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Abstract

Effective Teaching with Technology in Higher Education, 2003. A. W. Bates & Gary Poole. San Francisco: CA: Jossey-Bass. 306 pages. ISBN: 0-7879-6034-9. Reviewed by Diane P. Janes

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I must admit to having eagerly awaited this newest book from Tony Bates and his colleague, Gary Poole. There are several reasons for this, with the primary being that its publication coincided with two big events in my own life. First, I was leaving the University of British Columbia and the influences of working directly with Tony (a privilege I had enjoyed over the past seven years). Second, he was retiring from his position as Director of the Distance Education and Technology unit at UBC, at the end of December 2003. Given both these circumstances, I was interested to see if this book would be as intriguing to me personally, as was his 1995 ground breaking work, written as he joined UBC’s DE&T. I was not disappointed.

Effective Teaching with Technology in Higher Education is one of those books in our field, in my opinion, that you don’t want to put down until you have finished reading it. It is filled with ideas, thoughts, and examples that simply fuel your own `best practices’ as you read along.

Unlike several of Bates’ previous writings, this book is collaboration; a collaboration between two very different academics. And it works. It is a real acknowledgement of both of their efforts, in that it is almost impossible to tell where one voice begins and the other leaves off. Symmetry not often found in collaborative efforts. And each voice is richer for the experience.

Effective Teaching with Technology in Higher Education is divided into three parts, comprised of ten chapters. Part 1: Fundamentals of Educational Technology covers the first four chapters and “…provides the theoretical foundations” (p. xvi). These chapters discuss the current challenges faced by universities and colleges with respect to technology (Chapter 1), basic issues within teaching and learning (Chapter 2), and the “…nature of media and technology” (p. xvi) discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. Chapter 4 offers a further update to Bates’ ACTIONS model first discussed in 1988 and refined later in 1995. ACTIONS has now become SECTIONS making some significant changes by adding `students’, and revising his thoughts on access and ease of use (p. 78-80).

Part 11: Course Design, Development and Delivery covers the next five chapters and move from the conceptual to the more pragmatic. Chapter 5 reviews how technology is used to teach in higher education, Chapter 6 discusses program planning and course development, and Chapter 7 considers course design and explores how it is driven. Chapter 8 looks at production, including course maintenance and evaluation while Chapter 9 highlights the needs of the non-traditional, off campus student and the practical considerations when your student body is not in the same place as your faculty and administration. The final Part 111: Change and Stability in Teaching with Technology examines the issues that reoccur throughout the book, including workload, institutional support and the "…appropriate approaches to training and professional development for teaching with technology" (p. xviii).

This final chapter is the authors' most profound and hopeful section in the book, in my opinion. Bates and Poole move us through a vision, a continuum between face-to-face teaching and wholly technology-based teaching attempting to take the best from both worlds while keeping a focus on what is important _ the learner. As they note in their final pages, "The art of the teacher is to take the different ingredients…and blend them appropriately to provide the best combination of face-to-face and technology-based teaching for the contexts in which they will be used" (p. 282) while "…the main advantage of technology is that it increases access and flexibility for both learners and teachers" (p. 282).

Bates and Poole do not want the discussion they have begun to end with this book. They have set up an interactive web site (http://www.batesandpoole.ubc.ca) to further the discussion and to have readers comment on any and all of their points. When I visited the site for this review, I was disappointed it was not being actively used but after you read their newest work, I hope you'll find yourself drawn to discuss it with the authors themselves.

Effective Teaching with Technology in Higher Education is an excellent end to one phase and a great beginning to the next.

E-Research: Methods, Strategies, and Issues, 2003. Terry Anderson & Heather Kanuka. Allyn & Bacon. 192 pages. ISBN: 0-205-34382-1

Reviewed by Kathleen Matheos

Having read papers authored by both Anderson and Kanuka, I looked forward to their new book e- Research: Methods, Strategies and Issues. This well-written book reflected both authors' years of experience as practicing academic researchers and their thorough understanding of how these new e-tools could be used to enhance and expand research in a variety of ways.

The book is structured "...based on a model of academic research that we commonly use with senior undergraduate, masters, or doctoral projects..." (p. xv), a familiar model. I also appreciated that the book was written so it need not be read sequentially, allowing me to go first to the areas in which I was most interested.

The book is organized into fourteen chapters. The first six chapters introduce the readers to academic e-research, Chapters 7 through 12 present aspects of qualitative and quantitative research on the Internet.

Chapter 13 discusses the Net for dissemination of findings, and Chapter 14 looks to the future in e-research.

For those new to the area of e-research, Chapter 1 provides a solid foundation to understanding e-research. The chapter concludes with a well-documented example of e-research conducted by Anderson and Rourke. The example illustrates two ways in which the Web can support research: in the collection and dissemination of results, and in the observation of net-based communication.

Chapter 2 covers the Net; its history, structure and search engines, including tips for searching. Chapter 3 explains the design of e-research and includes an example of inadequately designed e-research, affirming the importance of a carefully designed research question. Chapter 4 discusses the literature review process and covering both informal and formal sources of information, and provides processes for using both effectively and efficiently. Chapter 5 present's ethics in the e-research context and the dilemma faced by e-researchers working within guidelines developed for the off-line world. What is required, the authors suggest is dialogue between stakeholders in both the Net and research communities. Chapter 6 illustrates the capacity of the Net to facilitate collaborative research, cautioning readers of its challenges and introduces e-tools for team research.

It was Chapters 7 through 12 were for me, the highlights of the book. These chapters provide practical explanations of the use of the Net for research activities including focus groups, interviews, Delphi and other consensus methodologies, surveys, collection and analysis of quantitative data, and content analysis of online documents.

Chapter 7 presents semi-structured and structured interviews on the Net. The chapter begins with a discussion of interview techniques, and walks the reader through the process of e-interviews. Chapter 8 concentrates on conducting online focus groups, comparing and contrasting face-to-face and net-based groups and providing a step-by-step guide to the process. Chapter 9 describes net-based consensus techniques including nominal group techniques and the Delphi Method. Each method is elucidated, reflecting the advantages the web affords these established methods. Chapter 10 focuses on the collection and analysis of quantitative data on the Net including specific examples. Chapter 11 offers a detailed discussion of e-surveys, detailing articulately the process involved. Chapter 12, entitled Content Analysis of Online Documents reflects on both qualitative and quantitative content analysis and outlines these processes in this new paradigm. The final chapter in this section, Chapter 13 discusses the use and advantages of the Net for dissemination of e-research. The concluding chapter of the book, Chapter 14 looks to the future of e-research in which the "mindful integration of new technologies and new research promises a golden age for Net-Based research" (p. 207).

e-Research provides a thoughtful and articulate commentary on the theory and process of e-research. For anyone interested in e-research this book contains valuable information to guide both experienced researchers and graduate students. As I was working my way through the book I had opportunity to chat with Heather Kanuka, and the conversation turned to the book, and her intent in writing it - to support others in doing e-research. The book does this and more; it brings together traditional and e-research and provides a foundation for much needed dialogue between the fields of traditional and e-research.

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