The
Rough and Ready Guide to
Teaching English Online
in a Time of Coronavirus

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The Rough and Ready Guide to Teaching English Online

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Introduction

This Rough And Ready Guide to Teaching English Online in a Time of Coronavirus is a short guide to the options available, and the issues involved in our situation at the time of writing (April 2020), and a considerations of the sort of decisions which you have to make when faced with the need (or desire) to teach English online.

It is not a step-by-step *how to guide*, though, as different platforms and solutions have different features and affordances: once you have chosen the tool(s) you will use (or had the decision foisted on you) then you will have to learn how to use it or them.

But first a general piece of advice: KISS

Keep It Simple, Stupid

Not that I'm saying you are stupid but we are <u>all</u> stupid at some things; we can't know everything and often simplicity is best.

At least keep in simple at first. Walk before you (and your learners) run.

Learning to teach online in a time of Coronavirus is best seen as a big adventure. Let's approach it with a positive attitude, but at the same time take care not to overload ourselves (and our learners) with work.

Also, remember that while there are lots of things which we can do, we do not necessarily have to do them. KISS.

This guide was written in a hurry. There will be omissions, and maybe even some mistakes. I apologise for those, but I hope the guide will be a useful tool for you going forward.

Good luck!

Rob

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Key Terms and Concepts

First a discussion of some key terms and concepts, and some teaching-learning issues. Note that these are not just limited to online learning.

1.   VLE

VLE stands for Virtual Learning Environment – what can replace the classroom in online teaching. This might be a complete system like Moodle which has a Learning Management System which keeps track of learner attendance and scores, or it might be a simple as Skype – which is basically just a communication tool. VLE's might be synchronous or asynchronous, or a mixture of both.

2.   LMS

A Learning Management System keeps track of the learners registered for your courses, tracks what they do on the course (how long they spend on an activity, for example) and their grades. A LMS might be integrated into a VLE (e.g. Moodle or Blackboard), or might be an independent (basic) system like Google Classroom. It is not necessary to have an LMS to teach online.

3.   Synchronous Learning

Synchronous means 'at the same time', so if you are in a classroom with your learners that is synchronous face-to-face teaching-learning. If you are online talking to a learner through Skype then that is synchronous online teaching-learning. If you are working with a group of learners on a synchronous online learning platform like Zoom, WebRoom, Adobe Connect, or using Big Blue Button on the Moodle platform, then that is synchronous online teaching-learning.

The system can have a range of features – video and audio (obviously, but both of these can be turn off for the learners), the ability to show presentations, use a virtual whiteboard, a chat function (which can also be switched off), and breakout rooms where you can do pair work and group work tasks.

The biggest advantage of synchronous learning is that the learners are there, in the learning space with the teacher (and the other learners), all at the same time. It is most like your normal classroom, and people have made a commitment to 'turn up' for the lesson.

The biggest disadvantage of synchronous learning is that the learners are there, in the learning space with the teacher (and the other learners), all at the same time. This fact creates time and performance pressure, classroom management problems with large groups, and makes you vulnerable to technical problems – like systems failures on the multiple computers and networks involved in the meeting. What do you do if someone cannot join the class (for whatever reason)? Is it being recorded? What are the privacy issues if it is being recorded?

In lecture mode synchronous classes can be for however many people you can get into the room (1000? A million?) but if you want to do effective pair work in breakout rooms with reporting back to the main group then you need to keep the numbers down – ten (5

pairs) would be the largest group I would want to work with, so consider splitting your classes up *if you can*.

4.   Asynchronous Learning

Asynchronous learning is learning which happens at a time (and place) of the learners choice. The learning materials are delivered to the learners (through a myriad of ways) and they work with them and respond to them *when* they want, obviously within given deadlines. There might be asynchronous discussions in forums (basically email discussion threads) associated with the tasks, and these might be moderated or facilitated by the teacher. Asynchronous learning is at heart **self-study**, with the learner engaging with the materials on their own, though there can be group and pair work tasks and project tasks built in to the study materials/process.

These count as asynchronous learning:

- Homework tasks given during normal classes e.g. workbook exercises, an essay
- A worksheet with instructions to visit YouTube, watch a video and answer some questions.
- A WebQuest
- An online quiz
- A collaborative project
- Online courses on an asynchronous platform like Moodle
- Basically anything the students do on their own or with others outside normal face-to-face or synchronous class time.

> Traditional asynchronous learning VLE's like Moodle are over-engineered solutions and unless you get paid for preparing materials are not the right answer to our problems. They *can* be made to work for highly motivated independent learners who are happy to study over a longer time period, mostly on their own, but it takes *a lot of time and effort* to prepare such courses. Their use should generally be restricted to highly specialized courses for specific purposes. They are better suited to other subjects and for teacher education.

The biggest advantage of asynchronous learning is that the learners can work independently at a time of their own choosing. This gives them time for reflection and reduces time pressure on their 'learning performance'; they don't have to answer questions in a set time (unless you choose to set a time and your system allows you to enforce it); they can review the material again and again.

> **Self-Check and Time Controls and Cheating**
>
> Self-check tasks are a valid form of learning. Self-check is best done immediately after doing the task. Withholding the answers for some time after doing the task is part of a testing mentality – not a teaching-learning mentality.
>
> Setting tasks (e.g. tests) for a specific time is possible in some systems. It can be done but should it be done? There are lots of reasons (especially during a crisis

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> situation) why learners will not be able to log-on to do a test at a particular time. Learning is more important than testing!
>
> Cheating might be a concern for some teachers but I'm not worried by this as cheaters are only cheating themselves. They will pay the consequences at some stage, like when they have to do an international exam and fail miserably.

The biggest disadvantage of asynchronous learning is that the learners can work independently at a time of their own choosing. This means they have to be independent learners and organize their own time effectively.

Your instructions have to be very clear and you have to be available (by email, in the forums) if support is needed, and you need to be visible online in the system so learners can find you if necessary at that time. The learners need to know your response time to queries and you need to be active in the forum discussions (if you have them) to show you are 'there', to moderate the discussions by weaving in disparate comments into a coherent discussion, and summarise the discussion at the end.

> Asynchronous learning (AS learning) is the older sibling of the two approaches to online learning. There has been a lot of research done on AS learning but relatively little of this research has been on language learning, and classic AS learning (with discussion forums as the main communication tool) is not a very effective way of learning a language. Most VLEs now have options to have synchronous discussions built in to them. Why? Because synchronous is more immediate and engaging (and better for language learning). Here we will take a broader view of what AS learning is.

5.   The Learning-Enabling Ecosystem

It is best to view online learning as part of a wider learning-enabling ecosystem. This ecosystem includes tools like Skype and WhatsApp, classic VLEs like Blackboard and Moodle, synchronous VLEs like WebRoom, Zoom and Adobe Connect, e-books and the coursebook publisher's electronic workbook systems like Pearson's My English Lab, the learner's paper coursebooks, paper and electronic dictionaries, Google and other search engines, general and language learning websites on the internet (like YouTube, the BBC and Quizzlet), tools like Google Docs, file sharing solutions like Dropbox, and computer programmes like Word and PowerPoint, and the Open Office equivalents, and mobile phones (with their tools – camera and voice recorder - and apps).

It is important to remember that we have all this out our disposal, not just a system like Zoom or Moodle and what we can upload or create and use there.

