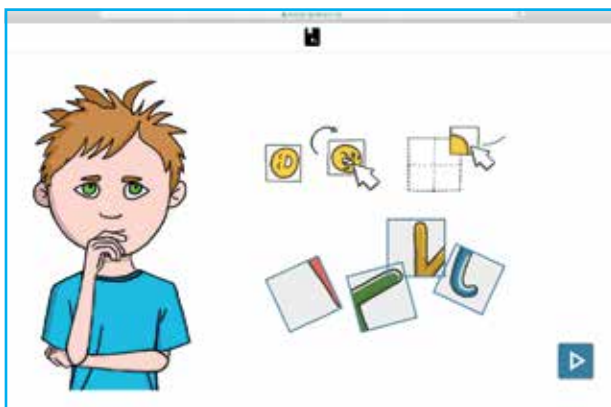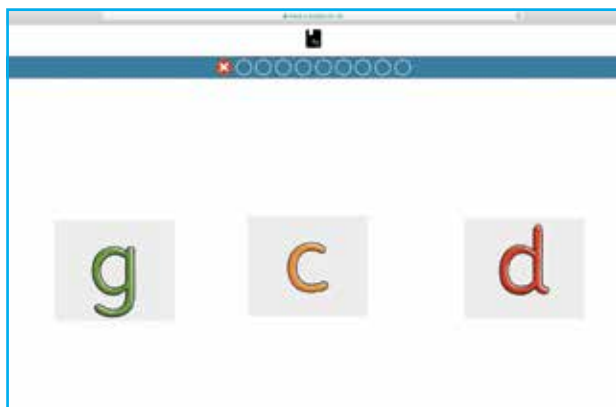
- **Find the object in picture** - learn word in playful way.

- **Fill In the Blanks** - learn how to construct easy sentences.

family

family

- - - - -

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i
j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r
s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z	

my mother, my father,
the baby, that's me,
my sister, my
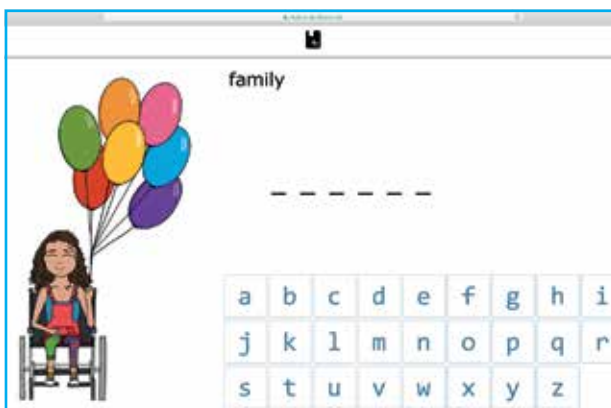
- **Spoken Text** - With Spoken text, students can have the text read aloud, helping them to learn correct pronunciation. Learners can also use the screen to read the entire contents on a screen. This both increases their exposure to language. The spoken text on the course, makes it possible for language learners to understand the text and its pronunciation.

Akelius Digital Language Course
Content Method & Interaction Sample

While planning a lesson, and based on the lesson objective and theme, for example **food**, the teacher will assign the thematic unit "Food" on the Digital Language Course and select one of the 8 lessons to introduce the new vocabulary. The students will be able to navigate between guessing, games, puzzles and to listen, read, blend and reinforce the new vocabulary words.

Students will also be able to self-assess using the "test" feature

The below table gives you an example of the content:

|	Chapter 4 - #1
Theme	Food
What should the user learn in this chapter?	• Learn 30 food related words • Learn parts of the alphabet
Which elements are included and why?	• 8 Lessons/units with 21 words per unit; to learn words and letters • Games - to learn words in a playful way • Guessing - to learn the words • Song - to help memorize the alphabet • Test - to repeat the lessons
What methods and interactions are used and why?	• **Guessing** To learn words in a playful way by trial and error • **Games** - *Falling Leaves* - to learn words in a playful way, by connecting written word, sound and picture - *Memory* - to learn words in a playful way, by connecting written word to picture - *Password* - to learn words by guessing, trial and error • **Interactions in lessons** - *Alphabet puzzle* - to memorize the shape of letters - *Drag and Drop* - to learn the spelling - *Pick the right picture* - to learn the word - *Pick the right word* - to learn the word - *Pick the right letter* - to learn the (handwritten) letter - *Drag and drop (word to picture)* - to learn the word - *Crosswords* - to learn words and spelling - *Find the object in picture* - Learn word in playful way
Words used?	• bread, apple, strawberry, olive, pizza, juice, toast, lentils, pineapple, pepper, pie, tea, salad, milk, fish, water, honey, banana, carrot, ham, rice, bagel, etc.

3 Blended Learning inside the Classroom

This section will look at how to put the theories into practice. There is no one solid blended pathway, however there are key steps to follow to provide a solid foundation upon which to develop a suitable pathway particular for your learners.

> *"To implement the Akelius Digital Language Course in class meant to rethink the whole process of lesson planning, timing, predicting, scheduling, dividing in separate and discrete steps so that the introduction of technology would be complementary to the lesson."*
>
> *A teacher, ELIX*

3.1 Introduction of Electric Devices in the Classroom

Introduction of electric devices such as tablets and laptops into the classroom must be designed in a way that teachers are familiar with the application, tablet features, navigation, and file management. When you introduce the electric devices in the classroom for the first time, teachers are advised to familiarize themselves well on how to use the devices as well as the Akelius Digital Language Course to be able to further enhance their students' learning. Here are some recommended practices:

- **Step 1:** **Establish rules and policies on how the students handle the tablets, laptops and the headphones.**

Think of creating a systematic process by establishing routines on how the tablets and laptops are distributed to the students and how they are returned to the teacher. Remember to always combine with the classroom rules set by the students.

- **Step 2:** **Once the tablets/laptops and earphones are in place in front of the students, demonstrate how to switch on.**

When you are using the tablets/laptops for the first time in the classroom, demonstrate how to switch on the tablets. Once the tablets/laptops are switched on, show the students where to find the icon, then how to log in.

