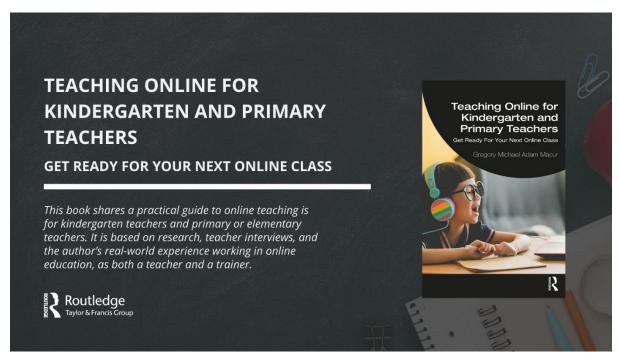**Book review and virtual book launch for 'Teaching Online for Kindergarten and Primary Teachers: Get Ready for Your Next Online Class'.**

Reviewers: Dr Elizabeth Hidson & Vikki Wynn, International Initial Teacher Training Team, University of Sunderland, UK; @DrHidson and @VikkiWynn1

- Author: Macur, Gregory Michael Adam - @Gregory_Macur
- ISBN 9781032168548
- Published October 25, 2022, by Routledge. [Online link](#).
- 214 Pages 1 B/W Illustrations
- RRP £29.99; 30% discount until April 2023 with code 'TOKPT30'.

Book context

Working in the field of international education gives a different perspective to the needs of teachers. While many parts of the world are already back teaching face-to-face, some areas are only just now making that transition either partly or fully, continuing to protect children and school staff in the wake of Covid-19. In the UK we have moved to a situation where, despite some being keen to move on from pandemic pedagogies, there is a need for educators to remain skilled and knowledgeable as part of contingency planning as well as for professional digital competence (Redecker, 2017). There is also now the idea of the 'Covid keeper' (O'Connell, 2021) – something that worked well out of necessity during the pandemic that is good to retain even now. Online parents' evenings, blended learning for strike days and snow days – all of these require schools to review their working practices and adapt accordingly.

Technology in Early Years

Those working with very young children may have noted the DfE's removal of the Early Learning Goal relating to technology as part of the reforms to the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE, 2021). Goto (2020) highlighted that changes to statutory documents only change what we need to report on and called for screen-based technology to be used in active and collaborative ways, to encourage communication. Although teaching online may be used less frequently with the very youngest pupils

out of preference for face-to-face teaching, it is still important for teachers to upskill in terms of teaching with technology. The findings of the EEF's 2020 rapid evidence assessment pointed to the importance of teaching quality, access to technology, pupil interactions, independence and teachers' pedagogical decisions about what is most suitable for the content and age of their pupils. It is against this backdrop that Macur's book appears, drawing together technology and pedagogy in an accessible and easily digestible handbook for teachers.

About the author

Greg Macur is a senior leader in an international school in China, involved in teaching, research and professional development within a large international school group. He also shares his expertise as a professional practice tutor for the University of Sunderland's international initial teacher training team, as well as contributing guest lectures and conference keynote presentations.

Audience

Although the book is aimed at teaching online, it is links online teaching to the pedagogical terms that teachers will be familiar with. It is also refreshing to see approaches that could be more complex in an online format being addressed, such as the inquiry-based learning that is popular in international schools. In the first instance, the book offers practical and realistic ideas for teachers, underpinned with examples, links to research, and key takeaways. It is first and foremost a teacher handbook. However, while teaching may take place in a virtual classroom, it is still part of a wider institution and for that reason, school leaders would find the advice and guidance important and relevant in ensuring a strategic approach to teaching and learning. This book would be useful to school leaders reviewing their policies for online teaching, for teaching with technology, and in fact when reviewing a range of other policies to bring them up to date with the new landscape. Policies for parental engagement may require an overhaul when technology becomes an expectation in the process.

Content of the book

The thirteen chapters of the book are structured to get a teacher thinking about online education – the why as well as the how arguments, with practical suggestions for getting set up. It tackles classroom management online, including online student engagement and working with parents. Interestingly, the author's own research on online teaching comes through in a chapter on body language and posture, with a fascinating insight into the lack of correct posture – a comment that makes the reader shift in their seat and think about good posture when learning with and through technology. Things that are useful for teachers, such as how to work with different size classes, how to provide error correction and feedback, along with practical online teaching and learning strategies are covered. The chapter on assessment draws the reader back into good practice on assessment for learning, reinforcing good practice. The closing chapters return to practical advice and guidance as well as a prompt to ask questions of one's own practice, which acts as a useful plenary for the reader – having asked these questions at the start, it is useful to finish by reflecting on the key decisions needed for teaching online and with technology. Macur encourages the reader to take from the book, adapt, apply to their own practice, and then to share.

Chapter listing

1. Introduction
2. Platforms you can use
3. Classroom management online

4. Online student engagement
5. Body language and instructions in the online classroom
6. Working with parents online
7. Big classes, small classes, and 1-to-1
8. Error correction and feedback online
9. Assessment – assessing students online
10. Online student welfare and wellbeing
11. Activities – online teaching and learning strategies
12. Things your students should have ready for classes
13. What to take from this book

Comments

This is a practical and useful book, written in an engaging way to appeal to fellow teachers. Apart from the author's experience in teaching online with this age group, it is good to see the engagement with research and literature around the topics in the book. As an international practitioner, Macur's knowledge of teaching children with English as an Additional Language informs much of his approach, which contributes to the emphasis on clear and engaging communication to ensure that the needs of the pupils are at the forefront.

Another strength is the way that the language and discourse is tied back into the core areas of pedagogy that will be familiar to teachers and trainees – behaviour, pedagogy, curriculum, assessment and professional behaviours are integrated throughout the chapters, and with a relentless focus on linking online teaching back to good teaching. New teachers as well as experienced teachers, mentors and leaders will feel comfortable with this book.

Virtual book launch

The review authors were invited to collaborate with the publishers on a virtual book launch in January 2023. In addition to an author introduction of the book, the panel focused on questions arising from the book, and from issues around technology and pedagogy in Early Years and primary teaching. This video of the book launch and wide-ranging discussion may be of interest to the readers of *Advancing Education* and will be available through the Routledge blog and via https://www.routledge.com/Teaching-Online-for-Kindergarten-and-Primary-Teachers-Get-Ready-For-Your/Macur/p/book/9781032168548 .

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