Greetings from KOLT, where we are proud to continue hosting, expanding, and improving our support services for students, faculty, and teaching assistants. Since 2010, a wide cross-section of the Koç University community has benefitted from our offerings, and our impact figures reflect our ongoing growth. Our offerings to faculty, students and teaching assistants remain rich and dynamic, including our faculty services, KOLT 500 Teaching Assistants Training program, Tutoring Center, Conversation Circles, and one-on-one academic support services.

We have had great success in increasing the university-wide use of Blackboard (529 courses as of Spring 2019). New digital textbook resources are added every semester, and the platform hosts a steadily increasing number of course videos. In this regard, we are especially keen to support faculty who wish to experiment with recording their lectures even in their office via our user-friendly Panopto software. This semester, for the first time, mid-semester course evaluations were conducted through the Koç University mobile application, which allows students to enter feedback more easily and quickly. Some instructors designated the last ten minutes of class to these evaluations, a strategy that has been shown to increase participation rates on digital course surveys at other institutions. Our internal review services also continue to thrive and expand, and an increasing number of academic units have sought feedback and consultation via our focus group and survey studies, which help departments and degree programs pinpoint areas of strength and improvement. I invite you all to take advantage of our support services in order to contribute to the enhancement of learning and teaching on our campus.
Learning outcomes are measurable or directly observable products or behaviors that demonstrate student learning. When defining learning outcomes:

- First, you need to think about the level of thinking and learning that you wish your students to achieve.

- Look at Bloom’s taxonomy (see the figure below) and set your expectations accordingly. What do you expect your students to be able to do with the knowledge and skills they gain in your course? Imagine the last day of your class and determine your course learning outcomes.

- As a last step, you need to write your wishes and expectations with the help of Bloom’s action verbs. You can find a complete list of these verbs via the following link:

Please remember that a good learning outcome has to be SMART: specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound. Also, writing 4-6 learning outcomes for a 14-week course is enough. Otherwise, assessment becomes fuzzy.


Jessica Shabatura
https://tips.uark.edu/using-blooms-taxonomy/
Let us assume that one of your course learning outcomes is the following:

By completing my course, students will be able to develop a project on...

Developing a project requires a high-level thinking process; thus, you need to focus on improving your students’ analysis, synthesis, and creation skills. In other words, you need to help students develop their higher order thinking skills. Lecturing on its own is not an effective teaching method to improve students’ those skills as it does not require any active involvement and engagement on the part of students. If you wish your students to develop a project but need some suggestions on how to approach such an assignment, please have a look at KOLT’s resources.

KOLT resources to watch:
1. Supporting Critical Thinking Across the Disciplines: Methods for Student-Centered Teaching Presenter: Prof. Chris M. Anson, Director of the Campus Writing and Speaking Program at North Carolina State University
2. Developing Critical Thinking in Productive Language Skills via the Use of Blackboard Technologies Presenter: Özgür Pala, ELC Instructor, Koç University
Click on the link to watch the videos: https://kolt.ku.edu.tr/?page_id=2441&lang=en

By completing my course, students will be able to develop a project on...

Course Design Ideas to help students achieve this outcome:

• **Pre-project session:** Before students start doing their project, you can allocate the last 20 minutes of your class time to leading a pre-project session. You can allow students to sit in their project groups and introduce online mind-mapping tools ([https://www.mindmapping.com/](https://www.mindmapping.com/) or [www.lucidchart.com](http://www.lucidchart.com)) to help them brainstorm ideas in a more structured way. Alternatively, you can use the Blackboard discussion module to help students form groups and start brainstorming to come up with a project idea.

• **On Progress:** Once each group starts working, you can introduce them to online project tools to facilitate and monitor their progress. Tasks can be assigned and a time frame can be set with the help of the online project management tools.

• **Closure:** Through the end of the semester, you can invite KOLT staff to teach your students how to prepare a project poster or video that has academic value and significance.

### Online Project Management Tools

- Bitrix24
- Pivotal Tracker
- Redbooth
- Targetprocess
- Teamweek
- Asana

- Easynote
- Hitask
- KanbanFlow
- Trello
- I done this
The Promise of Python: Sitting Down with Ahmet Uysal and Ipek Köprülülü

What is the KOLT Python Program?