THEME

| lesson | game | guessing | song | test |
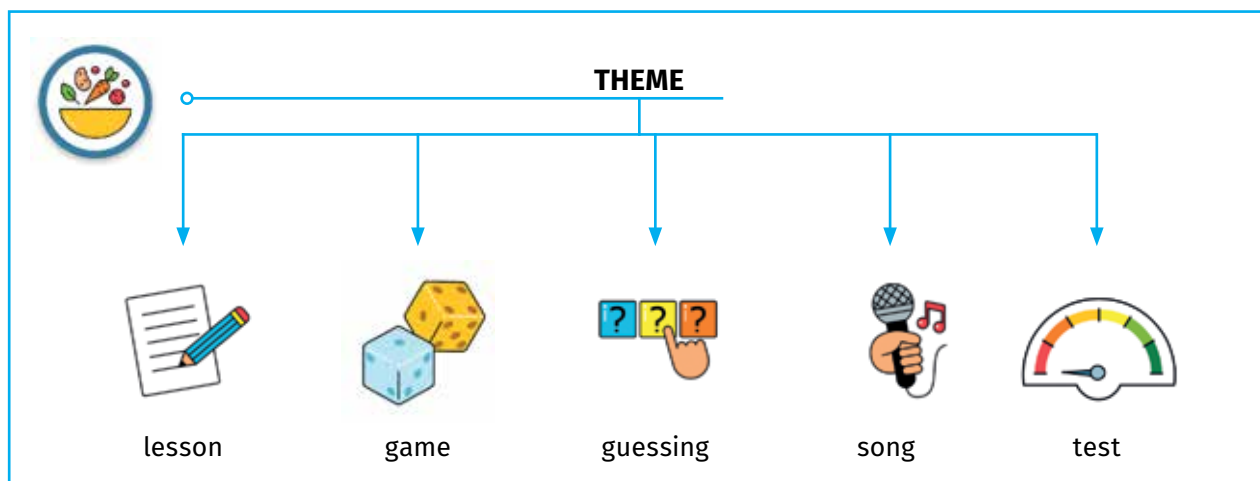
- **Step 3:** Introduce the content and basic features
  of the Akelius Digital Language Course to the students.

Walk through the Digital Language Course by showing the screen to the students. Always use the tablet or visual cues to facilitate this process. If available and possible, use a projector to project the features of the Digital Language Course onto the board, or draw images of the features on the wall and revert to them to familiarize the students and guide them on how to follow instruction of navigation from theme to lesson to task-based options.

3.1.1 *Challenges and solutions when using technologies in the classroom*

- **Internet connectivity for downloading the contents**

In order to overcome the internet connectivity issue, the Akelius Digital Language Course has been made available off-line. You can download **the Akelius Digital Language Course off-line version** from AppStore, Play Store, or from the link:
https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=de.akelius.university.mobile.languageapplication
(you do need the internet for downloading). In order to work off-line, you need to download each chapter manually.

Once you download all the contents on a device, the Akelius Digital Language Course works without the internet connection.

- **Technical support**

When you face a technical problem, please contact your IT/Akelius focal point in your organization. When such person is not available in your organization, please contact UNICEF Akelius Project Manager/focal point in your country.

- **Recharging the devices**

In some areas, where electricity is not consistently provided, teachers are advised to always make sure tablets are charged prior to the classroom session or lesson implementation, if the percentage of battery is below 40%. Charging the tablets needs to be managed by setting a responsible person and a schedule that reflect the availability of both the tables (are not in use by students) and electricity.

3.2 When to Use the Akelius Digital Language Course: Lesson components and different purposes of use

Which part of a lesson should you introduce the Akelius Digital Language Course?
The Akelius Digital Language Course can be used in any of the below components, according to the targets that the teachers want to exercise.
These ways are:

- **Introduction** of new linguistic elements (Warm-up or main session)
- **Practice** linguistic elements (Main session or application)
- **Consolidation** of linguistic elements (Application)

The three major components of a lesson structure[1]

1. Warm-up:
(Digital or face-to-face) prepare for class, introduce, brainstorm, review

2. Main session:
(Digital or face-to-face) focus on learning objective, communication, instruction

3. Practice Application:
(Digital or face-to-face) review, assess, extend, and consolidate

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MODEL A

INTRODUCTION
Guided Instruction
- Circle time
(face-to-face or Akelius Digital Course)
- Brainstorming
- Whole Class Digital Practice-Revision
(Using Akelius Digital Language Course)
- Teaching (Whole Class)

PRACTICE
Independent Learning
- Individual Activity or
- Akelius Digital Language Course

Collaborative Learning
- Worksheets (Pair Work) or
- Pair work using Akelius Digital Language Course)

CONSOLIDATION
Independent learning
- Presentations – Written or oral
- Revision/Reinforcement
- Test on Akelius Digital Language Course

MODEL B

INTRODUCTION
Guided & Focused Instruction
- Circle time (face-to-face or Akelius Digital Language Course)
- Read Aloud Activity
(face-to-face, whole class)
- Teaching (Whole Class)
- Modelling, Connection
(whole class, Akelius Digital Language Course)

PRACTICE
Independent Learning
or Collaborative Learning
- Guided practice (face-to-face or Akelieus Digital Language Course)
- Individual Activity (hands on activity or Akelius Digital Language Course)
- Station Rotation (hands on activity or Akelius Digital Language Course)
- Pair Work or small group activity (hands on activity or Akelius Digital Language Course)

CONSOLIDATION
Independent learning
- Presentations – Written or oral
- Revision/Reinforcement
- Test on Akelius Course

3.3 *Lesson planning*

The teacher applying this approach may teach according to a **lesson plan** (see annex 1) based on the following elements:

- **Overview and purpose:** Refers to what we hope our students to achieve.
- **Students:** Refers to what exactly you want them to be able to do by the end of the lesson.
- **Language elements:** Refers to the elements of language that will be covered throughout the lesson.
- **Skills:** Refers to the skills that will be acquired by the students at the end of each lesson.
- **Process and duration:** Refers to the description of how the plan will be executed. In other words, the actual procedures (i.e. methodology) proposed. This section can include information about patterns of interaction (e.g. teacher-students, student-student, whole class, groups, pairs, etc.) and timing (to describe how long teachers expect things to take). In addition to lesson closure and consolidation.
- **Akelius Digital Language Course:** Refers to connecting lesson objectives digitally.
- **Material needed:** Refers to the list of the materials teacher will use with the students and are attached to their plan.

