



Ditch That Textbook: Free Your Teaching and Revolutionize Your Classroom

Matt Miller

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Are you ready for a change?

You know potential exists for innovative, engaging, revolutionary education if you get the right ideas, right tools, and right people, all in the right order.

If that sounds like you, then you're ready to DITCH old mindsets and methods and replace them with empowering, liberating ones. Author and teacher, Matt Miller shows you how to choose and incorporate teaching practices that are:

Different from what students see daily. **Innovative**, drawing on new ideas or modifying others' ideas.

Tech-laden with the use of digital sites, tools and devices. **Creative**, tapping into students' original ideas as well as your own. **Hands-on**, encouraging students to make and try things on their own. Packed with practical advice, specific recommendations for tools, and the encouragement you need to revolutionize your classes, *Ditch That Textbook* will inspire you to create relevant teaching that gets student buy-in so they'll enjoy learning.

What people are saying about *Ditch That Textbook*:

"Matt Miller's *Ditch That Textbook* is a book that delivers sound advice, relatable anecdotes and an actionable roadmap for educators." -- **Adam Bellow, 2011 ISTE Outstanding Young Educator of the Year**

"In an age where many schools are still training students to work in a factory, Matt Miller moves past sweeping rhetoric and shows teachers how to move their classes into the future. This is a quick, energetic read that will leave you inspired to take the next step in your classroom!" -- **Don Wettrick, Innovation Specialist and Author, *Pure Genius***

Ditch That Textbook: Free Your Teaching and Revolutionize Your Classroom Details

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Leon (Mervyn) Metoyer says

Matt Miller's "Ditch That Textbook: Free Your Teaching and Revolutionize Your Classroom", is an impassioned, thoughtful discussion about the need for teachers to make pedagogical changes to meet the needs of 21st-century learners. Miller uses his phrase "Ditch That" as his battle cry to educators to step out of traditional teaching roles and embrace the technological world in which today's digital natives live.

Matt Miller is a classroom Teacher with more than 10 years experience teaching High School Spanish. Miller is also a Google Certified innovator, a PBS Learning Media Digital Innovator, and was named one of the top 10 influencers of educational technology by Onalytica, a Bammy! Awards nominee, and blogger.

Matt Miller's "Ditch That Textbook: Free Your Teaching and Revolutionize Your Classroom" has four themes. Those themes are as titled: Why go digital? Ditch that mindset, Ditch that textbook, and Ditch that curriculum. Each theme provides an explanation of each proclamation or question and is followed by practical classroom examples or theories either provided from his own teaching practice or from the practice of a colleague.

The first section, "Why go Digital?" discusses the technological advancements in our world and culture and explores reasons why some instructors are reluctant to adopt new technologies into their teaching practice. Miller specifically stated that "Education today is driven by methods effective for producing good little factory workers, but the kind of work people do in today's workforce is non-routine, interpersonal, and analytical. Call me crazy, but something doesn't add up. These practices that persist in classrooms today certainly helped workers thrive during the Industrial Revolution, but the Industrial Revolution is over! The digital revolution is here. It's time our classrooms address the needs of the current and future marketplace."

In the first section of his book, it seems as if Miller is speaking directly to educators who are struggling with evolving and using technology to deliver instruction. The first chapter of the book informs the reader of some of the technological advantages that 21st-century teachers have over teachers from any other time in history. 21st-century teachers can access information, images, and video from all over the world. Miller discusses these advantages and offers some specific apps and websites for teachers to use the start moving forward in their practice as a teacher. The writer also states and understanding for the anxiety caused by introducing new ideas and new technology into their teaching practice. However, he believes that the benefits far outweigh the risks involved when teachers ditch their textbooks.

There is a multitude of teacher/education/tech books, webinars, and professional development opportunities that laud using technology for increasing efficiency, however, Miller's perspective differs from many others. Miller discusses taking advantage of the efficiency that using technology offers to provide greater life balance for teachers. Many teachers spend more of their discretionary time than they would like grading papers, planning lessons, and tweaking assignments. Miller claims that utilizing the efficiency that technology affords, teachers can increase their discretionary time for personal pursuits. The author also claims that a teacher with a good balance of work and personal life pursuits helps create a better instructor.

