The complete guide to running a blended learning course

Preparing for the first lesson

You’ve decided to blend your course, so what’s next? Here’s a handy checklist of things to consider before starting.

You’ll also find some useful tips if you’re planning to use the Online Practice that comes with your Oxford University Press (OUP) course as part of your blended learning programme.

1. Examine your own beliefs about blended learning

What do you feel about blended learning?

Look at these teachers’ views. Consider your response:

‘I agree with the principles underlying blended learning. It just doesn’t work in my context.’

‘My students are not really ready for blended learning.’

‘Apparently, we all have to use this Learning Platform.’

‘Ah yes, online exercises – more gap-fills, right?’

‘I see my students in class every lesson. Why do I need a Learning Management System?’

‘I don’t use material where students can look up the answers. Why not? They just look up the answers.’

2. Decide which elements will be delivered in class and which by technology

In a face-to-face, classroom-based course, everything may be done in class – same time, same place. In an online course, everything is done online.

There is a link between the decisions you make here and your attitudes and beliefs towards blended learning. There is also a link between your institution’s approach to language teaching too. Let’s look at a couple of examples of principled decisions. You might wish to consider the beliefs and culture behind these decisions.

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Teacher one
A skills-based approach is taken.
Classroom is mainly for practising the productive skills of teaching and writing.
Online is mainly for practising the receptive skills of reading and listening.

Teacher two
A ‘dual track approach’ is taken.
The coursebook is used in class.
The online materials are complementary and used for catch-up (absentee students), those wanting extra work and those needing extra practice.

3. Spend time familiarising yourself with the administrative tools

Try:
- registering and signing in to the learning platform
- creating a class
- adding a course
- checking how to send a message

Joining the platform yourself then makes it easier for you to help your students to do the same.

Did you know?
For the Online Practice that comes as part of an OUP course, for example English File fourth edition, Headway 5th edition and Wide Angle, there are a range of materials to help you get started and use the digital tools to run a blended learning course, including a guide and video tutorials.
4. **Familiarise yourself with the course material on the learning platform**

**Don't forget!**
For OUP courses, this includes the teaching materials in the Teacher’s Resource Centre, including video, audio, and worksheets.

Consider: how does it fit in with the printed coursebook the students receive? The content is related to (but does not simply duplicate) the coursebook. Activities are clearly labelled so you can switch between print and digital.

5. **Check what equipment / resources you have available**

Internet connectivity or Wi-Fi? Desktops or class sets of laptops or tablets?

You may choose to take a BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) approach with students bringing their tablets or laptops to class.

Book a room with a computer if you don’t have a computer or Internet in class.

6. **Plan how to get students started on the equipment**

Most commonly when you set up a blended learning course, you meet your group first and then set up their online experience. Less commonly, you start a blended learning course remotely and then the students come together and meet in class.

Registering and signing in for the first time is easy nowadays. In the past, it could be challenging. Give your students simple tips like ‘remember your password’ and ‘check the help and support if you get stuck’.

The basic decision you need to make is when these things happen – **before, during, or after** the first lesson?

- If you choose **before the first lesson**, simply email your students and tell them what to do. Tell your students about the help and support videos to explain how to register, saving you the time.

- Choose **during the first lesson** if you want to finish the class knowing all your students are in the platform and ready to go.
If you choose **after the first lesson**, you can demonstrate how to register and set registration and joining the platform for homework. It’s easy to see if anyone didn’t join the online class before the next class, and help individuals accordingly.

**Tip** For extra preparation when you’re planning for blended learning, take a look at this [checklist of questions](#) from *Oxford Teachers’ Academy: Teaching with Technology*.
The first lesson sequence: student orientation and integrating digital content

The first sequence

It’s time to plan out the first lesson sequence. It’s a ‘sequence’ because you may not manage to do everything in one lesson. Rather, there are at least four major things vying for your attention at the start of any course:

A. Forming the group

This is where you meet the students and get to know their names. Create a group dynamic which may involve encouraging students to speak in English in class.

B. Teaching

This is where you teach them something. Let’s assume this is something from the coursebook.

