Chapter 4
Examining Guidebooks as an Online Pedagogy Resource

ABSTRACT
As the field of online pedagogy is newly developed and being distinguished from traditional pedagogies, the supplemental materials and trainings available for instructors are only just being created. There are few, if any, textbooks available solely for the purpose of a class or training in online pedagogy. Rather, what exist currently are guidebooks. These guidebooks are typically step-by-step instructions by current online educators for new online teachers. Since guidebooks are the official documentation and research (sometimes anecdotal) available regarding online pedagogy, they play a significant role in understanding and evaluating acquisition and learning in teacher training. Therefore, this chapter examines and defines a number of guidebooks for online educators in order to see the development of the field and acknowledge the positioning of acquisition and learning in these currently existing educational standards.

INTRODUCTION
Technologies do not supersede one another but coexist, combine, and overlap in ways that futurists can’t predict...So it is that instead of finding a great deal that was new in our chapters...we found, as we should have expected, that we were seeing evolutionary change, incremental and gradual, where the genres and classroom practices of the past provided the foundation for the genres and practices of the present- A. Herrington, K. Hodgson, & C. Moran (2009).

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-4666-5055-8.ch004
As the field of online pedagogy begins to develop into its own discipline, researchers from other disciplines with an interest in online learning have been key players in generating research and publications for the masses. Guidebooks in online learning have become the staple for instructors transitioning from face-to-face (F2F) to online classrooms. To my research, there are few published textbooks in online pedagogy. There is little demand for online pedagogy textbooks at this point, as there are few programs worldwide that offer an education specifically in online pedagogy. Therefore, instructors at all levels rely on guidebooks as the go-to source for assistance in both pedagogy and technology. Guidebooks are essentially advice books regarding online learning with a specific focus: building learning communities, effective communication, or incorporation of a specific technology. Since these guidebooks are a main source of information in and of the field of online pedagogy, it was necessary that this text examine a number of online education guidebooks in detail to understand the availability of published sources available for individuals interested in learning about online teaching.

The introductory quote from an edited collection by Herrington, Hodgson, and Moran provides a starting point for the discussion that is utilized throughout many of the guidebooks of the chapter. Until recently there has not been an interest or need for a distinction between traditional and online pedagogy. Instructors and administrators have relied on the traditional pedagogies and experiences with traditional F2F classrooms to inform the transition to online education. While that is certainly the logical progression of thoughts, higher education is now at the point where distance education has become its own entity and rightfully, its own field of study. However, we have not fully evolved aspects of online pedagogy such as in its application and role in teacher training programs. Many graduate degree programs discuss traditional pedagogies and building a strong F2F classroom. But some graduate programs do not even make mention of the online classroom when most faculty will be asked to or required to teach online in their careers. It is necessary that we understand the current state of online teacher training including what it is and what it isn’t. The guidebooks that are discussed throughout this chapter play a significant role in defining the parameters of online pedagogy and online teacher training because they are the major publications that offer research, support, and well-defined arguments for certain behaviors, processes, and pedagogies of the online classroom.

BACKGROUND

The purpose of a published guidebook is for an experienced online educator (the authors of the guidebooks) to offer advice, strategies for planning and executing effective classroom management, and often times to stress the unique communicative challenges of online courses. Published guidebooks, like educators themselves, vary tremendously in their scope, presentation, and overall messages. Some, like Palloff and Pratt’s text, focus on the development of learning communities—an idea