



Naturalizing Digital Immigrants: The Power of Collegial Coaching for Technology Integration

Alaniz, Katie; and Wilson, Dawn
Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2015

Book Review

Tags: digital learning | teaching with technology | technology

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This short, easy-to-read book may inspire academic administrators to set up one-on-one relationships between teachers with the goal of increasing effective technology use within classroom settings.

The book may not translate directly to those teaching in theological education because it is drawn from the authors' experiences in K-12 teacher education graduate programs. Its focus is on technology integration in elementary, and secondary contexts and teacher education, even though marketing copy on the back cover might indicate otherwise. Frequent clichés and repetitive text are also distracting.

A major conceptual problem in this book is the use of the idea of "digital immigrants." In the first chapter, Alaniz and Wilson describe current students who have grown up with the Internet as "digital natives." Their parents' generation, who did not grow up with the Internet, is one of "digital immigrants." This generational understanding of technology adoption does not advance the aims of the book. Technology integration in the classroom requires skill in both technology and pedagogy. Generational age is not a good indicator for teachers' capabilities in these areas. In the last chapter, the authors attempt to nuance the generational understanding, but it is too little, too late.

Despite these problems, the book presents an appealing method of collegial coaching for improved technology integration in teaching. Alaniz and Wilson ground their methodology in education research on the value of collaboration and conclude the book with testimonial evidence of the effectiveness of collegial coaching. The heart of the book is a recipe for setting

up a coaching program, supplemented by brief examples from graduate students who implemented programs in primary and secondary contexts. The steps for setting up this sort of program seem well-considered and backed by practical experience. While Alaniz and Wilson might have devoted more attention to intercultural issues in coaching relationships, they offer many helpful suggestions for considerations in selecting participants and structuring relationships.

Shifting from one-size-fits-all workshop sessions on technology to more focused coaching on technology integration is a strategy that may benefit all levels of education, not just the primary and secondary levels. Theological educators could have ongoing structured peer relationships that focus on integrating technology and educational resources into a classroom setting. Educational technologists and librarians in theological settings might utilize principles of coaching to help faculty utilize their resources in the classroom. It would be interesting to see this recipe for collegial coaching adapted to a theological education context, with greater sensitivity to intercultural dynamics in the academy and more nuance about generational facility with technology.

With noted cautions, this book is recommended for educators, particularly educational technologists, librarians, and deans, who might use insights from a peer coaching model to help faculty better use technology.

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