Book Reviews

Belanger, France, and Dianne H. Jordan. *Evaluation and Implementation of Distance Learning: Technologies, Tools and Techniques.* Hershey, Pa.: Idea Group Pub., 2000. 246p. $69.95 (ISBN 1-878289-63-2). LC 99-47580.

Belanger and Jordan—who have information systems and telecommunications backgrounds in private industry, government, and higher education—target "professionals and educators who are interested in preparing themselves for the transition from traditional learning to the emerging distance learning environment." Their book offers a comprehensive look at the technologies and tools used to provide distance education. The discussion, which is sometimes technical, covers the broad topics of analysis, design and development, and evaluation.

Transition is a key concept in their approach and may serve to ease the anxieties of those educators who wonder where distance learning fits in with what they already do, how it impacts them, and how (or whether) to get started. Distance learning is not, the authors assert, an all-or-nothing experience. They describe three levels at which technology can be utilized, ranging from technology insertion to total conversion.

The book consists of seven chapters, a bibliography and references section, four appendices, and an index. Following a brief discussion of the need for distance learning, chapter one addresses the multitude of concepts and terms that are commonly associated with it. Chapter two reviews several learning theories and identifies six learning variables associated with those theories. Of particular interest is a theory-based discussion of learning objectives in the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains, with attendant discussion as to how and to what degree instructional technologies might be appropriately employed to meet those objectives.

Chapter three presents six distance learning technologies: computer-based training, computer-aided instruction, Web-based training, teleconferencing, videotape, and video tele-training. Each is described in detail, including design considerations and equipment and access requirements. The authors review the advantages and disadvantages of each from the different perspectives of learner, instructor, and institution. Chapter four provides guidelines for media conversion analysis. The reader is walked through a series of steps to determine to what degree a course is amenable to conversion for distance learning delivery. A detailed discussion of instructional units, compression rates, development hours, and time and personnel requirements will prove useful to those interested in the cost-benefit aspects of such an endeavor.

In chapter five, the discussion shifts to the development of instructional materials for the distance learning environment. The authors discuss file and format specifications, levels of courseware complexity, and steps in courseware development, including technical and personnel requirements. The second half of the chapter is devoted to commercially produced Web content and course development tools. Following an overview of the features and functions of these products, several specific products are described. Web site addresses are included for readers who want more details on particular products.

The importance of "conscious management" of the distance learning initiative from the outset is emphasized in chapter six. Readers, particularly administrators, may take great interest in the organized step-by-step approach described. In reality, however, distance learning initiatives often evolve out of small pockets of in-

terest within the institution. The authors describe the "bandwagon" phenomena: "small efforts by motivated individuals outside of the strategic planning process, with little or no support or funding." They warn that the resulting small successes should not dictate the direction of an organization's entire distance learning initiative. A successfully managed initiative will ensure open-minded and institution-wide consideration of all of the technologies available. This chapter also includes a brief theory-based discussion of several useful evaluation models. Chapter seven concludes the book with three fictional case studies.

Belanger and Jordan have done an admirable job of bringing together a multitude of issues inherent in the implementation of any distance learning project. Readers familiar with distance learning technology may find parts of the book repetitive, whereas those who are not may feel overwhelmed by the terminology and technical detail. Although the book is generally well written and logically organized, the delineation of numerous subheadings with capital and lowercase lettering, italics, and indentations can be confusing.

Evaluation and Implementation of Distance Learning will be of value to administrators and managers charged with implementing distance learning initiatives in either educational or corporate environments. In addition to useful ideas for course design and media selection, the book alerts readers to important questions to ask about an organization's capacity for, and level of commitment to, distance learning. Instruction and outreach librarians can use the book to better understand the challenges faced by distance learning faculty and to better position themselves to both work collaboratively with faculty and develop and deliver their own instruction via distance learning technologies.*—Martha H. Kreszock, Appalachian State University.*

Bogue, E. Grady, and Jeffery Aper. *Exploring the Heritage of American Higher Education: The Evolution of Philosophy and Policy.* Phoenix: Oryx (American Council on Education/Oryx Press Series on Higher Education), 2000. 258p. $34.95, alk. paper (ISBN 1-57356-310-2). LC 99-049294.

As the title implies, Bogue and Aper attempt to offer a sense of perspective that is often missing in discussions of what is good and bad about American higher education. Their thesis is that higher education is a powerful factor in our democratic society and its complex moral, philosophical, and political heritage should be better understood because the ongoing debate over higher education's purpose and performance is a natural and necessary consequence of that heritage. To explore this thesis, Bogue and Aper address ten questions: What is the scope of American higher education? What are the missions? How are colleges and universities governed? What is taught, and who decides? How is quality defined, developed, and demonstrated? Who finances, and who benefits? Who does—and who should—attend college, and how do students and colleges influence each other? What are the faculty's roles and responsibilities? What is the relationship between intercollegiate athletics and academics? What are the leadership challenges confronting higher education at the end of the twentieth century?

This monograph could become the next textbook of choice for graduate students of higher education. In fact, the authors state this as one of their purposes. In addition, the authors hope that faculty, administrators, "international students and friends," and civic and political leaders will find their understanding of the current scene enriched by reading this book. Bogue and Aper offer these audiences a panoramic look at contemporary higher education and provide an excellent summary of the most important trends, pressures, expectations, influences, values, and current practices. The authors weave a masterly tapestry of the philosophical, political, and moral conflicts that have driven the development of the different kinds of American colleges and universities.