Handbook of Design in Educational Technology

Luckin, Rosemary; Puntambekar, Sadhana; Goodyear, Peter; Grabowski, Barbara L.; Underwood, Joshua; and Winters, Niall, eds.
Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2013

Book Review

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Although this handbook is primarily for design in educational technology much of it can be applied to the educational ecology of religious studies and theological education. It is also useful for discussions of basic learning theory and for applying technology to the task of teaching.

Chapter 3, "The Ecology of Resources," provides a model of the learner's context and identifies steps to map the learner's ecology of resources (33-51). Some of these steps may be familiar to seasoned educators. Those unfamiliar with these steps will find help that deepens their understanding and practice of teaching. Perhaps most notable here concerns the identification of filters, both positive and negative, through which the resources of the teaching environment, people and tools involved, and knowledge and skills required interact with the learners.

A chapter on assessment of student learning of twenty-first century skills focuses on collaborative problem-solving (53-64). This section provides a table that lists three indicators for success: action, interaction, and task completion, with brief descriptions of each. It then details three levels of quality criteria for each (low, medium, and high) with descriptions about each criteria level. The criteria, in particular, could be helpful for assessing an exploration of religion-based bullying in classroom contexts, for instance.

Context, Activities, Roles, Stakeholders, and Skills (CARRS), in a chapter on involving young people in design, provides a useful structure not only for the design of software but also for the development of a single class or an entire course (101-11). Each element involved will be

familiar to seasoned teachers, but the scheme's attention to developing the abilities of young participants to contribute is especially useful for beginning teachers.

"Designing for Seamless Learning" (146-157) creatively claims mobile technology ? such as cell phones and tablets – can be helpful for student learning. Seamless learning emphasizes continuity of learning within and beyond the classroom. Table 13.1 lists ten characteristics and shows specific ways by which mobile technology supports seamless learning: it is learner (user) centered, an everyday life experience; it functions across time, across location, and across social groups; it flows naturally across different situations, or can be situated (wherever needed); is cumulative, personalized, and accommodates versatile learning activities. Perhaps students studying worship, for instance, might be encouraged to report or note kinds of worship in their community.

Prompts for learning (scaffolds) have been a staple of classroom education for decades, and the chapter on "Scaffolding Learning in a Learning Management System" (241-255) extends that tool beyond the traditional classroom. Using internet tools to provide feedback, clarify assignments, engage in dialogue, and so forth engages the learner outside of the class in a range of ways to prompt learning.

Chapter 21 includes a discussion of the use and challenges of Second Life, a virtual reality construct, for educational purposes (366-369). The use of software gaming programs for teaching religion and theology is a growing area of practice. This chapter is timely.

Additional thought-provoking approaches to teaching practice are outlined within this book's forty-three chapters. This book could be purchased by the library, in paperback or ebook format, so that faculty in a department or theological school could have access to it. It is a stimulating tool that encourages a range of technological tool uses in ways appropriate to religious and theological education.

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