

Mastering Remote Pedagogy

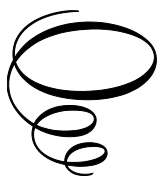
Mastering Remote Pedagogy:

Changing Paradigms

Edited by

Wafa Zoghbor and Helene Demirci

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Mastering Remote Pedagogy: Changing Paradigms

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CA	Conversational Agent
CBT	Computer-Based Training
CMC	Computer-Mediated Communication
EDM	Educational Data Mining
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELP	European Language Portfolio
ERT	Emergency Remote Teaching
ESL	English as a Second Language
FL	Foreign Language
FMV	Full-Motion Videogame
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
IAU	International Association of Universities
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
IoT	Internet of Things
LAQs	Long Answer Questions
LMS	Learning Management System
LOA	Learning-Oriented Assessment
MCQs	Multiple Choice Questions
NPC	Non-Playable Character
SoTL	Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
TLU	Target Language Use
TPACK	Technology, Pedagogy, and Content Knowledge
UAE	United Arab Emirates
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment
WBT	Web-Based Training
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

CHAPTER ONE

CHANGING PARADIGMS: MASTERING REMOTE PEDAGOGY

WAFZA ZOGHBOR AND HELENE DEMIRCI

Introduction

The shift to online learning was dramatically accelerated by the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Schools and higher education institutions were compelled to quickly adopt online and hybrid learning models and implement trustworthy remote assessment methods (Hilliger et al. 2022, 1507). Without the pandemic, online communication might not have become such a significant part of education and daily life. The urgent circumstances created by COVID-19 forced a rapid transition to distance communication to address health concerns and manage the unprecedented spread of the virus (Kalman et al. 2022, 1). Countries implemented measures to limit physical interactions, leading to widespread school closures. In this context, remote learning emerged as the primary, if not the only, means to sustain education and daily life without face-to-face interactions.

The impact of these school closures affected about 1.6 billion students in over 190 countries (UNESCO 2021,1). This crisis prompted a reevaluation of the value of university education, which includes not only academic content but also networking and social opportunities. To remain relevant, universities and schools must transform their learning environments to ensure that digitalization enhances relationships among students, teachers, and other interactions (Schleicher 2020, 4).

Historically, online teaching has faced resistance from educators (Ubell 2016, para. 6), and concerns about adopting learning management systems (LMS) based on educational technology have been prevalent (Gasaymeh 2017, 7527-7537). In this new educational landscape, these concerns are expected to grow, particularly as online tools became the only option during the COVID-19 pandemic. This complete shift may have heightened issues that were already of concern, such as teacher-student relationships

(Willen 2020), student engagement and motivation (DeWitt 2020), and teachers' mastery of remote pedagogy (Adams 2020).

While this volume is inspired by the sudden and unprecedented shift to online education during the pandemic, it develops the idea that the pandemic has long-term effects that extend beyond the reopening educational institutions, creating a new normal. This new normal has inspired the authors to reflect on their experiences and evaluate their practices.

The rest of this introductory chapter will explain how remote learning differs from online learning, discuss how the effects of COVID-19 continue to impact education, and examine the challenges and aspects of education that have been influenced and are being rethought. The chapter will then highlight the value and significance of this volume based on the discussions presented, and finally, introduce the chapters included in the book.

Online vs Remote Learning

This brings us to the concept of Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT), which distinguishes between online and remote learning. Hodges et al. (2020) describe ERT as “a temporary shift of instructional delivery to an alternate delivery mode due to crisis circumstances. It involves the use of fully remote teaching solutions for instruction or education that would otherwise be delivered face-to-face or as blended or hybrid courses, returning to that format once the crisis or emergency has abated” (Hodges et al. 2020, para. 13).

The terms online learning and remote teaching share similarities, particularly in their reliance on technology and devices to facilitate communication and education at a distance, often lacking face-to-face interaction. This shift has grown significantly in various educational settings, referring to interactions that occur through digital means, either in real-time (synchronous) or at different times (asynchronous). These remote interactions have become a vital part of educational practices, especially where in-person communication is limited or impossible (Santiago and Mattos 2023). However, while the absence of in-person interaction has become a dominant mode of communication, it has also altered how individuals connect in person, potentially diminishing the depth and variety of those interactions compared to traditional settings. Thus, understanding the dynamics of both remote and in-person communication is essential for fostering effective relationships (Santiago and Mattos 2023).

