



Motivating Teaching in Higher Education with Technology

Wilson, Jay R.; and Ralph, Edwin G.
New Forums Press, Inc., 2014

Book Review

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Motivating Teaching in Higher Education with Technology is a useful manual for both beginning and experienced instructors teaching at the post-secondary level. Jay Wilson is the head of Curriculum Studies Department at the University of Saskatchewan. He has extensive practical experience in the areas of technology with specific application to teaching and instructions. Edwin Ralph is a professor with the College of Education at the University of Saskatchewan with mentorship in education expertise. As indicated in the title, this book is about “motivating teaching.” The authors contend that technology serves a supportive role for teaching and learning. For them, “technology, per se, will not improve poor teaching” and “incorporating technology will not change the quality of your content” (103). Beginning with the theme of motivational teaching principles, learning climate and management, and the distinction between teacher- and learner-centered pedagogies, the book then unfolds what this could mean, using specific applications of technology to teaching in subsequent chapters.

The authors claim that technology can enhance the quality of teaching significantly when it is being used with thoughtful design and intention. Major benefits of using technology include: making course materials more accessible and available for review (especially for English as second language students), creating frequent opportunities for interaction beyond classroom hours, and encouraging active, participatory learning. As for online courses offerings, technology allows the possibility of bringing in a diverse student body to enrich the learning experience.

The authors emphasize the importance of adequate preparation for any kind of teaching but even more so when teaching with technology. Many instructors tend to focus on the

preparation of content and may neglect to consider the administrative side of teaching. This book draws the readers' attention to the importance of good learning "management" in teaching. Attention to course details such as a clearly laid out rubric of grading criteria, class policies, and behavioral expectations for face-to-face and online discussions all contribute to the success of building a positive learning environment.

Further strengthening this book are the step-by-step practical suggestions it provides for putting together learning modules, constructing concept maps, designing learning activities, developing questions for student reflection, and crafting effective assessment methods. "Instructors must carefully orchestrate the integration of technologies with appropriate methods and strategies at key junctures to maximize learner motivation" (100). Having taught both hybrid and online courses for over eight years, I find the suggestions insightful and refreshing.

Since the book is designed to be a manual, its writing style is concise and does not contain as many real life examples as readers may like to see. Readers will need to do much integration between the principles articulated and application to actual situations in their own teaching contexts.

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