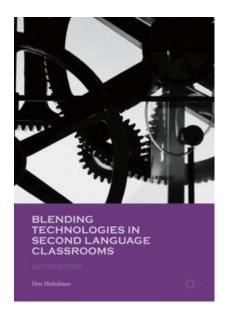# Book review

Blending Technologies in Second Language Classrooms

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Blending Technologies in Second Language Classrooms

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As a professor at Sapporo Gakuin University, Don Hinkelman's work explores teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and intercultural communication. He was awarded Best Moodle Innovation of 2014: Video Assessment Module. Now, we are able to read his latest book, *Blending Technologies in Second Language Classrooms* (2018). Divided into 12 well-referenced chapters, each one including a summary, this timely work offers a panoramic view of blended methodology. Of special interest is the postlude where we find a number of final reflections on some of the fundamental issues developed throughout the book, as well as on the future of teaching. The chapters deal with major topics in the field of Blended Learning (BL) and successfully fulfill the objective of the study by presenting updated pedagogical methodology and providing useful strategies to teachers and researchers.

Chapter 1 traces the advances in BL. Considerations such as its purpose, as well as issues relating to multimodality, appropriateness, and sustainability are explained here. Understanding learning technologies is the focus of chapter 2**,** in which performance and the six dimensions of such technologies (actions, timing, grouping, spaces, texts, and tools) are well described.

The author continues to elucidate the evolution of language pedagogy in chapter 3 by revisiting the learning process. He uses the term "metaphor" to review learning as instruction, acquisition and socialization, as well as discussing the role and centrality of the environment in which learning takes place. Here, Hinkelman raises the question of whether learning ecology can unite language-learning metaphors leading to an "ecological paradigm of technology".

Chapter 4 explores the designs for blended language learning and considers blended environments as hybrid. Social media, flipped classroom, learner analytics, visible learning, quantified self, virtual assistant, as well as disruptive innovation elements are also dealt with here. Throughout these pages, the content ranges from task design to professional development benchmarks.

Chapter 5 addresses strategies for language learning: flipped teaching, from single media to multimedia texts, synchronous and asynchronous activities and gamification. Notwithstanding, and worthwhile noting, the author does not ignore paper assessment, face-to-face assessment and online assessment.

In chapters 7 and 8 the principles of research and action research in blended environments are discussed. Moreover, blended environments are approached from an ethnographic perspective, an often criticized research method which the author redeems and defends in chapter 9.

Chapter 10 deals with blended technologies in practice. This chapter will be of specific interest to teachers, who will find the explanations of some techniques and activities very constructive. Some of the activities covered include carouselling, where learners give micro presentations and their *partners* record them on a mobile phone so as to later discuss the performance according to a rubric, quiz-game based classroom response systems such as *Kahoot!,* an example of formative assessment to force reading and vocabulary use. Video assessment with papers and LMS rubrics are also dealt with.

Chapters 11 and 12 are devoted to the explanation of blended language lessons and blended language programs in practice. Researchers in this field will learn from the author´s experience, since the results he observed were not always satisfactory regarding the pedagogical effectiveness of these programs. Despite this, the author posits possible explanations for the unexpected performance in some cases.

To sum up, this book represents an excellent contribution to the field for EFL teaching and learning. The writer shows, quite in line with Goffman (1974), how much has been done in this area of research from the diverse perspectives of teachers, administrators, and researchers. Hinkelman's writing allows the reader to easily follow the evolution of BL beyond Computer Assisted Language Learning to its establishment as a paradigm within Second Language Teaching and Second Language Acquisition. Constituting a new perspective on BL, the book explains in an enlightening, logical, and coherent way, how this new model combines communicative and Task Based Language Teaching principles, integrating new roles and concepts such as "ICTs ecology". What differentiates this book from others in the field is that it is not limited to the study of BL in the classroom but also covers research and curricular design, thus achieving a global vision of the construct. At a time when teachers seem to have chosen the "no method" option, it would seem that this trend has been surpassed by the inevitable presence of Blended Learning, which, according to Hinkelman, is the new future of learning.

Reference

Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience.* New York: Harper & Row.