The next theme, "Ditch that Mindset" examines the thought processes of teachers in regard to the adoption of technology to increase academic outcomes. Miller explores the idea of using technology to personalize instruction to increase student performance. One example from the book tells about a social studies teacher

that created a music playlist that correlated with the academic content and how the titles and lyrics of the songs were intertwined with the lesson. The section is concluded with a discussion about how at the end of the day, sound teaching should be prioritized above all else, including technology. In the chapter “Choose Task Over Tool”, Miller writes “the bottom line is that pedagogy must drive technology. The mindset that fuels digital learning is: Good teaching trumps good tools.” The focus of this section is to prepare educators to begin utilizing the combination of smart tech and teaching.

Miller addresses the title of his book in the following section “Ditch That Textbook” and offers practical advice to those looking to create a paperless learning environment and/or incorporate more technology into their teaching practice. The first practical advice the author provides is to create a website/home/base for students to find, create, and upload information. Next, he gives real common and original ideas to help teachers reach that ideal. Miller concludes this theme with a conversation with the reader imploring them to see their students for who they are and to instruct them in their world. In the book Miller states “the changing marketplace and continually advancing technology require us to reevaluate the way we educate”. It is Miller’s opinion that too many times educators are asking digital natives to learn utilizing analog methods.

The book is concluded asking educators to “Ditch That Curriculum” within the confines of the expectations of their employer to increase student outcomes. Educators are then asked to perform some self-reflection to determine a foundation or philosophy of teaching from which to build upon. Miller then asks teachers to build upon this foundation with a mission or end goal in mind, and then begin to plan backwards from that point. He also helps educators “Ditch That Curriculum” with practical advice to utilize flexible thinking, and gradually add tech to their practice.

Matt Miller’s “Ditch That Textbook: Free Your Teaching and Revolutionize Your Classroom” is a call to arms for 21st century educators to revitalize their teaching practice and engage learners. Although it might seem as if Miller might be asking teachers to throw their textbooks into the trash, Miller is trying to encourage instructors to be Different, Innovative, Teach-Laden, Creative, and Hands-On.

Paige says

So many great ideas for a new, tech based classroom. I can't wait to get started on planning. A must read for educators who want to change the way education has always been viewed.

Ian Simpson says

Quick read. It had some useful links for those who are beginners, but quite limited in other aspects. I'd like to see an updated version though as this is now four years old.

Jahmaal says

Summary

Ditch That Textbook: Free Your Teaching and Revolutionize Your Classroom was written by Matt Miller, a former reporter turned Spanish teacher who sought to revolutionize his teaching practice from traditional by-

the-book instruction, to an innovative learning environment with technology at the center of the learning process. The author's goal with this book is to have teachers examine their practices, and DITCH the methods that are inefficient or downright boring.

The author begins *Ditch* by lamenting on a moment in his teaching practice when he realized the disconnect he had with his students. After a class period filled with lecture and worksheets, Matt was amazed at the speed at which his students ran out of the door, so quickly "it might as well have been a fire alarm" (Miller, 2015). This moment marked a paradigm shift for Miller in which he realized that he expected to do what he had experienced as a student himself, and was faced with the realization that those methods are no longer relevant for 21st-Century learners (Miller, 2015). Miller's paradigm shift is what led him to create the DITCH model, an acronym that stands for Different, Innovative, Tech-Laden, Creative, and Hands-On. In *Ditch*, Matt Miller is careful to clarify that in many cases, teachers do not have the option to literally ditch their textbooks because of district mandates, but that should not stop teachers from ditching the practices they implement that do not fit the DITCH model. As a way to help teachers make the steps necessary to implement the DITCH model, Miller divided his book into four sections. Section 1: *Why Go Digital*, focuses on why it is important for teachers to use technology in the classroom. Section 2: *Ditch That Mindset* deals with moving beyond the antiquated teaching practices that have been historically present in the classroom, and trade those practices for ideas that work within the context of students' current environment. Section 3: *Ditch That Textbook*, gives teachers solid examples of ways to go paperless in the classroom by incorporating web-based tools to enhance the learning environment. Section 4: *Ditch That Curriculum* takes the teacher from the paperless classroom, and provides methodology for restructuring curriculum that will reflect your philosophy as a teacher, and bring out the best in your students.