> *Blending the digital Language Course into the components of the lesson procedure can take place at various times of the lesson. The digital Language Course may be used to introduce a lesson, review a lesson, practice or consolidate at the end of a lesson. Time allocated to the use of the Digital Language Course can also be flexible and depends on the teachers' assessments and observation of their students.*

Activity structures

Circle time

The teacher **may** begin with **circle time**. Circle time is all about language and discussion!
It includes:

- Discussions *WITH* children and not talking *AT* children.
- Games, songs and stories to encourage the use of letter sounds, recognizing letters, rhyming words, new vocabulary thereby helping develop language skills, enhance **listening** and **speaking** skills, and may also reinforce using the Akelius Digital Language Course.
- Open ended questions and short role plays to optimize children's comprehension, listening and speaking skills.

Listening and Read Aloud

Listening is an essential second language skill, with students exposed and trying to de-code and understand spoken language on a variety of communicative circumstances. On the other hand, Read aloud is an activity in which the teacher reads aloud for the whole group while the students are actively listening. Research confirms the importance and value of reading aloud to children of all ages.

The purpose of this activity is to:

- Enhance **listening** and **comprehension** skills
- Build vocabulary
- Associate reading with pleasure
- Motivate, encourage and excite
- Develop comprehension, assist children in making connections
- Activate and create background knowledge
- Provide a reading role model of any language
- Plant the desire to read and use the targeted language

Listening and Read Aloud

Listening to verbal speech is crucial in read aloud. Reading aloud to students taps into verbal intelligence because teachers use oral language to communicate the written passage and students use the verbal communication to make meaning and discuss the text.

Yenice and Aktamis (2010) state that most traditional forms of teaching are directed from verbal intelligence. Verbal intelligence is obviously not the only style of teaching, but it is used daily throughout the classroom. There are many forms of the verbal intelligence, and reading a book aloud is one of them. In a study by Hemmati et al. (2015), it was found that storytelling and read aloud were avenues to effectively practice and enhance listening skills. Moreover, research supports student comprehension improvement through read aloud. "The most effective forms of teacher read aloud happen when students are involved in asking and answering questions, making predictions, and making inferences instead of just passively listening" (Clark & Andreasen, 2014, p. 165). Knowing this, it is important to ensure students are engaged and participating during the read aloud session.

Wolf, Crosson, and Resnick (2005) researched elementary and middle school students' comprehension and thinking skills during read aloud. Their findings concluded that the discussions associated with read aloud texts did help improve student comprehension (Wolf et al. 2005). Delacruz (2013) states that previewing vocabulary and extending the read aloud with a written reflection or response may also lead to improvement in student reading comprehension. Students will get the chance to hear new vocabulary words from each read aloud text that is read to them (Smolkin & Donovan, 2001).

Even if teachers are not particularly promoting these new vocabulary words, students are still audibly hearing and adding these words to their own vocabulary knowledge.

Focused instruction

The teacher presents the lesson purpose, alerting students to the learning target and providing them with goals to measure their progress. Once purpose is established, the teacher presents the lesson's content, using modeling to demonstrate processes or skills. This modeling is accompanied by thinking aloud, which gives learners insight into how an expert understands the content or the process.

Focused instruction prepares students for learning by focusing them on the content, strategies, or skills being taught. For the teacher, this phase involves three important instructional moves, each of which can be coordinated with the use of the Digital Language Course.

Establishing purpose

Whenever a new content is introduced, a teacher should provide students with a statement of purpose that identifies the targets for the lesson. For beginners this could happen just by introducing the basic phrase / phrases of the new lesson.

Modeling and thinking aloud

Learners benefit greatly from an inside look at how a skilled reader, writer, or thinker—processes information and performs tasks. Typically, teachers provide this "inside look" by modeling and thinking aloud (Davey, 1987).

During Focused Instruction When communicating ideas and concepts, establishing purpose, and modeling, you need students following along closely. There are various ways to project what's on your tablet or to a big screen.

Guided instruction

Students begin to apply the skills, strategies, or processes that were introduced, with the teacher monitoring progress and collecting formative assessment data. For learners, making errors is critical at this phase of instruction; when students get stuck, the teacher's role is to ask questions and provide prompts and cues to redirect students toward understanding.

In order to advance students understanding, they need opportunities for application.

During guided instruction, the teacher follows students' first efforts at application, notices what they are doing, and provides feedback in the form of questions, prompts, and cues (Fisher & Frey, 2010). In the guided instruction phase of learning, tablets can be deployed to help gauge how students are applying concepts so that you can furnish additional scaffolds as needed.

Collaborative learning

Students consolidate their thinking and work together to apply new skills and knowledge to a novel situation. Learners engage in face-to-face and digital conversations on substantive topics, and this deepens their understanding of the skill, strategy, or topic.

Perhaps no phase of learning is more critical than when students work with their peers to consolidate their thinking and practice new skills (Frey, Fisher, & Everlove, 2009). In the classroom, this is most often done in large and small groups, where students interact, role-play, provide feedback on one another's work, talk about concepts and ideas, make connections between the content and their own lives, and create new products together. At this stage students are encouraged to use all the resources available (including languages of origin) to understand and use new vocabulary and structures.

Two or more students sharing a tablet can be enough to prompt the kind of face-to-face interactions that benefit all students. The tablet-sharing method of collaboration allows the group to work on a communication mode with which they are familiar (face-to-face conversation) while giving them the knowledge-extending benefits of working in a digital collaborative environment.

Independent learning

Students apply what they have been taught, fully expressing the skills and processes they have been using throughout the entire gradual release of responsibility framework, along with critical habits of mind, like metacognition and self-regulation.

In this phase of the GRR instructional framework, students are fully applying the content they have been learning and showing ability to transfer their learning independently in any context.

