

a disappointing bait-and-switch. And a final chapter on e-books begins with the deflating promise that “we will focus mostly on generic issues rather than on specific current solutions.” No one expects the author to singlehandedly solve the intractable problems surrounding e-book licensing, but why devote an entire chapter to rehashing e-book formats and delivery platforms like Overdrive when such information is readily available in Wikipedia, librarian blogs and LibGuides, trade magazines like *American Libraries*, and even the pages of major newspapers?

In a word, the book is slight. It's not that Walsh never advances good ideas; it's just that the same ideas are readily available elsewhere, for free. Few librarians will yield enough juice from *Using Mobile Technology* to justify its \$80 price tag. A deep dive in the formal and informal literature is enough to get a library “mobilized,” but those seeking a traditional compendium will spend \$20 less to acquire Jason Clark's *Building Mobile Library Applications*, a “cookbook” that covers the nitty-gritty of design and development while a still-evolving companion website keeps readers up to the moment.—*Michael Hughes, Trinity University, San Antonio, Texas.*

Robin Neidorf. *Teach Beyond Your Reach: An Instructor's Guide to Developing and Running Successful Distance Learning Classes, Workshops, Training Sessions, and More.* 2nd ed. Medford, N.J.: Information Today, Inc, 2012. 224p. \$29.95 (ISBN 9781937290016). LC 2012-030851.

Given the direction that higher education seems to be swiftly following, if you are not engaged in distance education as either teacher or student, you soon will be. Robin Neidorf, Director of Research for FreePint Ltd., has written the second edition of *Teach Beyond Your Reach*, which is a guide for instructors to deliver successful distance learning.

The book does not seek to be a “soup-to-nuts compendium,” as the author says, but rather “focuses strictly on the requirements for instruction.” She believes that collaboration should be part of any good educational environment and so leaves it to the reader to partner with others, pointing out where collaboration may be necessary and what skills may need to be sought out. Neidorf expresses in many places that collaboration is essential to the enterprise of providing quality distance education and stresses the point more than once. However, the way in which she addresses this substantial need could be fleshed out more. She does devote a final short chapter in the book to “Distance Learning as a Collaborative Enterprise.” In this chapter, she provides an excellent discussion of the roles and responsibilities of various potential collaborators. Simply framing the task in this manner is helpful to the beginning distance educator, because it helps fill in those areas a beginner might struggle to define.

The book is filled with good information, a discussion of learning objectives, learning styles, developing relationships with students, and much more. One of the strongest points that Neidorf makes in the book, she sums up in one phrase: “It's not about you, it's about them.” The ramifications of this focus on the student are repeated frequently throughout each chapter intentionally to drive home the point. An emphasis on student-centered learning is certainly one of the most important lessons that a reader can and should take away from this book. This is even more important when it comes to distance education. Many of the somewhat built-in features of good face-to-face teaching, such as developing student

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relationships and providing prompt feedback, have to be consciously planned for and implemented in the distance learning environment. In the distance learning environment, very little happens by accident—and Neidorf helps the reader realize that and plan for it.

Neidorf spends three chapters out of nine discussing technology tools and instructional design and development, leaving the reader wanting more. The first chapter, entitled “New Tools of the Trade,” provides a brief survey of a selected set of online teaching tools. Neidorf spends time discussing such tools as synchronous and asynchronous communication, video and multimedia, web-based conferencing, and collaborative workspaces. She provides a brief list of pros and cons of each of these technologies and adds a few brief recommendations for their use. However, much is left out in this brief survey, with only a passing mention of social media, screen capture software, and many other useful technology tools.

Chapters 3 and 4 cover the production of instructional content, dividing the topic up into “Instructional Design” and “Development.” The topic of instructional design is treated in a somewhat cursory manner, touching on learning objectives, activity-based learning, processes, and syllabi. The chapter on development includes tips and best practices for creating the instructional content. Here again, I was left with the feeling that much more could be said about best practices in developing distance learning content.