The KOLT Python Program is a 12-week program that aims to teach the basics of computer science to students from nontechnical majors with no prior programming experience using Python. The curriculum covers fundamental Python and computer science topics, but we focus primarily on real-world applications of Python as determined by student interests by taking advantage of powerful Python libraries. This is our first semester, and currently, we are teaching Python to 11 undergraduate and 10 graduate students from different majors.

What were the reasons for starting this program?

Last semester, VPAA Barış Tan and KOLT offered us to design and deliver a certificate program on Python. Both of us were section leaders for COMP 130, our university’s introductory programming course, for three semesters. Our two key responsibilities were leading problem-solving sessions and closely observing students’ level of learning by grading their homework assignments and providing personal feedback. During this time, we worked with many students from other majors and departments who were taking the course as a free elective, and we noticed that many of them were struggling to understand the topics. We got in touch with them to solicit feedback about their COMP 130 experiences with the goal of designing an alternative that would be more geared towards their needs. Based on this student feedback, and with the assistance of KOLT staff and Computer Engineering professors, we developed and launched the KOLT Python Certificate program.

Is this a one-time program?

No, the program received more attention than we could ever have imagined, and we plan to continue. We received close to 300 applications for the program, in which students spent 50 minutes on average explaining why they wanted to participate. Unfortunately, our team only consisted of two people and we could not accept more participants. We want to turn this program into a tradition where students from different majors collaborate, share, and work together to create. Please do not hesitate to apply next semester if you are up for the challenge.

“Student Experiences

The KOLT Python course has been very useful for me so far. I studied Archaeology for my undergraduate and graduate studies, and my hope is that with the content of this course, I can make use of Python programming more regularly. The instructors are great, they make learning Python understandable, respond quickly to questions and assist whenever needed.

Petrus Johannes Gerrits, Archeology PhD Candidate

I am very interested in programming, and this program is great for me because it is like a serious course, but it is fun and without the stress of exams. Our instructors are very nice and helpful, and I really love the assignments that they prepare. Time passes quickly when I try doing them. I would love it if there were more programs like this about other subjects that I am interested in.

Misra Taşı, Freshman, Medicine
What are the key elements of a successful and effective online course and what challenges can teachers face while building it?

Interacting with students and observing their responses in class can always help lecturers improve their teaching methods. However, when lectures are recorded and taught online we lose the possibility to learn from our students. For this reason, I believe that blended learning is a more effective teaching method whereby we can interact with students during discussion sessions.

What made you want to create an online course?

Business Law 202 is a compulsory course for business administration students. However, it is the only introductory law course that is open to all students of the university. Over 300 students enrol in the course annually. The course covers several fundamental areas of law. Because of the time constraints, when BLAW 202 was taught as a regular lecture course, it was often not possible to teach the basic concepts of law and hold meaningful class discussions in one semester. For this reason, I thought blended teaching would be an excellent opportunity to allow students to learn the basic concepts and theoretical framework in online lectures and to develop their analytical skills in class discussion.

Where and how do you think online/blended learning will evolve over the next decade?

I believe that some online videos may be integrated into all courses. However, for courses with a small number of students, the traditional in-class teaching methods are better suited. In such classes, it is possible to maximise interaction between the students. For courses with a large number of students, it is usually difficult to combine lectures with student participation. In such cases, blended learning provides an excellent method for separating lectures from class discussions. Lecturers can then shoot as many lecture videos as they wish and focus on interactive teaching in the weekly time allocated to the course. This is an important gain in terms of time management. We must also recognise that students have an increasingly better grasp of digital tools and feel at ease in digital environments. I believe that, as lecturers, we must also adapt to this process and integrate digital tools into our teaching methods.
Crossover Media

Podcasts and Digital Magazines to Remind You Why You LOVE Your Subject

Struggling to motivate yourself and your students in the middle of a cold, rainy spring? Spark students’ curiosity by pointing them towards crossover media that blend scholarly rigor with journalistic accessibility.

Aeon
A digital magazine publishing longform essays from scholars on unusual, provocative, and creative topics across an impressive range of disciplines, from archaeology to the history of technology, from Buddhism to bioethics. Editorial standards are high, and the writing is lively.