C. Administration

This is when you have students register to their online platform and do other administrative tasks, like have them join your online class. You should decide if you will register students onto the platform, or ask students to register themselves and join the online class. You can do this before, during or after the first lesson.

D. Learner training

This is where you have students work on a digital exercise in order to get familiar with the kinds of interactions and feedback using the materials on their platform.
Attitude and beliefs

It’s also very useful to find out your students’ attitudes to using technology. Here are three practical ideas to try out at the start of your blended learning course:

**Activity 1: Knowledge, skills and attitude**

Give students a list of relevant educational technologies. Here’s an example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Smartphone</th>
<th>Internet</th>
<th>Podcast</th>
<th>Blog</th>
<th>Wiki</th>
<th>Interactive Whiteboard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LMS (Learning Management System)</td>
<td>e-Book</td>
<td>App</td>
<td>Tablet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ask students to self-evaluate their:

- Level of knowledge (K) about technology: ‘What is it?’
- Level of skills (S): ‘Can you use it?’
- Attitude (A): ‘How do they feel about technology?’ Positive, neutral or negative?

It is not uncommon to find students who are ‘tech-comfy’ but not very ‘tech-savvy’. They are used to using their smartphones but have no idea that using them to look up unknown words during a discussion interrupts the flow and breaks eye-contact.

**Activity 2: Defining Blended Learning**

Ask students to write a definition of Blended Learning. They can come out and write it on the whiteboard. Compare the definitions. Give feedback.

This activity helps to identify some of their expectations and helps you pitch the opening of the course correctly. The message you may be trying to get across is: ‘This is a blended learning course, not a face-to-face course with a bit of optional technology. The online is essential.

**Why is the online essential?**

- It helps you deliver a ‘differentiated course’ which allows individual students to do extra practice in their own areas of weakness.
- It allows for consolidation of language. The essential nature of blended learning and the mix of face-to-face and online learning can be seen when a lesson is ‘flipped’, so students need to study the presentation part before coming to class.
- In-class discussions can be richer when students have the chance to think about the topic and prepare their ideas in advance.

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Activity 3: in class or online?

Write down a few activities you intend to do on your course on cards and ask the students to sort them into three groups:

1. Classroom
2. On the learning platform
3. Both

Examples of activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaking - discussion</th>
<th>Speaking - giving a presentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grammar exercises</td>
<td>Playing a vocabulary game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Using a pronunciation app</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again, this gives you useful insights into your students’ beliefs and expectations for the course.

Integrating digital content

Introduce students to the digital activities and how they relate to their coursebook

If you choose to use a coursebook with linked digital activities, there are clear advantages. One is a ‘trusted pedagogy’. You know that the material is sound from the word as it is written by experienced EFL writers; it has been piloted and improved.

Demonstrate how the digital activities work followed by a hands-on task

Why not start at the beginning – do the first digital exercise with the whole class. Give a question to each student pair and ask them to write out their answer. Ask one person from each pair to come out and type in their answer.

When the students as a group have completed the exercise, click SUBMIT and watch what happens.

For incorrect answers, ask students in small groups to discuss why the answers are wrong and ask them to try and correct them. If they cannot work out why something is incorrect, they can make a note and bring it to the next class.

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Blended learning works best when the classroom activity is based on the online work and the online work is informed by what happens in the classroom being fed into the self-study programme.

**Video demo**

There are other parts of the materials you might wish to demo in this first lesson sequence. Typically, this is the video.

Create interest in the video first, perhaps by giving the students the title and asking them to predict the content. Then play the video once so they can check their guesses. Point out that, after the lesson, they can access the same video on the learning platform and listen again more intensively. Demonstrate that they can control when to pause the video, and also access subtitles or a transcript.

Try out the ‘Message’ function on the platform. Tell your students you will make an announcement before the next class. In the next lesson, check students received the message.

Here’s a sample message:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title: Please reply to this message!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hi there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I hope you enjoyed our first class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From now on, I’ll be in communication with you using the message service on our platform.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please confirm you received this message by sending me a quick reply!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thanks, see you next week.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tell students you have sent them a message and that you expect an answer!
Using digital tools and activities in your class

Just one projector hooked up to a computer with Internet access can completely change the classroom into a place where you can access the students’ activities on the online platform for demonstration purposes. This article looks at using these digital materials and tools in your blended learning class.