6.   Replacement or augmentation? Blended Learning & The Flipped Classroom

Electronic means (Zoom, WebRoom, Moodle etc.) and resources (My English Lab etc.) can be used to replace the classroom completely or (in normal times) can be used to augment what you do in the classroom.

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Obviously, at the time of writing, we have been thrown into teaching online so we are in a replacement situation, but when things get back to normal you will be able to use much of what you learn during this time to augment what you do in the classroom.

You might want to do blended learning where part of the learning is done online and part done face-to-face. There are obviously many variations on this concept, depending on your specific situation: you might have, for example, 2 hours in the classroom followed by 10 study hours online followed by two more in the classroom. You might want to flip the classroom by giving the learners preparatory work which can be done as self-study and keep lesson time for more communicative tasks. So, you might assign some grammar study and controlled practice exercises (on paper or electronic) to be done before the class and then during the class you will do roleplays to practice the target language. If the work is electronic then it moves towards being blended learning – there are obvious overlaps. The learners need to be responsible enough to actually do the self-study work in both blended or the flipped classroom.

Given that we are (currently) in a replacement situation then you need to decide whether to replace your face-to-face classes with synchronous classes or asynchronous options, or a mixture of both, and the lengthier discussion of both options later will help you with this decision (if it is yours to make).

7.   The platform solution or a collection of tools?

There are a range of solutions available but you don't have to go for a complete 'all the bells and whistles' answer. Sure a VLE like Moodle has it all (or almost all) but if you don't need to track your learners then Moodle might be a too-complete or an over-engineered system. You might just want to talk on Skype, and if you do, you can screenshare a presentation and open a virtual whiteboard in a browser window and share that with your learner, though something like Zoom which includes video, a board, presentation uploads and chat all together in one package might be a more convenient package. You could run a course on a wiki like those available at pbworks.com. Or just send your learners emails (with attachments as necessary) and maybe use WhatsApp for video or audio chat, or just share materials through Google Drive or Dropbox.

The tools aren't or shouldn't be leading our response. We should be choosing our tools based on our pedagogical purposes and our philosophy of the language (how we see the language determines what and how we teach). 'How we are going to teach (which tools)?' shouldn't be our first question. 'What do we want to do (and why?)' should be what we are asking. Then we can decide how we are going to do it. However, if you've been told you are going to use Zoom, or whatever, then you'll just have to roll with that.

8.   The full environment: don't forget the humble pencil.

As mentioned above, online learning should be seen as part of an ecosystem of learning and we shouldn't forget our coursebooks and workbooks, and the humble pencil (and paper). Just because 'it' (whatever that it is) is *apparently* happening online doesn't mean that the learners shouldn't write things on paper. In fact, they should be positively encouraged to do so. We are brains with bodies and need to move physically to learn (unless we can't).

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We should be positively encouraging learners to write and so we need to design tasks which involve writing, and by writing I don't mean typing, though that can come later.

Writing the letter S, for instance, helps us feel and learn the shape. Writing a word, a sentence, a paragraph and an essay help us learn through our bodies, through the movement of our arm, the roll of our wrist and the tension of our fingers, muscles and tendons.

Learning by clicking on answers in online exercises is an impoverished way of learning. Yes, it's possible to learn something that way but it's slower and less effective than with a paper and pencil (or pen).

And that leads us to Point 9.

9.   Learning happens in the mind

Learning doesn't happen online. Learning happens in the mind. Learning opportunities might occur online but the real learning happens in our learners' heads when they make connections between what they know and what they are learning and commit new words to their memory. Online learning is short for 'learning facilitated online', where the facilitation can mean anything from just a means of sending information (by email or a chat app, for example) to synchronous discussions online, where, still, the 'learning' happens in the heads of the learners taking part in the discussion. This may seem obvious but sometimes we focus too much on the materials or the technology and lose sight of what the learners are (or should be) thinking and learning, and some activities or tasks which superficially might seem worthwhile might actually be pedagogically poor, especially when considered from a cost/benefit perspective.

10.   Being there is not really being there

Another thing to bear in mind is that even in a synchronous discussion while you might be 'there' in the room you are not <u>really</u> there in the room. It's not the same feeling as being in a classroom and being aware of the body language of 30 learners and having a feeling for the room and where you can take the learners. In an asynchronous environment you will have even less presence and it is even more important to be as there as much as possible so that the learners are aware that you <u>are</u> involved in the learning process and they <u>can</u> reach out and communicate with you. Which brings us to a consideration of interaction – Point 11.
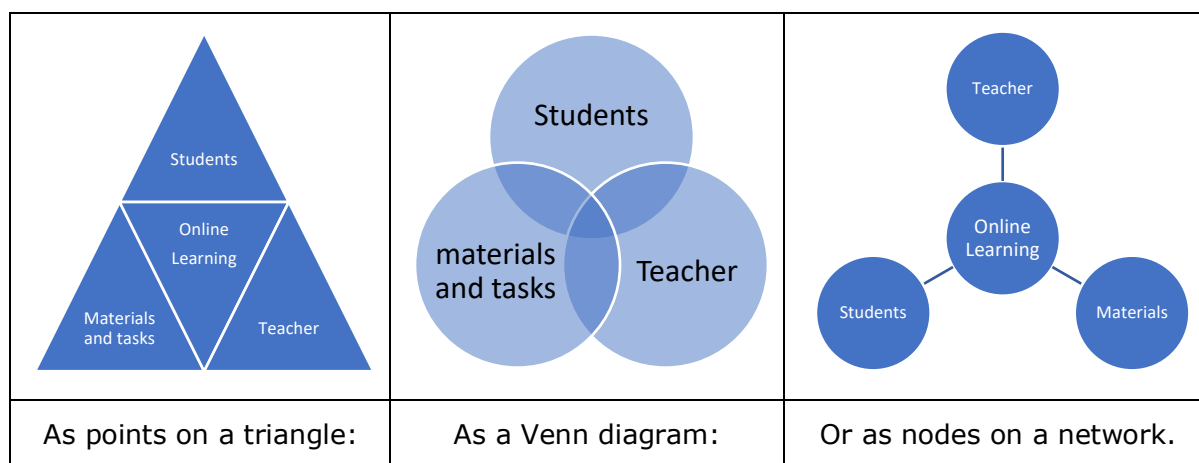
11.   Interaction and Engagement

There are three components to online learning which have interactions around them.

These are – the materials (and tasks), the learners themselves, and us as the teacher.

We can visualize these in different ways.

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As points on a triangle:	As a Venn diagram:	Or as nodes on a network.

However we visualize them, there are certain interactions which we need to consider. These are:

- How do the students interact with the materials?
- How do we mediate/scaffold/aid this interaction?
- How do the students interact with us?
- How do the students interact with each other?

As we are not (or should not be) just providing 'teach yourself' materials ("do these tasks and here are the answers") there needs to be interaction with us as teachers, at a minimum, and, unless it is a one-to-one class, with the other members of the class as well. Even in the current situation when many teachers have been asked to teach online we should still be thinking how we can encourage student-student interaction even if we are not doing synchronous teaching. We need to think *how* and *when* the students will be engaging with (all) the possible materials we have at our disposal and *how* and *when* and *why* our students will be engaging with each other and with us.

There are three broad options:

1. Replace F2F lessons with synchronous lessons (one for one); this can be very tiring for the learners – sitting in front of a computer all week is no joke as you will know yourself.