Nautilus
An online magazine about science...and everything else. Nautilus adopts an interdisciplinary lens to explore how science impacts all areas of our lives. A recent issue explored various approaches to the nature of time. They also publish excerpts of new books in cooperation with MIT Press.

Longform
A podcast featuring fascinating and candid discussions with some of the world’s best working journalists. Guests discuss their profession and craft, their latest work and their paths into journalism, what keeps them writing and reporting, and the obsessions to which they return time and again.

Quanta
Blends meticulous reporting with great storytelling to provide high-quality, public service journalism focused on making the latest research in mathematics and the sciences engaging and accessible. Recent posts explore an algorithm that governs how army ants cooperate to build bridges with their bodies, and how the Frauchiger-Renner thought experiment is shaking up quantum theory.

Stanford Law's Center for Internet and Society
In-depth discussions of the most urgent ethical and social issues of the internet age. This event podcast features scholars, programmers, policymakers, lawyers, security researchers, and others.

The Times Literary Supplement (TLS)
The TLS is not your grandmother’s weekly. The venerable old magazine has been revived and revamped for the 21st century by an energetic and inquiring new editor-in-chief. Book reviews and essays across a range of disciplines, plus your weekly dose of Cambridge classics don / pop culture icon Mary Beard.

In his weekly circles, Avni employs a “multilayered strategy” to help students approach, engage with, and master the text, which is typically “a very nicely chosen [article] from a news agency like CNN or BBC,” with accompanying questions. First, he asks students to skim the text and circle words they don’t recognize. Then, as a group, they search for and define new and unknown words. After all unfamiliar words and phrases have been clarified, they’ll read out loud as a group. “If there are any mispronunciations, I’ll just kindly chime in, very quietly, and let them know how it’s pronounced,” notes Avni. “Once we’re done reading, I’ll ask them what they thought about it. And then I ask them to refer to the text to answer the questions.” Avni finds his work with the students deeply gratifying. “What I love most, especially from ELC students, is seeing the joy on their faces when they pass their comprehension examinations, “ he says. “You feel like you somehow had a part in that. Or they at least allow you to be a part of [their success] by saying ‘Thank you so much,’ or ‘Look what I did!’”

KOLT’s Reading and Writing Circles are open to students of all levels and are valuable for graduate researchers struggling to manage their reading load or preparing to publish.

This month, we sat down with one of our veteran leaders, Avni Değirmenci, to learn more about his experiences as a Reading and Writing Circle leader at KOLT. Before coming to Turkey for graduate study, Avni taught high school in New York City for five years and received a master’s degree in history from CUNY’s (City University of New York) Queens College. Currently, he offers an upper intermediate circle twice a week, on Monday and Wednesday evenings. His sessions can include up to six students on any given night, but “one-on-ones are also wonderful,” he says. “Students really feel like they’re getting the private tutoring experience.” English reading and writing skills are crucial for all Koç University students. However, KOLT’s circles are just as valuable for graduate students, who, Avni notes, have publishing on their minds and need to read through extensive scholarly research quickly and efficiently.

In his weekly circles, Avni employs a “multilayered strategy” to help students approach, engage with, and master the text, which is typically “a very nicely chosen [article] from a news agency like CNN or BBC,” with accompanying questions. First, he asks students to skim the text and circle words they don’t recognize. Then, as a group, they search for and define new and unknown words. After all unfamiliar words and phrases have been clarified, they’ll read out loud as a group. “If there are any mispronunciations, I’ll just kindly chime in, very quietly, and let them know how it’s pronounced,” notes Avni. “Once we’re done reading, I’ll ask them what they thought about it. And then I ask them to refer to the text to answer the questions.” Avni finds his work with the students deeply gratifying. “What I love most, especially from ELC students, is seeing the joy on their faces when they pass their comprehension examinations,” he says. “You feel like you somehow had a part in that. Or they at least allow you to be a part of [their success] by saying ‘Thank you so much,’ or ‘Look what I did!’"
ELC has started using Blackboard as of Summer 2018 term. Since then, could you please tell us how have you used Blackboard in ELC courses?

