

**Teaching Online: Tools and techniques, options and opportunities**

Nicky Hockly with Lindsay Clandfield

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112 pages

*Teaching Online: Tools and techniques, options and opportunities* is a most welcome addition to the emerging resources for language teachers who are either currently engaged with teaching online or thinking about getting involved. For the latter group, co-author Nicky Hockly attests on the Delta Publishing website (<http://www.deltapublishing.co.uk/titles/methodology/teaching-online>) that this is "the book that I would have liked to have had when I started teaching online", which she did as long ago as 1997.

Nicky Hockly and Lindsay Clandfield have presented us with a manageable handbook of around 100 pages, covering, as the title suggests, four main areas: 1) tools teachers can use, such as hardware, software, and liveware; 2) practical activities and instructions on how to run them; 3) options for varying these techniques; and 4) opportunities for teachers to harness the power of the internet for professional development.

The book itself is easily recognised as a member of the wonderful *Delta Teacher Development Series*, divided clearly into sections. Part A deals with background and current issues and provides a selection of course site tools which the authors themselves have used. A somewhat disappointing omission in this section is an overview (however brief) of theory that might underpin effective language learning and teaching online. While the authors confidently support their claims with reference to their own extensive experience, the occasional reference beyond this would enliven the reader's experience with this section.

What follows is the heavyweight contender, making up half of the book and comprising suites of useful, creative activities for getting the course started online, teaching the four skills (integrated as reading/writing and listening/speaking), teaching knowledge about language and evaluation of that knowledge, and a final suite of closing activities. This way of organising Part B is a boon for busy teachers looking for a resource book that can be easily skimmed using the clear signposts of theme/topic, language or skill area, then tools and techniques required. Having said that, the book is more than a quick grab resource book, and the layout lends itself well to teachers wanting a resource that will help them design and structure an online course. With all suggested plans there are options, which, as mentioned earlier, are given in a "variation" section. It might also have been worthwhile to note the critical components of each activity and provide a prompt for teachers to reflect on their implementation with respect to these critical components, thereby building reflective practice into each activity.

Part C presents opportunities for teachers to build their own programme of professional development online. For many language teachers, especially those new to the profession (many of whom have been successful in previous careers), the idea of online professional activity being condoned by programme managers is novel, and this section does a sound job of adding the *gravitas* needed for teachers, administrators, and managers to quite easily grasp the perceived benefits. Perhaps the biggest challenge of getting teachers online is lack of experience and confidence; therefore, a suggestion for the authors and publisher is to combine this section with an online resource or provide explicit links to existing sites, such as <http://aplanet-project.org>

Overall, *Teaching Online: Tools and techniques, options and opportunities* is a resource that all language teachers involved now or in the future with online language teaching should have in their professional library. It is a good complement to the more theory and research-driven books, and lives up to the promise of being a great resource to get teachers started in this area.

Phil Chappell

