

# Combining online and hybrid teaching environments in German courses

Lucrecia Keim<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract.** In this article, we briefly offer the main characteristics of a hybrid design for Face-to-Face (FtF) and online German courses in the degree of Translation and Interpreting that combines the textbook with activities moderated with technology. We particularly focus on the activities designed for practicing oral production at level A2.2., where we have included self-evaluation as a component in such a way that each activity is linked to a questionnaire of a reflective nature that enables the teacher to offer feedback on the activity carried out. FtF and online students have been sharing the same classroom and interacting with each other. Students' perception of the classroom design is positive according to the results of the submitted questionnaire. They highly value the structure of the Moodle classroom, the design of the tasks and the possibility to interact with students of the other modality, respectively. However, the analysis of the self-evaluations of oral activities shows unequal awareness of the potential significance of multimodality as well as a low conscious use of interactional strategies.

**Keywords:** course design, oral tasks, German as a second foreign language.

## 1. Introduction

In 2008 the Faculty of Translation and Interpretation at the University of Vic started offering the degree in Translation and Interpreting not only for FtF students but also for online students. German is offered in this degree as a second foreign language and most students begin with no previous knowledge of the language. They are expected to achieve a B1 level after having been exposed to 30 ECTS tuition. The virtual classrooms for online students were designed in a Moodle environment, taking into account the characteristics of online learning and teaching, but following

---

1. University of Vic, Uvic-UCC, Spain; [lucrecia.keim@uvic.cat](mailto:lucrecia.keim@uvic.cat)

**How to cite this article:** Keim, L. (2015). Combining online and hybrid teaching environments in German courses. In F. Helm, L. Bradley, M. Guarda, & S. Thouéšny (Eds), *Critical CALL – Proceedings of the 2015 EUROCALL Conference, Padova, Italy* (pp. 294-300). Dublin: Research-publishing.net. <http://dx.doi.org/10.14705/rpnet.2015.000348>

the textbook designed for FtF teaching, *Schritte international* (Hilpert et al., 2006; Niebisch et al., 2006). When we began offering the online modality, each group worked in a separate virtual classroom. However, we have been progressively adapting to a hybrid pedagogic design, both with regard to the materials as well as the teaching itself that is briefly presented in this paper.

## 2. Teaching concept and methodology

In the design of the online courses the following points were considered:

- Comparing students' needs and our teaching goals with the material presented in the chosen students textbook.
- Selecting and ordering the sequence of activities for the students.
- Seeking alternatives for those activities of the textbook that were designed exclusively for FtF teaching and were significant for learning needs.
- Formulating the work guidelines so that they help students, establishing a bridge between the textbook and the Moodle virtual classroom and choosing the digital tool that best suits the communicative goal or the learning need.

Thanks to the kind collaboration of Hueber publishing house, we set up in a pilot version the virtual classroom complementing the textbook with webpages in which we inserted the textbook audios and images of the textbook aiming to reinforce the orientation of the students. Other learning resources (external links, internal webpages, short videos or PDFs) and our work guidelines monitor students in a way which is coherent with the teaching goals and learning needs (Figure 1).

As for the activities and tasks (Figure 2), we introduced

- Moodle quizzes linked to listening or reading skills or practice of language structures;
- written tasks that can respond to different genres and are mostly individual tasks. Some of them can be adapted to a wiki or a blog format;
- interactive written activities (forum or chat);
- interactive oral activities (asynchronous and synchronous).

Figure 1. Work guidelines in the virtual classroom of German 1

**Einheit 4 / Unitat 4 / Unidad 4**

**4 Meine Wohnung**

Kompetenzen

- eine mündliche
- schriftliche Wohn
- einfache Zeitung
- die eigene Wohn
- Gefallen oder Mi
- Ortsangaben ma
- eine einfache ku

**4.0 Vors**

Kursbuch, S

**4.1 Das**

Kursbuch, S

Prova - Llengua C1 (Alemany): 4 C Anleitung, Aktivitäten C1 und C2 - Google Chrome