I think it would not be an exaggeration to state that the ELC is the most intensive user of the Blackboard course management system. For departments, it is generally up to the lecturers/professors how they want to employ Blackboard while delivering their courses, assigning homework, announcing grades, etc.

In contrast, the ELC is the first institution through which new students get to know Koc University. Thus, the ELC carries a responsibility to not only introduce the Blackboard system to students but also make this first experience with a new system a successful and effective one. Therefore, we use Blackboard in numerous different ways from posting course-related announcements to sending emails to posting grades to providing detailed feedback through rubrics and other feedback tools. We generally put all course-related material on Blackboard courses even before a semester starts. The ELC has about 50 instructors, hundreds of courses and hundreds of students, which make pre-planning and standardization top priorities of our institution. Because we have about 5-15 different classes of the same level and same course (for example, 5 different classes of Upper-Intermediate level Reading and Writing course), the course-copy process may take some time.

Thanks to meticulous pre-planning and close attention to standardization of tabs, rubrics, documents to be posted, etc. we have not encountered any major issues so far.

What are the benefits of using Blackboard in the courses?

Blackboard is a user-friendly platform that provides many tools that English teachers need. With Blackboard, it is possible to provide feedback not just on PDF files but also on word documents as well. What’s more, audio and video feedback is also possible. In terms of access time, I think Blackboard is advantageous for students, too, because it takes less time to reach a certain assignment, document or folder compared to other methods. Instead of nesting different folders and files under one main folder, we try to feature tabs for important assignments/documents/tools on our homepage of each course. This way, students can reach whatever they need with a just a few clicks.

In terms of the ELC as an institution, I believe Blackboard makes it easy to standardize the way we present and deliver our courses, which is very important for national/international accreditation processes.

What kind of Blackboard tools do you use in your courses? For what purposes? What are the benefits of these tools for both students and instructors?

We use several tools depending on the nature of the course and the assignments. For example, for Listening and Speaking courses, the Discussion Board proves to be a valuable tool for getting students to express their opinions and provide reasons/justifications for what they say. Similarly, for such classes, it is very easy to post student-created videos on Panopto. For other courses, we also use timed multiple choice tests/quizzes, which is a great way to assess student learning, minimize cheating and cut down on tests/quizzes marking time.

There are of course tools that all courses use universally such as the Qwickly Attendance, Email, Announcement, Grades, etc. Additionally, the rubric tool is considerably useful in providing standardized feedback to students across different classes. Along similar lines, these tools make it easy for students to interact with their classmates and the teacher and monitor their progress whenever and wherever they want.

What advice would you give other instructors who use/want to use Blackboard?

I would advise them to have a thorough understanding of all the tools and functionalities before they decide how and when to utilize Blackboard. With innovative uses such as student-created video or audio responses, incorporation of critical thinking activities/tests, or Flipped learning practices, both instructors and students can make the best use of Blackboard.
An Immediate Response System can be defined as any system in which the instructor or presenter can poll participants and gather responses in real time during a class or presentation. Many platforms offer a variety of question types and other functions. Here are three exemplary platforms to help you get started.

**Response Systems & Advantages**

Online solutions for your classes

### Online Immediate Response Systems

- **TurningPoint**
  - PowerPoint integrated
  - Supports images/audio/video
  - Interactive presentations
  - 9 question types

- **Kahoot!**
  - Platform independent
  - Game-based learning
  - Competition-oriented
  - Free

- **Poll Everywhere**
  - Both platform independent & PowerPoint integrated
  - Supports images
  - 8 question types
  - Free up to 40 students

### Learning Management System (LMS) Test Tool

A learning management system (LMS) is a software package that enables the management and delivery of learning content and resources to students.

- **Blackboard**
  - Used university-wide
  - Easy to track the progress of individual students over time
  - Supports images/audio/video
  - 17 question types
  - Multiple Choice
  - Multiple Answer
  - Short Answer
  - True/False
  - Calculated Numeric
  - Essay
  - Opinion Scale/Likert
  - Ordering
  - Fill In Multiple Blanks

- **Question Type: Hot Spot**
  - Click on the isovolumetric process on PV diagram.

