Faculty Guide for Moving Teaching and Learning to the Web

Judith V. Boettcher and Rita-Marie Conrad
League for Innovation in the Community
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Reviewed by Alan McCord

Many campus IT leaders face the challenge of guiding sometimes-reluctant faculty toward the inevitable future of Web-based learning environments. Judith Boettcher and Rita-Marie Conrad provide a great "travel guide" in *Faculty Guide for Moving Teaching and Learning to the Web.* As my colleague Carl Berger notes in the book's foreword, "... teaching and learning can be done in many ways and from many domains, and that learning is a creative endeavor by the learner." Boettcher and Conrad have written a practical book that will involve faculty members as active and creative learners while exploring the use of technology to enhance instruction. This book could easily support a seminar or brown-bag luncheon series where faculty members explore the Internet, recent research on teaching and learning, and practical approaches to designing and developing Web-based courses.

The authors' history of the Internet and World Wide Web focuses on basic networking concepts as well as the infrastructure needed to support Web-based learning. Faculty members whose Web experience peaks with occasional use of a Web browser should find this chapter interesting and enlightening. The discussion of technology adoption presents a picture of change that should help faculty members move beyond a "let's wait and see what happens" posture, noting that all innovation is subject to risk and future change. The authors conclude by offering a vision of the Web as a gathering place for learning materials and experiences.

Boettcher and Conrad then provide a concise survey of what we know about teaching and learning, focusing on three schools of learning theory: behaviorism, cognitivism, and constructivism. In linking these schools to the practice of instructional design, this chapter encourages faculty members to reflect on how they teach their classroom courses today and how they can improve them — with or without migrating them to a Web-based environment.

The authors then offer practical guidelines to help faculty members, department heads, and deans agree on the underlying assumptions and design principles they will use to develop Web-based courses. The infrastructure and support components needed to move courses onto the Web are often underestimated, so this chapter will prove especially useful for evaluating the financial impact of a Web decision. Then follows an excellent discussion of the issues associated with migrating from time-based to Web-based systems. Comparative charts can help faculty members decide how to consistently measure Web-based courses against classroom-based courses, especially in computing student contact hours and instructor teaching loads.

Next comes an outline of an instructional design process to facilitate migration of classroom-based courses to the Web. This chapter is followed by an overview of currently available Web-course development environments, including numerous links and references. Then, "true life stories" describe how faculty members in a variety of disciplines have learned to deliver Web-based courses.

One of the most challenging aspects of Web-based course delivery is establishing and maintaining a sense of community. The authors provide a set of practical guidelines for faculty members to encourage student online participation. This chapter is followed by an excellent discussion of current issues surrounding Web-based instruction, including managing e-mail communication, optimum online class size, copyright and intellectual property, and evaluation.

The book concludes with Boettcher's "look to the future," a set of predictions coupled with an entertaining vision of future education as a *Star Trek*-like holodeck. This concluding chapter recalls Robert Lucky's quotation from the opening chapter: "It is easy to predict the future; what is hard is predicting what people will do with the technology." Boettcher and Conrad have increased our ability to predict what faculty members can do with technology by providing historical context, research about teaching and learning, and practical suggestions for implementing Web-based courses. *e*

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Leading with Something Besides Your Chin: A Guide to Organizational Leadership

Albert L. LeDuc and Clifford A. Fairbanks
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101 pages
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Reviewed by Chuck Chulvick

Good leadership isn't a genetic trait; it's a developed skill. Books espousing the latest perspective on leadership and management techniques appear with the same frequency as diet books. They can also be as gimmicky and ineffective as diet books. However, in *Leading With Something Besides Your Chin: A Guide To Organizational Leadership*, Albert L. LeDuc and Clifford A. Fairbanks have written a basic primer for those who wish to improve their leadership ability. Despite the boxing analogy in the title, keeping your guard up isn't one of the precepts that the authors recommend, nor is staying down for the count, nor lying on the ropes. On the contrary, they advance a model of a leader who is ethical, responsive, and proactive. LeDuc and Fairbanks have wisely emphasized the importance of

character in developing effective leadership. They don't shy away from suggesting that a good leader must have integrity, sincerity, and poise, characteristics that are anathema to those who favor a relentlessly aggressive approach.

One of the more difficult concepts discussed in this book is that of support. Many leaders feel conflicted by the need to support the organization and the need to support the employees. This conflict is a perceptual, rather than an actual, problem. It resolves itself when managers recognize that the goals of a strong organization aren't in opposition to those of the employees. At least in theory, a workforce that receives strong managerial support guarantees the healthy development of the organization, and an organization that has good managerial support provides a beneficial work environ-

ment. The difficulty many leaders have in providing this dual support is that it requires a certain degree of selflessness. It's based on the principle that everyone works for the organization, not the leader. Of course, there are those who will always support themselves to the detriment of their organization and subordinates; the only good advice for these egotists is self-employment.

A recurrent theme throughout the book is the need to maintain a balanced approach, one that allows a leader to delegate yet remain firmly in charge. Giving employees greater responsibility offers an opportunity for them to grow within their positions, to realize their potential, and to experience improved job satisfaction. However, this doesn't mean that the leader is above criticism when a plan fails. An effective leader always remains responsible for the activities in his or her department. The key to success is achieving the right balance between delegation and initiation.

The advice given in this book is sensible and practical. It offers no breakthrough revelations, and anyone handling a managerial position with honesty, common sense, and intelligence may find it reassuring rather than enlightening. However, for every good leader there exist many who need to improve. This
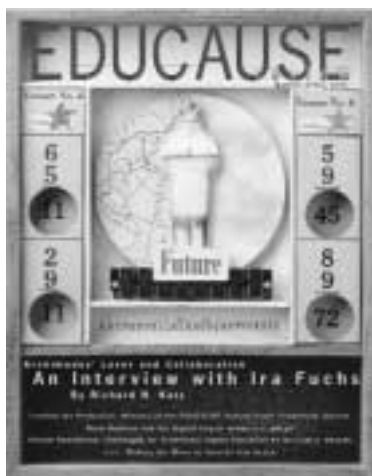
volume would be an excellent accompaniment to those folks' annual performance reviews.

Readers might appreciate the brevity of the book — or wish that the authors had provided more advice on situations requiring disciplinary action. Confronting problems such as bias, sexual harassment, and termination can be a nightmare for even the most experienced and effective leader. Approaching such situations without sensitivity and effective strategies will undermine the individual's authority and disrupt the organization for a long time.

Anyone reading this book in the hope of finding some redemption for the seriously flawed organization will be disappointed. As the authors rightly point out, "Even someone at the top cannot effect meaningful change in a truly sick organization." Nor will the ineffective leader find a panacea for management problems if unwilling to recognize that he or she is the source of the problem. However, leaders who understand that their personal development can elicit positive change for themselves and their organizations will find this book a useful reference. *e*

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