<https://campus.uvic.cat/aulas1415/mod/page/view.php?id=243719&inpopup=1>

**4 C Anleitung, Aktivitäten C1 und C2**

**4C1**

- Folgen Sie den Anleitungen im Kursbuch und überprüfen Sie dann die Lösung im Campus. / Seguiu les instruccions del llibre de text i comproveu després la solució. / Sigue las instrucciones del libro y comprueba después la solución.
- Denken Sie daran: Markieren Sie mit Farben die Artikel! Ordnen Sie die Wörter mit System, z.B., „Küche: der Herd, die Waschmaschine, der Tisch ...“

**4C2**

- Lesen Sie aufmerksam die Beispielsätze. Markieren Sie die Unterschiede zwischen dem Satz im Singular und dem Satz im Plural. / Llegiu amb atenció els exemples. Marqueu las diferències entre la frase en singular i la frase en plural. / Lee con atención los ejemplos. Marca la diferencia entre la frase en singular y la frase en plural.
- Hier wiederholen Sie du auch die Pluralformen von Substantiven! Schauen Sie die Liste im Kursbuch (Möbel). Wie bildet man die Pluralform auf Deutsch? Entdecken Sie eine Regelmäßigkeit? / Aquí també repasseu les formes de plural dels substantius! Mireu la llista del llibre de text. Com pensesu que es formen els plurals? Descobriu alguna regularitat? / Aquí también repasas otra vez las formas de plural de los sustantivos. Mira la lista del libro de texto. ¿Cómo crees que se forman los plurales? ¿Descubres alguna regularidad?
- Kontrastieren Sie Ihre Überlegungen mit den Erklärungen im Glossar XXL (S.32-33). / Contrasteu les vostres idees amb les explicacions al Glossar XXL (pàg.32-33). / Contrasta tus ideas con las explicaciones del Glossar XXL (pág.32-33).

Praxis im Arbeitsbuch, Seiten 112-114, Übungen 1-6 (Lösungen im Glossar XXL, Seite 81)

Figure 2. Students working through the Videochat

videochat beta

Deutsch

17/05/2015  
11:16:24 - 11:29:51  
01:21

Thema: Eine Traumreise  
Beschreibung:

11:16:24 - 11:29:51

01:21

11:16:24 - 11:29:51

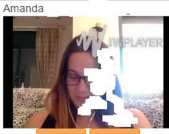
01:21

11:16:24 - 11:29:51

01:21

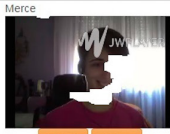
Teilnehmer

Amanda



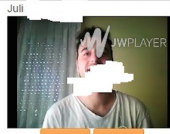
SOLO MUTE

Merce





SOLO MUTE


Juli



SOLO MUTE








CHAT

11:16:24 - Amanda  
Aufnahme beginnt! (ON)

11:29:51 - Amanda  
Aufnahme beenden. Verbinden Sie sich neu oder verlassen Sie die Sitzung! (OFF)

11:30:29 - Amanda  
archivieren & schließen! (geschlossen)

This project has been funded with support from the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission.  
This site reflects only the views of the authors, and the European Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



296

The result is that FtF as well as online students work following Solares (2014) in a technology mediated textbook-bound context. One of the lessons we have learned is that redundancy in this case plays in our favor and offers supplementary learning opportunities. For instance, forum activities can begin in the FtF classroom and can be continued at home by both FtF and online students. This is one way to trigger and guide the forum.

## 2.1. Oral production activities

The interactive asynchronous and synchronous activities introduced in the German level 4 course (approx. A2.2.) aim to address different levels of complexity of language, of the task and of the technology. In order to promote, as far as possible, focusing on both the content as well as the form and to motivate students to observe their production and to evaluate their progress, the guidelines and the assessment of each activity were linked to the pre-structured reflective questions of a Moodle quiz (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Guide questions for reflection

Beantworte kurz die folgenden Fragen auf Katalanisch/ Spanisch/ Deutsch:

1. Habe ich die Vorbereitungsaufgaben im Arbeitsbuch gemacht? /Vaig fer els exercicis preparatoris del llibre d'exercicis? /¿Hice los ejercicios preparatorios del libro de ejercicios?
2. Haben wir über alle Punkte gesprochen? Konnte jede/r ihre/seine Argumente erklären?/ Vam parlar sobre tots els punts? Van poder explicar tots els seus arguments? / ¿Hablamos sobre todos los puntos? ¿Han podido decir todos sus argumentos?
3. Schau das Video nochmal und achte auf diese Aspekte:

