Moodle (r)evolution
Developing VLE for teaching Polish as a foreign language

Polish at SMLC

•Polish and Slavonic studies program;
•Language classes as optional – language instruction supplements – for undergraduate and PG students (mainly from CRCEES);
•PG Diploma in Polish, students learning a language for research purposes and fieldwork;
•3 levels of teaching: beginners, intermediate and advanced.

Initial stages

Moodle in teaching Polish at SMLC served mainly as a **repository** of various resources, mainly in-house textbook, making our students only **passive viewers** of texts.

It is helpful for students to have instant access to their learning materials. **Lack of interaction** with the platform however, makes it less attractive and less popular as it should be among learners. The format of presenting and using resources on Moodle had to be changed at all levels, to make them more language course oriented.

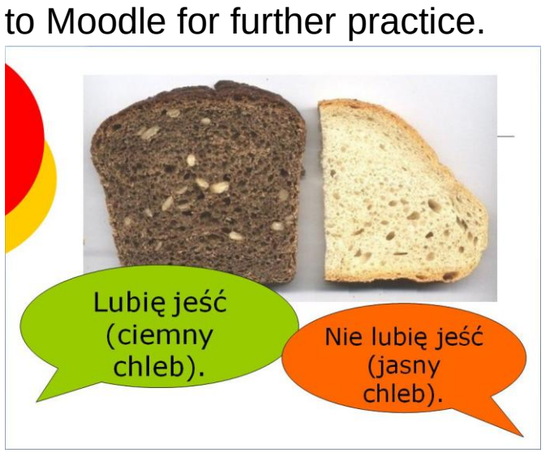
Lesser taught languages, like Polish, in the current financial climate may need to move completely onto online platforms.

Course for beginners

Moving from repository of texts to fully interactive online course, supporting development of all language skills, in a few steps.