Tablets are a great tool for conducting independent work. It is a way were students use technological skills and demonstrate understanding.

3.5 *Classroom Layout for the Whole Class Approach*

The first thing you notice when walking into a classroom is how it is set up. Planning the physical learning environment is very important as it is affects students' behavior and work ethics. Classroom layout and seating arrangement may vary based on activities implemented. It can also be used to minimizing distractions. There are various potential seating organizations you can choose from in your classroom, including rows, groups (or pods), a horseshoe, a circle, or a mix of these.

Seating charts are typically selected based on how much you want your students to interact. Rows of tables with all students facing forwards are typically best for classrooms where individual work is the norm, while smaller group arrangements can help students engage in periodic group work. Arranging students in a u-shape or circle will facilitate an environment where group work is the primary focus of the classroom. Second language classrooms should work as a language laboratory, facilitating interaction, group work and debates: that's why the typical setting of rows of tables is not suitable to increase communication.

ROW SEATING
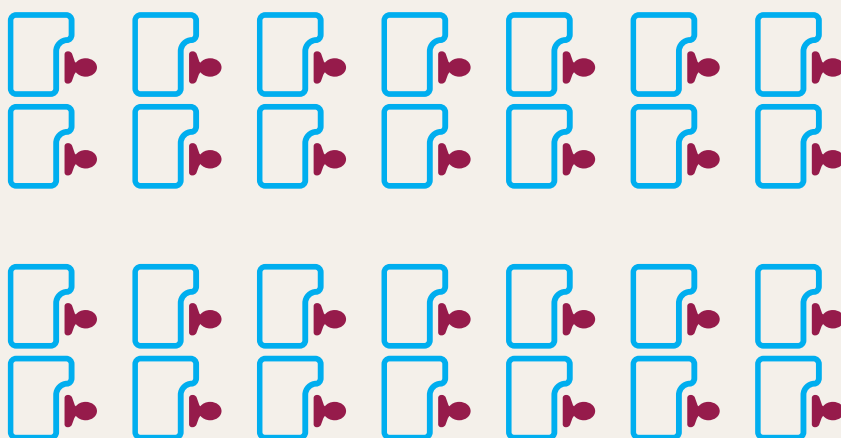
GROUP / PAIR WORK SEATING
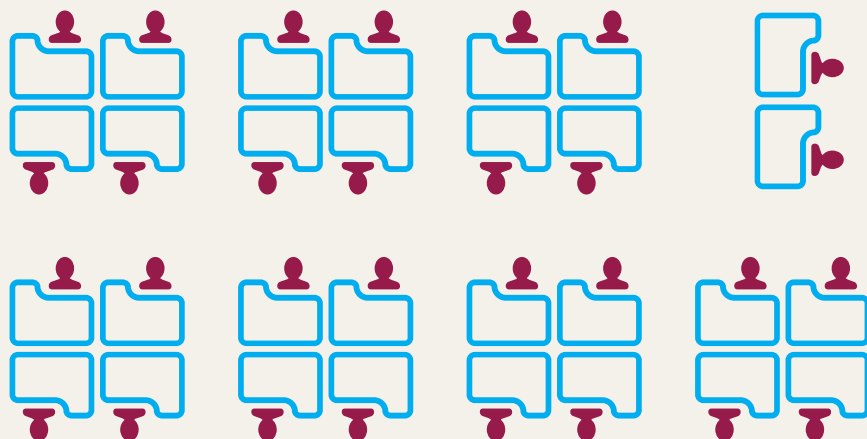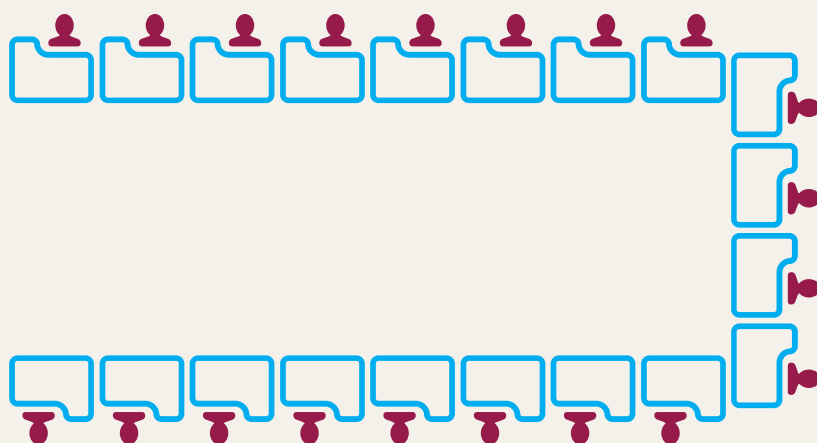
U-SHAPE SEATING
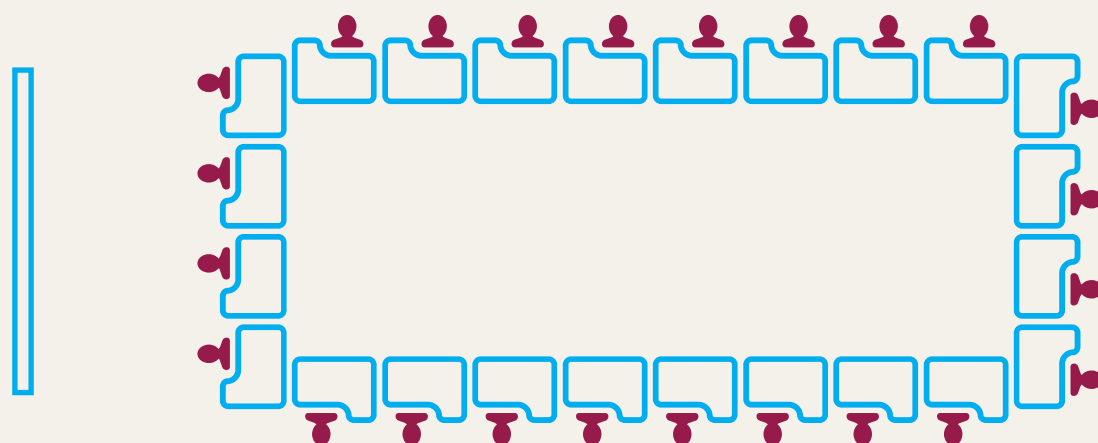
3.6 *Differentiated Station Rotation*

Not all learners need the same lesson delivered in the same way at exactly the same time. To better accommodate and engage the individual learners in the classroom, it is best to differentiate the practices during the independent practice time. The Station Rotation Model is a blended learning model where students rotate through a series of online and offline stations. Instead of teaching a lesson to all students at the same time, you can teach the lesson to small groups, customizing the delivery each time to differentiate for the learning strengths of the individuals in each group. This allows the teacher to provide additional support to one group while the remainder of the class remains engaged at their stations.