Listening

Like many teachers, I assiduously prepare my students for the in-class listening task. They listen. Afterwards, I see a range of faces, a few happy, many discomforted and many downright distressed. That moment various students realise they haven’t understood much and hope the teacher doesn’t ask them a comprehension question.

I believe that technology enables students to work on listening outside the classroom. A university lecture epitomises the ‘one-size fits all’ approach which has been around for centuries. A powerful argument claims it is more effective to have students watch a lecture online on their tablet and using the ‘pause’ and sub-titles leads to a better, more individualised listening experience.

Listening comprehension is ‘invisible’. There’s not much point in asking: ‘was that clear?’ I already know their listening ranges from low through medium to high. The weaker students might catch a smattering of isolated phrases. The higher levels can filter the content and ignore irrelevancies. Like most teachers I probably pitch the class to the upper end of the middle group. During my follow-up to listening, I desperately hope that 2-3 students don’t answer all the open comprehension questions, leaving the others demoralised. That’s what used to happen!

These days are long gone.

If I teach 16 individuals, I can now use the digital materials to great effect for differentiation. I might use a global listening or the audio from the course in class, and then have students working together on more intensive questions. This could be done by pairing up students on a laptop. The classroom is like a bridge, so that by the time they get home, the students can really exploit their digital materials. One student thinks the exercises are quite easy and listens once. Another listens five times. Another checks every word in the transcript in their dictionary. The point is that blended learning gives students this kind of choice. Using the digital material to provide 16 different language listening lessons is one of the best aspects of blended for me...

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Try flipping

Having students with access to these materials is a great way to try ‘flipping’ the class. The term originated in the US from content teaching, not language teaching. The content included chemistry formulas, mathematical equations, historical dates, geographical terms and so on. Could the ‘presentation’ part be done remotely, with tutors making a video of a maths equation which all students could watch before the lesson? Yes! Faster students could watch once, those who found the topic more difficult could watch several times. The class time is then used to discuss the input, apply the knowledge, and for individual work. This was received positively by language teachers, although language teaching is different from ‘content’ teaching since students are expected to use the language, not just study it.

I flipped the video input once and asked my students: ‘How many times did you watch the video’. The answers ranged from once to five. That was an interesting moment for me, as I realised some students were so fearful of listening that they wanted to watch and re-watch something before class in order to better to discuss it. This is what the learning platform is for!

The platform can be used in many ways, depending on the approach you wish to take. You could for example:

- use the resources for a **whole class presentation**. You can then re-organise the room so students are in small discussion groups, clustered round a laptop or tablet. This arrangement is great for a grammar quiz.

- have each **student working individually on their own device**. This is a useful way for students to do individual listening practice before they leave the class and continue their study at home.

**Speaking**

You can use the ‘Discussions’ tool for students to talk about topics in advance of (or after!) a class. This is a useful way to **extend the discussion** from just the real-time in-class activity by adding an extra dimension – time. Time for students to think about their viewpoint, or argument. Here are five ideas for ways in which you can use this tool on the learning platform:

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1. **Post a photo**

A great way to personalise the coursebook material. For example: post a photo of the way your town used to look like, prior to a lesson on ‘used to’.

2. **Grammar forum**

Create a Grammar Forum. Encourage students to post a screenshot of something they found problematic when doing their online grammar practice, and which they wish to discuss in the forum. A great way to encourage peer reactions and get students to help each other.

3. **Ranking**

Ask students to put three things in order and post to the discussion board. A great lead-in to a discussion. For example, put the following (abc) in order of importance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which are the biggest threats we face today?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Climate change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Nuclear war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Rise of AI technology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. **Yes / no questions**

Tell students the discussion in class will comprise a vote on an issue and let them submit their pre-class answer. Add a ‘Not sure’ category. This will help you gauge the way students are thinking before they hear other students’ arguments. Great for encouraging critical thinking. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Censorship is wrong.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes / no / not sure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. **Sharing experiences**

‘Have you ever...’-type questions are great to get students thinking around a topic and sharing their own experiences before a lesson. ‘Which countries have you visited?’ for example is a good way to precede a lesson of cultural differences and travel.
Here are further examples of posts which can be sent to prepare students for a specific discussion, based on *Headway* 5th edition Upper Intermediate Student’s Book.