He fet servir els Redemittel que s'indicaven al llibre? / ¿He utilizado los Redemittel que se indicaban en el libro?	M'ha entès el company/la companya mentre parlava en aleman o he hagut de recórrer en algun moment al català/espanyol/anglès per fer-me entendre? / ¿El compañero/la compañera me ha entendido mientras hablaba en alemán o he recurrido al español/catalán/inglés en algún momento para hacerme entender?	Si m'he quedat bloquejat, he sabut superar-lo activant recursos (demanant en alemany com es diu alguna cosa, buscant al diccionari o els apunts, reformulant la idea...) / Si me he quedado bloqueado, ¿he sabido superarlo activando recursos (preguntando en alemán cómo se dice la palabra que busco, buscando en el diccionario, reformulando la idea...)?	M'he mostrat actiu iniciant jo els temes o més aviat he reaccionat? / ¿Me he mostrado activo iniciando yo temas o haciendo yo preguntas o más bien he reaccionado?	He donat senyals d'escolta activa (Reaktionssignale)? / ¿He dado señales de escucha activa?
--	---	--	--	---

3. Schreib hier einige Aspekte oder Beispiele aus deiner Beobachtung. /Escriu aquí alguns aspectes o exemples de la teva observació. / Escribe algunos aspectos o ejemplos de tu observación.
4. Was würdest du jetzt an deinem Beitrag verbessern? / Què voldries millorar de la teva intervenció? / ¿Qué te gustaría mejorar de tu intervención?

Schreib auch den Link zu deiner Aufnahme:

As a pilot project, with this group of students we joined the platform of the Speaks Apps Project (EU-Project, <http://www.speakapps.eu/es/>) and had access to the tools Langblog (forum + Video) and Videochat (web conference system).

At the beginning of the course the teacher published in the virtual classroom the schedule for all the activities along with an explanation of the aims and the technical aspects (Table 1).

Table 1. Tasks schedule

Main goal	Task type	Social form	Tool
Introducing yourself	Talking about oneself (Video monologue and reaction to others)	Individual	Langblog
Planning an excursion	Reaching a consensus	Pairs chosen by students	Videochat
Describing a beloved object	Talking about oneself (Video monologue and reaction to others)	Individual	Langblog
Apologizing to a friend	Role-play	Pairs chosen by students	Videochat
Planning a journey	Reaching a consensus	Trios chosen by the teacher	Videochat

3. Results and discussion

In the questionnaire submitted by 85 % (*N*=32) of all German students, they agreed (4) or strongly agreed (5) on a 1-5 points Likert Scale with the following items that refer to the course’s design (see [Table 2](#)).

Table 2. Items that refer to the course’s design

I appreciate the boundedness between the text book and the Moodle classroom.	75%
I appreciate the links to resources or webpages with additional explanations inserted in the Moodle classroom.	93%
I appreciate the quiz format in order to practice the language structures and to get feedback.	78%
I consider the design of the forum tasks appropriate.	68%
I consider the design of the written production tasks appropriate.	75%
I consider the design of the oral production tasks appropriate.	53%
I consider that when teachers correct me with correction symbols, this fosters my learning process.	84%
I consider the formative assessment procedures implemented during the course support my learning process.	78%
I would appreciate the introduction of learning games.	62.5%

As for the oral activities in the German level 4 course, we can say that they were well accepted by students if we ignore the complaining about technical inconveniences.

However, FtF students didn't deliver the questionnaires in a consistent way. This could be related to the fact that these students had the possibility to comment on the recordings in the FtF-classroom.

In their self-evaluations students value positively the possibility of hearing and analyzing their outputs as well as the possibility of working with students of the other modality. Some students mention explicitly that the repetition of tasks reduced the self-perception of anxiety.

In their comments they focus more on the speaker role than on the hearer role. Reflections of lower-level students are more superficial than those of higher-level students, who are able to focus also on form and detect errors. Comments on negotiations of meaning are rare, due in part to the task type. One lesson learnt is the necessity of introducing more task type varieties.