Evaluation

First and foremost, *Ditch That Textbook* is not a revolution against textbooks themselves, but rather the mentality that surrounds the standardization of education that is exemplified by text-book teaching: teaching that focuses on reading, worksheets, rote memorization, and little meaningful learning. For this reason, the title of the book is a bit misleading, however, the content of the book backs up the idea that it is important to DITCH the methods and ideology that has caused education to stagnate the past few decades. Miller argues that in order to successfully implement the DITCH method, teachers have to be comfortable integrating technology into the classroom in a real and meaningful way. "If our job is to prepare students for the real world, the question isn't if we should go digital, but how to go digital--starting now" (Miller, 2015).

Miller continues unraveling the DITCH method in section 2, by shifting the focus to changing our mentality. In order to make the mindshift, the author contends that the most important aspect of "Ditching That Mindset" is to focus on making learning personal. Standardization and textbook-driven learning is cold and impersonal, and students know that, which leads to the lack of engagement seen in so many schools across the country. Miller asserts that "if we can ditch our textbooks, at least momentarily, and connect to our students' lives through our content, we can help them answer those big questions...then they'll see themselves in what they're learning" (Miller, 2015).

Ultimately, the DITCH methodology must be a holistic approach to revamping the classroom. The changes that Miller suggest for teachers that are willing to create a paradigm shift in their own classrooms have gained widespread support by other writers and educators. Dave Burgess', *Teach Like a PIRATE* and George Couros' *Innovator's Mindset* both echo the importance of building relationships with students to understand how to craft lessons that will benefit the unique needs each one of them brings to the table. While all three of these books share a common vision of the future of education, DITCH gives practical insights to help teachers formulate a concrete plan to transform their learning environments. It's the practicality of DITCH that makes it attractive to anyone who is seeking to overhaul their current classroom model into something that provides students with the opportunities to exercise the skills they will need beyond their formal education.

Conclusion

Ditch That Textbook is an important read for anyone seeking to modernize their learning environments. Not

only does it provide helpful insight and anecdotal experiences from the authors, but it gives a practical framework for educators to implement real change in their classrooms. By ditching the textbook, teachers leave behind the rote, standardized methods of teaching, and improve on those lessons by taking into account the individuality that exists within their classrooms. It is when teachers are willing to implement the DITCH method, that students will truly become active in acquiring the skills necessary to approach their future with confidence.

This book was published by Dave Burgess Consulting, Inc. and is available in both paperback and Kindle formats ranging in price from \$9.97 to \$21.11. Paperback ISBN: 978-0-9861554-0-6. Ebook ISBN: 978-0-9861554-1-3.

Miller, M. (2015). Ditch That Textbook: Free Your Teaching and Revolutionize Your Classroom. Dave Burgess Consulting, Inc.

D. Bright says

Great book. Don't be confused by the title. It is not just about getting rid of your textbooks. It is more about making your teaching better and more relevant for your students than an outdated textbook, paired with outdated worksheets. A great read. Plus, if you are not listening to Matt Miller and Kasey Bell's Google Tribe podcast, you should.

Enjoy.

Tracy Scoggins-Lucas says

Matt Miller is a great author. I really enjoyed this book. I was surprised to discover that DITCH was an acronym, but I liked it once he explained it. He did not overwhelm us in this book, which because of the title, you could easily think it would be very overwhelming. Matt is realistic about education, and is constantly saying in the book to take our time. Do not try it all at the once, make a plan and test it out. Then make adjustments as we go, but whatever we do, "start," don't just "do nothing!"

I loved that the chapters were all short and extremely easy to read. He breaks down the book into 4 sections: Why go Digital, Ditch the Mindset (which is the longest section probably because teachers sometimes have a hard time changing our original mindset), Ditch that Textbook, and finally Ditch that Curriculum. In each section he gives very easy to follow steps on how you would go about "ditching" in each of those areas. Because the chapters are so short, it doesn't feel overwhelming. Also his light humor dispersed though out

the pages makes it follow along through the book easily.