During the pandemic, the terms ‘online’ and ‘remote’ were frequently used interchangeably to describe educational settings that did not involve traditional face-to-face interaction. Despite this apparent similarity, these

concepts represent different approaches to leveraging technology for educational purposes, and the tendency to label all non-classroom-based learning as online learning can lead to confusion (Barbour et al. 2020, 1). To clarify this distinction, it is crucial to differentiate between emergency remote teaching—often a temporary solution implemented during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic—and well-designed online learning programs. Emergency remote teaching typically lacks the planning and resources that characterize effective online learning environments, thus failing to reflect the true potential of online education (Barbour et al. 2020, 1). Hodges et al. (2020, para. 13) further explain that emergency remote teaching aims “not to re-create a robust educational ecosystem but rather to provide temporary access to instruction and instructional supports in a manner that is quick to set up and is reliably available during an emergency or crisis.”

In contrast, online learning is a planned and deliberately designed approach to education that employs a variety of technologies and pedagogical strategies, distinct from a mere digital replica of face-to-face instruction. Before the pandemic, online learning carried a stigma of being perceived as lower quality than traditional education, despite research indicating otherwise. The rapid transition to online learning during the pandemic may have reinforced this negative perception, as many educators struggled to maximize the potential of online instruction due to the rushed circumstances (Hodges et al. 2020, para. 4). Consequently, Barbour et al. (2020, 6) emphasize the importance of avoiding the conflation of emergency remote teaching with high-quality online learning.

Understanding the fundamental differences is crucial: emergency remote teaching is characterized by limited planning and design, often involving the adaptation of existing materials with minimal modifications. It prioritizes speed and accessibility over pedagogical considerations, often leading to a heavy reliance on synchronous tools while neglecting the affordances of asynchronous learning. This lack of preparation can result in limited teacher training and support, leaving educators without the necessary skills and resources for effective online instruction. In summary, the labeling of educational methods as “online learning” can lead to significant misunderstandings, particularly when the context of emergency remote teaching is not adequately acknowledged. It highlights the need for clear definitions and critical examination of the terms we use in educational discourse. By recognizing these distinctions, we can better appreciate the unique challenges and opportunities presented by both online learning and emergency remote teaching (Barbour et al. 2020, 1).

Transforming Education: The Impact of COVID-19 on Remote Pedagogy

While COVID-19 is not the only pandemic in human history, it has undeniably reshaped the educational landscape in unprecedented ways. Previous crises, such as the SARS outbreak in 2003 and the H1N1 outbreak in 2008, demonstrated the potential of remote learning to facilitate continuous education during periods of disruption, with the latter allowing approximately 560,000 students to continue their studies amid pandemic-induced school closures (Barbour et al. 2020, 9). However, the dramatic global shift to online education prompted by COVID-19 stands apart in both scale and speed. This profound impact on people's lives leaves a lasting legacy that necessitates ongoing monitoring to understand its potential positive and negative effects. Barbour et al. (2020, 3-4) outlines the phases that education underwent during the pandemic, as categorized by Hill (2020) and Kelly (2020a):

- Phase 1: Rapid Transition to Remote Teaching and Learning.
- Phase 2: (Re) Adding Basics—institutions focused on integrating fundamental practices into the emergency course transition.
- Phase 3: Extended Transition During Continued Turmoil.
- Phase 4: Emerging New Normal. This last phase includes an uncertain but likely rise in online learning compared to before COVID-19. To help students succeed in this new environment, schools need to build strong online learning systems, both in technology and support.

The investments made during the pandemic in different tools and resources should continue to be used after the pandemic. As teachers and students get better at using these tools, they are much more likely to stay engaged with online learning. Following these phases, Hill and Moore (2020) argue that the professional practice of instructors in higher education should be enhanced in the wake of the COVID-19 experience by incorporating reflective practices into their teaching. This ongoing transformation indicates that while the immediate crisis may have subsided, the impact of COVID-19 on education persists, ushering in a new normal that differs significantly from pre-pandemic practices. The need for discussions on remote pedagogy is more pressing than ever as educators navigate this evolving landscape.

Navigating the Ongoing Challenges of Remote Learning in a Post-Pandemic Era

While remote learning has enabled education to continue amid disruptions, it has also highlighted significant challenges and emerging issues that are not entirely resolved as we transition into a post-pandemic educational landscape. The sudden shift to remote learning created numerous obstacles, particularly for educators in vocational education and training (VET), which emphasizes practical skills and job-specific training. The abrupt nature of this transition limited training opportunities for educators, exacerbating the difficulties faced during this time (Schleicher 2020, 23). Institutions were not ready for the sudden changes, which had a negative effect on students' involvement in their learning.