This approach is useful when:

- Digital devices are not accessible to all learners at one time (not enough devices compared to the number of the children);
- The teacher needs to provide extra support to a group of learners with similar needs;
- The teacher wants to reinforce internalization and transfer of skill implementation in different setting (across different stations).

Limitations: This model is an optional model. It has its limitations. A small classroom or large number of students in one classroom, even if the classroom is not small, will be challenging to implement this model.

Example: When it is appropriate to address the entire class at once, you may use station rotations afterwards to provide practice with the newly introduced skill. The teacher may introduce the lesson or reflect on a previous lesson prior to students starting with their stations.

Work stations: Stations may vary based on activity, with the following as suggestions:

- Small group instruction station
- Digital learning station (including Akelius)
- Independent work or collaborative activities station
- Direct instruction station
- One-on-one Instruction station
- Group work/projects station (see pictures below of sample stations).

For the non-digital part of their learning, students receive direct instruction from a teacher, followed up by a variety of activities, which could include modeled and independent reading, worksheets or other pencil-and-paper tasks, small-group work, projects, games, and flash cards.

Can this be implemented by only one teacher?

In a well-organized class where classroom rules and procedures are agreed upon with the students (shared responsibility) at the beginning of the course and the procedures are clear and reinforced in a consistent way by both the teacher and the students, station rotation will not require additional support from another teacher. Sharing the responsibility results in autonomous students who focus on work with minimal distractions and behavioral issues.

3.6.1 *How to organize the stations*

One simple way is to use a four-station rotation:
A teacher station, an online or digital station, an independent practice station, and a group/ partner practice station. Time spent at each station may vary depending on how much time is allotted for the lesson block. See figure below.

STATION ROTATION MODEL

Digital Learning

Small group instruction

Independent work or Collaborative Activities

Digital Learning

Teacher

Assistant
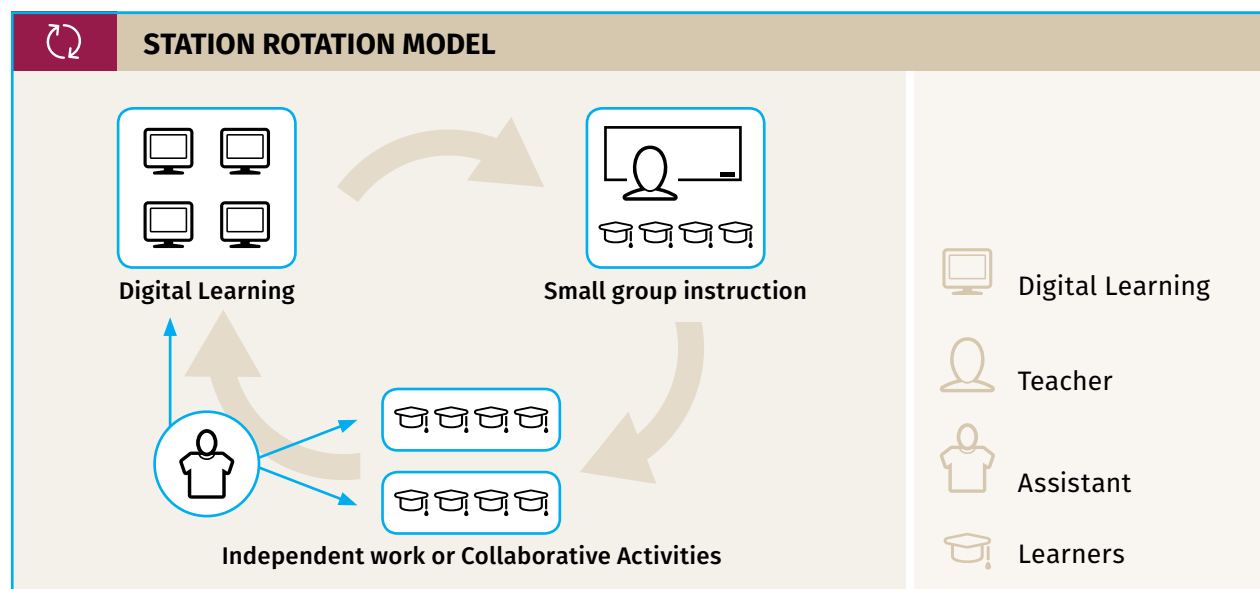
Learners

Station rotation reinforce the transfer of learned skills and encourage learners to employ all skills learned during the face to face or digital learning with less fear and hesitation.

a. Small Group Instruction

At the small group instruction, use this station to re-teach or reinforce the content to a small group of learners rather than the entire class.

The lower-performing group of learners rotate through the small group instruction station first. Use the time at the small group instruction station to push learners further in their thinking about the concept and skill they are learning.

Purpose:
- Allows teachers to evaluate learners' learning strengths and tailor lessons to them.
- Break down concepts not easily understood or reinforce lessons so that learners firmly grasp.
- Learners receive one-on-one attention which can boost their confidence
- Opportunity for direct and frequent feedback
- More time for students to ask questions
- Collaboration, everyone participates

Materials: Based on lesson.
Setting: Small Group Instruction Station.

b. Digital Learning or Akelius Language Course Station

Purpose:

- Allows learners to work at their own pace
- It is fun and easy to use
- Gives direct feedback without the assistance of the teacher
- Excellent method of learning a foreign language, focusing on **listening** and **comprehension** skills

Materials: Akelius Digital Language Course.
Setting: Independent work station or collaborative work station.

