

don't I use it with my 7.30 class today.'). or even inspire you to do something better than how you've been doing it up to now; the excellent section on writing clear, concise rubrics is a case in point. There is always a danger that we become jaded, that we think we've seen it all and know it all, but let he whose skills cannot be honed cast the first stone.

Pitfalls are legion: in our keenness to customise the material for a hefty percentage of the course, we can end up burning the midnight oil more than is good for us (the Get-a-Life syndrome); we start scouring *The Guardian* website for discourse markers; we develop a tunnel vision for the material that prevents us from spotting otherwise glaring errors, like the info gap where both sets of students find themselves with exactly the same text; we can become overprotective or aggressive, like a mother watching a child from the sideline of a contact sport event. And why is it that our best proofreading only happens after the horse has bolted? ETpedia's authors tackle many of these issues head-on in the section titled Writing materials for other teachers. Teacher's notes are something you can arguably do without when it's just you doing the teaching (the same can maybe be said for rubrics, too, as you know what the instructions are and you probably prefer to give them orally), but allowing other teachers to test drive or simply use your

work really is a paradigm shift, so tips like using the imperative in rubrics, rather than the silly, patronising 'Try to ...' in the meticulously thought-out 10 Tips on writing effective rubrics make you wonder why the obvious is often so hard to come by.

Beyond the basic level of coming up with material that gives you, say, a more satisfactory take on the real differences between *some* and *any* (right down to where they do actually overlap) than you've seen in many coursebooks, with a certain discipline and some honest feedback, you can find your own voice coming through in the way you devise authentic responses to authentic material, instead of subjecting the text to a battery of so-called comprehension questions. The section on Writing material for reading, listening, speaking and writing provides sound guidance in moving in this direction, though the authors acknowledge that 'creating exercises to practise speaking can be especially challenging'.

Among the standout units for me here are the 10 Tips for writing role plays. The question of shelf-life (they call it Lifespan) is important with authentic material; only invest your time in what you can get several years of use out of. They also recommend the use of glossaries, still incredibly underused to

judge by the stuff I find lying abandoned around the photocopier. Used wisely, glossaries are a sensible way to deal with rare lexis that is key to understanding. The section on Adapting the level of the text has tips that include shortening, simplifying and omitting low frequency vocab. I find, maddeningly, that the more peripheral the lexis, the longer it takes to deal with, and I have no qualms about de-bugging (eliminating or rewriting the peripheral) authentic print text; nothing is sacred, fortunately.

One thing I noticed again with the trainees on our recent Business English Teachers' Course is how little published material most teachers have access to, making this ETpedia even more valuable and overdue. It's common for glowing reviews to conclude with something like 'This is a must for every teachers' room', but I cannot say that here; in my opinion, this is a must for every teacher.

Going into class with a piece of material of your own making, you want it to work so much that you teach from it as if your life depended on it. One thing is to be a fine teacher, another is to be a fine material writer; put them together and you have a potent mix.

Brian Brennan

Brian Brennan is the Language Training Manager at International House Barcelona Company Training.

Background books

Best Practices for Blended Learning

Pete Sharma and Barney Barrett
Pavilion Publishing 2018
See page 88 for details

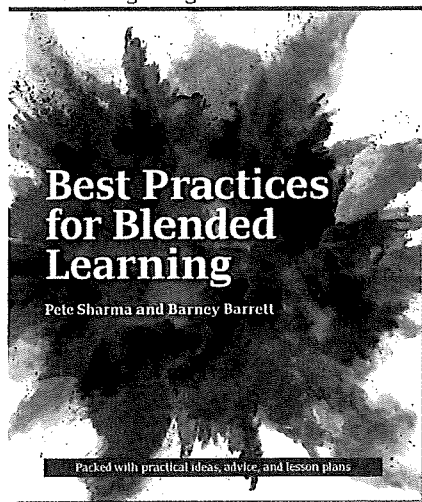
As a language teacher and teacher trainer, I have incorporated aspects of Blended Learning (BL) into my practice for a number of years. This often meant battling with the sceptics around me, who questioned the value of virtually any new technological tool. I found this

book to be timely as it consolidates and puts the notion of BL into perspective, maybe even for the sceptics. The reality is that technology is here to stay, and we need to evaluate any technology we choose to use in the same way we do any new task, approach or assessment, with the idea of enhancing our language teaching and gaining maximum benefit for our learners. We are constantly faced with decisions around how we need to incorporate technology into our teaching and we grapple with the balanced

