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Review of:

Teaching Online by Nicky Hockly with Lindsay Clandfield, Delta Publishing



Reviewed by Philip Kerr

Unsurprisingly, recent years have seen a spate of books for English language teachers that look at technological aspects of teaching and learning. These include the excellent *How to Teach English with Technology* (by Gavin Dudeney & Nicky Hockly), *Blended Learning* (by Pete Sharma & Barney Barrett), and *The Internet and the Language Classroom 2nd edition* (by Gavin Dudeney).

Teaching Online: Tools and Techniques is a very welcome addition to this literature. It offers practical guidance to language teachers who are working online, and, to my knowledge, there is no other similar book that is currently available. It is divided into three sections:

- A: A brief overview of the issues involved in online language teaching, followed by an annotated list of available online software (with URLs) that could be used by language teachers.
- B: Over 50 pages of practical activities, lesson plans and suggested variations, using online resources, that are divided into (1) introductory activities for the start of a course, (2) reading and writing activities, (3) listening and speaking activities, (4) language focus and evaluation activities, (5) activities for the end of a course.
- C: 20 pages of suggestions for online teacher development.

The focus throughout is on helping teachers to acquire practical skills. Anyone interested in a more developed theoretical framework should turn to *Online Communication in Language Learning and Teaching* and *Network-based Language Teaching: Concepts and Practice* (details can be found in the References section below).

For most users of this book (as with most teacher resource books), I imagine that it is the middle section – the bank of practical activities – that will prove most popular and useful.

Some of these are online variations of well-known classroom activities (e.g. 'find-someone-who', jigsaw reading, mindmapping or dictogloss); others will be less familiar (e.g. those using wikis). All are lively, clearly presented and invite experimentation. As a reader, I would have liked to see more concrete examples of these tasks, and the book cries out for a supporting website. However, examples of many activities can be found at Nicky Hockly's blog 'E-Moderation Station' (<http://www.emoderationskills.com/>).

The lack of an accompanying online component to this book is also regrettable when it comes to the part of the first section which deals with course planning. Good sample timetables for different combinations of f2f and online courses are offered, but these are only partial (i.e. two weeks) and neophytes, like myself, would appreciate much more.

My reservations about the need for online support aside, *Teaching Online* is an excellent introduction to its topic area. It is very well designed and edited, and is a powerful addition to the ever-improving 'Teacher Development Series' from DELTA publishing. It is likely to be a strong contender for the various ELT book prizes (e.g. the Ben Warren-International House prize or the ESU Duke of Edinburgh prize). Extracts from the book can be downloaded at the publisher's website <http://www.deltapublishing.co.uk/titles/methodology/teaching-online> .

References

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