

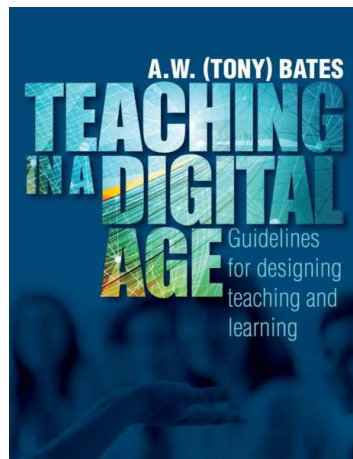
## TEACHING IN A DIGITAL AGE - BOOK REVIEW

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### Textbook Details

*Teaching in a Digital Age*

A.W. (Tony) Bates

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### 1. Introduction

The rapid development of technology has led massive changes in every aspect of our life, one of which is the way we teach in classroom. The volume *Teaching in a Digital Age* is aimed at providing a base theory and knowledge to teachers and instructors. It also offers alternative classroom procedures that both teachers and instructors could employ to teach their students within a digital environment.

The volume is written by A.W. (Tony) Bates, a well-known author, practitioner, and professor in educational media research. It is one of Bates's extraordinary works on

educational technology, online and distance learning; and it has been translated into such languages as French, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, and Serbo-Croat (p. viii). Although the volume was first published in 2015 and specifically does not discuss the incorporation of technology in language learning classroom, the discussion is still relevant to the field as it provides fundamental principles about instructional approaches and methods and the use of technology in both online and offline modes of instruction.

The volume is published in an electronic book (ebook) format and is intended as an open textbook for university teachers and instructors. It comes with various formats like epub, pdf and mobi that allow readers to read the volume from their personal computer, laptops, tablets and smartphones. Together with these ebook versions, the author also provides additional podcasts to support the book contents.

## **2. Sections and chapters**

The volume comprises an “About the book” section, twelve chapters, four appendices and a feedback section. Some important keys, references, and bibliography are also provided in the volume. Each of the chapters in the volume is typically structured with a section explaining the purpose of the chapter, activity and “what-if” scenario. This chapter structure helps the reader not only to comprehend the materials discussed but also to allow them to establish a relation between “theory” and the actual “classroom practices”. More importantly, the “what-if” scenarios which reflect ten semi-fictional cases of the corporation of technology in classroom settings “stimulate imagination and thinking” of the teachers about their current conditions and alternatives improvement in the future (p. 4). Throughout the scenario, the author seems to encourage readers (teachers) to be more critical towards technology and its incorporation in the classroom.

Chapter One discusses the changes in society and economy that influence education in the digital age. Some interesting topics covered in the chapter include the changes of work and workers, skills required in the digital age, the interface between education and the labour market, and the effect of development of technology on the teaching method. Chapters Two-Five are concerned with the epistemology of teaching and teaching methods. The discussion in Chapter Two mainly focuses on the nature of knowledge and how our understanding of the knowledge would affect the way we teach. Chapter Three emphasises the teaching method within a campus-based environment while Chapter Four is concerned with the teaching method in an online setting. Chapter Five describes MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) as a product of technological innovations in higher education.

Media and technology are the themes of Chapters Six-Eight. Chapter Six explains the role of media and technology in education while in Chapter Seven the pedagogical characteristics for the utilisation of media and technology in the classroom are detailed. The chapter also offers a framework that teachers can employ to examine the pedagogical characteristics of educational media. Although the author offers criteria that teachers could consider in selecting technology for classroom use (see Chapter Eight), such criteria seem to be universal one, and accordingly readers need accompanying reference. In the field of English language teaching (ELT), readers could use either Chappelle's or Hubbard's evaluation framework (see McMurry, Williams, Rich, & Hartshorn, 2016). The practical implementation of Chappelle's framework, for example, can be found in journal *Teaching English with Technology* (see Mulyono, 2016).

Chapter Nine focuses on the mode of instructional material delivery, such as face-to-face, blended and full online learning. The role of technology in blended learning may include the use of technology as classroom aids, flipped learning and hybrid mode of instruction. Considerations to help teachers (instructors) to decide types of modes of delivery are also offered in the chapter. Chapter Ten presents trends in open education, and the discussion focuses on open learning, open education resources (OER), open textbooks, open research and open data. The implications of this openness in learning are highlighted in the final part of the chapter.

Chapter Eleven offers a framework that teachers (instructors) and principals can employ to develop, apply and ensure quality in teaching in the digital age while in Chapter Twelve the author suggests institutional strategies to support teachers (instructors) to incorporate technology in their teaching. The need for teachers' professional development and training on how to incorporate technology into teaching practices is also highlighted in the final chapter.

### **3. Evaluation**

Personally, my colleagues and I have been using this volume as a textbook in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in English Language Teaching course in a second language teacher education (SLTE) at University of Muhammadiyah Prof DR. HAMKA (UHAMKA), Jakarta, Indonesia. Not only does the volume inform me, my colleague, and my students about the epistemology of teaching in the era of technology, but it also provides us with some alternative procedures of incorporation of technology for classroom practices. As an instructor and a teacher educator at SLTE, I found this book really useful. The author's thoughts,

suggested activities and scenarios have helped develop my understanding of the nature of teaching English in the digital age. Most importantly, it helps improve the quality of my classroom teaching within which I incorporate digital tools (see my classroom practice with technology in Solihati & Mulyono, 2017). In addition, my students who are in-service teachers found this volume worth reading. They perceive the volume as a valuable reference for their professional development activity. Readers who are interested can download the volume at <http://opentextb.ca/teachinginadigitalage>.

**References:**

- McMurry, B. L., Williams, D. D., Rich, P. J., & Hartshorn, K. J. (2016). An evaluation framework for CALL. *TESL-EJ*, 20(2), n2.
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- Solihati, N., & Mulyono, H. (2017). A hybrid classroom instruction in second language teacher education (SLTE): A critical reflection of teacher educators. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning*, 12(5), 169-180.