Student engagement in the learning process was another challenge. Engagement is crucial in STEM pathways, as emphasized by Kuh (2009, 693) and Perry (2022, 1312–1326). Remote learning can incorporate various engagement strategies, including motivational factors, effective teacher facilitation, hybrid learning models, and the use of learning technologies to enhance student involvement (Yang et al. 2023, 1). However, the engagement of learners was adversely affected not only within lessons but also throughout the broader educational process. Kuh (2009, 694) notes that while the long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic remain uncertain, there is evidence indicating a downward trend in student engagement since 2020.

Unplanned or poorly planned remote learning can jeopardize student engagement (Yang et al. 2023, 2). The lack of engagement has limited opportunities for quality, systematic online learning processes that could not be achieved face-to-face. Additionally, the availability of technology has impacted learners' engagement and the ability of educators to deliver high-quality remote lessons. Not all students had the necessary technology at home, which particularly affected those with special education needs. This situation brought to light the necessity for ensuring a “universal remote public education” to secure equitable access to education for all learners and to mitigate the limitations caused by the sudden shift (Caprucci 2022, 2).

Another issue is the lack of training. Unplanned remote learning led to difficulties in offering support to all educators due to insufficient preparation time. Consequently, while many educators adapted to continue teaching in this new mode, they often found the experience to be stressful (Barbour et al. 2020, 1). This sudden shift has unveiled several challenges and

weaknesses within the education system, underscoring a lack of preparedness to handle crises that disrupt face-to-face learning.

Educators require not only support for implementing tools to deliver remote learning that maintains the quality of their face-to-face instruction but also assistance in adapting to a new environment that expects them to function as inclusive educators. The pandemic and remote learning have significantly affected teachers' expectations, needs, skills, and roles. While teachers have worked diligently to prevent learning losses and support student well-being during online education, they have also faced cognitive, subjective, physical, and social challenges (Kalman et al. 2022, 2).

Assessment practices also needed to adapt to the new remote learning context. Trustworthy remote assessment, as defined by Surahman and Wang (2022, 1537), refers to honest, valid, and reliable methods of evaluating learning outcomes remotely, ensuring consistent results across different administrations. Given that trustworthy assessment is critical for supporting learning processes and accrediting educational quality (Hilliger et al. 2022, 1507), the rise of academic dishonesty, defined by researchers as violating rules to gain unfair advantages, has raised concerns in online assessment environments. Instances of cheating and plagiarism have been documented, with mixed evidence regarding their prevalence compared to face-to-face courses (Hilliger et al. 2022, 1508). In other words, while we know that cheating and plagiarism happen, it's uncertain whether they occur more often in online classes than in classes where students and teachers meet in person. Some studies suggest that it might be easier to cheat online, but the overall data does not provide a definitive answer on how these behaviors compare between the two modes of learning environments.

In examinations, cheating remains a common issue, taking various forms such as consulting unauthorized materials and collaborating with peers to achieve higher scores. To uphold academic integrity, researchers have suggested multiple strategies for detecting cheating, including machine-learning algorithms and the use of normative appeals or honor codes. Different types of digital proctoring mechanisms have emerged to address these challenges. Live proctoring mirrors traditional proctored examinations, with a human proctor monitoring remotely. Other methods include recording online examinations for later review or using automated systems to identify misconduct (Hilliger et al. 2022, 1508–1509).

As we move forward, it is essential to acknowledge that many of these challenges may persist, necessitating ongoing attention and innovative solutions in post-pandemic education.

Significance of the Book

While many chapters in this volume were inspired by the global pandemic caused by COVID-19, their relevance extends far beyond that singular moment in time. The authors draw from their experiences during the unprecedented shift to remote learning and the resulting transformations in educational practices. These insights illuminate the long-term effects of the pandemic, which have ushered in new norms that significantly differ from the pre-pandemic educational landscape. This book is anchored in two main pillars that underscore its importance.

The first is the value of reflection in enhancing teaching skills (Hodges and Fowler 2021, 118-122). John Dewey famously stated, “We do not learn from experience... we learn from reflecting on experience.” Reflection is a vital cognitive process that not only enhances individual learning but also applies across various professional contexts (Marshall 2019, 405). By prioritizing reflection, this volume encourages educators to critically assess their experiences and adapt their practices for improved outcomes.