required in a BL environment. Sharma and Barrett, in their introduction, clearly mention that their book is designed to 'provide a comprehensive, practical handbook of use to language teachers, academic managers, teacher trainers and institution heads around the world'. The authors appear to adopt an objective and realistic approach to the notion of a BL environment. This is particularly visible in a few of the chapters such as Chapter 1 (What is blended learning?), which addresses various terms that have been

used to discuss BL such as, disruptive, redundant, sustainable, mobile, culture and flux; in Chapter 3 (Research) where, with all the positive aspects of BL, they state clearly that 'Any claims about the superiority of BL need to be taken cautiously'; and in Chapter 6 this objectivity is addressed under the heading of Challenges.

Teaching English



The authors mention that the main aims of the book are to investigate the design of successful BL courses and to illustrate the range of such courses in language teaching. Overall, the book is divided into three main sections with Section One covering the concept of BL in language teaching; Section Two highlighting some practical ideas related to the teaching of key language components, such as grammar and vocabulary in a BL platform; and the final Section sharing useful resources for teachers. All the chapters are short and succinct, yet the authors manage to pack valuable advice, tasks and guidelines into each chapter.

Section One has ten short chapters, with the first two chapters summarising some background. Following that, Chapter 3 has tasks where crucial reflection questions are posed, such as 'Where on the scale between Theory (research) and Practice (Classroom teaching) is your own work represented?' These questions allow you to evaluate your use of BL as you work through the book. Chapter 4

(Models) continues in the same vein with self-evaluation tasks encouraging you to engage in an exploration of your own model of BL. It covers a range of interesting models such as a % model, dual track model, flipped classroom model, station rotation model, supplemental or replacement model. The core reasons affecting choices about incorporating BL courses are addressed in Chapter 5 (Why run a blended learning course?). The authors' objective approach is continued in Chapters 6 and 7, where the authors choose to elaborate on four critical success factors (appropriacy, complementarity, attitude and training).

Section Two includes ten short chapters exploring a range of practical teaching ideas. These follow on from an informative introductory chapter covering the impact of the digital age on certain contexts, such as teaching vocabulary, grammar, the fours skills, young learners and CLIL, and a guide on starting a BL course. In the rest of the section, the authors recommend practical implementation techniques for each of the contexts mentioned in the introductory chapter (such as, teaching vocabulary and grammar). Throughout these practical chapters, there are pertinent worksheets that are easy for teachers to use and which are suitable for most language teaching scenarios.

I found Section Three (Resources) inspiring and exciting as the authors focus on the potential for BL and language teaching in the future with short, thought-provoking bites on current technological development including augmented reality, virtual reality, robot-assisted language learning (RALL), artificial intelligence and intelligent speech recognition.

A special feature is the supplementary website resources linked to this book. It seems particularly appropriate that a book which focuses on BL extends the resource with such an outstanding selection of website material. There are guides on how to build a platform and create digital resources, as well as

additional teaching ideas, case studies and supporting videos. Links to other web-based resources are shared, for example the use of virtual classrooms and web-based conferences, which could be accessed by students living in more remote areas.

Another distinct feature is the inclusion of useful photocopiable worksheets providing teachers with easily implemented, user-friendly measures to produce or evaluate aspects related to their BL environment and to consciously reflect on the BL teaching environment.

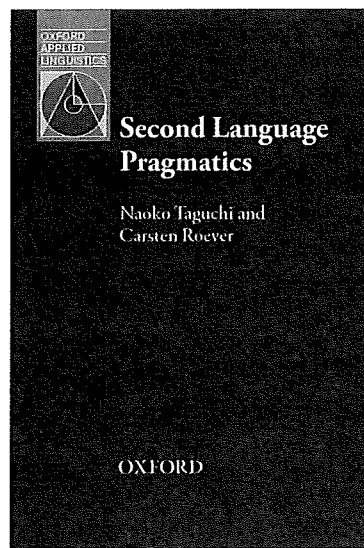
Teachers who have been working in a BL environment, as well as teachers new to the concept of BL, will gain pearls of wisdom from this extremely practical book.

Anthea Fester

Anthea Fester is an Academic Staff Member and researcher in the Centre for Languages at the Waikato Institute of Technology (Wintec), New Zealand.

Second Language Pragmatics

Naoko Taguchi and Carsten Roever
Oxford University Press, 2017
See page 88 for details



Pragmatics is the branch of linguistics dealing with language in use and the contexts in which it is used. With second language pragmatics research, work is both narrower and broader