

Book Reviews

LEU, D. J., JR., & LEU, D. D. (2000). *Teaching with the Internet: Lessons from the classroom* (3rd ed.). Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers (pp. xv, 384). NZ\$95.00/US\$38.95 (paperback).

There can be few teachers today who are not aware of the Internet, although many may still wonder how it can be used in their classrooms to enhance teaching and learning. Donald and Deborah Leu wrote this book with Internet beginners in mind. This book is designed to help teachers and learners feel comfortable in the "new learning environment"; to minimize the time it takes to find useful learning tools for students and to show how the Internet can be used in classrooms to support learning. It contains many practical, interesting and common-sense suggestions for getting a class started with the Internet.

Donald and Deborah Leu begin with an explanation of the Internet and E-mail and how communication can be enhanced not just between teachers and students, but between students themselves. Their book, which is extensively illustrated with web pages, comes with a CD and is laid out in a way that will provide teachers with ready access to sites they can consider for the enhancement of lessons in their classrooms. There is an extensive section on the use of the Internet to support Language Arts and Literature, another chapter on Social Studies, followed by chapters on the Internet and scientific thinking and one on "thinking mathematically." Each of these chapters contains a section called "Lessons from

the Classroom" in which the authors provide readers with an analysis of preceding case studies of classroom Internet applications. Each chapter provides teachers and students with instructional resources on the Internet in these and related areas as well as practical suggestions for classroom Internet projects. Of particular interest to many classroom teachers considering using the Internet to enhance their teaching will be the authors' details on "central sites" in Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. These sites provide teachers with a solid basis from which to consider the use of the Internet in their classrooms for different subject areas.

I found the chapter on "Effective Instructional Strategies" for using the Internet to be particularly good value. I noted a suggestion from this chapter that when a teacher is still trying to "figure out" something, his or her classroom problem could be posted on the Internet with an invitation for others to respond. This seems to me to be an excellent way of making use of this global collaborative technology for teaching and learning. The emphasis on sharing and collaborating that is likely to arise from classroom use of the Internet may lead to consideration of different instructional strategies.

This is a book that is likely to have value in almost any classroom. There is a chapter devoted to "Special Ideas for Younger Children" and one on "Using the Internet to Increase Multicultural Understanding." One of the most useful parts of this book to me though is

the section on how to integrate the Internet into a classroom, including the development of class homepages. However, the authors point out that "When the Internet is used without direction and guidance, students will often be diverted from thoughtful integration and analysis of information and engage instead in random, unconnected surfing experiences".

The Internet can expand the horizons of learners, provide new pathways and introduce young people, and teachers, to new areas of knowledge. The integration of the Internet into a classroom has to be planned and used judiciously to be of maximum value for learning. Ultimately, the Internet is likely to break down the insularity of the traditional classroom and encourage new relationships between teachers and learners within and between schools. In this process, not only will new teaching and learning relationships be fostered, but telelearning will become integral to classroom life.

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PERRATON, H. D. (2000). *Open and distance learning in the developing world*. Routledge Studies in Distance Education. London: Routledge (pp. x, 228). NZ\$61.00.

The scale of problems faced by distance educators and educational planners in the developing world are of a magnitude not known in developed countries. While distance educators in many parts of the developed world are working with expanding ranges of hardware and software and discovering ever more uses for the Internet in teaching, learning

and the networking of schools and universities, it is sobering to realize that these are very much first-world educational phenomena. There is a growing technological gap between have and have-not societies in what Perraton refers to as the North and the South. Levin and Lockheed (1993) almost a decade ago observed that there were considerable differences in distance education in developed and developing societies:

Schools in developing countries often lack the most basic resources needed for education such as qualified teachers, facilities and textbooks. Double and triple shifts of a few hours are the norm in some regions; the number of days in the school year has been reduced; and teachers' salaries have declined so much that fully qualified teachers are often a luxury and teacher turnover and attendance are problematic.

At a time when open and distance learning are becoming mainstreamed in both schools and universities in developed societies though on-line teleteaching and telelearning, mass computing and a steadily increasing range of software, it is timely to consider the role of distance learning in the developing world. Although information and communication technologies are able to link teachers and learners in a range of ways, permitting both synchronous and asynchronous learning, these are not options for most people in the developing world.

At a time when we are becoming used to the idea that technologies can link schools with other schools and link universities with one another to form new partnerships, Bates and Escamilla

de los Santos (1997) point out, these developments reflect the north-south export trade, reflecting the gap between technological development (and its distance education applications) in developed and developing countries. Through technological enhancement, the teaching and learning capacity of distance education institutions in developed countries can be extended to overshadow distance learning institutions in developing societies. Perraton observes that:

...as rich-country universities have gained expertise and legitimacy in distance education, so they have sought to extend their influence through consultancy, sales and enrolments. (p. 153)

As research director of the International Foundation for Open Learning and someone who has worked in international education for thirty years, Perraton is well placed to comment on the provision of education in the developing world and to provide readers with a global view of distance education. This book provides an overview of how many developing countries have used distance education as a response to what the author calls "the critical educational problems of numbers, resources and quality." He notes (p. 145) that:

It is possible to develop a whole course in a variety of media, make this available through the Internet and use the same technology for contact between student and tutor and among students. Computer links, in principle, make it possible for students in any location to be treated as a single group—once any language barriers are overcome. The most highly developed countries are

from the north....constraints on this type of enrolment are no longer a matter of geography but of access to the Internet and the ability to pay the enrolment fees and the costs of communication. There are beginning to be examples of this in the south, though more often within a framework of north-south cooperation than of indigenous southern development, or, indeed, south-south cooperation.

One of the most spectacular developments in distance education in developing countries in the last quarter century has been the rise of open universities. A chapter is devoted to these institutions, with statistics that provide insights into the scale of distance learning in developing societies. Another chapter explains "non-formal education" as "the light that never shone."

This book will be of interest to students of comparative education, the economics of education and to those interested in the problems of education in developing countries. For people in developed countries who are now looking to new approaches in telelearning and teleteaching using an expanding range of hardware and software and, of course, the Internet, this book is a timely reminder that a lot of the world is not able to consider teaching and learning this way, at this time.

The global analysis of distance education in the developing world presented by Perraton will probably not be familiar to most readers in developed countries. For me, this book provided an explanation of the roles of many distance education institutions throughout the world whose names were familiar but whose functions were not fully appreciated. However, the

lasting value of this book for me has been the awareness it has provided of the gap between distance education in developed and developing countries.

REFERENCES

- BATES, A. W., & ESCAMILLA DE LOS SANTOS, J. G. (1997). Crossing boundaries: Making global distance education a reality. *Journal of Distance Education*, 12, 1-2.
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