The second pillar focuses on the long-term effects of the pandemic and the evolving nature of education. Daniel (2020, 95) posits that the changes implemented during the pandemic will leave “a lasting trace,” suggesting that the innovations in teaching and assessment instigated by COVID-19 will likely continue. Mottiar et al. (2022, 117) echo this sentiment, and the concept of “waves of learning technology,” (Guppy et al. 2022, 164), indicates that the pandemic has accelerated the adoption of educational technology. There is a consensus among university stakeholders that blended and hybrid instruction will see increased prevalence in the post-pandemic landscape (Guppy et al. 2022, 164).

Recognizing these shifts, this volume not only presents primary data studies on remote learning, its impact, and effectiveness but also evaluates the remote learning experience during the pandemic. It includes reflections from authors who deeply understand the transformative effects of COVID-19 on education. Ongoing evaluation of learning systems during this time will be crucial in identifying and sustaining effective practices. Together, these two pillars make this book not only relevant but invaluable to educators navigating the complexities of remote learning. By focusing on the unique circumstances brought about by the pandemic and emphasizing the power of reflection in the learning process, this volume provides essential insights for adapting to the new normal that has emerged in education.

Introductions to the Chapters

This volume is organized into four parts to address the key areas mentioned above. The four parts are:

Part One: Innovative Tools and Resources for Remote Learning

Part Two: Designing and Planning Effective Remote Learning Experiences

Part Three: Assessment and Academic Integrity in Remote Education

Part Four: Experiences, Adaptation, and Emotional Impact in Remote Education

Part One: Innovative Tools and Resources for Remote Learning

Chapter Two, “Think Tasks before Tech Tools,” by Rania Jabr, reflects on the experience of remote learning with the attempt to maintain quality teaching by combining essential English language skills with important digital skills needed while teaching online to meet students’ needs and utilize teaching methods for developing an interactive learning environment online. Rania Jabr argues that teaching online is not just another way of delivering material at a distance instead of in person, but should work to bridge the gap between teaching skills and using online tools. This chapter explains how to create a connection between developing tasks and using tech tools.

While the opening introductory chapter sets the stage for critical reflection that connects language and digital skills, the next three chapters present digital tools designed to enhance learners’ skills and foster interaction in remote learning environments. In Chapter Three, “Gaming Dialogue Systems as Language Teaching Assistants: The Case of Choices-Matter Video Games Subgenre,” Athanasios Karasimos looks at how language teaching and learning can be connected with tools that use natural language processing, focusing on choosing apps and games for teaching languages. Using a communicative approach to foreign language education, he examines the development of digital assistants and video games, showing how they can be used in a constructive learning environment. Karasimos provides a critical analysis of two digital assistants, Cortana and Siri, as well as two recent video games, *Detroit: Become Human* and *The Infectious Madness of Doctor Dekker*, and discusses how these tools can be

used to teach English and Greek, offering practical strategies for their use in the classroom.

In Chapter Four, titled “Web 2.0 Tools for EFL Teaching and Learning: Empirical Findings and Pedagogical Applications,” Lucrecia Rallo Fabra and Evangelia Karagianni examine the impact of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, particularly in enhancing the complexity and accuracy of language use. They introduce several Web 2.0 tools that teachers can utilize to engage students with digital content and collaborative activities, which can significantly improve their communication skills in the foreign language.

In Chapter Five, “Integrating Novel Camtasia Videos in a Flipped Classroom for a Health and Environment Course at a UAE University,” Rima Al Chaar and Lama Mahmoud introduce a new method that utilizes the interactive online tool Camtasia for an undergraduate Environmental Sciences course. Unlike traditional online tools like PowerPoint and Narrated PowerPoint, Camtasia provides pre-lecture sessions focused on content, complete with short quizzes that give students immediate feedback and allow educators to assess their understanding of the lecture material. This chapter explains the reasons for adopting these various technological tools and explores the benefits they bring to the learning experience for both students and instructors, suggesting a promising framework for future research.