Moreover, some students experienced in a negative way the fact of having to search for new words they needed in the online dictionary during interaction. As a matter of fact, they don't activate interaction strategies that would allow them, for instance, to apologize for a short interruption and so looking up for words in the dictionary results in a long silence, which stops interaction. In other cases, low-level students seem to be overloaded by the fact of having to attend to the interaction on the screen and looking up expressions in the book simultaneously.

#### **4. Conclusions**

Combining a hybrid and an online teaching environment in a technology mediated textbook-bound context has turned out to offer interesting and motivating learning potential for students. In short, lessons learnt are that the design should be not too open but not too restrictive as well as not too optional but not too compulsory. Tools used should be aligned with learning needs as well as communicative goals. Finally, there is still a way to go in order to motivate students to profit from the full potential of multimodality (Lamy & Flewitt, 2011).

#### **References**

- Hilpert, S. et al. (2006). Schritte 3 + 4 international. Lehrbuch und Arbeitsbuch. München: Hueber.
- Lamy, M. N., & Flewitt, R. (2011). Describing online conversations: insights from a multimodal approach. In C. Develotte, R. Kern, & M. N. Lamy (Eds.), *Décrire la communication en ligne: le face-a-face distanciel* (pp. 71-94). Lyon: ENS Editions.

- Niebisch, D. et al. (2006). Schritte 1 + 2 international. Lehrbuch und Arbeitsbuch. München: Hueber.
- Solares, M. E. (2014). Textbooks, tasks and technology: an action research study in a textbook-bound EFL-context. In M. González-Lloret & L. Ortega (Eds.), Technology mediated TBLT. Researching technology and tasks (pp. 79-114). Amsterdam: Benjamins. [doi:10.1075/tblt.6.04sol](https://doi.org/10.1075/tblt.6.04sol)

Published by Research-publishing.net, not-for-profit association  
Dublin, Ireland; info@research-publishing.net

© 2015 by Research-publishing.net (collective work)  
© 2015 by Author (individual work)

Critical CALL – Proceedings of the 2015 EUROCALL Conference, Padova, Italy  
Edited by Francesca Helm, Linda Bradley, Marta Guarda, and Sylvie Thouéšny

**Rights:** All articles in this collection are published under the Attribution-NonCommercial -NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) licence. Under this licence, the contents are freely available online (as PDF files) for anybody to read, download, copy, and redistribute provided that the author(s), editorial team, and publisher are properly cited. Commercial use and derivative works are, however, not permitted.



**Disclaimer:** Research-publishing.net does not take any responsibility for the content of the pages written by the authors of this book. The authors have recognised that the work described was not published before, or that it is not under consideration for publication elsewhere. While the information in this book are believed to be true and accurate on the date of its going to press, neither the editorial team, nor the publisher can accept any legal responsibility for any errors or omissions that may be made. The publisher makes no warranty, expressed or implied, with respect to the material contained herein. While Research-publishing.net is committed to publishing works of integrity, the words are the authors' alone.

**Trademark notice:** product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

**Copyrighted material:** every effort has been made by the editorial team to trace copyright holders and to obtain their permission for the use of copyrighted material in this book. In the event of errors or omissions, please notify the publisher of any corrections that will need to be incorporated in future editions of this book.

Typeset by Research-publishing.net  
Fonts used are licensed under a SIL Open Font License

ISBN13: 978-1-908416-28-5 (Paperback - Print on demand, black and white)  
Print on demand technology is a high-quality, innovative and ecological printing method; with which the book is never 'out of stock' or 'out of print'.

ISBN13: 978-1-908416-29-2 (Ebook, PDF, colour)  
ISBN13: 978-1-908416-30-8 (Ebook, EPUB, colour)

Legal deposit, Ireland: The National Library of Ireland, The Library of Trinity College, The Library of the University of Limerick, The Library of Dublin City University, The Library of NUI Cork, The Library of NUI Maynooth, The Library of University College Dublin, The Library of NUI Galway.

Legal deposit, United Kingdom: The British Library.  
British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data.  
A cataloguing record for this book is available from the British Library.

Legal deposit, France: Bibliothèque Nationale de France - Dépôt légal: décembre 2015.