The activity should reinforce the objective of the lesson. Building or spelling words, matching games, or vocabulary acquisition. Allow the learners to complete activities independently or collaboratively at the digital station, with assistance from the classroom assistant (if available) when needed. If the setting allows, assign some activities from the Akelius Digital Language Course where students can repeat words they listen to. This activity will improve the student confidence in using the new language without feeling any pressure.

At the digital station, the teacher assigns a lesson from the Akelius Digital Language Course an interactive activity for learners connected to the previous face-to-face lessons, or topic/subject/skill that the learner needs to reinforce.

c. Independent Work Station

During independent work, tasks have to have a clear beginning and end–students have to know what they are expected to do and when they have finished. This means that tasks must be things that don't require someone else reading directions, a teacher asking a question or anything that the student cannot do by himself.

Activities may range from independent reading, worksheets, cut and paste, sorting, matching, Akelius Digital Language Course to basic writing.

Purpose for independent work stations:
• Students are fully applying the content they have been learning
• Showing ability to transfer their learning independently in any context.

Materials (Based on activity): Books, worksheets, phonics flashcards.

Purpose for independent reading:
• Interaction between readers and text
• To apply the following comprehension and cognitive strategies for constructing meaning:
  - Making and confirming predictions
  - Making connections
  - Self-monitoring
  - Visualizing
  - Summarizing
  - Inferring

During independent reading, the students will read illustrated levelled books that are characterized by repetitive words (beginner levels), picture-word or small sentence on one page, and so on as the level increase the book complexity for children who can read at higher levels. They can also read their personal produced text from previous work. Students read on their own, with minimal to no assistance from the teacher. Independent reading plays a key role in the development of reading fluency (speed and ease of reading), vocabulary acquisition, background knowledge, and even spelling. It is important for developing habits of reading, interest in reading, transfer and practice of learned skills. Learners will also use vocabulary and other language skills learned while using the Akelius application during the digital learning to empower their language acquisition.

Applying to authentic situations:

Materials: Books, leveled books, decodable books, journal.
Setting: Independent work station.

At the independent work station, select an assessment, worksheet, or game from the Akelius Digital Language Course to build on a newly introduced skill or reinforce an existing skill or activity. For example, a phonics activity that allows learners to manipulate letters to build and spell words.
Learners may also practice independent reading and writing at this work station.

d. Collaborative Work Station

While this station is also a practice station, the focus is on practice done collaborative with partners. Practice that involves classmates working together is much more engaging. This station is a great place to incorporate a project or performance task requiring students to work together and learn from each other. Students learn a lot through peer interactions and collaborative problem solving. Setting students up with an activity and providing them with the tools and direction they need creates opportunities for this type of learning to occur. It also reinforces speaking the targeted language. Students can depend on vocabulary or phrases learned from the Akelius Language Course during the digital learning to communicate or present their work.

Purpose: To collaboratively learn and work through activities that can help students to develop problem solving and group work skills.
Materials: Based on activity.
Setting: Collaborative work station.

e. Closure (Whole Class)

Closure is the activity that ends a lesson and creates a lasting impression. It is the wrap up at the end of the lesson that helps students synthesize and summarize the new knowledge. Students reflect on or review what they have learned.

Materials: Based on lesson.
Setting: Whole Class.

Teachers must use closure to:

- Check for understanding
- Emphasize key information
- Tie up loose ends
- Correct misunderstandings

Students find closure helpful for:

- Summarizing, reviewing, and demonstrating understanding
- Linking lesson ideas to a conceptual framework and/or previously-learned knowledge
- Transferring ideas to new situations

When Concluding:

- Develop a plan for concluding the study
- Cross check the topic web and original list of questions with the learners. Which of their questions have and have not been answered?
- Invite learners to discuss their research findings.
- Organize a culminating event
- Engage learners in preparing for a final event in which they deepen their awareness of what they have learned.

3.7 Assessment

3.7.1 The Importance of Assessments

Assessment is a critical step in the teaching and learning process. It determines whether or not the learning is happening and if learning objectives have been met.

Classroom assessment is the most powerful type of measurement in education because it has the ability to influence student learning. When well-constructed, classroom assessments provide the most valid measure of student knowledge and skill.

Assessment in the classroom is very important for both the students and the teacher.

FOR TEACHERS:
- The teacher will be provided with information about what students know and what they can do.
- The teacher will be able to evaluate in an <u>ongoing process</u> with the aim to provide feedback for developing better instruction.
- The teacher will be able to use the resulting data for instructional decision-making and lesson planning.
- The teacher will be able to use the resulting data to guide instruction, which can lead to targeted, timely teacher interventions.

FOR STUDENTS:
- It provides a road map for students. Students should, at all times, have access to the assessment so they can use it to inform and guide their learning.
- It helps students set learning goals.
- It helps students reflect on their learning and what needs to be done to achieve their learning goals.
- It helps motivate students when they experience progress and achievement.

3.7.2 *Types of Classroom Assessments*

Assessment can take a variety of forms. Classroom assessment is generally divided into three types: assessment **for** learning, assessment **of** learning and assessment **as** learning.

Assessment *for* Learning (Formative Assessment)

Assessment **for** learning is ongoing assessment that allows teachers to monitor students on a day-to-day basis and modify their teaching based on what the students need to be successful. This assessment provides students with the timely, specific feedback that they need to make adjustments to their learning.

After teaching a lesson, we need to determine whether the lesson was accessible to all students while still challenging to the more capable; what the students learned and still need to know; how we can improve the lesson to make it more effective; and, if necessary, what other lesson we might offer as a better alternative. This continual evaluation of instructional choices is at the heart of improving our teaching practice (Burns 2005, p. 26).

Assessment *as* Learning

Assessment **as** learning develops and supports students' metacognitive skills. This form of assessment is crucial in helping students become lifelong learners. As students engage in peer and self-assessment, they learn to make sense of information, relate it to prior knowledge and use it for new learning. Students develop a sense of ownership and efficacy when they use teacher, peer and self-assessment feedback to make adjustments, improvements and changes to what they understand.