Part Two: Designing and Planning Effective Remote Learning Experiences

Part Two of this volume is a compilation of three chapters on planning effective remote learning experiences. In Chapter Six, titled “Planning an Effective E-Learning Session,” Mahmoud Nafa discusses practical ways to design and run successful e-learning sessions. He talks about the benefits and challenges of e-learning, focusing on three main questions. The first is the long-term effects of COVID-19 on the growth of e-learning, noting how it initially increased in popularity and continues to shape educational practices even as its immediate impact lessens. The second is the strategies for addressing the challenges faced when implementing large-scale e-learning. The third is the changing relationship between traditional classroom teaching and online learning. Using insights from both real-world experiences and academic research, the chapter ends with recommenda-

tions to create a supportive connection between traditional teaching methods and e-learning.

In Chapter Seven, titled “Reimagining E-Portfolio in Remote Foreign Language Learning,” Sanja Vicevic Ivanovic discusses how portfolios have become popular as a tool for assessing foreign language learning. She starts with the idea that remote learning might have changed how portfolios are used and aims to explore whether e-portfolios have taken on different roles in remote foreign language education. Using a qualitative analysis of 10 Seesaw digital portfolios from young language learners aged 6 to 10, the chapter examines how these portfolios functioned in remote and face-to-face foreign language (FL) classrooms. It highlights the changes in their roles, showing a shift from simply reporting to playing a more significant educational role. The chapter concludes by reflecting on the major changes in the educational function of e-portfolios and what this means for using them in early foreign language learning.

In Chapter Eight, titled “Exploring Online Learner-Content Interaction of Emirati Female Students,” Larysa Nikolayeva investigates the online interaction styles of eleven Emirati female students enrolled in an English writing course and how these styles relate to their course outcomes. She utilized Educational Data Mining (EDM) techniques to analyze student behavior based on data collected from Blackboard course reports. The findings showed that there was no strong link between how often students accessed the course materials on Blackboard or the amount of time they spent on these materials and their overall grades in the course.

Part Three:

Assessment and Academic Integrity in Remote Education

Part Three consists of three chapters that focus on assessment and academic integrity in online learning. In Chapter Nine, titled “Mitigating Against Academic Misconduct in Online Assessment,” Peter Davidson tackles the challenge of preventing academic dishonesty in online assessments to ensure that these evaluations are fair and trustworthy. The chapter aims to explain how educators can create and carry out assessment tasks that reduce cheating and maintain a good level of fairness and reliability. It specifically examines how different types of test tasks and the way assessments are conducted can limit students’ chances to cheat. The final section of the chapter discusses ways to minimize academic dishonesty during remote and online tests.

In Chapter Ten, titled “Weighing on Online Assessment: College Students’ Stances,” Najah Almohammed, Negmeldin Alsheikh, Maha

Alhabbash, and Safa Alothali explore college students' views on online assessments. The research was conducted in two parts: interviews with six college students and a survey involving 140 randomly selected college students who completed the survey about their experiences with online assessments. The students reported experiencing stress and anxiety due to unstable internet connections. They also believed that online assessments during remote learning resulted in lower exam scores and did not effectively measure their practical knowledge. The findings could influence how teaching, curriculum, and assessments are approached in schools after the pandemic. Hence, the chapter addresses the long-term impact of the pandemic on remote education and future assessment in language courses.

In Chapter Eleven about "Quality Assurance of Teaching and Learning in Remote Learning Settings in Higher Education: From a 'Stepney Tyre' to 'Pandora's Box'", Burcu Tezcan Unal shifts from assessing students to assessing process and teaching during remote learning. Her chapter addresses a more generic level of assessment of remote learning focusing on quality assurance and teaching remotely. The author argues that as the way students and teachers interact changes with the shift to remote learning, the existing practices for teaching, learning, and quality assurance need to be reassessed. This reassessment is essential to meet the educational needs of students in the given context. The chapter emphasizes the importance of universities establishing their own internal quality systems to focus more on student-centered approaches in their teaching and learning processes. The chapter suggests that the pandemic has prompted a necessary re-evaluation of how educational quality is ensured in a rapidly changing learning environment.

Part Four:

Experiences, Adaptation, and Emotional Impact in Remote Education

In Chapter Twelve, titled "The Emotional Impact of Online Teaching on University Educators," Theologia Michalopoulou and Thomai Alexiou examine how remote teaching has affected university professors during remote learning as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. They used a questionnaire to gather responses from 31 academics. While the participants felt confident in managing their online classes, using technology, and being effective in their teaching, regardless of their age, they were less satisfied with their desire to teach online. They experienced frustration due to an increased workload required for planning and preparing online classes. The lack of eye contact and personal interaction with students led to feel-

ings of loneliness and inadequacy, and technical problems added to their frustration. Despite the challenges reported, the authors expressed positive feelings about the potential for a blended curriculum that combines online and in-person learning.