2. Mix of synchronous and asynchronous lessons in varying proportions (this is my personal preferred solution).

3. Asynchronous learning including student to student collaborative work.

This brings us to a consideration of time and an evaluation of the costs and benefits of what we do.

12.   Time Considerations and Costs and Benefits

There are several time and cost factors we need to evaluate. These are:

1. **The time required to prepare the online lessons**. Preparation for online teaching generally takes longer than preparing face-to-face lessons, especially if you are using a VLE like Moodle. What we really want to do is to minimize the time

we take to prepare lessons – purely for the sake of our own well-being. Preparation time is a cost – a cost to us. Burn out is not a job requirement.

2. **The time it will take the students to do the tasks**. Here we are in 'how long is a piece of string?' territory. It is very difficult to know how long a task will take. But we need to estimate how long it will take the average student and then judge whether it is actually worthwhile doing – what are the benefits of doing this particular tasks? Is it worth the time the students are going to spend on it? The time students spend on a task is a cost to them.

3. We also need to consider **the opportunity cost of a task**. The opportunity cost is the cost of doing something and not doing something else. The cost of doing a gap fill includes the cost of not writing personalized examples, for example. We need to evaluate the relative worth of a task by considering what else we could (reasonably) do with the time we have – is this the best way of spending our time? This is most important when we consider the range of tasks which we ask our students to do. If all (or almost all) of our tasks are gap fills for example then we are not providing a pedagogically useful variety of tasks. The opportunity cost of each gap fill we do is cumulative – it increases with each gap fill, as our students are not getting the range of tasks they need. They need practice in all fours skills and in a range of task types, which depend on where they are in the lesson and where they are in terms of language level. Lower level students will need controlled practice tasks after the presentation stage of a PPP lesson but they will still need writing and speaking fluency tasks. Higher level students will need fewer controlled practice tasks because they will be experiencing fewer PPP lessons but they will still need <u>some</u> such tasks.

Now the benefits of the task – what are they? What will the learners know better or be able to do better after this task? Or is this task a necessary step for a subsequent task?

Analysis: Other people's English vs Your Own English

There is a huge difference between working with 'other people's English (all coursebook tasks like gap fills, reading, listening tasks) and producing your own personalised spoken and written text. Producing your own English is an essential part of the using-learning process. As soon as possible, and as much as possible we should be asking our learners to produce their own text rather than working on other people's text.

The basic evaluation – is it worth our time doing this? An example analysis: Kahoot!

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The Kahoot! Cost/Benefit Analysis

If you are not familiar with Kahoot! then you can visit the site [www.kahoot.com] to get an idea of what it is, but basically, as they say themselves, you can use Kahoot '*to create a learning game or trivia quiz on any topic, in any language'*.

In the classroom the students are then put into teams (or work singly) and read the question on the class screen (projected from the website) and select the (hopefully) correct answer represented by, for example, coloured shapes (but basically A, B, C, or D) which are displayed on their phone screens. They are answering it against the clock, so it is a race against time and against their peers.

At heart Kahoot! is a '*read the question and select the right answer <u>as quickly as possible</u>'* type of activity, and it's great fun; kids love it, but is it cost effective?

The effects are positive reinforcement if the answers are correct but it's basically a test; and there could be negative feedback with too many wrong answers. So, it's a knowledge test rather than teaching-learning.

And there are costs. Lots of time costs. These include: your time registering for Kahoot! and learning how to use it; your time to think of the questions and answers; your time logging on to Kahoot! and writing the questions and answers and checking your work to avoid embarrassing mistakes; the time to set up the equipment in class; the time to divide the class into groups; the time for you to log on to Kahoot!; the time for the students to install and register with Kahoot!, and to log-on for this particular game session; the time spent reading the questions and answering them, that is doing the game. These time costs build up enormously for what is in fact 30 second competition - *read the question and select the right answer <u>as quickly as possible and press the right coloured shape on your phone screen</u>'*.

Reading a question on the screen and selecting a shape on your phone screen is a pedagogically poor use of students' time compared to a reasonable alternative – listen to your teacher reading out the question and write down the correct answer, and then do an oral check of the answers (more listening).

Doing exactly the same thing as Kahoot! does with paper and pencil and no other technological mediation (no internet, projector, website, phone etc.) is <u>so</u> much more developmentally useful than using Kahoot! It's almost pedagogical malpractice to use such apps. It's certainly a waste of your time to create Kahoot! quizzes, and the opportunity cost for your students is too high.

Sure, do it once just for fun if you <u>really</u> have to, but then do something more worthwhile.

13.   Learning how to learn

Learners (and you) will have to learn how to teach/learn online. There will be a learning curve (perhaps steeper for you, but don't be fooled by the 'digital native' propaganda – young people have problems using technology beyond consuming products). Don't go

overboard at first with lots of tasks and think you have to include sound and video and this and that and the other. As mentioned above, learning happens in the mind – the tasks and materials are a means to an end – and your time is your most valuable commodity. Take the time to learn how to effectively teach online; and give the learners the time to learn as well. Don't overload them at first. Develop their skills.

For some learners getting online, logging on somewhere, activating the microphone and video will prove problematic. Other learners might not be able to open documents (no matter what file format you send them in) because they don't have the right software installed. Learners will have to develop their time management skills. Or learner netiquette. Or learn how to contribute to online discussions. All this will take time.

14. Learning the group

If you are teaching a group, both you and the learners will have to 'learn the group', by which I mean they will have to learn about each other and about each other's strengths and weaknesses in learning and language, and also about each other's personalities. This takes longer when *separated* by technology, and that is a useful way of looking at it; we are separated geographically, and separated *by the technology* – it isn't bringing us together, it is keeping us apart by making it possible to learn at a distance – and this contrarian perspective means that we think of how to overcome the difficulties of the online learning situation.

15. Teaching-learning not testing-learning

Too much of teaching is really biased towards the testing end of the teaching-testing spectrum. The only real difference between a gap-filled text in a coursebook in a classroom and in a formal written test is in what we do with the information gathered from learner performance in the task. In a written test the performance leads to a rating and a certificate. In a good class the learners' performance in the gap-fill leads to feedback on the correctness of the responses and remedial teaching for those gaps which caused problems. A gap-fill + feedback + remedial teaching is a *test task biased towards teaching* (but it's still fundamentally testing). A test without feedback, just a score, and perhaps a certificate is pure testing.

Anything with a gap is, at heart, a test, even if we call it 'practice'. Comprehension questions on a reading or listening text are tests of comprehension – tests! If all (or even the majority of) your learning tasks are really tests (even if alleviated with feedback and remedial teaching) then it is fair to ask: Where is the teaching in your practice?

If your teaching boils down to '*do this exercise and then we'll check the answers'*, then we have to wonder why you haven't been replaced by a robot already, or why don't we just give the learners the answers and they can check themselves?

You can learn from tests and test do provide useful information but really they are only worthwhile doing frequently if you do something with the information you get from them.

Really, trying to learn a language by doing test tasks (exercise after exercise) is not the most productive way of proceeding.

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This is especially true of online learning where you can (if you have enough time) set up lots of tasks which are marked by the computer (quizzes etc.) but this is <u>not</u> enough for proper, or efficient learning.

> Note you might want omit Point 16 if you are comfortable with your goals and teaching aims. Move straight on to Point 17.