**Discussion 1**

‘Have you seen the film *Lion*?’

Use the student responses in class to set up the seating in pairs or small groups, so students who have seen it can tell the story to classmates.

The messages you send can personalise coursebook lessons.

**Discussion 2**

‘Is it fake?’

Select a couple of stories from the news, one real, the other fake, but both equally strange. Send the headlines to all students and ask them to think and comment on if they are True or False. This activity ‘updates’ the coursebook by supplementing it with current news.

**Tip:** Alongside the Class threads where you (or a student) start a discussion yourself, you can use the Course threads in the Online Practice. These are linked to the coursebook and provide lots of good ideas to deepen and extend classroom discussions.
Setting digital homework

In my experience, the word ‘homework’ is met with a slight groan from students. ‘Homework’ is a portmanteau word, and the connotation of each part can be very different. ‘Home’ may conjure up positive feelings of comfort and relaxing; ‘work’ may evoke the negative feelings of difficult yet necessary jobs. Still, ‘work’ can also be something more pleasant and fulfilling. This article focuses on setting digital homework.

Digital homework

Digital is the part of the homework which is done online or using an app. It may be just one part of homework; students can also do non-digital tasks like working through a graded reader.

The critical thing about homework within a blended learning programme is that it is essential, and not a ‘voluntary’ activity which less motivated students don’t do. ‘Not doing homework’ should be a thing of the past!

Benefits

The benefits of setting digital homework are countless. By carefully selecting the homework, you can ensure it caters to individual students’ interests. In the era of the smartphone, tablet and laptop, students can do their homework anytime, anywhere. They can spend as much or as little time on an exercise as they need.

Approaches

There are several approaches to setting digital homework. Here are three of them:

### Approach one

Using a ‘lock-step’ approach means that you restrict what your students do. For example, you can use the Lock/unlock tool on the learning platform to drip-feed the units students can access so they match the face-to-face course. Simply set some tasks as homework and follow these up in the next lesson.

### Approach two

This is the opposite. While you focus on teaching your classes, you grant access to all the online materials for students to do outside class. You should check students’ progress regularly, and look at general language problems in class and individual difficulties in tutorials.
**Approach three**

Use a ‘targeted’ approach. Evaluating your students’ strengths and weaknesses, set each learner different exercises from the platform. The activities are labelled by skill, making it quick and easy to target problem areas.

**Task:** think about any advantages and disadvantages of each approach. Which suits your next class?

A key feature of blended learning is its flexibility. As a teacher, your aim is to create the optimum course for your specific group of students.

Here are six of my top tips to help you successfully integrate digital homework into your language course:

1. **Use the ‘Messages’ tool**

   This extra communication channel can really help create a ‘social’ dimension to your course. For example, you can send administration messages (announcing room changes, setting homework) to the whole class, and also send personalised messages to individual students.

2. **Use the data**

   Check the students’ gradebook regularly to assess their progress. You can download a class report and see a student’s first and last activity scores. Noticing progress (from 67% to 81%) can be hugely motivating.

   You can identify different ‘types’ of student from the data. One student may work systematically through each exercise in order, while another who is more haphazard may need help with their planning. Let’s imagine two students who do very little. The first may need a motivational talk, while the other may be confident and is less in need of doing extra online study.

3. **Run individual tutorials**

   Have a lesson where students go online as a class and you meet each one individually. Discuss their individual Self-Study plans with them.

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4. **Link the face-to-face work and the online homework**

Let the face-to-face class determine what you set for homework. In this two-way process, student performance in the homework dictates the content of the class. Link the homework to classwork by finding out the most common mistakes the students make on the platform and then dealing with these in class.

5. **Let the platform do the work**

Setting homework from the platform can really save time. The platform does the automatic marking. It is critical to ensure students understand the feedback so encourage students to message you with any problems and be ready to step in. In blended learning, there is clear role for the teacher as clarifier. Understanding the distinction between your sensitive feedback and the automatic marking on the platform is vital for both students and teachers.

