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

implement distance education so that it is equal to but different from face-to-face instruction. This book is a timely publication that provides guidance and support to educators as they contemplate, plan, and implement online education.

In the book Lynch attempts to uncover the meaning and complexity of distance education by asking the question: "What is wrong with online education?" (p. 4). Recommending that education be viewed from a systems perspective where "many things happen simultaneously and many steps require returning to previous steps" (p. 4), Lynch adopts a similar format for the book. Accordingly, each chapter provides potential solutions to the question of meaning, but needs to be considered within the "systems development cycle" (p. 4). Lynch suggests to the reader that the book is structured along the format of a web-based course and she includes the mind map that was constructed for the book showing the theme of the book and the major components (chapters) and subtopics as they are linked and interrelated to each other (p. 80). Each of the eight chapters provides information about a specific category including: planning, assessing student needs, building support systems, course design, developing faculty, software selection, evaluation, and miscellaneous details. As such, the book will meet the needs of readers who are seeking in-depth information on one of these topics. However, in keeping with Lynch's focus on a system perspective for online course development and implementation, the content in the book is linked. For example, the topic of support systems has direct relationships to the components of faculty development, course design, and planning. Therefore, given the format of the book, the reader may "delve into those chapters that address your particular problem at the time" (p. 4) while maintaining a global view of how all the parts relate to and have an impact on the creation of the virtual environment.

The book has three major strengths that fit with the author's intent to simulate a web-based format for the content. First, consistent with the belief that a question-driven discourse is effective in establishing an inquiry-based learning environment, the author provides key questions for the educator to consider in each component of the development of the online environment. In so doing, the author encourages the reader to adopt a reflective approach to the topic that is based on individual

context and needs and thereby avoids the presentation of information as a lock-step guide or recipe for implementation.

The second strength of the book in its unique approach is its capacity to provide readers with the author's wealth of background research, references, and resources on various topics throughout the book. Not only are multiple Web sites provided in each chapter, but the author also has created a Web page with all the links activated as well as the URL to access the Web page. The use of 16 tables and seven illustrations to organize a maximum of information provides a succinct and visually appealing presentation of content.

The third strength of this book relates to the author's personal experience as an online educator which has led her to an understanding of the issues facing students and teaching staff within the virtual environment. In Chapter 4, "Developing Faculty: The Changed Role of Online Instructors," the author courageously addresses such issues as: key role changes for faculty in the online environment, transformative communication, the love-hate relationship of faculty with online instruction, assessment of Web-based development and instruction for promotion and tenure, release time or overload pay, and faculty mentoring. A focus on the personal issues related to becoming an online instructor provide insight into the human factors of online program delivery that ultimately will have an impact on the success of the program. The inclusion of these important personal factors moves this book beyond being a mere technical manual for online education.

Although this book offers summaries of four student populations studied in the online distance environment including elementary students, secondary students, at-risk students, and adult learners (p. 28), this work seems best suited to instructors who are working in the area of adult education. Drawing on her experience at the university level, the author's description of technology needs including hardware and software, course design, system requirements, as well as issues related to instructor readiness and development are most relevant to the complexity of post secondary education. As well, this book will be most useful to educators who have prior knowledge of or some experience in distance education either as a student or an instructor. Although clear in its presentation and format with good explanation provided for technological terms, in my opinion the book is not a primer for

instructors new to distance education. On the other hand, as an instructor new to online delivery, but with some rudimentary course design and instruction as part of my experience, I found the book to be enlightening, provocative, and informative in terms of my personal learning. Furthermore the book may serve as a valuable resource for future questions that may arise for the instructor in the area of online education.

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