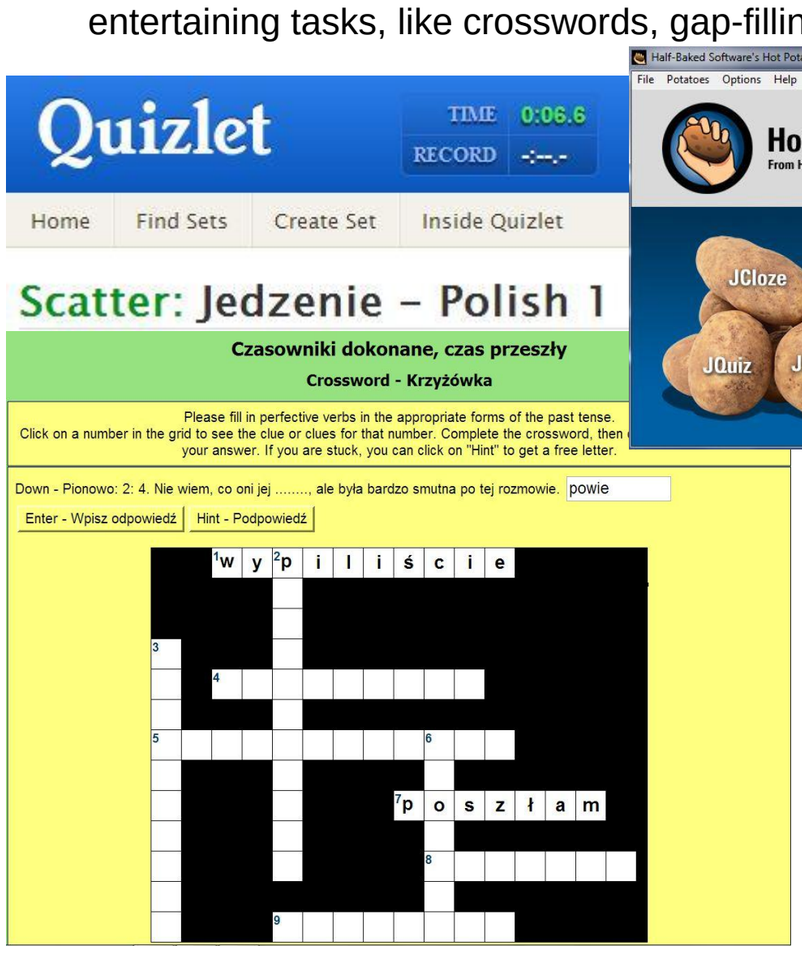
I. Speaking exercises

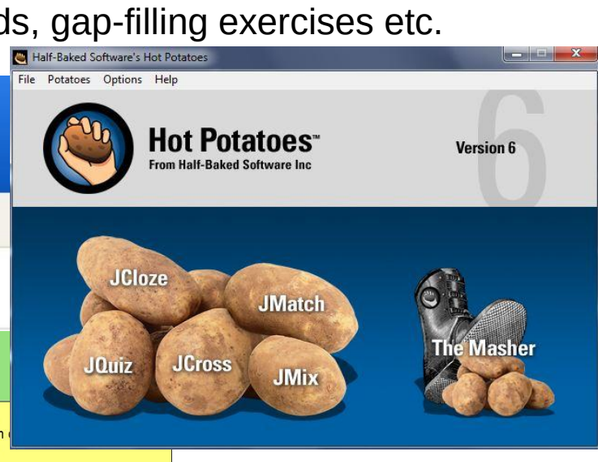
Introducing PowerPoint presentations to help develop speaking skills in the classroom, uploaded to Moodle for further practice.



II. Grammar and vocabulary exercises

Using Hot Potatoes and Quizlet as tools to create easy and entertaining tasks, like crosswords, gap-filling exercises etc.



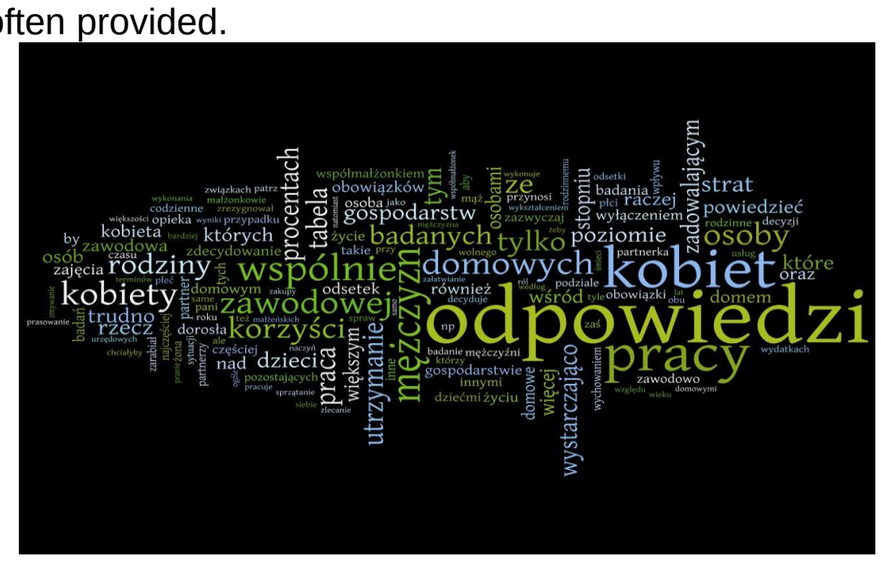


Other courses

Though the beginners course is a priority (relatively high intake), we do not forget about the other levels, trying to adapt the tools to their needs.

• Intermediate

Speaking and writing skills are the focus. Similarly to the beginners, PowerPoint presentations are used. **Writing** is developed by establishing forums for exchanging opinions on particular subjects. Links to websites focusing on current events and pop-culture are also often provided.



•Advanced

Moodle is used as a crucial tool for **translation** classes, through forums. Also as a resources base with links to translated texts and further reading.

Learning forums

Section	Forum	Description	Discussions
1	Translation1 24.09.12	Proszę przetłumaczyć fragment tekstu podany niżej. Termin: piątek 28.09, godz. 14.00 The move is the brainchild of IT teacher Fraser Speirs. Last year, the 105 kids at the school were forced to share 12 laptops between them. Now they've each been given an iPad to work on lessons - ...	5

Further development

I. The most important task is to increase **accessibility** and **interactivity** of materials. Contextualizing the learning process in an environment of modern technology that is familiar to our students seems to be essential nowadays.

II. Focusing on developing **beginners** course by introducing further skills, mainly **reading**. My research project is focused on graded readers that can be converted into online-based texts with reading comprehension exercises.

III. Introducing everyday technology to help develop **writing** skills – in various forms, depending on the level: blogging, micro blogging, photo blogging, commenting on articles online, creating wikis etc.

IV. Creating resources for **listening** comprehension is a lot easier with the arrival of smartphones. Particularly beginners can benefit from being exposed to natural conversations and a variety of accents.

V. Finding freeware that supports **pronunciation** development (speaking is a lot harder to perform without a human being at the other end).

VI. Finally, moving from web 1.0 to 2.0 and creating an **online course** for beginners, particularly those focusing on language based area studies, accessible throughout the UK, with teachers supervising participants from their desks.

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