6. **Encourage students to find their own ‘learning style’**

One benefit of using digital exercises on an online platform is the fact that the same activity can be done in a variety of ways. Some students can do the grammar without using the Grammar reference, to challenge themselves; others can study the language first. Another student can simply listen to the answers and then work out why the answers are correct.

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Finally, if you’re using an Oxford University Press course with Online Practice, here are **four ideas** for using the tools on the Oxford Online Practice learning platform for digital homework:

1. **Discussions**

Use the discussion board to start a thread with course related topics. Remember that, as a teacher, you can moderate all messages.

Before a discussion class, post a question to the discussion board: ‘You shouldn’t believe the reviews on TripAdvisor’. Start the class with a vote using a free tool like Mentimeter. Then, have a discussion and finish with a second vote. The results can be used as a basis for a writing follow up, using the data to explain why the group changed their minds.
2. **Listening**

Having students able to access the same video at home as they view in class offers many benefits. Here’s one idea. In class, brainstorm what students know about New York City. Create a mind map. Show them a video on the city with no sound. Students in pairs create the spoken dialogue. For homework, students watch and compare their soundtrack to the actual soundtrack. In class, students meet to discuss the similarities and differences between their attempt and the actual soundtrack.

Why not reverse the traditional order and let students access the listening script for homework, first. They can do vocabulary work in advance of watching the video in class.

3. **Speaking**

Traditionally, we practise speaking in class. However, it is useful for weaker, under-confident speakers to practise at home. Use the ‘interactive video’ activities with record and playback. The students really practise saying a phrase or sentence repeatedly until they feel it is right to submit. This extra homework practice can really help.

4. **Writing homework**

After a student has submitted a writing task to you, you can provide feedback in your reply. This feedback can be rich, formative and encouraging, which is more motivating than the well-known ‘red-ink’ sprayed across students written work in the past!
Independent learning

What is independent learning?

**Task:** Think about a typical group you teach. Give them a mark out of 5 for how ‘autonomous’ they are, where 1 is low and 5 is high.

In some areas, this figure may be low. Teachers are traditionally the ‘knowers’ and students rely on them to teach, to present language and set up tasks. If this figure is high, you may be dealing with highly-motivated students with insights into their own strengths and weaknesses. The latter are more independent, more ready for blended learning.

**Independent learning and blended learning – what’s the connection?**

There is no doubt that more independent learners are likely to be successful on a blended learning course as they are used to making self-study work for them in achieving aims and goals.

Blended learning often relies on technology, which usually runs smoothly, but not always. So what happens when there’s a glitch? Independent learners use a ‘workaround’, come back and try again. Less independent learners may give up. Enter the teacher as motivator!

Independent learning through using an online platform can be especially helpful in these three common scenarios:

- **Absenteeism.** Business English teachers are used to this phenomenon! Students can keep up with the course, despite missing face-to-face classes.
- **Fast-finishers.** They can do extra exercises.
- **Students who need extra help.** They can access answers and help on the platform.

If you know you are weaker in a skill, then becoming more independent can enable you do more practice in this area.

Learning how to help yourself has become an important skill for students to develop. Digital exercises can really help. Here’s an example based on an online practice activity:

- Check the answer. Notice what you got wrong. Think: why?
- If you don’t know why the answer is wrong, select: see answers.

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If you don’t know why, make a note and ask the teacher in the next class.

This is where blended learning outshines purely ‘self-study’ courses. Time and again, students drop out of purely self-study courses. This link with the teacher is of paramount importance.

**Encouraging students to learn independently**

Much has been written on ‘learner autonomy’. Is it important for students to ‘take control’ of their English learning? I particularly like this definition of Learner Autonomy by Jeremy Harmer: ‘students learning on their own and relying on their own abilities’. I believe that new technology has really empowered students to learn on their own, alongside their classroom learning.

Much has also been written about ‘good language learners’. One thing such students do for instance is to ‘practise whenever they can’. This makes an online learning platform an ideal, even essential part of a modern language course. A good language learner might be more risk-taking than risk-averse when it comes to seeking out opportunities for communicative practice. To do this, a certain degree of independence is necessary.

