


Book Review of *Best Practices for Teaching with Emerging Technologies*

Pacansky-Brock, M. (2017). *Best Practices for Teaching with Emerging Technologies*. London: Routledge. 2nd Edition. 180 pages. ISBN: 978-1138643659.

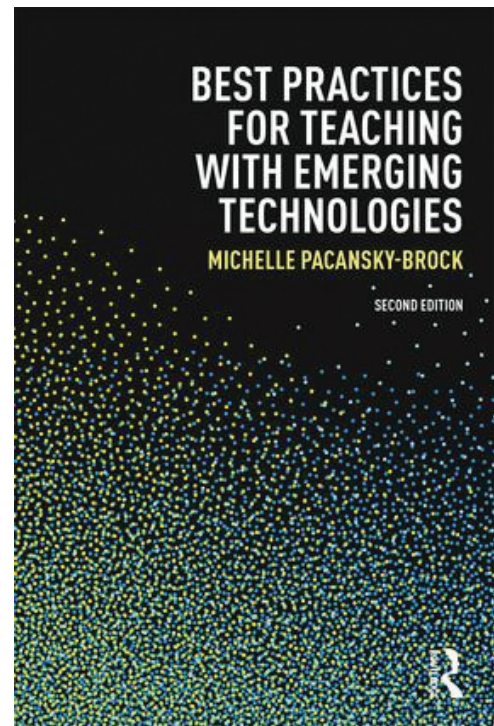
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This book is full of examples of how teachers can integrate technology into their classroom and should inspire the most tentative teachers to try something new. As with any book centered on emerging technologies, the content runs the risk of becoming outdated quickly, but the author acknowledges this in the introduction and continues to build on central tenants as evidenced in a second edition placing emphasis on smartphone and social media usage. The author openly shares her journey, not as a gold standard, but rather a shining example of how one thing can lead to another. Challenging the norm, thinking outside the box, and trying to meet a growing, diverse population rich with varied technological backgrounds and perspectives where students are is the hallmark of good teaching. One may be inclined to assume this book will detail the “what” and the “how” of integrating technology into the classroom, given the title. While there are plenty of use cases, guides, and starting points in this book, perhaps one of the greatest strengths is the author’s commitment to “why” technology should be integrated into the classroom.

Every administrator, faculty member, and instructional designer should read this book. Administrators naturally tend to inherit more administrative responsibilities over time; as such, we slowly start to move away from our why. In other words, the gap between students and administrators unavoidably grows due to the nature of daily tasks. This book can teleport readers back to a time when they first started teaching and remind us of our commitment to student success, trial and error, and may serve as a catalyst toward administrative support of faculty development and technology adoption in every type of classroom. The pedagogical playground has grown to be more dynamic given the technological landscape, and

“If professors are encouraged, inspired, and incentivized to teach with emerging technologies, the playing field will shift, and college will play a formative role in mastering necessary 21st-century skills and encouraging students to develop a credible digital footprint...” (p. 76).

Faculty often are unknowingly adopting technology to solve a problem, try something new, and/or intersect with students more efficiently and effectively. Oftentimes, the use of technology in a classroom is not necessarily accidental but not completely purposeful as certain tools and integrations



have become commonplace over time i.e. MS Office. Faculty sentiments of unknowingly adopting technology are echoed in the definitional realization of recent surges in the open educational resources (OER) movement i.e. “Oh that’s what OER is... I’ve been doing that for years”. While designing with the end result in mind may not always be at the forefront of the faculty mindset, this book includes real life examples of educators and their technology rabbit holes. Faculty who read this book may start to get lost in former woes having once tried to use a tool presented, but the examples (not all success stories) remind of us of the terminal need to shake things up, change with the time, and remain innovative. The process of taking a technology leap will place greater emphasis on the need for instructional designers, give faculty perspective on an instructional designers role in the process, and help manage expectations between faculty and instructional designers.

Instructional designers, regardless of where they work, can apply the principles presented in this book to practice. Instructional designers are often sought-out as technology gurus or whiz kids, but the author’s story can reinvigorate the most hardened instructional designers (who feel like nothing more than tier-one tech support) to challenge their role as a critical piece of a technologically complicated learning landscape. Similarly, instructional designers often serve as a first stop or gateway for faculty to move from the traditional classroom to the online or hybrid classroom as the facilitators of various “teaching with technology” workshops. Using this book as background reading or parsing out the various chapters into modules within such workshops could ultimately bridge the gap in a scaffolded way. Imagine an institution requiring faculty to complete a course focused on online teaching prior to teaching online. In such a situation, facilitators could easily adapt the chapter titles as learning modules and situationally contextualize the content at their institution. These workshops should dive further into the pedagogy of online teaching and focus less on the nuts and bolts of any given tech tool, and while grasping the technology is important, this is usually better served through a personal experience or journey. In this regard, this book serves dual purposes as an example for faculty and a guide for instructional designers. In the process, this read will reassure faculty that taking a chance with technology is quintessential to the teaching and learning process as things can and will go wrong and instructional designers are there to help.

While many of the emerging technologies presented in this book would hardly be considered new today, the author’s perspectives challenge the reader to think of these tools in new ways. Readers may find themselves immediately wanting to rethink their syllabi, give podcasting a go, send their first tweet, design an immersive mobile learning experience, or try threading voices seamlessly over course content. all of which emphasizes the need for classrooms rich with technology, especially blended and online learning environments. In short, we need to innovate to remain current. This book has the potential to push the laggards and the late majority into at a minimum, the early majority, but the moment a reader uses an idea presented in this read in their own situational context, brace yourself, and welcome to the world of an early adopter.

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