16.   What is (are) our goal(s)?

It is important to keep our end goal(s) in sight. For me, for my students, my goals are:

1. To teach my learners *enough* <u>about</u> the language to enable them to understand the language system but <u>only</u> enough, not too much. This means only using a minimum of metalanguage. We have to teach them some things about the language to compensate for the limited time they are spending on learning the language; native speakers spend thousands of hours learning the language and learn from the data provided in these hours; they don't use (or need) metalanguage or explicit knowledge about the language; they use their implicit knowledge to learn to speak the language. Our learners need the Goldilocks 'just right' amount of knowledge about the language.

2. To teach my learners <u>enough</u> of the language (grammar and lexis) to enable them to say and write what they need to say and write, and be able to read and listen what they need to read and listen to. This means all the key grammar and as many words and collocations as possible.

3. To help my learners <u>memorise</u> the language they need to know, (and its colligations and collocations), and 'prime' them with this language so they can recall the language *as quickly as possible* and use it accurately in speaking and writing. They need to be able to remember the language and produce it quickly and with as few errors as possible (that is, fluently) – so they need lots of language practice – practice remembering and using the language they are learning in their <u>own</u> utterances and texts.

> **What are your goals?**

My goals lead me to this kind of practice:

- Minimal use of metalanguage [there is no such thing as '*the to infinitive'* for example; and no such thing as the '*gerund*' – it's a '*doing noun'*]; avoidance of confusing 'rules' which are difficult to operationalize; a focus on meaning first: *what does this word mean?*

- Lower level students (Beginner to Pre-intermediate) need to learn the most important grammar and most frequent 2000 + words as quickly as possible, using PPP type lessons using clear generative contexts. Listening and speaking are

relatively more important than reading and writing. Listening should be focused on listening to things they (should) know or are learning; speaking is used to encourage recall and to practice the language; reading is a source of contextualised language; some writing is used to support learning, and to encourage recall of what they are learning. The main teacher role is as a presenter-explainer of the core of the language.

- Students at Pre-int and above need to start using the grammar and vocabulary they have started learning to learn the rest of the language (all those words!) and what they have already studied (through revision). 5,000 – 10,000 words is now the target. Multiple grammar points are touched upon in the lessons in frequent grammar reminders rather than full blown exclusive grammar presentations focused on one or more grammar point. Lessons are generally text based – reading as a source of language becomes more important than teacher-fronted oral presentations, though phrasal verbs might need to be dealt with differently. Topics should be repeated throughout the course in topic threads which will encourage distributed revision. Repeated practice of what the students are learning is vital. The students need to be able to recall words and their collocations and use them in speech and writing to show that they are learning and can use the language. The main teacher roles are as 'reviser-in-chief', text (and topic) explorer (the expedition leader, as such; English is an adventure!), and provider of meaningful, personalized language practice opportunities (not *just* gap fills).

- Higher level students need to do more reading for language learning (For words! For collocations! For word order and other grammar!), as well as writing to show learning; there should be lots of formal writing to provide raw material for developmental feedback from you as a teacher (writing is a different kind of commitment from speaking); and lots of formal speaking – presentations – on a range of topics + developmental feedback from you; and of course listening widely in the topics they are studying. Overall, there is more learning by doing – the students will learn by reading (using the language) and by speaking (using the language + feedback, and doing the task again) and by writing (using the language + feedback, and doing the task again). The teacher's role changes from being a presenter of the language to being a language (performance) coach.

17.   Demonstrations, Performance and Competencies

At the end of the day we want the learners to be able to demonstrate what they can do in the language (mainly speaking and writing, I think) and develop their competencies (including co-operation, creativity, communication and critical thinking) in the language. We should be asking them to *show* what they can do and respond to this in a positive, developmental way, focused on improving their *performance*. And much of language (speaking for example) *is* a performance and we should view it as a performance because that implies rehearsal and preparation before the performance.

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Instead of formal written testing (through multiple choice tests etc.) we should focus on asking the learners to demonstrate what they can do (from introducing themselves, to giving directions, to making a presentation, to writing an essay etc.) and rating their performance of these tasks. Then we should give them feedback and help them improve their performance.

This should happen from the beginner level but as the students learn things it becomes more and more important *not* to forget them – in fact to actively remember them - and so practice of what they already have started learning becomes something we need to devote time to. Every lesson should have an element of revision. And every lesson should have time for production of language – meaningful production that is.

18.   Differentiated Learning

Differentiated learning is a buzzword and we are supposed, under this approach, to develop different versions of the same task which will reflect our learners abilities. A differentiated dictation task would mean some learners get blank paper while others get a gap-filled text. The more able learners will get a more challenging version of the task. Less able learners will get an easier version of the same task. This is all very well but I'm not convinced that this is the best way to focus our energy and time. We might also be asked to provide extra challenging tasks for the more able learners – all well and good and fine <u>if</u> we have time to do this. I'm more interested though in differentiated output rather than differentiated input. I would expect more able learners to write and speak more extensively and for their language use to be more accurate. I'm much more interested in evaluating spoken and written output. I want samples of their output to give me information about where they are in terms of language development and for me to help them get better.

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Learning Tasks: What can we do online?

Now, let's us consider learning tasks in more detail and suggest some things you need to consider in these areas.

Here we will run through some of the tasks you can do in online teaching.

S/AS?	Task	Comments
S/AS	**Teacher-led presentation**	The teacher talks through a presentation of a language point or a set of vocabulary. These should be short. Because presentations should be short – that's the rule.
		This could be done synchronously (e.g. through Zoom etc.), which would enable interaction with the students, or it could be done asynchronously if the presentation was recorded e.g. by using screen capture software.
		Note that if you are doing a live presentation and your system converts PowerPoint slides to pdfs then you will lose the animations so if you need animations you will have to design your presentation differently by having multiple slides rather than one slide with animations on. Each slide will represent an animation 'move' or change.
S	**Virtual Whiteboard**	We can use the virtual whiteboard to present language (grammar and lexis) in our synchronous meetings. In some systems you can share the board with the learners. You can also upload a presentation and use the whiteboard tools to write on the presentation.
AS	**Self-study presentation**	Learners work their way through a presentation which you send them. Presentations can include audio and video and pictures and links. It could include questions to check understanding. Learners could write down the answers to questions on paper and then check their answers. The answers could be provided separately or they could be included on the presentation; One slide: read the question and write down the answer. Click on the next slide for the answer.
		Remember this is self-study. Testing them would come later with a writing or speaking task.
AS	**Assignments**	Learners write a letter/essay/report etc. These are sent to the teacher who marks them and returns them to the learner. This can be done simply by email or through a VLE like Moodle. You should think about whether you provide a model and study it with the learners (how? synchronously or asynchronously?) before the assignment, and what success criteria there are for the task – these should be clear to the learners.
S	**Chat**	Allows participants to have a real-time synchronous text-based chat discussion. Chat is useful for getting feedback and asking questions of the learners.
		But chat should be strictly controlled. If students are using the chat during a teacher-led presentation (e.g. during a Zoom meeting) they

