

Book Review

A Review of *Voices: Online and Hybrid Classroom Education*

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Kesser, G, & Stewart, T. (2018). *Voices: Online and hybrid classroom education*. Alexandria, VA: TESOL Press.

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If you wonder whether online learning is working or will work for your ESL students, *Voices: Online and Hybrid Classroom Education* offers a look at the future of both teaching and learning in the increasingly popular world of online and hybrid classes. It is an edited collection of twelve chapters featuring different authors, and it presents a variety of authentic teaching and learning approaches in online and hybrid instructional TESOL. This book demonstrates the diversity of English language study and teaching in online and hybrid environments based on the teachers/authors' experiences in their own classrooms through the evolution of technological change, and it explores what the future may hold for online/hybrid education. The importance of the book revolves around the theme of social networking for language learning and how learner-centered learning environments have maintained human connections.

This collection is unique because it looks at the insiders' perspectives and their experiences in their own classrooms. It is valuable to note that the experiences of the teachers and students in this book are geographically, culturally, and contextually diverse and appropriately presented. The collection is divided into three sections: voices of participants in online and hybrid TESOL teacher preparation contexts, voices of participants in online ESL and EFL contexts, and voices of participants in hybrid ESL and EFL contexts. It is important to take into consideration the attitudes and educational backgrounds of both teachers and learners and how those backgrounds affect the use of online learning. Teachers and learners' attitudes play an important part in the success of using technology in education. The contexts of hybrid learning and online learning require those of us teaching online to methodically reflect on our practices to better our teaching and learning. In Chapter 2, we read about learner autonomy (pp.15-21). In

Chapter 9 and Chapter 10, we learn about flipped classroom formats (pp.79-87; pp.89-94). In Chapter 11, we hear from teachers and students about online mentorship (pp. 95-100). These chapters are highlights because ESL instructors can relate to these viable issues, find valuable information, and learn from fellow teachers that are facing the same issues across educational domains.

In his effort to illustrate online learning, in Chapter 11, “Peer Mentoring Among ESL Learners via a Social Networking Site,” Radzuwan Ab. Rashid underscores the importance of student feedback, along with the relationships between teacher and student, and peer mentoring supplemented with online interactions. After listening to the voices of his students, he found that just because students socialize with family and friends on Facebook, they do not necessarily want to be mentored by a professional teacher via Facebook. This points to the need for traditional educational standards to be met by a professional teaching mentor with face-to-face human contact. Teacher-student interaction cannot be replaced by technology. According to Rashid, students feel that the online learning environment is a good supplement, but it is never a substitute for teacher-student interaction (p.99).

Rashid also mentions that there are some disadvantages to online mentoring using informal networking sites (p.98). The online discussions used in academic interaction are often less engaging, resulting in poor levels of student involvement. Motivation can be lower because students do not feel like engaging if they do not like what the other students type. Students may not engage because of the lack of personal human contact and human interaction in the online discussions. Students report that there are a lot of misunderstandings, misinterpretations, and some ambiguity in online interactions. In conclusion, the students in this article did not want to communicate solely with their teachers through informal networking sites because of the lack of face-to-face interaction.

Voices: Online and Hybrid Classroom Education is a useful resource for pre-service teachers, practicing teachers, and administrators at all levels and in all contexts. The book follows a sensible, practical, and easy to read structure. Kessler, the volume editor and Stewart, the series editor, are especially effective at showcasing the voices of actual teachers and students in real ESOL classrooms. The topics cover real-life situations that teachers and students are currently facing in the age of digital media and online learning. There is no better way to learn than from our own peers and colleagues. In developing *Voices: Online and Hybrid Classroom Education*, Kessler and Stewart have opened a discussion about the careful negotiation of online and hybrid learning experiences between teacher and students. If we extend this discussion, we can continue to critically analyze teaching and learning practices in TESOL online and hybrid learning contexts.

Author

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