One example of how we as teachers can help our students to learn independently is to run ‘learning how to learn’ sessions. Such sessions can demonstrate using an online platform and apps for independent learning, and provide guidance in areas such as vocabulary review and improving listening. This final article in the ‘Running a blended learning course’ series provides ideas for helping students to learn autonomously in several language areas: grammar, vocabulary, skills and pronunciation.

**Encouraging autonomous grammar practice**

To understand blended learning, it is essential to understand the nature of digital exercises and the kind of feedback they provide which is different from the feedback you give in class. Digital exercises address ‘crisp’, black and white areas of language; in class, we can clarify ‘fuzzy’, grey areas.

**Task:** Decide which question is best ‘dealt with’ by the teacher and which lends itself to online learning:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q1 Is the word ‘went’:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Simple past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Present perfect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q2 What’s the difference between:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) I did it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) I’ve done it</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Blended learning means that students can practise grammar on their learning platform; this helps focus on form, consolidate and review. In class, the teacher can personalise and activate the online, combining the ‘best of both worlds’.

Encouraging autonomous vocabulary learning

Revising and reviewing new vocabulary is one area where students can really be autonomous and make progress.

Task: Ask your students how they review the new vocabulary they learn in class.

Typically, answers range from having no system to analogue systems (index cards or a Vocabulary Notebook) to digital (a spreadsheet or an app which reminds you that you have words to study). While no one system is ‘best’, we can help students identify something that works for them.

The receptive skills of listening and reading really lend themselves to out-of-class vocabulary practice. An advantage of using online practice activities is the link between the coursebook and the learning platform, so words which students need to practise are identical to those covered in the course in class.

Encouraging autonomous listening

In the past, students’ exposure to English was only through the in-class audio. Now, with the Internet, streaming and podcasting, English is everywhere. Students should be made aware of ‘choice’ – the freedom to choose listening material and how to listen beneficially. The material they choose may be authentic, but too high level for the student. Listening material found on the learning platform and created especially for students is more comprehensible, with the option to listen with or without sub-titles, with or without a transcript. Our role as teachers is more as a facilitator, advising students on the best strategies to improve their listening independently.

Encouraging autonomous reading

Reading for pleasure has well-known benefits for vocabulary building. There is so little time for this in-class that many teachers recommend a graded reader to accompany their course. Reading can also be done on-screen, especially with shorter texts. Many students are still hazy about the difference between ‘skimming’ and ‘scanning’ and many read rather slowly. Online materials can really help here.
Encouraging autonomous pronunciation learning

Many aspects of pronunciation are best practised away from the classroom. Coursebooks commonly have an integrated pronunciation syllabus, allowing the teacher to assign a series of units to focus students on this skill. Some courses, like *English File fourth edition*, include audio and video clips which help raise awareness of sounds and how to say them.

Do your students know the phonemic symbols? If they do, they can then work out how to say the words in the dictionary, making them more autonomous and cutting through the problems of the spelling-sound relationship in English. Again, there are many exercises which help familiarisation with the symbols.

**Tip:** Some visual students benefit from seeing the sound wave pattern of a word. They could use an app such as Say It (for iOS and Android) for this.

Encouraging autonomous writing

Technology has certainly changed the nature of writing, allowing writers separated by distance to work on the same document. Teachers can use the platform to explore the benefits of such ‘collaborative writing’. Divide students into pairs and set them an essay. Students then work on their essay together in a tool like Google Docs. This raises awareness of grammar and vocabulary as students discuss optimum forms. You can subsequently use the Discussion threads on their platform to have students read each other’s essays and offer peer-review. This extra layer of ‘feedback’ can really improve editing skills.

Teaching a course nowadays involves the integration of classroom teaching with online resources: blended learning. The use of an online platform and other tools can help make our students more independent, and therefore more able to make progress in their language learning.

What’s next?

[Watch this video](#) to find out more about Oxford Online Practice and explore the learning platform.

Are you planning to use Online Practice for blended learning? **Explore** our [courses with Online Practice](#) for adult learners, then [check out these useful resources](#) for the Oxford Online Practice learning platform:

- [Guide](#) on how to get started
- Help and support [video tutorials](#)
- [Teaching tips](#)

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