Matt is not a demanding author, so I found myself willingly taking notes on a few things that I could begin making changes to in my classroom. He often mentions himself and explains many of his failures in the book, which I think he did to make us feel at ease while we are reading. Plus it gives us a area of connection to him as an educator.

I purchased the ebook, so I loved the hyper links to his blog, and articles that he refers to (very 21st Century learner). This book provided resources, questions, and effective ways to rethink my mindset as a teacher and new a perspective to going paperless. I do think that this book could stand to be updated with some of the newer tech that is available today, like Google Suite, Remind, and Edmodo. His confidence in us as being our own best professional development was very encouraging. I've been teaching my self a lot of the new apps and programs lately, so being a forever learner is such a true statement. I will definitely be rereading this book over the summer to get fired up for next school year.

Kelly says

Excellent! A lot of info but a good balance of general and specific treatment of topics. Not a guilt trip but motivational. I was encouraged through parts because of practices I already use but also given so many ideas for ways and areas in which to improve as well. I also personally really appreciated that the author is also a Spanish teacher because there was more credibility and were more examples I could relate to as I read. Definitely glad I bumped this one up on my to-read priority list!!!

Shannon Hugo says

Following the main idea of this text would be difficult since I work in a big district with lots of guidelines. However, as we embark on a one-to-one program in the fall, implementing some of the supporting ideas would be helpful. Regardless, it's practical and helpful advice in (and out of) the classroom to "[e]mbrace the messy and the complicated. Go out on a limb because that's where the fruit is. Embrace the uncomfortable and discover what's really possible."

Christina says

Confirmed a lot of things I already do, but lacked specific examples for how to implement new ideas. Had some good elements to use in my classroom.

Brian McCann says

So inspired by this book and demand that average isn't good enough for our students.

Mr. Trapp says

As an educator, I've often been frustrated with the rigid and inflexible textbooks. Although time consuming, I've often devised my own activities and assessments. Matt Miller suggests ditching the textbook. He feels this can be easily done with today's technology that allows teachers to work more efficiently while engaging the students more in the process. While designing a new curriculum is daunting, Miller offers some great personal advice, so teachers don't become too overwhelmed. Also, he offers examples of many educational websites and apps that can be incorporated into any subject area. He provides some great out-of-the-box activities as well. Furthermore, I enjoyed how Miller shared many of his successes and failures in the classroom during his years of teaching. Whether a rookie or a veteran, this book challenges teachers to rethink their current methods and practices. Not only will it benefit educators, but more importantly, the students whom they teach!

Lori says

Great ideas! Can't wait to hear him in person!

Toni Rose Deanon says

Love Matt Miller and everything he has to offer. I did roll my eyes when I found out that DITCH is an acronym. I suppose I should just get over the fact that education loves and embraces acronyms. I do think that this book needs to be updated a little because Google Classroom wasn't mentioned, and some other apps/programs that have recently come out. It does provide a plethora of resources and hyperlinks so that's cool. Since Matt teaches high school, his students use twitter a lot while my middle school babies prefer instagram and Snapchat so I definitely need to figure out how to implement those two in my classroom. I can also relate to Matt when I made the decision to go paperless. Actually, I felt as if Matt was writing about my life in this book. His experiences and my experiences are quite similar. This book provides resources, questions, and effective ways to rethink teacher mindset and perspective. He also reminded me that I am my own best professional development. I've been teaching myself a lot of skills lately and I've been super frustrated with my school for not providing information to better my teaching. I'll definitely be rereading this book over and over again.

Esther Arrindell says

Fijn pleidooi om voorbij de methode te kijken, met aardige en praktische ideeën. Bijbehorende website en nieuwsbrief leveren inspiratie online.

Alexandra Coullée says

I loved this book and I read it at just the right time. A great up-lifting read for any teacher out there trying to be innovative. Lots of ideas but also lots of interesting thoughts to reflect upon!