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		are <u>not</u> concentrating on the presentation. They should be watching and listening and making notes. Constant chat is also distracting for the presenter who feels they need to engage with the chat and answer questions as they come up. This is a mistake. Deal with questions at the end of a presentation – <u>turn off chat until you actually need it</u>.
S/AS	**Pair work and Group work**	We can still do pair work and groupwork both asynchronously and synchronously. AS pair/group work is when learners engage over a set period of time to do a task. They can use whichever communication tool they want to do this. You will carefully need to consider what will be the outcome of the pair/group work – what will be the product? Just talking or text-based chatting for the sake of it is not enough – there needs to be a concrete outcome – a product (written, spoken) which you can evaluate and give developmental feedback on. Synchronous pair/group work is when learners engage with each other in a lesson. To do this the system will need **breakout rooms** so you can divide the class into pairs of groups. You can set up the task; sort the learners into pairs/groups and they will be sent into the rooms. You will be able to visit the rooms to monitor. Again there needs to be some outcome to the task. Pair work can best to viewed as providing the students as a safe rehearsal time where they can practice the language before using it in open class, for example. Learners should report on what they discussed; model what they said; do the role play for the whole group etc. There needs to be some visible outcome from the pair work or group work and it needs to be reported or used for the next stage of the lesson. Note that doing synchronous pair/group work means that your groups cannot be too big. You can do a teacher-led presentation to a billion people if you really wanted to but it is very difficult to manage 100 learners into breakout rooms, monitor these rooms and get meaningful reports from what happened in the rooms. Synchronous classes with breakout rooms need to be relatively small.
A/AS	**Controlled Practice**	We should give the learners controlled practice of the target language and we can do this in two main ways in this situation. 1. Use a commercial 'electronic workbook' solution like My Grammar Lab. Here the computer provides the practice activities (gap fills etc.) and marks them. You may be able to monitor learner performance. 2. We can use the paper-based tasks in our coursebooks and workbooks and we should provide the answers so the learners check themselves. We should <u>not</u> be spending huge amounts of time checking these kinds of tasks. In a face-to-face classroom we can check such tasks quickly and efficiently. Online though, checking such tasks through online submissions and responding

		personally to each learner is an absurd use of our precious time. Give the learners the answers; ask them to report how well they did and deal with individual problems (if you have time), or better still take the information the learners provide on their performance and prepare follow-up or remedial teaching for everyone, if there are major problems. Save your time for responding individually to personalised spoken and written language tasks.
AS	**Forum Discussions**	In some VLEs, like Moodle and Blackboard, which are built as asynchronous learning platforms, the main interaction happens through forum discussions. The teacher posts a message to the forum to start the discussion and then learners reply to the message to have asynchronous discussion, which builds up as thread of replies to the initial message.
		Such discussions are predicated on the concept of *knowledge construction* where learners develop their understanding through the discussion. This discussion is marked by time delays and possible incoherence as learners post at different times, do not respond to the other learners or go off topic. This can lead to stress, frustrations, demotivation and high dropout rates. The written nature of the discourse is also a disadvantage as learners are reluctant to write publicly in a second language, and understandably so.
		Such tasks might be ok for teacher development or for subjects like geography or history where a discussion might be useful (and in the native language) but extended asynchronous discussions are <u>not</u> an effective way of learning a language. I would just forget about using asynchronous forum discussions for language learning.
AS	**On-line Reference Materials**	We should remember the online reference resources which are available and decide how we build them into our courses. Will we provide links or leave it up to the learners to find the resources?
AS	**3rd party websites**	It is tempting to search the internet and find a website with an interactive exercise on 'the present perfect' and then ask the learners to go there and do the exercise. I would avoid doing this for two main reasons. The first is quality control and safely – where exactly are you sending them and what will they be doing? Where might they end up? The second is that doing this random task does not provide you with any information about the learners' performance – you don't get to see the scores – it is invisible practice.
		Websites such as YouTube where there is content you might want to exploit in some way is a different matter, though consider embedding the video into your presentation (for example) rather than linking to it.
AS	**Paper/screen text-based Lesson**	We can provide text documents with lesson materials on (worksheets etc.), or webpages of text-based materials. This is basically self-study materials so the key issues are the instructions and how we check understanding – as you are not there to support the learner everything

		needs to be crystal clear. Keys need to be accurate, and there needs to be self-check tasks and reporting (e.g. a reporting sheet the students fill in while doing the materials and then send to you), and some productive test-type task which you will rate. Also, timing is an issue; too much material is demotivating: less is probably more. Think about adding fun 'throwaway diversion tasks' to break up the materials, but consider the time implications of adding more.
AS	**Quizzes and other tests**	In Moodle and Blackboard, and on other sites, the teacher can design and set quiz tests, which may be automatically marked by the system and feedback and/or the correct answers shown. It is very tempting to create a lot of such materials <u>but</u>, remember, this is just (really) testing. All your course cannot be made up of such exercise-tests.
		Also, on a more practical note make sure you tell the learners how many questions there are and how long it will /should take, if taking it is time restricted, and if they can redo the test, I mean, the quiz. There is the danger of a student doing task after task, not know how many questions there are and getting the feeling of being lost in a maze.
		These kinds of tasks have a place but it is a limited one.
		It is very time consuming and fiddly to create a quiz in Moodle, for example, and unless you are getting paid for your time to create such materials I would seriously question if it is the best way of spending your (and later your learners') time. Creating a test in Google Forms is a much quicker option.
AS	**Padlet**	Sites like Padlet [https://padlet.com] can be used for collaborative boards, documents, and webpages that are easy to read and fun to contribute to. This is best done asynchronously rather than during precious session time in a synchronous meeting.
AS	**Infographics**	We can use infographics ourselves to introduce topics, practice vocabulary, on presentations, or, even better, we can ask our learners to produce infographics and then share or present them. There are free sites like Canva where you can prepare infographics using templates: https://www.canva.com/create/infographics/
S/AS	**Audio dictation**	Dictation is an underused, old-fashioned, activity. Giving audio dictations online means that the learners can listen as many times as they need to. They could even play around with the speed of playback, or pause the recording. They have more control and it becomes less of a test and more of a learning task.
		A simple way of doing this is to embed a short (one sentence) recording into a PowerPoint slide. The learners listen (as many times as they need) and write down the sentence on a piece of paper. Then they click to the next slide to see the sentence. If they made a mistake they can listen again and read at the same time.
		<u>But</u> the most important thing to remember is that these dictations should be of language which they are familiar with – not unknown language. The task is revision-practice. Choose or write variations of

		sentences from the unit you are doing (and previous ones) and record these for your learners.
S/AS	**Video**	We can use video for many purposes and we can embed these in a page, or a presentation, or link to YouTube etc. We could watch them during a live synchronous lesson or as part of asynchronous (self-study) materials. In each case we need to prepare the learners for watching the video. What grammar and vocabulary do they need to know (or need reminding of) before they watch the video? Our aim should be for the video watching experience to be a <u>successful language using experience</u>. If they are watching the video on their own what kinds of tasks does it make sense for them to do? And how are these going to be checked? Self-check? Using a video to answer comprehension questions is not perhaps the best use of video – use it as a prompt for a more personalized, creative response.
S/AS	**Reading / listening lessons**	We can still do reading and listening based lessons in online teaching both synchronously and asynchronously. Synchronously, we need to consider whether asking the learners to read a text in the lesson is the best way of spending our time, especially if it is a 'comprehension test' type task we are doing. It would be better to do a lot of language focused reading / listening preparation tasks <u>before</u> doing the reading / listening comprehension task. Study the key grammar which appears in the text and the key language (including collocations) with the learners on a simple PowerPoint presentation. Do word order tasks – ask the learners to reorder the words in a sentence, then reveal the correct word order – discuss it. Study the kinds of prepositional and noun phrases which appear in the text. Remind them of the use of cohesive devices and the meaning of 'a' and 'the'. After all this study <u>then</u> do the reading/listening as a 'reading-listening for success task'. Asynchronously, we can do the same as above – do extensive preparation before doing a reading or listening but provide the answers/guidance/self-check tests, and perhaps an opportunity to contact you if there are any problems.
AS	**Create a Wiki or a Blog**	A wiki is a collection of web pages that anyone can add to or edit. We can use a wiki as a course delivery system, and a place for learner produced work e.g. collaborative project work. We could also ask the leaners to create a (private) blog; this could be a collaborative project for small groups.
S/AS	**Quizlet**	This tool, Quizlet, can be used to create online flashcards, diagrams, study guides and practice tests. It is worth spending time, or even better your learners spending time, on developing these resources as they can be used as part of distributed revision – extended revision and practice to enhance learning. The cost/benefit analysis of Quizlet

