

A Technophobe's Journey in Times of Corona

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Online Teaser Event

Facing the Challenges of Distance Learning, June 30

My Personal Teaching/Learning Context

- Grammar courses; EAP; General English courses
- Various University Departments
- Ready-made course handouts, so little space for choice or flexibility
- Highly formalised written exams for all students at the same time

My Priorities in the Language Classroom

- Establishing a positive and supportive classroom atmosphere
- Involving students actively in their tasks
- Encouraging cooperation rather than competition
- Creating an environment where students learn from each other, and where ideas and thoughts as well as teacher input are discussed

My Priorities in the Language Classroom

- Reducing students' anxiety and inhibition when speaking in front of others
- Allowing students to take on diverse discourse roles and produce authentic language
- Enhancing students' speaking time through collaboration and groupwork (seating arrangement)

From a Technology-free Classroom to (A)Synchronous Teaching

- ❖ *Tuesday, March 10*: University will close down tomorrow
- ❖ *Friday, March 13*: Staff meeting – Moodle platform to be used
- ❖ Videos; ppt with sound; tasks with keys on moodle
- ❖ *Monday, March 23*: Email from student
- ❖ Trial sessions with a few courses
- ❖ *Monday, March 30*: Start of regular synchronous teaching

Email from Student

Dear Professor Burkert,

You did very well today, especially when taking into consideration that this was one of your first online classes! :D I just wanted to encourage you to go on as you did, because I liked it very much and it helped me more than I thought it would. I am really looking forward to Wednesday 8:15. 🤗
Have a nice day and enjoy life.

Sincerely Yours,
Jakob

Phase 1:

- ❖ Total shock and disbelief
- ❖ How are we going to manage?
- ❖ Asynchronous teaching via moodle: Various technical problems

Bottom line: Many insecurities; feeling that the next few weeks are going to be a disaster

Phase 2:

- ❖ Very intense (a)synchronous teaching (jitsi)
- ❖ Seemingly endless online marking of written homework and practice texts
- ❖ Flood of emails
- ❖ Video conferencing through various tools and whatsapping with colleagues and friends

Bottom line: Feeling totally overwhelmed, esp. timewise; stressed; confirmation that technology not good for body and soul

Phase 3:

- ❖ A routine of (a)synchronous teaching
- ❖ My technophile best friend asks ME for advice and help
- ❖ Interactive online conference: Moderator of break-out room

Bottom line: Appreciation and gratefulness; curiosity to find out more about various technological tools; growing self-confidence

My Present Beliefs about the Use of Technology in the Language Classroom

- Technology is highly beneficial if it fulfills my teaching priorities (e.g. interaction)
- It is important to know about the benefits of various technological tools and how to use them
- It is *not* important to use a huge variety of fancy tools
- It is important to use technology to keep in contact with your students

Questions and Activities for you

- Did you have similar experiences? Please describe the different phases you were going through.
- Has your attitude towards technology changed due to the switch to digital teaching?
- Have you learned new things and are you planning to use some tools also in “normal” teaching?