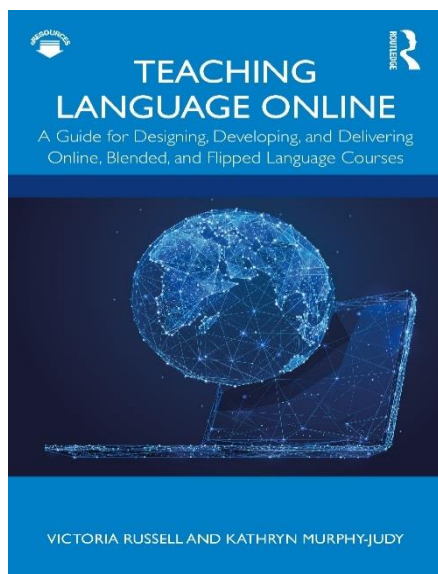




Book Review



Teaching Language Online: A Guide for Designing, Developing, and Delivering Online, Blended, and Flipped Language Courses, by Victoria Russell, Kathryn Murphy-Judy, London, Routledge., 2021, 328 pp., £32.00 (Hardcover), ISBN 9781138387003

Recently, the world has undergone unprecedented technological changes. So has language education (Aysu & Sanli, 2021). These changes have transformed how language is taught and learned across the globe. As a result, second and foreign language teaching must keep pace with this evolution. One guideline that can help language teachers adapt to new circumstances is the book *Teaching Language Online: A Guide for Designing, Developing, and Delivering Online, Blended, and Flipped Language Courses* authored by Victoria Russell and Kathryn Murphy-Judy, who are leaders in online teaching and learning pedagogies. The book provides detailed guidelines for

educators to develop and deliver online language courses for learners with different language levels and backgrounds. It also includes clear and easy-to-follow guidelines for designing blended or flipped language courses, which cover the designing, delivering, and evaluating processes, providing valuable resources for front-line teachers interested in online teaching and learning.

The book consists of five chapters, each of which explains a significant aspect of online language teaching and learning including the basic components of online course design, the strengths and weaknesses of online language instruction, the importance of online language teaching, online professional development, and a review of the current literature regarding distance learning pedagogy. Each topic is introduced thoughtfully and linked to an adequate literature review. At the end of each chapter, there are key takeaway summaries, discussion questions, and suggestions for further reading.

The first chapter explores the basics of designing online courses. It provides a detailed analysis of all components of an online course, including but not limited to context, technology used, learners, content, instruction, and evaluation. The chapter also takes readers through each phase of the design process. For example, the author discusses different online teaching models such as Google Open, Mobile platform, backward design, and the strengths and weaknesses of each design. Also, the chapter includes an extensive and detailed review of the procedures involved in designing tools to assess online learning outcomes and how to adapt online courses to match students' needs and interests. References about the basics of designing online courses are provided at the end.

The second chapter reviews the practical side of online teaching. It starts with a deep analysis of how to develop different aspects of online courses such as the learner, the learning management system, the course structure, and interactive course activities. Each of these aspects is explained in sufficient detail to leave the reader with a clear picture of a development phase. The chapter also explores different types of online course development tools, and provides numerous ideas for developing material (e.g., video,



multimedia, media companies, textbooks) for online courses. The chapter ends with thought-provoking discussion questions about how to develop an online course, which challenge the reader's understandings of each component of the development phase.

The third chapter could be considered as the heart of the book as it raises a critical question of "what makes online teaching special?". To answer it, the authors explored core theories and practices of different types of teaching and learning including online, blended, and flipped learning. This exploration helps increase the reader's understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of each type. Another significant topic that the chapter touched upon is how the Communicative Language Teaching Approach fits the online, blended, and flipped learning environments. Moreover, with guidance and clear examples, the chapter depicts the teaching practices and the materials used in an effective online course and how to create a meaningful context appropriate for learners with different cultural backgrounds. As an example, the authors discuss the importance of using authentic materials to enhance and develop the learning environment.

The fourth chapter focuses on language teachers' professional development on online teaching. It offers a guideline for language teachers and researchers to locate professional development opportunities to increase their understanding of online course design. Also provided are valuable information about how to design professional development sessions, workshops, and webinars, as well as how to get connected with others and become involved in professional organizations and conferences. What's more, readers are directed to valuable materials, resources, and activities designed by Language Resource Centers.

The final chapter examines relevant research on online language teaching. It includes an extensive review of different aspects of online teaching, such as online teacher and learner satisfaction, class size, language learner anxiety, learner connectedness, and language assessment. The chapter also investigates recent studies on best practices in online teaching. This review helps readers form a clear picture of the current literature around online teaching in terms of what works and what doesn't.

Overall, the book is an informative and beneficial resource for understanding online teaching and learning of second and foreign languages. It is a well-developed guide for both new and veteran language teachers and researchers, taking them through each step of designing, developing, and delivering online courses. The authors succeeded in merging theoretical perspectives with concrete practices. In other words, the book links online teaching to empirical research, which increases the validity and credibility of each topic discussed. I highly recommend this book for both new and veteran faculty who are teaching or about to teach online courses. The book will equip them with both theoretical knowledge and practical skills needed to design, develop, and deliver effective online course. Today's language teaching and learning develops so rapidly; it is important to keep up with these changes. Resources such as the book under review, which "cater to the needs of students and teachers" (Aysu & Sanl, 2021, p.124), are invaluable in shaping our understanding of online teaching pedagogy. Such understanding is crucial for us to evaluate and select various online language learning platforms, digital applications and online teaching and learning tools.

Despite its merits, the book has left some important questions unanswered. For instance, it does not discuss the potential effects or consequences stemming out of replacing traditional teaching with online or hybrid language teaching. It is this reviewer's opinion that it is necessary to discuss some of the drawbacks and issues associated with online teaching and learning that are often encountered by teachers and learners in online courses. These issues include but not limited to the difficulty in providing and receiving feedback, limited classroom interactions, and lowered learning motivation (Son, 2018). Discussing these issues is important as it would raise questions about how to design and implement online courses to avoid the problems that prevent online teaching and learning from achieving its full potential. Teaching language online is likely to become unavoidable and necessary in our post-pandemic world. It is, therefore, crucial that researchers shall discuss, debate and come up with short and long-term strategies to address the remaining issues and problems.

References

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