		is in favour of the benefits because the materials can be used repeatedly over a longer time period.
		See: https://quizlet.com/topic/languages/
S/AS	**Learner-led Presentation**	We can ask the learners prepare and give a presentation <u>but</u> there are some things to remember here.
		Presentation skills is a specialized learned competency. It needs to be developed and practiced. This is especially true of presenting online. Think about how much trouble you are having presenting online – and you are used to standing up and presenting to a class. Think about how much stress your learners will be under to present online with an unfamiliar system.
		It is basically <u>unfair</u> (and pedagogically <u>wrong</u>) to ask a student to prepare a multi-slide presentation and then present it live online to an audience without extensive support and practice. We shouldn't be putting our learners into a *sink or swim* situation. Use these strategies instead:
		Start with one-slide presentations which you have prepared (and make them good slides, not too much text etc.). A slide could be a picture of a person – the task – introduce this person; or talk about this person's life history in chronological order; it doesn't have to be just text.
		Ask the students to script what they will say about the slide, then correct it with them.
		Then ask them to practice talking about the slide.
		You might want to ask them to record what they are saying and send it to you for advice and corrections.
		Then, when they are happy with their performance, ask them to use screen capture software and record themselves talking about the slide. They then send it to you for marking.
		Once they have done a few one-slide presentations (the first ones you created, then next they created), you can move on to multi-slide presentations: 2, 3, 4 then 5 slides.
		But there is no need for learners to do *live* presentations until they are very experienced
		When you do come to do live presentations, the learners should have the opportunity to do the presentation as a practice run with a peer before presenting to the class.
		And as for sharing or joint presentations, just forget it, why complicate an already complicated and very stressful situation?
S/AS	**Learner produced video / audio**	You can ask the learners to produce audio and video both singly and collaboratively. There needs to an audio track to video because it really should be language-based and learner produced language at that. They can narrate a video story or do a documentary style voice over.

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		Who rates the videos and gives feedback? You and/or the other learners? The learners could vote for the best video and be asked to provide positive (and only positive feedback) on the videos or audios. Your role would be to provide more constructive feedback on language errors etc.
S/AS	**Instructions**	Obviously we need to give our students instructions. Synchronously you can obviously say them, or write them on the electronic whiteboard, or have them written on a presentation.
		Asynchronously there is no real way to cope with confusion or misunderstandings which arise so your instructions have to be better.
		If you are sending your learners a set of materials e.g. a presentation and worksheets through Google Drive (or whatever) then consider recording a short audio introduction to the day's work, recording on your phone and included in the materials set as a 'play me first file': "Today you will be looking at a presentation about X. You have to do Y and then Z. Finally you will listen to a song. Send me back your completed worksheet by 5 o'clock today. Remember you can email me or call me on Skype if you need help. Good luck."
S/AS	**Collaborative Work and Projects**	These are very useful for you to teach your learners to work together online to produce writing (reports etc.) and audio visual materials (videos, infographics etc.).
		Making an assignment or a project collaborative, however, will mean that it will take longer. There needs to be clear work plans and deadlines. It is not enough to say 'I want you to do X with Y and Z.'
		Learners need to be taught how to work together, taught how to plan, taught how to meet deadlines, and taught how to give feedback to each other. There will be the possibilities of conflict and dominance of the group by one or more learners. You will need to monitor closely and keep an eye on their progress, and have channels of communication open to each member of the group.
S/AS	**Error Correction**	If you are given any kind of writing from your learners you can correct errors and give feedback – this can be in writing or even recorded using screen capture software. This takes **a lot of time**.
		Errors are information for you and you can deal with them individually like above or collectively by taking typical or important errors and asking everyone to correct them.
		Instead of providing individual, time consuming feedback, create a simple presentation of errors for correction on each slide. Each slide will have the sentence with the error(s) on it. Indicate how many errors there are in the sentence. Learners write down the correct sentence in their notebooks/on a piece of paper. Then they click to the next slide to see the corrected sentence, and compare with their own. Then they move on to the next slide. By doing this you are providing useful language input for everyone and it takes much less time to do this than to respond to each learner individually.

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AS	**Google Forms**	We can use Google Forms for quick tests, for short written work and for feedback. The good thing about Google Forms is that the responses are all collected in one place. We could have a form with three sections: 1. Name; 2: Class; 3. The Task. When the task is submitted we will get all the responses in one place and this makes reading through them much easier – we are not opening up lots of email attachments. This is especially useful if we are collecting information on learner performance and do not need to give individualised feedback.
AS	**Repeatable Tasks**	It is a very good idea to get learners to repeat tasks. This builds their competence with the task and their language fluency (which is marked by ease of language recall and accuracy of recall).
		For example, we could ask the learners to listen to a song and respond to it – say if they like/dislike it and why, and what they think of/how they feel when they listen to the song. They could write a short paragraph based on a this model which has selection/deletion choices and gaps: "I do/don't like this song because _____. In fact, I really _____ this song. The song makes me think of _____. When I listen to it I feel _____. I would/wouldn't like to listen to this song again."
		Then next week we could ask the learners to listen to another song and write the *same* paragraph on their reaction to *that* song. You could choose the songs or ask learners for suggestions. You could give them a specific song to listen to or give them a choice of (5) songs to respond to. The key is to practice useful language again and again and again.
AS	**Responding to learners**	We should keep in contact with the learners, especially when they are working asynchronously. This could be done in a number of ways. We could send each learner an individual email when they send us some work. This could be a quick 'thank you reply' or it could be more detailed feedback on their work. Or we could send a whole class email thanking for their work that week and pointing out a few issues and including a few reminders about the target language, and answers to any technical questions/problems which have arisen. Obviously we would have to bcc the email addresses for privacy reasons.
		This is a question of time. If a learner is having big problems (of whatever kind) then a personalised response is required. If there are no serious individual problems (maybe everyone is having the same problems) then a class email is all that is required – and it reminds them that they are still in a class.
		Instead of sending an email we could record a message to our learners (either using video or audio), saying well done and thanks for all their work this week. Learners and their parents should be made aware that these messages (and all the other learning materials) should not be shared on social media etc. in fact learners and their parents should sign a privacy contract to this effect – and this should come from the school or Ministry of Education.

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Now, let's try to bring all the elements above into one table. Note: this is not an exhaustive list – just examples of some of the myriad solutions which are out there. These are some of the tools you might want to use and some of the things you might want to do.

