

Book Review

Engaging Online Language Learners: A practical guide

Reviewed by Holly Satterfield, Tokyo International University

Pawan, F., Daley, S., Kou, X., & Bonk, C. J. (2022). Engaging online language learners: A practical guide. TESOL Press

Editors' Note: ORTESOL would like to thank TESOL Press for providing this book free of charge.

How instructors design their curriculum has changed greatly due to the pandemic. While online instruction has been available for years, it has not been the mainstream medium of instruction. Many current instructors did not have experience with online teaching practices before classrooms were rushed online and years after the beginning of the pandemic, online instruction is still common. A Review Of Engaging Online Language Learners - A Practical Guide helps bridge the gap for instructors looking to develop their professional skills in a new age of online teaching.

The book is divided into three sections: The Whys of Engaging Students in Online Teaching, The Whys to Engage Online Language Learners, and The Next Steps to Sustain Online Teaching Expertise. With a total of ten chapters, important points for topics such as teaching methodology, classroom practice, and future development in online instruction are highlighted. In the preface, Pawan et al. describes how emergency remote teaching left many teachers and students with uncertainty for their professional and academic lives. Each chapter is briefly summarized with the important themes highlighted. This is followed by online resource information and references for further study.

In part I, Vygotskyian research-based information for teaching frameworks and class implementation methods are provided. Current trends in education are explained alongside how online instruction has an influence on current learners and instructors. Including frameworks for principles in online learning is essential for instructors to consider their own teaching style and how it transfers to an online platform. Motivation is a common theme throughout part I and utilizing various teaching approaches to support students needs is essential to consider in order to maintain student motivation.

Online resources and teaching approaches for educational purposes are included along with a description of its uses. For instructors transitioning to an online platform, taking advantage of the range of online language learning material available helps navigate different educational needs. Part I describes some of these challenges, summarizes current trends in education, and provides appropriate online resources for different trends.

Principles in online instruction provide educators with frameworks for curriculum development. Specific principles introduced and expanded on in part II include the community of inquiry (CoI) framework and the TEC-VARIETY framework. Considering these frameworks, classroom activity approaches are introduced to engage students in a variety of tasks focusing on language use and fluency. One approach alone is not the key to student motivation. Allowing students to partake in different approaches keeps classroom engagement diverse.

A developed list of activities stemming from the principles established in the beginning of part II are available along with detailed descriptions of purpose, methodology, age range, and scaffolding needs. These activities are all created with an online classroom setting in mind and include online programs and resources that may be used. Using previous knowledge or instructional guidance provided in previous chapters, the activities listed may be adapted for different classroom needs.

Online instruction is an effective way of learning, especially so when instructors and education administrators have knowledge in online instructional practices. Part III shows the importance of understanding online instructional practices and how they are applied to the classroom. A strong point of online instruction is the ability to view lessons (if recorded) and material again to reflect on educational professionalism, content, and development. Taking advantage of these features is beneficial for instructors and administration in the area of professional development.

Engaging Online Learners provides instructors with a wide range of topics backed by research in how to improve the online learning experience. While a detailed guide, a previous knowledge of teaching methodology and research themes is highly recommended for comprehension without further research necessary. Online learning is here to stay and developing the skills to facilitate a successful online environment is an inevitable skill needed for the present and the future of education.

Author

Holley Satterfield Holly Satterfield received her M.A. TESOL. in 2021 from Portland State University and is currently an English language instructor at Tokyo International University in Japan. Her academic work focuses on multicultural learning and sociolinguistics.