In Chapter Thirteen, titled “Changing Paradigms: Reflecting and Assessing Students’ Initial Remote Learning Experiences,” Shytance Wren and Catherine Negron developed a qualitative study to explore students’ expectations, experiences, and learning outcomes from 125 reflections written by final-year students at a public university in the UAE. They look at how students describe their experiences with remote learning and identify factors that encourage or discourage their participation. The chapter presents a remote learning model based on themes found in the student reflections, discussing its educational implications and practical strategies. The three main points drawn from these themes highlight that students need interactive group learning, quick and varied communication, and different ways of learning to succeed in a remote learning setting.

The final chapter, Chapter Fourteen, titled “Online vs Face-to-Face Learning: Lessons for Going Back to the New Normal After the Pandemic,” by Denise Ozdeniz and Mary Hatakka, discusses the lessons learned from remote learning experiences, emphasizing students’ perspectives to help educators adapt to the new normal following the long-term effects of COVID-19. This study focuses on the experiences of Gulf Arab students with remote learning during the pandemic compared to face-to-face learning in the post-pandemic period, aiming to provide recommendations based on insights gained from both methods of instruction. Reflective essays by 82 male and female students from two different higher education institutions in the United Arab Emirates about learning in both environments and emerged included the impact of both learning modes on students’ personal lives, study skills, personal development, individual concerns, and digital literacy challenges. The findings from this study can offer valuable insights into the new normal in the post-pandemic period, shaped by the long-term effects of COVID-19, and can guide current teaching and learning practices.

Concluding Remarks

This volume is a collection of studies focused on mastering remote pedagogy. The papers included in this volume reflect on the experiences and insights inspired by the COVID-19 pandemic, its ongoing long-term effects, and the transition to a new normal shaped by these global changes. The contributors emphasize that the long-term impact of COVID-19 has

created a new normal that has transformed the systems, skills, expectations, and experiences of educators. While the topics covered in this volume are not exhaustive, they provide valuable insights into the current challenges surrounding remote learning and the evolving landscape of online education as a result of the pandemic.

The chapters highlight various aspects of remote learning, addressing issues such as lesson design, assessment, perceptions and attitudes, and quality assurance. On a personal note, editing this book has been a unique experience for both editors. It has come at a critical time in remote education, as the world navigates the aftermath of a global pandemic and seeks to forge a new era of education. This new era requires that we do not simply return to pre-pandemic practices, but rather embrace an emerging normal that equips both learners and teachers with extensive experiences using remote tools. This transformation shifts the concept of 'remote' to 'online,' placing education in non-face-to-face environments in a new context for educators. We hope that this collection of chapters will serve as a valuable resource for educators. By following the recommendations from the authors, researchers can further enrich this knowledge base by addressing specific gaps and validating these studies, enabling educators to better tackle remote learning challenges and provide adequate support to learners during their online education experiences.

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PART ONE

INNOVATIVE TOOLS AND DIGITAL RESOURCES FOR REMOTE LEARNING

CHAPTER TWO

THINK TASKS BEFORE TECH TOOLS

RANIA JABR

Abstract

In online education, the integration of critical English language skills with essential digital literacies is vital for 21st-century teaching. This chapter emphasizes a student-centric approach, focusing on effective practices for creating an interactive online learning environment. Beyond acquiring remote teaching skills, educators must select appropriate technology tools—such as learning management systems, collaboration apps, and gamification platforms—and tailor them to specific learning contexts. It is crucial for educators to develop the ability to assess when, how, and with which students to implement these tools effectively. A seamless transition from face-to-face instruction to online settings requires bridging the gap between teaching competencies and the use of digital resources. Educators should prepare to incorporate technology in their virtual classrooms, designing interactive, skill-based English lessons that also promote digital citizenship. This chapter outlines the need for synergy between task development and technology integration. It explores practical strategies such as brainstorming sessions, collaborative techniques, gamification elements, and reflective practices. Additionally, it addresses potential challenges educators may encounter in this transition and offers solutions to overcome them, ensuring a comprehensive approach to online teaching and learning.

Introduction

With the move toward online instruction, which was dramatically adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic and has been adopted post-pandemic as a long-term effect, ensuring an optimal match between tasks and tech tools has become indispensable. Educators soon realized the need to think of technology not as a learning outcome in the classes but as a necessary communication medium (Jabr 2020, 135-136). Technology provided the