Assessment *of* Learning (Summative Assessment)

Assessment **of** learning is the snapshot in time that lets the teacher, students and their parents know how well each student has completed the learning tasks and activities. It provides information about student achievement. While it provides useful reporting information, it often has little effect on learning.

ASSESSMENT		
FOR LEARNING	**AS LEARNING**	**OF LEARNING**
• By teachers • To determine what to do next instructionally (strategies, differentiation) • To provide descriptive feedback to students (what they are doing well, what needs improvement and how to improve)	• By student • To determine what to do next in my learning (e.g. strategy, focus) • To provide descriptive feedback to peers and self (peer and self-assessment) • Goal is to become reflective, self- monitoring learner	• By teacher • To determine student's level of achievement of overall expectations at a given point in time • As evidence to support professional judgment
Akelius Digital Language Course Example: The teacher needs to base next lesson plan on results from test taken on the Digital Language Course. The teacher may determine which words the students have not acquired and reteach the words using different strategies. In addition, the teacher may discuss with the students the words that they have not acquired and the students may practice more using the Akelius Digital Language Course.	**Akelius Digital Language Course Example:** The learner may revisit the section that he/she has not yet mastered on the Akelius Digital Language Course and determine after reflection which strategy he/she will use to learn the vocabulary words again and take a retest. Students may assist their peers through the processes.	

It is important to be able to determine the extent to which each and every student met the lesson objectives. The teacher will want to know if the students learned what he/she has taught them. In order to assess learning, the teacher must have a baseline or pre-assessment of what students know prior to instruction(pre-assessment) as well as an indication of what they know after instruction (post-assessment). The assessment strategies will help to determine the extent to which students met the learning objectives developed.

The same objectives must be assessed prior to and after instruction. The teacher must make sure that he/she has information for every learner that identifies his or her level of performance before and after instruction, and. also information recorded about ongoing student performance during instruction.

Some examples of good strategies for assessing student performance include:

- The analysis of running records to determine students' use of reading strategies.
- Using anecdotal records to record students' progress in using manipulatives to solve problems.
- Conducting observations with check lists to assess motor skill development.
- Using rubrics to assess different skills.
- Various paper and pencil tests.
- Digital test on the Akelius Digital Language Course.

Annex

Examples of lesson plans using
the Akelius Digital Language Course

Thematic Unit: "What time is it?"

LEVEL: BEGINNERS   **DURATION: 90 min**

Overview and Purpose

- Review of the time and parts of the day
- Introduction to verbs that describe daily routines
- Presentation of new vocabulary

Students are expected to:

- Connect their knowledge about time and parts of the day with daily routines
- Use the new vocabulary in a dialogue about daily routines, produce questions and answers
- Describe the daily routine of themselves or a classmate
- Learn and understand the different endings of the verb in the singular

Language elements

Vocabulary items
Time, parts of the day, basic verbs of daily routine (wake up, go to school, eat, drink, sleep, have lesson)

Grammar
- Endings of the verbs (1st, 2nd, 3rd person of singular and plural)
- Phrases that express time

Skills

- Listening, understanding oral speech and writing
- Taking notes of new information, Reviewing concepts
- Speaking practice with a classmate in class (role-play)
- Writing practice, presenting

Process and Duration

- **Use of the digital language course: at the beginning of the lesson** for the review of concepts of time and introduction to new vocabulary (daily routines verbs) > **30'**
- **Processing new information through flashcards of common daily actions:** Students describe them and put them in order according to the routine of the day > **10'**
- **Experiential activity** > **15'**
- **Worksheets: (prior to the lesson)** Prepare different sets of worksheets for half the number of students. Each one should have a different schedule with missing information. Students work in pairs, and have to ask questions in order to fill the blanks > **10'**
- **Written and oral presentation of daily routines:** After filling in the missing information, students write a paragraph describing their partners' daily routine and present it orally to the group > **25'**

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Chapter 15 'What time is it?'
Lesson 3,4,5

Material Needed

Tablets/Headphones, flashcards, worksheets (2 different schedules for each pair)

Thematic Unit: "Learning"

LEVEL: BEGINNERS | **DURATION: 90 min**

Overview and Purpose

- Review of vocabulary on students' equipment and introduction to school vocabulary
- Introduction to the language structures "This is a… / This is the…"

Students are expected to:

- Read and write words that are related to school
- Practice reading and writing whole sentences
- Recognize and understand vocabulary concerning school
- Use school vocabulary in full sentences in order to orally describe their school or classroom
- Review nouns in English and practice them in the language structure "This is a…" / "This is the…"
- Distinguish the communicational contexts in which we use the definite and indefinite article

Language elements

Vocabulary items
School vocabulary
(desk, chair, backpack, pencil, letter, word etc.)

Grammar
- Use of the indefinite and definite article
(This is a pencil / This is the courtyard)

Skills

Students practice reading and writing whole words and sentences, recognizing and reproducing short sentences orally, collaborating in order to produce an intellectual product, presenting and expressing themselves in a group, making research autonomously and independently in order to fulfill a project.

Process and Duration

- **Circle time:**
  Use of flashcards to review relevant vocabulary. Students present in turns their flashcard using the language structure "This is a…". Their peers have to remember and answer questions about each other's' flashcards > **10'**
- **Brainstorming about our school:**
  Students name in Greek or their 1st language places and parts of the school while the teacher draws and writes them on the board. Consider using pictures as stimulus or scaffolding elements > **10'**
- **Lesson:**
  Students are presented to the new language components (diphthong, definite / indefinite article distinction) through examples related to school life > **10'**
- **Experiential Activity** > **15'**
- **Practice:**
  Using the Akelius digital language course students practice new vocabulary and the language structure "This is the" (This is a… / This is the… > **20'**
- **Consolidation:**
  Group work. In groups, the students design their school and write down the relevant vocabulary, with the help of the digital language course (their tablets at hand).
  Then they present it to the class > **20'**

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Chapter 5 «Learning»
Lessons 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Material Needed

