

A REVIEW OF **RETHINKING PEDAGOGY FOR A DIGITAL AGE: DESIGNING FOR 21ST CENTURY LEARNING**

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Review

The title *Rethinking Pedagogy for a Digital Age: Designing for 21st Century Learning* may seem to indicate that the author's primary purpose is to inform readers about various ways to incorporate technologies in curriculum design. However, it is not just about design techniques for education. Experienced e-learning and learning design researchers and practitioners in Australia and UK have contributed to the overarching mission of this edited collection: to fill gaps in our knowledge about effective design for learning in the current technology-rich and technologically fast-changing era. The contributions address both the theoretical and practical underpinnings of the best practices for the design or improvement of pedagogy in various distance education and e-learning contexts of higher education institutions, communities, and professional fields. Therefore, this book is beneficial for those who wish to gain a deeper understanding of scholarship, practice, and controversy in distance education and instructional technology, including both academics and practitioners from scholars, students, and teachers in higher education to instructional designers, online instruction administrators, and policy makers.

The editors begin this book by clarifying the mutual nature of the relationship between pedagogy and technology. Many educators and educational scholars have emphasized pedagogy through the use of technology, a viewpoint that has become entrenched, rather than a more symbiotic relationship. In contrast, the editors of this collection argue that the features of pedagogy change as technology develops. Therefore, a plethora of learning technologies extends the traditional boundaries of education, and digital technologies in pedagogy simultaneously transform relationships among the constituents of education. This is why, the editors argue, we should continue to rethink the changing characteristics of pedagogy along with new technology-driven challenges.

The first edition of this book, published in 2007, was built upon the assumption that the field of education had experienced a dramatic paradigm shift as a result of the development of information and communication technologies. It argued that learning technologies have been overplayed or misconceived as a panacea for better pedagogy by policy-makers. At the same time, the first edition stressed going beyond just applying new learning technologies to traditional educational practices. The original version ultimately called readers' attention to creative ways of using digital technology for teaching and learning by introducing learning activities in educational contexts involving proficient electronic and mobile technologies. New material about social

media and its impact on pedagogy has been added to this second edition, and the other content has been thoroughly updated along with the up-to-date research and practice.

The book consists of three main parts. Part I encompasses the principles and practices of pedagogic design. Contemporary principles and theories of pedagogic design are outlined in Chapter 1, while Chapter 2 discusses how these trends can be applied to practical learning design. Chapter 3 illustrates how technology-rich learning environments call for a sophisticated, holistic analysis at the system level. Chapter 4 describes actual designing as social, cultural, and organizational/political practice by employing four research studies. In Chapters 5 through 9, a number of design tools, environments, and challenges are addressed in various ways by the authors. Part II captures more specific contexts of designing for learning. After expounding upon the practice of course teams in Chapter 10, Part II deals with design for learning in concrete disciplinary contexts such as the arts (Chapter 11), professional development (Chapter 12), and social sciences (Chapter 13). Additionally, Chapter 14 and Chapter 15 take readers' understanding of context further by showing the details of learning design projects at the University of Lincoln and in the LAMS community respectively. Chapter 16 elaborates upon the pedagogical context where learners in higher education are equipped with mobile technologies by themselves. Chapter 17 wraps up Part II by discussing the uncertainty of the future in which designing for learning takes place. Lastly, Part III offers a variety of resources to help readers to understand the material contained in the previous sections.

Even though this book is based upon several learning design projects, its structure parts and chapters effectively leads to innovative models of designing for learning alongside novel standpoints of pedagogy. Readers are introduced to specific activities for accomplishing learning objectives, the roles of new technologies in educational design, the ways in which organizational sustainability is supported by technologies and prevailing e-learning models, and future developments. This book extensively discusses both theoretical and practical implications for designing for learning rather than just enumerating the projects. Despite the vast amount of research that examines the significant impact of technology on information systems and communication processes, there are few, if any, studies that delve into the transformational paradigm of generic teaching and learning as a consequence of the recent technological development. This collection effectively updates the status of current knowledge in the field while boosting discussion of multiple roles of technologies in the contemporary pedagogy.

However, although the editors argue that this book is oriented toward a general discussion of the pervasive role of technology in universal pedagogical theories and practices, it is based exclusively on the Western cases. Given the literature discussing the intimate relationship between technological development and globalization (e.g., Hrynyshyn, 2002; Rycroft, 2003), the perspectives and discourses of half to two-third of the globe were not inclusively examined within the book. Even if it is impossible for a book to cover every perspective of the topic, more international participation in the authorship could have furthered the discussion as well as the diversity of the viewpoints. Besides, though many chapters of this book refine definitions of learning for each chapter's purpose and context, various socio-cultural aspects of learning are not legitimately considered while the instrumental facet of learning is overly highlighted. This lack of socio-cultural consideration undermines, or even contradicts, the overarching goal of this book which is to provide a universal explanation of pedagogy in relation to technological development.

Nonetheless, this book resonates with its call to build resilience into curriculum systems in accordance with fast-advancing technologies. In particular, it offers ways to cope with a significant challenge faced by educators and learning designers: how to foster creativity and innovation so that learners develop their own resilience within various pedagogical systems.

Incorporating a variety of educational contexts, including face-to-face, self-directed, blended, and distance learning environments, this book suggests multiple ways to reconsider the flexible learning needs of individuals, institutions, and societies.

References

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