

Issues in Design and Technology Teaching is an immediate response to the call from the National Curriculum of the United Kingdom that design and technology should be included in general education. Therefore it strongly focuses on the United Kingdom. This strong geographic focus, in my opinion, may be less relevant to people in other areas like North America.

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Maddux, C.D., & LaMont Johnson, D. (Eds.). (2001). *The Web in Higher Education: Assessing the Impact and Fulfilling the Potential*. New York: The Haworth Press. Hardcover.

An edited book about *The Web* in higher education can take many directions. For example, some contemporary authors focus on the effect of the worldwide web on the changing nature of higher education institutions and governance (Clark, 2003), while others write about the utility of the machine technologies brought to bear by the Web in higher education (Short, 2000). Still, other authors take a philosophical perspective on the subject by considering the values supporting our varied epistemological approaches to the Web in higher education and instruction (Smith, Ferguson & Caris, 2001). Without directly defining potential or web in their book *The Web in Higher Education: Assessing the Impact and Fulfilling the Potential*, Maddux and LaMont Johnson (2001) offer a collection of papers written primarily by researchers interested in the design and delivery of on-line or web involved instruction. The focus of this book is upon the conceptualization, design, and delivery of various theory-based, web involved teaching and learning environments. In fact, the chapters present a sequence of themes in that order.

Most articles in this book are offered from teams of researchers who have an educational technology or instructional design background. As such, the language of the collection does not exclude any prospective higher education teacher or learner, but it does require non-educational

technology readers to miss some jargon and to skim for meaning. Indeed, researchers in educational technology will find this a great resource from which to view theoretically grounded analyses of complex, differently contextualized, modern forms of web-related issues found in the domain of higher education teaching today. Also, support personnel, administrators, faculty, and students facing web learning issues may benefit from reading this book because this collection of authors identify both the strengths and the weaknesses of several theory supported best-practice recommendations for web enhanced learning design. Most chapters in the book present descriptive higher education case situations in North American and European settings. From my experience in administration and teaching, the situations presented by the authors are also representative of some of the most pressing current issues and social phenomena impacting the conception, design, development, or implementation of sustainable web based learning events today.

A good amount of K-12 literature informs these works as authors cite K-12 scholars of teaching theory and practice. For example, Reynold's chapter on communities of practice for internet learning forums in higher education is a typical example of the extrapolation of conceptual frameworks from K-12 to interpret higher education cases (p. 111). The only weakness of the book is that a consistent application of K-12 literature might not translate as well to higher education situations as we think, so there is a need for higher education teaching and learning theory to inform more of the case interpretations in general. However if readers of these works are teachers in higher education, or if these readers are contemplating developing or redeveloping face to face classes into some form of web based instruction, this book could be a great insight into new web based learning design, language, and terminology. Overall, the book offers a slightly different view of pedagogy for asynchronous and synchronous learning events that are portrayed from various experienced instructional designer perspectives. The different design approaches offer up good learning for readers who are not intimate with instructional design practice today. As a minimum, this book offers an exposure to some carefully analyzed practice and theory about web learning in the modern higher education context. At its best, the book offers educational technologists, education course leaders, and instructional designers several field-proven perspectives from some carefully considered case studies. From these cases, we can see various

subtle recommendations from researchers in different national and higher education institution contexts. Peering into that process from either the outside or the inside of the educational technology field will provide readers of the book with fertile ground and some practical principles from which they can make implicit conclusions about web usage in higher education.

As such, the book is a collection of articles. Few authors in the chapters of this book echo or even implicate the editors' early warning of the great difficulties within higher education found in Chapter One: "There are hard times ahead for all levels of public education." Findings from one study reported in the book provide support for the editors' strong warnings (more specifically from an instructional design perspective) as Coombs and Rodd write that in today's higher education context, good instructional design is critical for web based learning: "Bad on-line instructional design of courses has led to poor implementation" (p. 88). In Colaric and Jonassen's chapter the same general conclusion or warning is re-emphasized again: "It is unlikely that the Web will ever transform learning and educational opportunities for students, as some educators have predicted. Only educators can do that" (p. 167). This book is a rich collection of American and European higher education case studies about web involved teaching and learning and many of the final recommendations in the chapters create a legitimate knowledge supplement for higher educators who are contemplating engaging web based course activities. The book is also a useful reference for people who wish to improve their web based teaching and learning practice. There is implicit information here for education administrators who are not familiar with the core design and implementation issues surrounding new ventures into web supported on-line education. In fact, an article on administration of web course development would be a great addition to this book.