Tablets/Headphones, flashcards, papers and markers

Thematic Unit: "Grocery shopping"	
LEVEL: BEGINNERS	**DURATION: 90 min**

Overview and Purpose	Students are expected to:
• Review of food vocabulary and connection to vocabulary related to food categories and stores • Introduction to basic phrases and language structures concerning grocery shopping • Practice of the plural of nouns • Practice of the indefinite article in accusative form (One, a, an)	• Learn how to group food into specific categories and relate these categories to food stores • Create short descriptions based on a predetermined set of questions • Practice vocabulary related to grocery shopping • Understand short description of grocery items found on labels and packages • Practice language structures related to grocery shopping in order to ask and provide information about grocery shopping • Use the plural of nouns orally and written within a relevant context (grocery shopping circumstance) • Use the indefinite article orally and written within a relevant context (grocery shopping circumstance) • Cultivate their brainstorming, collaboration, free and guided association, role playing skills

Language elements	Skills	Process and Duration
Vocabulary items Food categories and food stores (meat, dairy, fruits & vegetables, cereals, fish, grocery shop, open air market, butcher's, supermarket, bakery). *Grammar* • Plural of nouns • Indefinite article in accusative form *Speaking functions* Grocery shopping typical dialogues and phrases ("How much does it cost? How much do they cost?" "I would like a / two / three…" "There you go"	Students practice expressing themselves orally, making short descriptions of items, categorizing and relating objects, making associations, collaborating in order to produce an intellectual product, using their imagination in order to enact a fictitious communicational circumstance and exploiting different kinds of data from different sources (posters, flashcards, book, tablet, whiteboard) in order to communicate.	• **Circle time:** Use of flashcards depicting fruits, vegetables, meat, dairy and cereals. Consider also the use of realia (real items). Students answer to questions about each food (what color it is, when during the day we eat it, where we can buy it, whether we like it or not, what food category it belongs to). Encourage students to ask their classmates such questions, creating short role plays. • Then students get assigned a secret card each, which they have to describe for their classmates to guess, using the information practiced beforehand (color, meal, taste etc.) > **10'** • **Brainstorming:** The teacher splits the board into five columns: - supermarket - grocery shop - butcher - bakery - open air market After giving an example of food/food categories we can find in each store, students stick the food flashcards in the appropriate column and debate in case of disagreements > **10'** • **Lesson:** Students are presented to the new language components (plural of nouns, indefinite article in accusative > **10'**

Language elements	Skills	Process and Duration
		• **Practice:** Students are divided into 5 groups corresponding to the five food stores. They create group posters of their stores, including name, illustrations (either drawings or cut outs from food magazines), labels of the products in plural, and prices. The food posters are displayed in different corners of the classroom > **15'** • **Practice:** Using the Akelius digital language course students practice new vocabulary (stores, food, categories) and grocery shopping phrases > **20'** • **Consolidation throughrole playing:** Representatives of the 5 groups become vendors in their respective shops (in front of their group posters). Their classmates, in turn, visit the shops and play the role of the customer. A typical dialogue is written on the whiteboard which assists the students to role play a grocery shopping circumstance > **25'**

Akelius Destination	Material Needed
Chapter 12 «Grocery Shopping» Lessons 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	Tablets/Headphones, flashcards, papers, scissors, food magazines, glues and markers

Notes

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Glossary

Term	Definition
Second language	**A second language** is a language that is not your native but you have learned it to get by in your daily life. The typical vocabulary of a second-language speaker will be about household items, groceries, various routine needs such as going to the doctor, to the hairdresser, calling a plumber, being familiar with local holidays. Its purpose is to help you survive. One could say that some refugees and immigrants or ethnic minorities in a certain country will be learning this language as their second language.
Foreign language	**A foreign language** is a language you learn because you are interested in it for whatever reason. The typical vocabulary of a foreign language speaker will include amazingly varied topics such as politics, philosophy, science, literature - not necessarily useful in real life but picked randomly anyway from textbooks and other media used for the enhancement of language learning. A foreign language may be the one you will never have an opportunity to use in your day-to-day tasks.
Blended learning	**Blended learning** is an approach to education that combines digital educational materials with traditional face-to-face classroom methods.
Cooperative learning	**Cooperative learning** is a teaching strategy in which small groups, each with students of different levels of ability, use a variety of learning activities to improve their understanding of a subject. Each member of a team is responsible not only for learning what is taught but also for helping teammates learn, thus creating an atmosphere of achievement.
Student-centered learning	**Student-centered learning** refers to a wide variety of educational programs, learning experiences, instructional approaches, and academic-support strategies that are intended to address the distinct learning needs, interests, aspirations, or cultural backgrounds of individual students and groups of students.
Classroom environment	**Classroom environment** encompasses a broad range of educational concepts, including the physical setting, the psychological environment created through social contexts, and numerous instructional components related to teacher characteristics and behaviors.
Active learning	**Active learning** is any learning activity in which the student participates or interacts with the learning process, as opposed to passively taking in the information.

Term	Definition
Lexical approach	**Lexical approach** is a way of analyzing and teaching language based on the idea that it is made up of lexical units rather than grammatical structures. The units are words, **chunks** formed by **collocations**, and fixed phrases.
Consolidation	**Consolidation** is a lesson stage where new material is reviewed, and learning is reinforced. It normally occurs at the end of the lesson. Consolidation can be compared with revision, which takes place at a later time and serves to remind learners.
Workstations	**Workstations** are designated areas in the classroom where students work alone or with a partner/group using instructional materials to explore, practice, and expand their learning. Workstations can provide an opportunity to assess students' mastery of different components within the same objective and establish a routine of differentiation for students with various instructional levels, interests, or learning styles. When workstations are managed effectively, students are aware of behavioral expectations and academic responsibilities.

The Teacher Guidance Manual was developed with the aim to familiarize teachers with the framework and methodology of blended learning and in particular with use of the Akelius digital language learning course.

This Manual guides teachers in order to:

- Understand the foundations of blended learning in the teaching of language, as well as the benefits of the use of digital tools, and more specifically of the Akelius course in the classroom.
- To create the necessary conditions inside an inclusive classroom for the optimization of the use of digital tools with the aim to teach a second language.
- To develop lesson plans that incorporate the Akelius course in order to achieve specific learning goals.

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