

TEACHERS CORNER – FEBRUARY 2015

ONLINE LEARNING

Over the last few years the field of language teaching has embraced teaching and learning online. Online learning, it was thought, would motivate and engage language learners by allowing them to learn whenever, and wherever they wanted. However, as with all new trends in education, online learning has not delivered a perfect learning context outside of the classroom. Online learning, like all methods and practices in education, needs to be balanced with student needs, technology resources, and the teacher's classroom goals in order to create an effective learning environment.

Creating an effective learning environment online is similar in many ways to creating an effective classroom environment and good design is key. By designing our materials and activities to take advantage of the digital space we can better equip our students to become self-directed learners. Yet, if completely online learning is not the goal we can still maximize its benefits when it comes to blending face-to-face and online learning.

In this month's Teacher's Corner, we will investigate online learning and explore the advantages and disadvantages of teaching and learning online. We will also sort through the available approaches to learning online, specifically online learning, blended learning, and the flipped classroom model. Each has their own strengths and weakness that will be covered this month. Included with each of these approaches will be design considerations and tools we can use to maximize the benefits of online teaching and learning.