

## **Integrating Technology in English Language Arts Teacher Education: A Book Review**

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The use of technology in teaching has many skeptics about its advantages and positive impact on teaching. In *Integrating Technology in English Language Arts Teacher Education* (2020), Donna L. Pasternak speaks to the skepticism by examining the challenges and benefits of technology integration in English/English Language Arts classrooms. The study of teaching ELA has changed from an area that defined itself as a subject that teaches composition, literature, and rhetoric to one that teaches abilities needed to learn content such as interpretation, writing, speaking, critical analysis, Etc. (Coiro et al., 2004; National Council of Teachers of English, 2018). Pasternak's central argument is that technology integration and multimodal literacy are vital components of ELA curriculum development and provide clear and practical guidance on technology integration for prospective teachers of English in U.S. teacher education programs.

The book is organized into five chapters, each providing a framework for ELA instructors and teachers in other content areas to integrate technology and improve digital literacy skills. Chapter one discusses national learning and the challenges encountered while integrating technology. Chapter two covers the tension in the field and reflects on the potential for technology to replace traditional teaching methods. Chapter three explores technology integration into methods courses and examines how teacher educators guide their trainees in the use of technology. Chapter four describes the technologies pre-service teachers need to know to acquire the content of ELA methods. Furthermore, finally, chapter five describes how technology has transformed ELA students and the impact of technology in the classroom.

One of the book's significant concerns is that despite technology's role in instruction, it is still referred to as a "tool" (p. 77) in the narratives and assignment rubrics, replicating the traditional pen-and-paper approach. The book speaks to these concerns, which is also one of its strengths, by providing straightforward and practical case studies on technology integration in the ELA classroom. Pasternak provides clear and actionable examples from the case studies on how ELA teachers integrate technology into their classrooms. In one case study, a teacher used digital storytelling tools to help students create their own narratives using a combination of text, images, and sound (p. 64). A second case study highlighted how a teacher used online discussion forums to facilitate deeper analysis and reflection on texts (p. 85). The teacher in the case study provided examples of strong discussion posts and helped ELA students learn how to engage in meaningful online conversations.

Another strength of the book is the focus on best practices for using technology in the ELA classroom, such as emphasizing the importance of using technology in a purposeful way rather than just for the sake of using technology. This helps ensure that technology is being used effectively to support student learning. For example, Pasternak discusses how some teachers fall into the trap of using technology for its own sake, such as having students create digital presentations just because they can (p. 30). Instead, Pasternak emphasizes examples that show the importance of choosing technology tools that support specific learning objectives and helps students achieve a deeper understanding of ELA concepts (pp. 61-72), which promotes active learning and student engagement. Finally, Pasternak cites research showing that technology can be especially effective in fostering student collaboration and communication and encourages teachers to incorporate these strategies into their teaching (p. 46; p. 92).

While *Integrating Technology in the English Language Arts Classroom* is a valuable resource for ELA teachers and teacher educators, one area where the book could be improved is its treatment of the latest discussions around Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its impact on teaching English. As AI continues to advance, it is becoming increasingly important for teachers and teacher educators to understand how it can be used to enhance their teaching practices and support student learning. For example, AI can analyze student writing and provide feedback on grammar, spelling, and sentence structure (Dong et al., 2022) and develop students' AI Literacy through the power of digital story writing (Ng et al., 2022). Unfortunately, Pasternak does not provide much discussion or guidance on how to incorporate AI into the classroom. As AI continues to advance and become more prevalent in education, it is essential for ELA teachers to be aware of its potential applications and to learn how to integrate it effectively into their teaching practices. Therefore, the book could be updated to include more discussion and practical guidance on the use of AI in the ELA classroom.

Overall, *Integrating Technology in English Language Arts Teacher Education* provides different levels of understanding about technology and how ELA teachers can incorporate it into their classrooms. The book aims to show how tensions/ideas are presented in the English education field and provides clear and practical guidance on technology integration for prospective teachers of English. Pasternak emphasizes the importance of using technology purposefully rather than just for the sake of using technology and provides actionable examples from case studies on how ELA teachers can integrate technology into their classrooms. Despite its limitations, this book is a valuable resource for ELA teachers and teacher educators who seek to incorporate technology into their curriculum development.

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