



Deep Approach to Turkish Teaching and Learning

DATTL NEWSLETTER

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Transcending Goals, Tasks, and Standards

by François Victor Tochon

In the deep approach students are curriculum builders. The focus is most often on language as a self-sufficient analysis with the necessary tools at hand, and on meanings in action. Focus on form is rarer and may help when the teacher feels the need to intervene to scaffold the realization of projects and facilitate the educative process. Meaning-focused projects involve language use before form is analyzed. Self-study and focus on language come next, and peer review has as much importance as the teacher's in-depth feedback on process as well as language to promote accuracy. Deep understanding of the process through which one can reach accuracy is more important than the formal details: the focus is on the generation of correct communication and constant improvement of production, not on formal exercises. (p. 11)



As in ceramic painting, DATTL is evolving with constant reviews and ameliorations until reaching a complete product.

Recent News

Translation of Deep Approach

The conceptual aspects of the deep approach and its fundamentals, as developed by François Victor Tochon, are being translated into Turkish. *See p. 3.*

Deep Approach presented

The Deep Approach to Language Teaching and Learning has been presented around South-East China by François Hoca. *See p. 3.*

NCOLCTL conference

A 4-hour pre-conference workshop on the deep approach has been organized by the National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages (NCOLCTL) on April 7, 2011 with a one-page summary in the Conference guide. *See p. 3.*

Course on Deep Approach

François Hoca is giving an ongoing Spring graduate course on the deep approach to 14 language teaching assistants of the College of Letters & Science of the University of Wisconsin—Madison. *See p. 3.*

DATTL in Progress



Grammar Storytelling videos

We are still exploring what the best approach for empowering language students would be in order to relieve their instructor from having to “teach” them grammar. We have started recording a series of videos on specific grammar points useful to intermediate and advanced learners of Turkish, which could be indexed to the texts they read and the videos they watch. The idea is not simply grammar lessons, but to have a native speaker telling stories about the deep meaning of language utterances, such that we’d learn about the pragmatics underlying language use, with examples and anecdotes. We have uploaded a few grammar storytelling videos on the DATTL website, and there will be more. We aim to have all the topics ready before September. We filmed a few videos with Akile Zorlu (METU), and we will continue with Mukaddes Şahin (UW).



Mukaddes Şahin, Turkish Instructor, UW-Madison

Individual users

We start getting e-mails from individual Turkish learners who learn Turkish intensively with the only help of the DATTL website, plus Livemocha.com Turkish contacts. They will give us feedback on what works and what can be improved.

AATT Connection and revisions of the materials

Erika Gilson (Princeton), who is partnering with us 20% this spring, visited us to give us feedback on improvements of our modules. As you may be aware, producing such a broad spectrum of instructional activities involves careful re-reading by quite a few experienced instructors. We did a first reading and revision last summer regarding typos; we’ll revise the modules’ concept maps during the coming months. We agreed with Erika Hoca on a number of improvements on the DATTL website to make it more user-friendly. We will add a thumbnail ‘How to’ to tell users how to use the site; and one thumbnail ‘Site map’ with a summary of the modules’ projects; another new thumbnail will give direct access to the list of multimedia, so that learners who want to use only those tools for their language development could do it.

General Events

The Deep Approach to Language Teaching and Learning has been presented around South-East China by François Hoca in March of 2011, at Shanghai Normal University, Zhejiang University, Zhejiang Normal University, Nanjing University of Aeronautics (Neihang). See: <http://flc.zjnu.edu.cn/show.aspx?id=3661&cid=172>



François Victor Tochon is giving an ongoing Spring graduate course on the deep approach to 14 language teaching assistants of the College of Letters & Science of the University of Wisconsin—Madison in various languages (Chinese, French, Hindi, Hmong, Japanese, Turkish, Russian, Spanish, Urdu) and two middle school teachers of French. The course is partly online. It makes it possible in the near future to organize distance teacher training in the deep approach.

DATTL Forum: We regularly add to the database of the asynchronous discussion list in our forum. Currently, 30 forum members have received a password. If you forgot your password, feel free to ask François Hoca: ftochon@education.wisc.edu

We cannot emphasize enough how important is your feedback to improve the instructional materials in this project, as well as increasing the Q&As (Questions and Answers) that will be soon available online. Please visit the forum and enter your experiences!

A 4-hour pre-conference workshop on the deep approach has been organized by the National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages (NCOLCTL) on April 7, 2011 with a one-page summary in the Conference guide (p. 14). The organizers told us that it was the most attended of the 4 pre-conference workshops, with 24 participants during the first two hours and, after a 30-minute break, 38 participants popped up! Among the participants, Funda Derin, Turkish instructor at UW, reported anecdotes of successful teaching with the deep approach.



Funda Derin, Turkish Instructor, UW-Madison

The theory of the deep approach: The conceptual aspects of the deep approach and its fundamentals, as developed by François Victor Tochon, are being translated into Turkish by Esra Alagöz and Yasin Tunç. The translation will be revised by Dr. Celile Eren Ökten and Dr. Abdullah Cendel Karaman during the summer and should be available next fall.

Interview with Dr. Tochon

Interview with François Victor Tochon by graduate students in his course

Q: You seem to adopt a very different stand than earlier trends, which proposed controlled environments for controlled learning.

Indeed. There is a strong rationale for changing old patterns, which arises from current research in Second Language Acquisition and World Language Education. The main issue with controlled environments is that learners learn how to do well with what they are being taught through repeated controls. However, outside of this controlled environment, they are lost. They do not develop genuine proficiency. Proficiency is what the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) evaluates: it is the spontaneous expression of communication in an uncontrolled environment. Instruction should unfold language creativity in unpredictable avenues. Rather than planning 'perfect' sequences in an idealized environment, we opted for more natural (maybe more profuse and somewhat messy) contexts and semiotic niches that stimulate creativity, idiosyncratic progressions, and proficiency. Since this new environment with thematic units, modules, films, multimedia, power points, grammar narratives and transcriptions is more complex, feedback will be key in studying how learners behave with the materials, what their choices are, what complements are needed to the materials. Our open forum and discussion list will help improve the instructional material with the feedback we receive.

Q: What are the benchmarks for teacher planning?

Help students create educative projects following these benchmarks:

1. **Relevance:** The one best way (or the best and only way) does not exist. The teacher must be less concerned with evidence of certainties than with the relevance of a path of activity that can be adapted to real circumstances.
2. **Holism:** The segmentation of teaching leads to reductionism and may be an obstacle to proficiency. Understanding the parts does not necessarily entail the functioning of the whole. The object of learning is in dynamic interaction with a context, a situation, a speech community.
3. **Direction:** Every student is unique and different. How can one prejudge classroom activities by a single gradation? Better to emphasize an orientation of work, and to accept a variety of possible goals.
4. **Connectedness:** It is not possible to propose exhaustive plans. The definition and selection of connected units are sufficient for instruction: acknowledging that all representation is one option about reality, not through omission, but deliberately.

DATTL online

We are on facebook as *Deep Approach to Language Learning* ([deep.approach@groups.facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/deep.approach@groups.facebook.com))

Our website: <http://deepapproach.wceruw.org>

Twitter: http://twitter.com/Deep_Approach