Roenko L.V.,
Senior Lecturer at the Department of Foreign Languages,
Kyiv National University of Technology and Design,
Kyiv, Ukraine

THE MAIN ASPECTS OF TEACHING ENGLISH ONLINE

Nowadays we cannot imagine the educational process without information and communication technologies (ICT). The challenges of the present time cannot be solved without ICT. They are various in types and purpose. Using ICT is extremely helpful in teaching and studying foreign languages, namely the English language.

Let us have a look at ICT which are currently widely used in the educational process in the area of foreign languages.

The aim of the given research is to analyse the basic technical aspects which the teacher needs to know and take into account in order to start teaching English online.

Teaching online is fairly common around the world. But switching from face-to-face to online lessons is not as easy as it may sound. Some of the skills that are very useful in the classroom may not be as useful online and vice verse. Classroom management has to be different, we use different types of materials and resources, and even the time that students are able to focus on one specific activity can change.

That is why the teacher who starts his online practice needs to pay attention to the following pieces of advice connected with teaching English online:

1) Be realistic about your own development. The most successful online English teachers have either had specific training or learned a lot from experience. This takes time and opportunity – something that not all of us have right now. If the teacher hadn't a transition from face-to-face to online lessons, then it's only natural that a few of his lessons are not as good as

usual. Some things will probably go wrong, especially at the first lessons. Teachers will come across technical difficulties, planning lessons might take longer than usual, a lot of the activities, which usually were great in the classroom, might not work online. It takes time and practice. We must explain the students that we are all learning together. The teachers don't have to rush in and try to do everything that experienced online teachers already do. While evaluating our lessons, it is important to focus on things that the teacher managed to do rather than on things that he didn't.

2) Get some input on teaching online. Instead of trying to figure out everything on your own, it is advisable to take advantage of all the resources and materials that are available to an English teacher. It is a good idea to get in touch with local English teachers' association or join one of the many Facebook groups for teachers where the teacher will be able to find more information.

3) Start with the tools you are familiar with. There is a huge number of digital tools out there that the teachers can use for their online lessons. Such smartphone apps that we already use for communication with friends can be useful, for example, Viber, WhatsApp, Facetime can be very useful for live online lessons. The apps like Zoom and Skype even allow sharing our screen and content from our computer. Other common apps like Google Drive, Dropbox allows sharing our materials with students very easily and even encourage some collaborative work. It is advisable to start using the apps a teacher is familiar with, meanwhile start experimenting with more complex tools which can be more effective such as Google classroom, Zoom etc. Later, when the teacher becomes more confident it is good to start introducing the tools to students gradually. It is important to remember that it is not only the teacher, the students also have to learn how to deal with the new tools and technology.

4)   Stick to the principles you know. Teaching online can be very different from face-to-face but it all goes down to Teaching, and more importantly – learning. The principles the teacher uses in face-to-face lessons are still going to be applied in the online lessons. It the students are used to communicative approach, the teacher should try to make the lessons as communicative as possible. If the teacher tends to use task-based learning then it would be useful to do collaborative tasks that will be carried online. Going back to the basic principles that guide the teacher's planning and delivery may help to be more confident and it can also prevent situation when the students may feel that the online lessons are not exactly as profitable or enjoyable as before.

5)   Use the right tool for the job and try to integrate the tools when possible. As have been mentioned before, there are lots of different tools which a teacher of foreign languages can use for teaching online. Knowing which tool to use will depend on how comfortable the teacher is, using different apps and software, how the students use technologies in daily life and also what exactly the teacher wants technology to do for his lesson. When we teach online, most of the tools we need will probably help with these for actions:

-     Sharing materials with students, including handouts, texts, videos etc.;

-     Organising interaction, tasks, activities and materials;

-     Carrying out live meetings and web conferences;

-     Adding diversity by including games, interactive online activities etc. [2]

And if the teacher is already familiar with the basic tools it is a good idea to integrate different tools in order to make foreign language lessons more dynamic.

6)   Flip your lessons. In the traditional lesson we present the lesson and then give home task to students to practice. The idea if the flipped lesson is to change this order, so homework comes

before the lesson. So, students receive homework which includes videos and activities that will help them study independently the grammar or vocabulary the teacher wants them to learn. Then the lesson itself is used to check students' understanding and mistakes, and more importantly use the language students learned at home to communicate, improving speaking skills and fluency. Russel Stannard explains: "Since we can now quickly make videos or find relevant material on the internet that relates to the teaching we do in the lesson, then we can guide the students to this material, tell them to look at it at home and learn it, then use the class time to actually work with the new knowledge they have acquired". [1] In order to do that we need an online repository or a place where the teacher can organise and share the materials for the learners. Some of the most popular options are Google Classroom, Edmondo and Moodle. They all allow us to share links, texts, videos and even visual explanations – all in a very organised manner.

7) Test and rehearse before the lesson. There are just so many things that may go wrong with technology in an online lesson. The best solution is preventive not reactive. At the beginning of each working day, or in the hour before the lesson, it is advisable to spare the time to test your Wi-Fi connection speed and make sure that nothing is preventing access to the microphone, headphones or video camera. It is vital to check if everything is working from the students' perspective. It can be useful to use mobile and laptop for a teacher at the same time. We can log on the laptop and do the action which we do as a teacher and using mobile we can pretend that we are students and check if everything is working fine.

8) Get feedback from the students. The transition from face-to-face to online lessons may not go as smoothly as the teacher planned. By being aware what goes well and what doesn't in our lessons the teacher can little by little improve his performance and

therefore can become more effective online teacher. And students can give precious feedback and information how productive the lesson was and how effectively the technology worked. In this case it is necessary to keep an open communication channel with the students. It is vital to remember: the more specific question we ask, the more detailed information we get.

To conclude, it would be necessary to remind that efficient using of information and communication technologies (ICT) in the educational process is an urgent issue. Nowadays a teacher of foreign languages has to be able to prepare and conduct a class using information and communication technologies. A class using ICT is visual, bright, informative and interactive, saves the teacher's time and allows the student to work in his own pace, allows the teacher to train students individually and in a nuanced way, gives the possibility to control and evaluate the results of the training process immediately.

Effective use of information and communication technologies during foreign language classes allows making them more interesting, engaging the students into project and research work; students strive to realize their potential and use opportunities.

REFERENCES

1. Stannard, R. (2019) The flipped classroom and your coursebook [Electronic resource] / R. Stannard. Available from: https://www.eltnews.eu/articles/1679-russell-stannard-the-flipped-classroom-and-your-course-book

2. Heredia, R. (2020) Tech tools to teach online in times of social distancing and lockdowns. [Electronic resource] / R. Heredia. Available from: https://www.whatiselt.com/single-post/2020/03/18/Tech-tools-to-teach-online-in-times-of-social-distancing-and-lockdowns