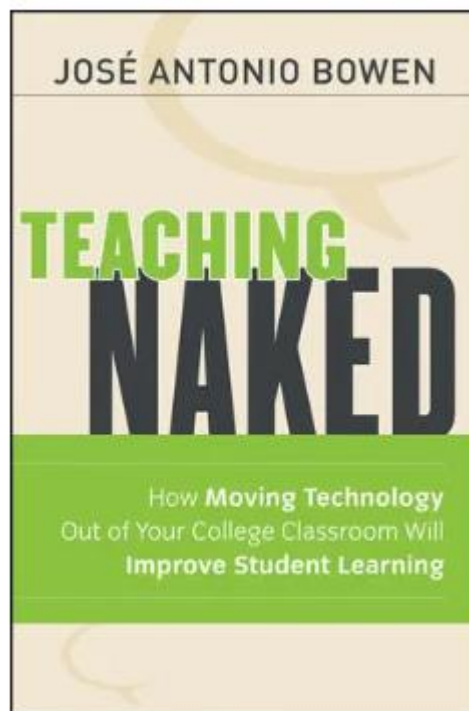


Teaching Naked: How Moving Technology Out of Your College Classroom Will Improve Student Learning (Book Review)

Reviewed by

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Title: Teaching Naked: How Moving Technology Out of Your College Classroom Will Improve Student Learning
Author: José Antonio Bowen
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Summary

The book *Teaching Naked: How Moving Technology Out of Your College Classroom Will Improve Student Learning*, written by José Antonio Bowen, argues that meaningful learning occurs primarily through human interaction rather than digital technology. The author (Bowen) contends that technology should support learning rather than dominate classroom time. According to his approach, digital tools are most effective when used outside the classroom for preparation and reinforcement, allowing in-class time to focus on discussion, problem-solving, and active learning. The central argument of the book is that technology should enhance pedagogy rather than replace traditional human-centered teaching. Though the book was reviewed by Spangler in 2013, Larson in 2014, and Rowe in 2015, the current review provides an updated critique considering current AI driven tools. It is more relevant to today's learning and teaching through technology and language education and the SLA perspective, which was not covered in earlier reviews. It also connects Bowen's ideas to practical implications for today's language classrooms. These elements offer added value beyond the existing reviews and justify the relevance of this additional assessment.

The book centers around four key themes. In the first, flipped classroom approach, Bowen promotes that students engage with content online before class, freeing class time for deeper interaction. In the second, active learning strategies, the book emphasizes discussion, collaboration, and critical thinking during in-person sessions, and the core principles in language pedagogy. Techniques like think-pair-share, information, gap activities, and case-based learning align perfectly with Bowen's vision of interactive classrooms. The third is a discussion of technology as a tool, not a replacement. This encourages thoughtful integration of technology without letting it dominate classroom time. Bowen warns against passive technology use during lessons. Instead, he suggests leveraging technology for preparation and reinforcement. Language teachers can use apps for pronunciation practice, online quizzes for vocabulary, and digital platforms for formative assessment. The fourth is related to assessment and feedback, in which Bowen advocates for continuous, low-stakes assessment. Language educators can implement online quizzes, reflective journals, and peer feedback systems to monitor progress and encourage learner autonomy.

Comments

One of the book's major strengths is its practical orientation. It offers concrete strategies that instructors can adapt across disciplines, including language education. His emphasis on classroom interaction is valuable for language teaching, where communication and collaboration are essential for developing linguistic competence. Another strength is the book's forward-looking perspective. Although published before the widespread expansion of hybrid learning and today's AI environments, Bowen anticipates the growing importance of blended learning and lifelong education. His argument that technology should be used strategically rather than added to existing teaching methods remains highly relevant even today.

Bowen's approach aligns with influential research in SLA and communicative language teaching. For example, interaction-based theories, such as those developed by Michael Long in the 1990s, emphasize that language learning occurs through the negotiation of meaning in communicative interaction. Similarly, task-based learning frameworks, such as those developed by Rod Ellis (2003), highlight the importance of purposeful communicative tasks in language development.

Recent AI technological advances have expanded Bowen's model in new directions. The emergence of AI tools, such as ChatGPT and adaptive learning systems, allows students to receive personalized training, automated feedback, and language support outside the classroom. These tools reinforce Bowen's core idea of taking content practice outside the classroom, thereby expanding opportunities for individualized learning. However, in the classroom, there should be space for human-to-human interaction.

For language educators, the book might appear to have a limitation, rather than a weakness, which is the limited empirical support. The author confidently proposes that students respond better to classrooms where the teacher's role is less lecture-driven and more focused on guiding interactive learning, yet he does not support these claims with data-based studies or analysis. Bowen, for instance, recommends using platforms such as Facebook and Twitter for more targeted instructional purposes. However, these suggestions reflect the technological landscape of 2012, when the book was published—well before the emergence and widespread adoption of today's AI-driven tools. Nevertheless, the underlying idea remains relevant: technology, if not used carefully, can easily compete for students' attention rather than support meaningful learning.

The book at times exhibits some repetition between chapters, which may make certain sections feel lengthy and less engaging for some readers. The guidance provided is generally broad and not always tailored to specific disciplines. While this wide applicability can be viewed as a strength, it may also mean that the book does not fully address the distinct pedagogical needs of fields such as the sciences, humanities, or professional programs. Some educators have noted that Bowen's model tends to assume that students will complete preparatory work outside of class—an expectation that is not always consistently met in practice. The title itself could also be interpreted as somewhat misleading, as the book advocates not for the elimination of technology, but rather for its strategic re-purposing.

Given that the book does not delve deeply into established SLA theories that could strengthen its pedagogical framework. For instance, SLA concepts such as input processing, output hypothesis, and sociocultural perspectives on learning could provide a deeper theoretical foundation for Bowen's model of the interactive classroom. Without explicitly linking his ideas to these frameworks, the discussion sometimes remains at the practical rather than theoretical level. These are important areas that SLA researchers might find interesting to pursue research on and link to Bowen's book. Also, language teachers may want to adopt Bowen's strategies to account for linguistic complexity, cultural diversity, and varying levels of language proficiency among learners. While preparatory video materials can support learning, teachers should ensure that these materials are linguistically accessible and culturally appropriate for learners of different proficiency levels. Similarly, interactive classroom tasks should be designed carefully to enable students to participate effectively despite their varying language abilities.

To conclude, *Teaching Naked* is a valuable resource for language educators who are seeking to integrate digital technology thoughtfully while preserving the human element of teaching. Bowen's call to 'teach naked' is not a rejection of technology but an invitation to use it strategically, outside the classroom, to maximize interaction inside the classroom. For language teachers, this means embracing flipped learning, designing communicative tasks, and leveraging digital tools for preparation and feedback. In an era where online platforms and AI-driven tools are reshaping education, Bowen's message is clear: technology should

serve pedagogy, not replace it. For those committed to fostering authentic communication and learner engagement, the book offers both inspiration and practical guidance.

Disclosure Statement

I (the reviewer of the book) hereby declare that research ethics and citation principles have been considered in all stages of this paper. I take full responsibility for the content of the paper in case of a dispute. I confirm that the manuscript has been created by the author(s) and not an AI tool/Large Language Model (LLM).

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