A Year after ERT: How Online and Hybrid Classes have Reshaped F2F 2.0 Classes

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Vignette

Our Teaching Journey highlights our online and hybrid university teaching experiences during the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic, specifically as informed by workshop-based preparation sessions for faculty and students, and how these experiences impacted face-to-face (F2F) classes in 2021. As teachers with limited backgrounds in online instruction and blended learning approaches, we had many questions to consider, such as how to adapt the curriculum and how to create policies to ensure the best outcomes for students in synchronous and asynchronous online environments. Fortunately, our faculty team of ten teachers was divided into small learning groups and given five weeks to prepare (Table 1). Coinciding with two aspects (substitution and augmentation) of Puentedura's (2012) SAMR framework for technology integration in education, learning groups each week were given specific tasks in the morning, such as researching challenges of online pedagogy, experimenting with online tools that support curriculum delivery, and drafting policies for class conduct. In the afternoons, learning groups were given time to share their findings with the faculty team. At the end of each day, learning groups reflected on their daily tasks and the implications of the team sharings.

Starting from week three, students interacted with each other through the Edmodo learning management system (LMS). Students were given biweekly prompts that encouraged them to collaborate on troubleshooting issues in online learning environments. The prompts also collected needs assessment data on students' digital literacy and home learning situations. By week four, students had co-created a code of conduct to help establish behavioral norms for Zoom video conferencing and were encouraged to access Zoom to reduce potential anxiety during week five's orientation and subsequent classes.

Table 1. Pre-Semester Preparation (April 6 - May 7)

Timeline	Protocol
Wk 1 (Teacher)	Adapt curriculum & assessment, Learn Edmodo and Teams
Wk 2 (Teacher)	Adapt curriculum & assessment, learn web 2.0 tools
Wk 3 (Student)	Introduce themselves, interact with classmates, collaborate for troubleshooting
Wk 4 (Student)	Complete tech survey, co-create Zoom code of conduct
Wk 5 Orientation	Review class policies and practice Zoom breakout rooms

During the second semester, our department was mandated to switch from online lessons to a hybrid format. Speaking and listening lessons were conducted online because the faculty agreed that these skills would be safer and more practical to perform at home. We reasoned that wearing masks in F2F instruction would disrupt verbal and nonverbal cues in communication and that it would create a tendency to break social distancing protocols, as speaking activities often necessitate closer physical proximity. Writing and reading lessons were conducted in person. Students brought their laptops to class and were assigned collaborative tasks on Google Docs. There were some students who opted to continue learning remotely. Laptops and Google docs allowed F2F students to collaborate on tasks with remote students Zooming into lessons.

As our experience illustrates, the urgency to develop digital literacy during the pandemic has helped learners and teachers become more familiar with educational technology. Teaching experiences in the past year were a form of professional development, resulting in increased proficiency in using technology for language education (Promnitz-Hayashi, 2021). Returning to face-to-face classrooms in 2021, it became apparent that technology had

become an integral part of our teaching and students' learning and could be beneficial in the physical classroom. In the following sections, we explore how online and hybrid experiences have reshaped our F2F 2.0 classes.

Objectives
- Describe how online and hybrid experiences have reshaped learning and pedagogy.
- Illustrate ways in which F2F 2.0 classes could impact post-pandemic language education.

Practical Implications

Hybrid instruction and socially distanced classrooms during the second year of the pandemic played a role in establishing norms for using educational technology. Safety concerns resulted in a shift towards less movement in the classroom, stricter rules for pairwork engagement, and reduced usage of class handouts. We overcame these challenges with our students by using online tools such as Edmodo and Google Docs to access assignments, collaborate on tasks, and post homework. The more educational technology was used during instruction, the more it became a core component of language education.

Educational technology and online tools have played an increasingly prominent role in supporting learners in F2F instruction. In pre-pandemic classrooms, students with visual, auditory, or learning disabilities may not have been identified, resulting in some students underperforming or having anxiety in completing assignments. Increased usage of laptops in post-online classrooms has made it easier for students to access assignments, organize resources, and collaborate on tasks. By providing more flexibility, technology has enabled students to access their work from anywhere, making it easier to work with peers inside and outside of class. It has also allowed students to share completed homework with the whole class, leading to increased peer feedback and interaction with course content.

The bigger role of technology in language education has not only impacted how learning is envisioned, but has also impacted how teaching is conceptualized. When preparing for the second year of the pandemic, the nuances of online and F2F lessons became less distinguishable as planning stages remained unchanged. Integrating technology into lesson plans did not become incidental or unnecessary, but instead became a norm in teaching practices. We knew technology was here to stay when we noticed even the most reluctant of our colleagues during the first year of the pandemic had shifted their teaching approaches and found more creative ways to integrate technology into their pedagogy and assessment practices.

Online tools have made learning more transparent as teachers can digitally share documents with students and view their progress towards assignment completion. Being able to observe how students are completing assignments enables teachers to identify students who need support and provide timely feedback on the learning process. Shifting more attention to the process of learning can help teachers maximize learning experiences. The pandemic has compelled educators to rethink teaching practices and technology integration into curricula, which will enhance learning and teaching experiences in post-pandemic language education.

Reflective Conclusion

Online instruction during the pandemic has broadened our own and our colleagues' perspectives on LMS and web 2.0 tools in language education, which has increased opportunities for collaboration in class, during homework tasks, and in higher-stakes assessments. Educational technology has also reshaped how we and other teachers track student progress and provide feedback. Access to more robust assessment tools will help teachers identify struggling students who need support and make more informed decisions on adjusting lessons accordingly. We have come to appreciate especially the flexibility online tools provide, as they enable support for an array of situations students may encounter. We think these constructive additions will continue to positively impact the classroom. We believe our observations of our successful collaborative efforts, in-service training, pre-academic course preparation, and ongoing needs assessments will provide insights for establishing best practices in both pandemic and post-pandemic classrooms.

References

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Author Bios

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Link to Presentation on YouTube:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uVH4EGeNfl4