Zoom (Synchronous VLE)	WebRoom (Synchronous VLE)	Adobe Connect (Synchronous VLE)	Skype (Synchronous VLE)	WhatsApp (communication)
Viber (communication)	Telegram (communication)	Moodle (AS VLE)	Blackboard (AS VLE)	Google Classroom (an LMS)
Teacher Presentations (recorded and live)	Breakout Rooms (for pair work in Zoom etc.)	E-mail (communication)	Google Docs (creating docs and collaborative docs)	Google Forms (creating docs and quizzes)
Video Conferencing (use for synchronous learning; consider turning off the video at times)	Virtual Whiteboards (use in presentations; share tools with the learners)	Chats (for feedback/answers during synchronous learning: does it always have to be on?)	Office / Open Office (creating docs and drawings, annotated photos, maps etc.)	Infographics (e.g. Canva)
Paper Coursebooks (we've got them, let's use them!)	Paper Workbooks (we've got them, let's use them!)	Electronic practice activities (e.g. My English Lab)	YouTube etc. (videos etc.)	Pen and Paper (don't forget!)
Teacher Worksheets (prepare worksheets to support your coursebook etc.)	Learner Presentations (learners practice and present)	Dictations (short teacher recorded dictations of what the learners are learning)	Learner Recordings (learners to practice and record)	Learner Infographics (get the learners to produce infographics and present them)
E-coursebooks (Publishers have provided digital copies of some coursebooks)	Teacher Recordings (record dictations; prepare videos of your presentations)	Quizzlet (distributed learning)	Dropbox (Storing and transferring docs etc.)	Learner Notebooks (don't forget these aides to learning!)

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Pulling It All Together

Now we have considered some of the things we can do online let's consider how you might pull everything together. But the first, and perhaps most important question is;

- What can the learners usefully do by themselves, asynchronously, and what <u>has</u> to be done synchronously?

Here we take asynchronous learning at its widest scope. It means any work we give the learners to do in their own time at their own pace (within the deadline set). I would assign *as much as possible* to the asynchronous mode, either before or after a synchronous session. I would try to keep valuable face time for really important teaching and production tasks. *As much as possible* will depend on the age of the learners and their language level. Younger learners and lower level learners will not be able to do as much on their own as older and higher level learners, so they will need more synchronous meetings.

My internal monologue would go something like this: "I can do a grammar presentation on WebRoom with my learners but is that the best use of our time? Could they view a recording of the presentation (me talking about the grammar point captured through screen capture software), and then we can discuss it together online? Or do we have to do it together live? Or could I record it in advance and then we all watch it together?"

"How should they do controlled practice of a grammar point? Can this be done online on some system like My Grammar Lab? Ideally, I won't have to prepare the tasks and then correct them – if I can farm out this to a publisher and their already created materials then that's the best option. Mechanical practice is best done online and marked by computer. I should be worrying more about presenting the language and freer practice. I should be worrying about creating lots of computer-based practice tasks."

"If a commercially-produced online electronic workbook is not possible then I would prefer to give the learners the exercise answers and they would self-check the tasks from the coursebook and workbook. They would then report to me on their progress and ask if they have any problems. I can provide them with a form to complete reporting on how many answers they got correct, and also ask for feedback on the lesson."

"In general, given the choice between spend a lot of time before a lesson preparing electronic resources (quizzes etc.) or spending a lot of time after a lesson giving feedback on learner production (speaking and writing) I would choose to spend time dealing with the learner production."

The Balancing Act

I have some overarching aims which I have to balance. I want to:

- maximise the learning impact of what I do
- minimise the amount of time I spend preparing lessons
- minimise the amount of time I spend checking stuff after the learners have done the work (exercises etc.)

I will also keep in the mind the distinction between *could* and *should*. There are lots of things I *could* do (but are <u>unreasonable</u> to do in terms of time and effort required to

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prepare them and the quality and quantity of the output; our cost benefit analysis) and things which we *should* do because they really benefit the learner.

Also, I remember the distinction between *can do* and *don't have to do*. For example, a free Zoom meeting is 40 minutes. Lessons in many schools are 40 mins long. Coincidence? I think not. So, we can have 40 mins long (free) lessons. But we don't have to. I would prefer to have three separate 20 min sessions with three smaller groups (more effectively pedagogically) and give more self-study practice. I think I can do an effective presentation and some initial practice to concept check the target language in 20 mins. The learners would then go away and do controlled practice with the answers (or checked by computer if I have access to such a commercial system), and I would check their learning later with some productive personalised written work or speaking task.

Using Paper Resources Online

And another key question is how do we continue to use our coursebooks and workbooks while teaching online?

> If you have an electronic version of the course book which you can use in your synchronous classrooms (e.g. through screenshare) and play the video and audio for your learners then you can use that pretty much as you do in normal lessons.
>
> Classroom management, though, of student responses (controlling the mikes and chat functions) will take more time and you will probably be doing less in the class time.
>
> Teaching can be pretty much the same - though I do encourage you to think about how you approach reading and listening lessons and do much more preparation work before you do a reading .

Now, let's look at a few examples of my approach to teaching a **paper** coursebook and workbook online in the current situation. For my coursebook I have chosen Solutions Pre-Intermediate 3rd Edition from Oxford, I will look at Unit 1, chosen at random from the coursebook. Each unit of this course has the same pattern: a lesson on vocabulary, followed by one of grammar, then listening, then grammar, then word skills, then reading, then speaking, then writing.

So, here are some suggestions, which I think are the simplest ways to approach teaching with these materials. At the end of each unit or module I would consider adding a collaborative or individual productive task which would use all (or most of the language of the unit), such as a video, writing, presentation task. With a large number of students though that would mean a lot of marking so that is why I wouldn't do this for every lesson but would leave such summative demonstrations of their language ability for the end of the unit.

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Unit 1A: Adjectives Describing Feelings

Coursebook Task Sequence: (Ex. 1) Look at photos and answer the questions; (Ex. 2) check the meaning of the adjectives; (Ex. 3) work in pairs - sort adjectives into positive and negative (all shown on the right); (Ex. 4) mutiple choice test; (Ex. 5) reading some tweets; (Ex. 6) listening to five speakers; recycle grammar box; (Ex. 7) part 2 listening; (Ex. 8) pair work check of Ex. 6 and Ex. 7; (Ex. 9) modifying adjectives; (Ex. 10) write notes about 6 situations; (Ex. 11) speaking.

My plan: synchronous lesson on WebRoom or Zoom etc. (20 mins): Welcome the class. Ask them to write one word to describe how they are feeling today in the chat. Thank them. Simple PowerPoint presentation to introduce the adjectives (Ex. 2) – with pictures and translations (do this live or have recorded version; chat off). Learners make notes of the word meanings, listen to the pronunciations. Then put learners into breakout rooms to look at photos from Ex. 1 and assign adjective to each photo.

Close breakout rooms and ask groups for ideas. One learner from a group nominated to give group answer either by chat or through microphone. Then put groups back into break out rooms to discuss which adjectives are positive or negative (Ex. 3). Bring them back to the main room for a check. Ask the learners to indicate if the word is positive (+) or negative (-) using the chat as survey tool. Then assign these tasks from the rest of the lesson as self-study-self-check work: Workbook ex. 1 crossword; ex 2 modifying adjectives; Ex. 3 sentence completion and ex 4. listening. Learners do the tasks by the deadline, check the answers and complete a self-reporting sheet on this, and complete a writing task based on coursebook ex 10. (write six sentences on the pattern of "When I X, I feel Y."), which will be marked. The learners send me the self-reporting sheets with their scores for the task and the six sentences for ex. 10. I thank them for the work and rate their sentences from Ex. 10, and use the information from these sentences to prepare a short error correction presentation (with key) for next week. I would also record three sentences of my own on the pattern "When I X, I feel Y." as a dictation task (on a presentation with the audio embedded in the slides and the keys provided) as a revision task.