- **Question Type: Jumbled Sentence**
  - The standard SI unit of power is the
  - Select the appropriate option:
  - joule
  - ampere
  - watt
  - calorie

- **Selected Coordinates**
  - Clear
One of the recipients of the Spring 2019 grant proposed shifting to a student-centred learning framework by incorporating digital humanities tools into their course in order to enhance student research. Another recipient proposed the creation of a flipped classroom environment and expanded opportunities for student feedback and input. Of the five grant recipients in Fall 2018, two focused on course design, one proposed one of the world’s first design-thinking courses, and the other two recipients sought to integrate active learning strategies, such as reciprocal learning strategy and problem-based teaching sessions, into their teaching plans.

TIG aims to bolster faculty members who are enthusiastic about discovering new teaching methods and new ways to bring fresh, effective learning experiences to their students. The primary goal of this grant is to enhance student learning by supporting faculty as they experiment with course structure and strategy in order to further integrate students into the collaborative project of knowledge acquisition and mastery, and ultimately, to challenge the traditional positions of instructor and learner in the learning process.

KOLT’s Teaching Innovation Grant (TIG) is given to faculty members who would like to enhance the teaching and learning strategies employed in their classroom and to expand interaction-based learning.

Teaching Innovation Grant (TIG)

KOLT’s Teaching Innovation Grant (TIG) is given to faculty members who would like to enhance the teaching and learning strategies employed in their classroom, and, in particular, to expand interaction-based learning. Up to this point, TIG has been primarily awarded to faculty members who would like to prepare an online course, augment their course design with educational technologies, integrate “flipped classroom” design into their course to promote active learning and critical thinking, or enhance their curriculum and to those who work on innovative responses to issues raised by students via the mid-semester course evaluation.

94 different proposals have received TIG funding since Fall 2010. Each of the five courses which received a grant in Spring 2019 proposed enhancements to students’ active learning.
With the kind support of KOL T, we developed a small library in these rooms, which is composed of guides on history taking, physical examination, and medical procedures. With these guides, our students now have the chance to practice and improve their clinical skills with a reciprocal learning strategy. The clinical skills books were designed in a student-to-student guide format and allow students to practice history taking via peer-practice, in which one student follows specific instructions to play the role of the patient, and the other student plays the role of the physician taking the medical history.

She states that by putting attention on practice as much as theory and establishing clinical skills in lab activities, they have been able to increase students’ confidence in history taking and communicating with the patient. She also highlights that student feedback reflects the success of these active learning practices. Students state that they feel comfortable and confident in their communication with the patients after having had the chance to practice clinical skills lab prior to being in the field. She has found that students are more eager to learn in an active learning environment and are more cooperative throughout the learning process as they work together to perform specific tasks. She hopes to increase students’ active learning experiences by allowing more space for practical courses in the curriculum and shifting theoretical courses from lectures into panels.

An Interview with Gülnihal Özcan (Fall 2018 TIG Recipient)

Gülnihal Özcan and Arzu Ruacan from School of Medicine received KOLT Teaching Innovation Grant in Fall 2018 for their Clinical Skills Lab Program. Their main aim was to simulate patient-doctor experience in a lab environment. They were motivated by the lack of opportunities for students to gain face-to-face experience with patients prior to their fourth year in the School of Medicine. She describes the impact of the grant on their course as follows:

“To build a bridge between basic and clinical sciences in medical education, we have incorporated a clinical skills program into the Year 3 curriculum. In the context of the program, we aimed to equip our students with the knowledge and skills that are essential to communicating with the patients, taking medical histories, performing physical examinations and medical procedures such as blood sampling, injection and suturing. For this purpose, two different rooms in the School of Medicine at the Rumelifeneri Campus were organized as clinical skills labs, which have an examination bed, physician’s desk, models for physical examination, and a video recording system that records the physician-simulated patient encounters. In these rooms, with the help of simulated patients, clinicians give lectures on the process of taking patient histories and on giving physical examinations. The students have the chance to practice the examination of specific organs and medical procedures on models. With the kind support of KOLT, we developed a small library in these rooms, which is composed of guides on history taking, physical examination, and medical procedures. With these guides, our students now have the chance to practice and improve their clinical skills with a reciprocal learning strategy. The clinical skills books were designed in a student-to-student guide format and allow students to practice history taking via peer-practice, in which one student follows specific instructions to play the role of the patient, and the other student plays the role of the physician taking the medical history.”

