

FROM THE EDITOR

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“The first wave of COVID-19 over, the first wave of massive online/blended/distance education over as well. While we are waiting for the second wave of both, reflection on how to transform language teaching into the technology-assisted mode is needed to better serve teachers and students in those hard times.” Starting the editorial like this in the July issue of *Teaching English with Technology*, it was hard to imagine that already the next editorial, as quickly as three months later, will be written in the times of the second wave of the pandemic, even more serious than the first one, with new restrictions introduced by countries all over the world in a frantic attempt to thwart the disease.

To be more effective in language teaching in those hard times, instructors need, surely, to be introduced to and trained in the use of new tools, software and online services. To meet that need, the October issue focuses on virtual worlds and virtual reality in **Minoo Alemi** and **Shiva Khatoony**'s paper on Virtual Reality Pronunciation Training for young learners. Framing pronunciation practice in a virtual reality game run by a humanoid robot is an interesting example of how advanced technology can be in a language classroom.

Another cutting-edge technology application, a *Classcraft* gamification portal, is proposed by **Irene Rivera-Trigueros** and **María del Mar Sánchez-Pérez** (Spain) to foster both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation of secondary school students. However, as supreme technology does not mean supreme pedagogy, the authors show how gamification should be designed so as to make the learning process a demanding yet enjoyable experience.

Focusing more on methodology than technology, **Shahriar Jalili**, **Hamidreza Khalaji** and **Hossein Ahmadi** (Iran) prove that sophisticated communicative activities can be designed in a relatively simple computer-mediated environment. In the study, a simple *Telegram* tool was used to make the students engaged in various peer and group activities including pre-communicative sentence arrangement, communicative tasks, pair, and group discussion, role-plays and storytelling.

Staying at the lesson design level, **Patrisius Istiarto Djiwandono** (Indonesia) shows the application of the SAMR model (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification and Redefinition) in a vocabulary classroom. After the first wave of COVID-teaching it has become obvious that it is not possible to teach regular coursebook lessons and activities through a camera and microphone. Hence, ample reflection is needed on how to best adapt, modify and restructure coursebook activities for use in the online mode.

Undeniably, online environments in which learners interact shape their understanding of the world, influence the rate and success of their language acquisition, as well as have an effect on their production. Quite interestingly, **Diana Al Jahromi** (Bahrain) proves how the utilization of social media has positively impacted interlocutors' lexical variation, writing style, reading and communication skills.

Finally, the October issue contains two practical materials – a MOOC review of *Writing in English at University* Massive Online Course (by **Nashid Nigar**, Australia) and a lesson plan related to teacher education during practicum (by **María Amor Barros-del Río, Beatriz Mediavilla-Martínez, Carlos López Nozal** and **Fernando Catarino**, Spain and Portugal). Both of these classroom resources are readily usable by those language instructors who seek immediate help in redefining their language classes in those difficult moments.

Finally, I would like to take that opportunity and thank **Marcin Mizak**, Ph.D., who has made great efforts to facilitate Journal production over the last year as Assistant to Editor. Without Marcin's patience and devotion, all the issues last year and this year would not have had their current shape. We are grateful for your help and wish you all the best in your work!

For all of our readers, we wish good reading and good health in those hard times!