Perhaps the best example of the practical ideas found within the collection is the guide or model for web course implementation developed by Hare, de Boer, and Collis in their chapter "Implementation and Adaptation Experiences with a WWW-Based Course Management System" (p. 127). Hare, De Boer, and Collis present a model generated from a faculty-wide research and reflection resulting from their research of six years of web course implementation at the University of Twente.

While the authors generate a good step-by-step guide for the implementation of new web managed courses, their conclusions are good examples of some of the subtle themes that emerge from the book. The themes include:

- 1) There is a clear need for both technical and instruction training for faculty engaged in web courses.
- 2) There is a need for more faculty awareness about support systems in the institution providing web based teaching and learning.
- 3) Because web based courses result in more (not less) communication between faculty and students, these particularly faculty members need to be well aware of the goals of the course, and of their capacity for change.

These themes ring true. As an educator whose responsibilities have involved web based teaching and learning design and development for several years, I found myself nodding in appreciation as I read findings from the Bonk, Daynter, Daynter, Dennen, and Malikowski chapter about student-derived web based cases. Grounded in the "Vygotskian or sociocultural camp" (p. 191), the authors used a cognitive apprenticeship framework to interpret forms of learning emerging from multi-year study of over a thousand pre-service teachers conversing on-line about professional cases. Bonk et al. found that with minimal learning, students readily adapted to a web learning environment whereby extensive advice to the students occurred. I have experienced these particular phenomenae with both graduate and undergraduate students in on-line discourse. Teaching and learning via the web can lead to a richer learning experience than larger face to face class and teaching and learning events, particularly when it comes to preservice professional counseling dialectics. In a more negative tone, Bonk et al. lament that students are at the same time prone to "insufficient text referencing" (p. 193) in their discussions with each other, so there really is a need for the designer and instructor to push the scholarly dialogue idea to keep the web based discourse rigorous. Nevertheless, Bonk's findings counter the older stereotypes that web based instructor-student relations are weaker on-line. Good teaching is good teaching, and good design is good design after all is said and done. Bonk et al. go on to suggest that future software developments could help instructors to identify emerging trends within and between case discussions or in student-led on-line case

development work. Such technological innovation could really help higher education instructors who use the web with a constructivist teaching approach, as feedback and discourse analysis can be a complex process with large on-line groups, and the discovery of any topical trends in on-line dialogue could support laborious on-line discussion analysis and interpretation. Bonk presents a truly fascinating idea for a time when the amount of information available on the web seems almost infinite, and when a well directed case study can lead to a (better) student directed learning situation where the instructor's facilitation strategies are more important (Ehrmann, 1997).

In the first chapter, the editors paint a dark picture of on-line teaching and learning as they outline the impossibility of offering a defensible higher education to the public sector today, but the rest of the book has no such message. By the end of the book, the higher education on-line instructor is left to infer the potential of the web from the various ideas within the other chapters. Overall, Maddux and LaMont Johnson declare early in the book that they see only the positive potential of the web as an instrument in higher education. This is a fair comment as "fair warning" about the inevitable, classic tensions between entrepreneurship and a liberal higher education system continue regardless of the mode of teaching and learning we choose to engage. However, this collection of works also supports a proclamation by the editors that profound change in higher education institutions is available to us because of the availability of the internet (p. 14). Indeed, a refreshing theme from the beginning to the end of this book is the to-and-fro challenges to educational technologists and leaders in distance education. These challenges invite on-line instructors and institution administrators to re-examine our practice and to consider less instrumental teaching methodologies. I realized by Chapter Two that the initial question of perspective on the whole idea of using the web in higher education was a rhetorical one, and that the question would not be addressed directly in the book – but as a reader, I appreciated *that* good question to be a preface for review of a collection of cases from different contexts.

As such, this compilation of work offers readers a very good survey of institutional and faculty experiences, trials, and tribulations concerning web involved teaching and learning. The findings, theories,

ideas, and pragmatic guidelines found in many of these case studies are presented through the lenses of both experienced educational technology researchers and by inexperienced web instructors / developers. As such, this is a nice, heterogeneous collection by key stakeholders on higher education web course leadership teams. The volume could just as easily inform project leaders and educational administrators as it could inform experts in this growing field.

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Lynch McVay, M. (2002). *The Online Educator: A Guide to Creating the Virtual Classroom*. New York: Routledge Falmer. Softcover. 176 pages.

As technology has advanced and changed our world, we have become a global learning society. Web-based education in which individuals may pursue course work and accreditation or advance their corporate training and skills through online delivery is described as the wave of the future in education. In fact, "the online education market is predicted to be the largest sector of technology-based education by 2002, with a dollar growth to over \$1 billion in the United States alone" (p. 155). Despite this demand for the development and incorporation of distance education programs into university and corporate structures, there is a lack understanding amongst stakeholders as to how to