Doing this all asynchronously: I would record the presentation for the learners to watch and provide the answers for Ex. 1 and 3; all the other self-study work is the same.

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Unit 1B Past Simple (affirmative)

Coursebook Task Sequence: (Ex. 1) lead-in; (Ex. 2) Reading for specific information; (Ex. 3) Learn This box + find past simple examples in the text from (Ex. 2); (Ex. 4) Complete the sentences; Ex. 5 gap fill text; (Ex. 6) speaking; (Ex. 7) complete the sentences with adjectives; (Ex. 8) speaking.

My plan: synchronous lesson on WebRoom or Zoom etc. (40 mins): Welcome the class. Ask them to write one word in the chat to describe how they felt yesterday. Thank them. Give presentation about past simple (affirmative) starting with 'Yesterday I felt…'; making sure I cover all the verbs in the text in Ex. 2 with example sentences (but not those from the text); Do reading to explain the numbers in the text: 1970s, 2008, $13m and 1990; elicit answers from named learners; check overall meaning of text (ex. 2 basically); then ask learners to underline the verbs in the text, then match them to rules in ex. 3. Check by showing PowerPoint answer – which is the text written out on a slide with the verbs highlighted; Then do Ex 4. from the book individually.

Show slide of answers; then do mini presentation of be + (done) adjective e.g. I was excited/upset; ask learners to complete sentences presented on a slide e.g. 'Yesterday I was Y when I did X. On Sunday I did X and I was Y. When I did X I was Y' (this is sort of ex. 8); nominate learners to read their sentences.

This synchronous lesson would be followed by self-study. Instruct learners to do Ex. 5 and 7 from the coursebook as self-study work, and Ex 1, 2 (two sentence completion tasks) and Ex. 3 (a text gap fill) from the workbook; or I could save Ex. 3 from the workbook to do later; or I could ask the leaners to do Ex. 3 from the workbook as the test – ask the learners to send me these answers and I will just check this exercise and give marks based on that alone; or I could ask them to do Ex. 5 from the workbook (write 5 true sentences about yourself) as the test, on a Google Form.

Provide answers for all these tasks as decided. Learners also do error correction on PowerPoint, self-check, and dictation tasks from Unit 1A (prepared after previous lesson).

Learners send me their self-reporting sheets and the answers for Ex.3 if I choose to do it that way, or Ex. 5 if I choose that way.

Send individual thank you emails as they send me their work ('Thank you') and a group email after marking Ex. 3 with general feedback, and the answers; or rate ex. 5 and use for general feedback/error correction.

Doing this all asynchronously: Record the presentation with concept check questions and answer slides using screen capture software; provide all the necessary keys and step-by-step instructions; give the self-study materials as above.

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Unit 1F Reading

Coursebook Task Sequence: (Ex. 1) speaking (prediction from title and photos); (Ex. 2) reading the reading strategy (for matching task) then gist reading; (Ex. 3) read again to match questions with paragraphs; (Ex. 4) speaking; (Ex.5) complete the questions with question words (how many etc.) ; (Ex. 6) vocabulary: which words from the text?; (Ex. 7) matching verb forms (present and past); (Ex.8) speaking (tell your partner)

My plan: synchronous lesson on WebRoom or Zoom etc. (40 mins): Welcome the class. Revision from 1E of adjective endings on a PowerPoint slide: Choose the correct form e.g. I was **shocked/shocking** when I saw my home-work mark. Elicit answers from named learners, then show correct answer. Language study presentation of when clauses, the use of be and defining relative clauses; study of examples on slides with concept check questions and examples; also check of some phrases and collocations e.g. from time to time; break a bone; a lot of attention; vocabulary check: cuts bruises and injuries; genetic disorder; cure; check past verb forms which occur in the text in a mini test.

All this language work is from the text. Learners mainly listen as this is lecture mode but you can have questions and answers built in to the presentation to check they are paying attention and learning something. Then do the reading tasks (Ex. 1 – elicit predictions); Ex. 2 – elicit yes/ from the learners; Ex. 3 – do and then check as a class. Then do Ex. 5 on a slide – making the questions with the learners, and then ask the learners to reread the text to find the answers. Class check by nominating learners to supply answers.

This synchronous lesson would be followed by self-study. Instruct learners to do Ex. 1 and 2 from the workbook (supply answers), then do Ex 3 and 4, again supplying answers.

Learners send me their self-reporting sheets on the workbook tasks. The learners will do writing in 1H so there is no need to do writing exercises here. I will check some of the language from the texts in subsequent lessons (check collocations etc). When they do the writing in 1H I will check it and then ask the learners to record it and send the recordings to me to listen to.

Send individual thank you emails as they send me their work (just a simple 'Thank you').

Doing this _all_ asynchronously: You could record the pre-reading language study presentation; using the native language if you think this is necessary and appropriate.

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Conclusions and Moving Forward

The choice between synchronous and asynchronous online learning should not be a binary either/or choice. The solution is the appropriate mix of both.

I would worry about presenting language so the learners understand it (at lower levels) – in clear presentations of the grammar points; at the lowest levels this is best done to small groups synchronously using straightforward PowerPoint (or similar) presentations.

If I have one class of 30 learners I would consider splitting them into three smaller groups and giving each group a shorter lesson. This would be ideal but not always possible. If I have been given a hundred students I would consider presenting to them all together in lecture mode and then splitting them up into three smaller groups for practice tasks and doing my best with the larger numbers – at least 30 or so is easier to manage than 100.

I would provide controlled practice through something like My Grammar Lab if I could (or provide the answers to paper coursebook and workbook tasks and ask the learners to report on how well they did the tasks). This can be done asynchronously. I will check how well they are doing through personalised writing and speaking tasks – not by checking how well they do workbook exercises.

Learning vocabulary *can* be done asynchronously but it means material preparation beyond providing the answers to coursebook tasks. Coursebook materials are not self-study materials and providing the answers does not magically make them into such materials, so synchronous is probably best, with asynchronous follow-up tasks (with answers) and then personalised speaking and writing tasks to check.

I would try to exploit the reading and listening resources in a coursebook by preparing the learners in great detail *before* they do the reading – to achieve a successful reading/listening experience. This *could* be done asynchronously but would be better done synchronously. The reading comprehension tasks could be done asynchronously after the synchronous meeting, or during it, depending on the time available. The reading is a really a test – so I could check the answers or provide them.

Speaking and writing are what I am interested in evaluating – so I will need the learners to provide samples of these.

The solutions and options I have discussed above work for me and I hope they help you. You will each have to reach your own conclusions and devise a good way of working which works for you and your students. If you are lucky enough to have access and the means to use an electronic version of your book your task will be easier. If you have to use a paper book online then you will need to prepare some extra materials – but keep it simple, at least in the beginning – straightforward presentations are enough.

Learning to teach online is a big live experiment being conducted in lots of countries around the world. We and our learners have been thrown into the deep end and we'll make mistakes and get frustrated and so on, but it's a great learning experience for all of us. We need to keep in mind our learning objectives, protect ourselves from overwork and keep healthy.

Good luck.