



## BOOK REVIEW

# The Productive Online and Offline Professor: A Practical Guide

Bonni Stachowiak

*Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, 2020*

*(xx + 270 pages, ISBN 978-1-62036-730-8, \$22.50)*

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When *The Productive Online and Offline Professor: A Practical Guide* arrived on our virtual bookshelves in early 2020, few practitioners imagined how relevant this book would become in a matter of months. For many educators, the possibilities of thriving and being productive seemed to drift farther away as they scrambled, with varying degrees of success, to move their courses online in the middle of a semester. Due to preference or limited opportunity, some of these teachers had never taught online before. Some hoped never to do it again. However, as new semesters approach, pedagogues are likely gearing up for online or hybrid courses, and those teachers might again wonder if a thriving and productive semester is possible. Teaching and learning expert, Bonni Stachowiak, argues that indeed it is.

Divided into five parts, the book identifies the meaning of productivity, communication strategies, methods for sharing knowledge, resources for grading and other online teaching tasks, and strategies for increasing relevance of the material. Practicing what she preaches about building community and focusing on learners, Stachowiak provides an appendix of helpful tools and has a consolidated list of tools on the book's website, <https://teachinginhighered.com/productivity-tools/>.

This book serves as a complement to *Thrive Online* by Shannon Riggs (Stylus, 2020). Whereas *Thrive Online* sets the foundation for new and experienced instructors to become committed to confident delivery of quality online instruction, *The Productive Online and Offline Professor: A Practical Guide* focuses on how instructors can manage their personal productivity.

Significantly, Stachowiak does not frame pursuing productivity as a means of appeasing the never-ending appetite of competitive academia, but rather, defines the goal of productivity, online and offline, as presence. To pursue productivity in this sense is to find meaning in one's work by being aware of one's priorities, acquiring flexibility for inevitable changes, and implementing systems to optimize time spent on work. Stachowiak acknowledges that the focus of human relationships should not be efficiency, but believes that attending to workflow and equipping oneself with a sampling of new tools can assist teachers in creating meaningful learning experiences.

With instructors facing limited time and stressful circumstances, this book offers highly practical ways to improve online instruction. Whether teaching synchronously or asynchronously, fully online or hybrid, or even in person, this book provides accessible explanations of tools to assist educators in their essential functions. By design, the author notes that not all of these tools should be taken on by one instructor, but rather that the book offers a useful table of contents that enables the reader to peruse and pursue their most pressing issues. Stachowiak presents over a hundred helpful tips for increasing productivity, and subsequently for cultivating presence, meaning, and trust between teachers and learners.