to-face learning—makes no place for genuinely learner-directed learning and even for unintended and yet valued learning outcomes, featuring now in UK practice and literature.

There follows a massive chapter on online course interaction which features a rich selection of seemingly valuable but perhaps time-limited technological resources for the educator. There seems no space to note or engage with the frustrations which have occupied many UK researchers recently, when online discussions have proved fruitless and under-utilised. Nor is there any consideration of the growing literature dealing with the problems of effectively moderating discussion board activity with learners from Chinese heritage backgrounds.

The book closes almost hurriedly with a short and cramped treatment of strategies, advantages and disadvantages of assessment and grading rubrics. Several UK stalwarts feature here, though the omission of Boud seems a serious weakness in a source book which stresses and explores self- and peer-assessment.

Nevertheless this thin volume of 131 pages epitomises the Scots saying that "Guid gear gangs in sma' bulk"—meaning that worthwhile content is often best conveyed succinctly. It is an excellent overview and source for those concerned with learner-centred education, whether online or not.

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Summary

The aim of this is to offer novices and experienced learning/teaching practitioners an accessible and user-friendly resource that will help them enhance their students' learning through the use of a range of learning technologies. A clear rationale for the practical ideas presented here is provided in the authors' overview of related educational theory, recent trends, and debates. If this book seems likely to be relevant to you, I recommend you buy a copy.

Sara Hammer

Ingle and Duckworth's book is focused on the practical—but is firmly grounded in educational theory and research. The learner, and the enhancement of learning through the use of educational technology, sits at its heart.

At the start the reader is provided with a day in the life of a learner called Sam, and the final chapter provides more instances of the "learner voice" through case-study-based student reflections about the role of technology in their learning.

This student voice, along with the theories and issues reviewed in Chapter 1, provides a persuasive argument for the positive role of educational technology in learning and teaching. Ingle and Duckworth also provide a teacher perspective by considering the effects of globalisation, technological innovation, and the potential gap in technology use between teachers and their learners. They also briefly examine the ways technology use may be shaping learner behaviour, and the implication of such trends for both the learner and the teacher. The book's first part also provides a clear and simple introduction to theories of learning, including the impact of educational technology on learning theory, an overview of digital literacy, and the open learning movement. Ingle and Duckworth conclude Part 1 by introducing the Independent Reflective Investigation for Solutions (IRIS) model that is designed to help practitioners identify and address critical learning incidents through the use of educational technology.

Part 2 is the practical section of the book, with 25 well structured activities focused on using specific systems of educational technology to enhance student learning, student engagement, learner interaction, and digital literacies. Each activity is structured under engaging, easy-to-use sections that offer an overview of the learning tool and its use, web and resource links, any potential issues with its use, exemplars of its use, and points for reflection. A particularly noteworthy aspect of this approach is the sections entitled "Give it a go": these offer potentially wary readers a sequence of questions designed to engage them with the technique in question based on what could reasonably be assumed to be their current practice. This strategy offers a clear starting point for the readers and is an example of good learning and teaching design in practice.

Learning techniques featured range from straight forward tools—like PowerPoint alternatives, such as Prezi—to more exciting, if challenging ones, such as "augmented reality" software and browsers, as well as the use of digital avatars, online comics and digital storyboards. In each instance there is an emphasis on freeware and education options, although commercial sources are also noted.

As a reader I found this book tremendously engaging and had to resist the urge to jump online and try out some of the featured learning techniques.

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Summary

Leone's little book is a highly academic exposition of Moodle 2.0, the personal learning environment (PLE), and of its potential to improve learner-learner interaction, co-creation, and sharing of both the formal and the informal knowledge needed for modern learners to be highly engaged. It could be worth borrowing if you are dedicated to innovation in online learning and/or want to know the theory behind the software.

Robyn Smyth

Sabrina Leone's offer in the series "SpringerBriefs in education" provides the context for a focus on personal learning environments (PLEs—ie IT-based ones) as a likely next generation of online learning system. She contends that PLEs have the capacity to support lifelong learners in more effective and engaging ways than most current learning environments.

The short book is very obviously based on recent doctoral work and therefore some readers may find it too academic and dense in its style. If you are interested in the pursuit of technological innovations in support of online teaching, learning and pedagogy, however, it could be worth spending the hours digesting the detailed discussion.

Characterisation of a personal learning environment as a lifelong learning tool begins with a useful discussion of the research questions which underpin the work, and a structural guide. The glossary is most comprehensive and readers will find it useful to check acronyms, emerging social networking language, and names of digital tools. Similarly, the reference lists appended to each chapter are comprehensive within their field.

The first chapter provides a snapshot of the current status including:

- intended European Union 2020 benchmarks for educational attainment;
- participation rates for formal and informal lifelong learning amongst European countries;
- characteristics, needs and expectations of lifelong learners;
- the derivation of the notion of personalised learning and the tensions between PLEs and virtual learning environments (VLEs) based on learning management systems (LMSs);
- an extensive discussion of contested definitions within the art of teaching (pedagogy, andragogy, heutagogy and so on); and
- the derivation of the concept of the social semantic web (SSW) which underpins the model which is subsequently trialled.

The second chapter provides a detailed explanation of the conceptual, technical and adaptive nature of the system which increases its ability to personalise learning through stimulation of neural networks connected with shared social construction of new knowledge, both formally and informally. It contains extensive business processes and description of tools and their capabilities. This chapter concludes with a case study and SWOT analysis—while the third chapter details the results of its trial. For the more technically minded e-learning professional, this last analysis will be most insightful.

Even acknowledging the author's tentative final notes, my main concerns relate to the implied claims for the SSW for lifelong learning as an approach "successfully validated as a device suitable to provide a dynamically personalised learning environment to the lifelong learner" (p 79)–when the trial comprised 21 "expert ICT and/or e-learning professionals" (p 63).

Also, as an academic developer who has worked in distance learning for a significant time, I would like to have seen more discussion about further research into the generalisability of the system. This would include how less experienced learners would cope and how scaffolding of learning might be reconceptualised to support the increasing variety of learners entering higher education because of increasing aspirations for educational attainment.

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