She states that by putting attention on practice as much as theory and establishing clinical skills in lab activities, they have been able to increase students’ confidence in history taking and communicating with the patient. She also highlights that student feedback reflects the success of these active learning practices. Students state that they feel comfortable and confident in their communication with the patients after having had the chance to practice clinical skills lab prior to being in the field. She has found that students are more eager to learn in an active learning environment and are more cooperative throughout the learning process as they work together to perform specific tasks. She hopes to increase students’ active learning experiences by allowing more space for practical courses in the curriculum and shifting theoretical courses from lectures into panels.
Led by European University Association, the European Forum for Enhanced Collaboration in Teaching project aims to revitalize the education role of universities in Europe. The project aimed to identify good practices and develop new and innovative approaches, and support institutions in the enhancement of learning and teaching. The project released the following 10 Principles:

1. The higher education learning experience nurtures and enables the development of learners as active and responsible citizens, critical thinkers, problem solvers, equipped for life-long learning.
2. Learning and teaching is learner-centered.
3. Commitment to learning and teaching is integral to purpose, mission and strategy of the university.
4. Institutional leadership actively promotes and enables the advancement of learning and teaching.
5. Learning and teaching is a collaborative and collegial process involving collaboration across the university and with the wider community.
6. Learning, teaching and research are interconnected and mutually enriching.
7. Teaching is core to academic practice and respected as scholarly and professional.
8. The university community actively explores and cherishes a variety of approaches to learning and teaching that respect a diversity of learners, stakeholders and disciplines.
9. Sustainable resources and structures are required to support and enable learning and teaching enhancement.
10. Institutional quality assurance (QA) for learning and teaching aims at enhancement, and is a shared responsibility of staff and students.

Then, EUA published a call for participation to choose universities to pilot the ten principles. In addition to Koç University, the following 11 universities were selected to pilot the 10 principles and develop a support package/toolkit for European universities to improve teaching and learning:

1. Instituto Superior Tecnico, University of Lisbon, Portugal  
2. KU Leuven, Belgium  
3. University Mediterranea Reggio Calabria, Italy  
4. Ulster University United Kingdom  
5. University of Agder, Norway  
6. University of Exeter, United Kingdom  
7. University of Freiburg, Germany  
8. University of Hamburg, Germany  
9. University Pompeu Fabra – Barcelona, Spain  
10. University of Eastern Finland, Finland  
11. Vienna University of Economics and Business (WU Wien), Austria

KOLT has been working with these ten principles since 2018. We have integrated the principles into our internal review process to be able to make a comprehensive mapping of our core activities and assessment of their effectiveness. We will keep you posted about our progress with these ten principles.
Koç University Office of Learning and Teaching (KOLT) was established in November 2009, becoming the first office of its kind in Turkey. The mission of KOLT is to lead and support continual development of learning and teaching at Koç University.

Murat SÖZER
Assoc. Prof., Director
Office: LIB-Z06-C
Phone: 1582
Email: msozer@ku.edu.tr

Zuhal ZEYBEKOĞLU
Dr., Manager
Office: LIB-Z06-A
Phone: 1468
Email: zzeybekoglu@ku.edu.tr

Sarah Rachel AMAR
Training Assistant Specialist
Office: LIB-Z06-H
Phone: 1416
Email: samar@ku.edu.tr

A. Sedef DÖNMEZ
Training Assistant Specialist
Office: LIB-Z06-H
Phone: 1755
Email: adonmez@ku.edu.tr

S. Deniz UZUNOSMANOĞLU
Educational Technologist
Office: LIB-Z06M
Phone: 0936
Email: suzunosmanoglu@ku.edu.tr

Seda AKGÜL
Educational Technologist
Office: LIB-Z06M
Phone: 1059
Email: sakgul@ku.edu.tr

Ayhan ÇERÇİ
Educational Technologist
Office: LIB-Z06M
Phone: 3741
Email: acerci@ku.edu.tr

Abdülmenaf GÜLTEPE
Office Support Personnel
Office: LIB-Z06
Phone: 1296
Email: agultepe@ku.edu.tr