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Igniting Your Teaching with Educational Technologies: A Resource for New Teachers Book Review

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1. Heading

Igniting Your Teaching with Educational Technologies: A Resource for New Teachers

Editors: Matt Rhoads and Bonni Stachowiak

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2. Introduction

Across educational levels, teachers are actively working to keep up with rapid technological developments and are consistently looking for ways to incorporate technology tools into face-to-face and online classrooms. *Igniting Your Teaching with Educational Technology: A Resource for New Teachers* by Matt Rhoads and Bonni Stachowiak highlights six thematic areas into which new teachers can incorporate technology into face-to-face, hybrid, and online classrooms: Classroom Management, Learning Management Systems, Assessing Learning, Collaboration Tools, and Professional Development Via Social Media. The book is an ideal resource for new teachers and for current students in a college teaching program who are ready to start student teaching. *Igniting Your Teaching with Educational Technology: A Resource for New Teachers* provides an overview of current educational technology tools and certainly serves as an idea book to spark further exploration.

Matt Rhoads and Dr. Bonni Stachowiak are appropriate and well-positioned editors for this text as both have extensive experience in teaching and pedagogical practices. At the time of this review, Matt Rhoads is a doctoral student. Dr. Stachowiak is an Associate Professor of Business and Management and the Director of the Teaching Excellence and Digital Pedagogy at Vanguard University of Southern California. Notably, Dr. Stachowiak hosts and produces the weekly Teaching in Higher Ed Podcast. Together, the two editors led a cohort of doctoral students to author the book chapters from real-world experience. The text is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License and Pressbook copies are available by emailing Editor Stachowiak (bonni@innovatelearning.com).

3. Critical Review

As with any text, *Igniting Your Teaching with Educational Technology: A Resource for New Teachers* has strengths and weaknesses. This book's strengths include the succinct text, consistent focus on community building through technology, and the inclusion of free technology resources. Without deep theoretical or pedagogical discussions, instructors can read one chapter or the entire book quickly and begin implementing new ideas into their classrooms. Rhoads and Stachowiak focus on creating and fostering community through technology which is an important and timely topic for all instructors. The authors provide several educational technology resources that are free or have minimal cost, which is a helpful starting point for new teachers with often limited budgets. Further, the technology resource ideas can enhance classroom learning by engaging more students in the classroom and enhancing teaching methods with technology. Several of the chapters are reinforced by educational research findings to support the provided suggestions. Technology will be a vital part of education for years to come and this book provides a starting point for new instructors to enhance their technology skills and

inspire ideas of how to incorporate technology in the classroom setting. Overall, the book is a timely resource and includes relevant information for new online and face to face instructors across settings.

In contrast, weaknesses include the length of the book, overly simplistic summaries, and grammatical errors. The length of the book is both an asset and a downfall. The short text makes it easy to read and implement, however the brevity hinders readers from truly learning about the different ways to incorporate technology. Teachers may learn about the different classroom technology ideas from the book but will have to seek outside sources to actually develop the classroom techniques using the technology. Overly simplistic language throughout the book is another example of the weakness of the length of the book. As an example of an overly simplistic summary, a learning management system was summarized in one, four-sentence paragraph with the pros and cons of the system respectively summarized in one sentence. Learning management systems are complex and there are several different companies with different learning management systems. Perhaps the authors could have highlighted the different learning management systems and highlighted the pros and cons of each so teachers could decide which system would be best for their classroom. Typos in the text unfortunately detract from the quality of the text and may be distracting to detail-oriented readers. While the book was recently published, the section on Educational Technology already reflects outdated information regarding Wi-Fi in schools. Books on technology need to ensure the content covered in the book is still relevant upon publication. As educational technology tools are developed, modified, renamed, and discontinued, the text is not poised to age well. After reading the book, readers are justifiably left wanting additional information on implementing and incorporating technology into their respective classrooms. Overall, this brief text is a catalyst for further investigation into

educational technology lesson enhancements.

4. Significance to the Field of Distance Learning

Rhoads and Stachowiak's edited text fills a void for new instructors interested in brief tool descriptions and quick implementation ideas without deep pedagogical or theoretical discussions. True to the book's title, this edited volume is most appropriate for current educational technology students and new teachers interested in diversifying their technology toolkit. While this text does not reflect a significant addition to the distance learning literature, it reflects an important contribution for busy students and new teachers. The authors wrote the book to provide opportunities for future authors to expand the current book, update the information, develop a broader audience, and create meaningful impact on the literature of distance learning.

5. Overall Impression

Igniting Your Teaching with Educational Technology: A Resource for New Teachers is a reflective resource for new teachers. The text is not a groundbreaking compendium of novel ideas nor is it exhaustive in outlining all current educational technology tools. The text is a quick read authored by doctoral students with "over one-hundred years of combined, total teaching experience, in various capacities, grade levels, and content areas" (Rhoads & Stachowiak, 2018, p.1). Due to the text's brevity, the content may feel overly simplistic to more experienced instructors and scholars familiar with many of today's tools. Further, the brevity causes readers to seek outside resources to learn how to develop and implement the education technology tools discussed in the book, instead of the book serving as a resource. This text is more appropriate as a suggested reading to augment and complement more substantial works due to parts of the book already being outdated. Overall, we recommend this book to educational technology educators

and students with reservation.

Reference

Rhoads, M., & Stachowiak, B. (eds). (2017). *Igniting your teaching with educational technologies: A resource for new teachers.* Ladera Ranch, CA: Innovate Learning LLC.