Four of the chapters of the book are devoted in various ways to the interpersonal aspects of running a successful distance learning class. This is where the book has its strongest material. Chapter 2 discusses the typical distance learning student and that student’s attitudes, learning styles, and other attributes that distinguish him or her from the typical on-campus learner. In chapter 5, dealing with classroom management, Neidorf provides solid advice about many of the mechanics involved: office hours, dialogue, repetition, feedback, and

conflict, among others. Chapter 6 carries the subject still further, relating how to foster meaningful relationships with students, motivate them, and mentor them. Chapter 7 provides ideas on how to create learning communities in distance environments.

Chapter 8, “Beyond the Formal Classroom,” is intended to be a guide for taking advantage of providing educational experiences in informal settings. The main value of this chapter lies in the author’s brief discussion of using social media to involve learners in a community and offering some advice on avoiding common errors in providing instruction informally.

I understand Neidorf’s desire to not attempt comprehensiveness in addressing all the surrounding issues in delivering distance education, but the beginning instructor may benefit from a more balanced approach. The subtitle of the book is *An Instructor’s Guide to Developing and Running Successful Distance Learning Classes, Workshops, Training Sessions, and More*, but this is not representative of the content of the book. Neidorf seems to be generally working with a model of a distance education class that typically runs several weeks and functions with a certain level of technology. But distance learning has a much wider range of implementations, as indicated in the subtitle, and Neidorf provides little guidance to the hopeful practitioner of these other types.

Teach Beyond Your Reach has a considerable amount of good advice and recommendations for many types of instructors, but it will be most useful for its main audience: teachers looking to provide a certain model of distance education to their students. Neidorf provides numerous worksheets and examples to assist the reader in planning for and understanding the practical aspects of the points she is making. She explains concepts well, keeps the discussion refreshingly clear of jargon, and uses a reassuring voice to help the reader.

Another of the strengths of the book is the breadth of material that Neidorf lays out for the reader. Of necessity, however, this reveals its weakest point, in that while

providing such a panoramic view of the practice of teaching to distance learners, Niedorf must discuss many of these topics only lightly. I was often left wishing that Niedorf would offer more than a cursory analysis and go deeper into the subject matter. For that reason, I think the book would be of greatest use to those who are brand-new to the practice of teaching distance students. They should be able to get an overarching view of what the process of preparing for a class is like and how to manage the class once it is underway.—*Scott Rice, Appalachian State University.*

Thomas H.P. Gould. *Do We Still Need Peer Review?* Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2013. 175p. paperback, alk. paper, \$60 (ISBN: 9780810885745). LC 2012-021731.

Peer review is used extensively in many professional fields including most academic disciplines, scientific and medical research, and even in computer software development. Peer review uses independent and, in many cases, anonymous reviewers in an attempt to obtain an unbiased evaluation of a work or performance by others in the same field or profession. A work or performance that has undergone the peer review process is considered to have met the gold standard of quality.

The role of the peer review process in scholarly communications is to foster research and intellectual progress by either reaffirming existing theories or by supporting new ideas that are built on commonly accepted methodologies and reasoning. However, new and emerging Internet technologies are not only changing the way that people interact, but also how scholars can communicate their theories and ideas using more direct routes to publication. Although the use of the Internet can expedite scholarly communications, it can also bypass the traditional formal publication and, therefore, the peer review process.

The ability of the peer review system to adapt to the changing technological landscape is addressed in *Do We Still*

Need Peer Review? by Thomas H.P. Gould. Gould is an associate professor of Mass Communications in the A.Q. Miller School of Journalism and Mass Communications, Kansas State University. This book would be of interest to academics interested in the evolution of the peer review process in the publication of scholarly communications.

In this book, Gould provides an argument for change in the peer review system in the face of a technological environment. Gould argues that, without an immediate effort by scholars to institute reform, the future of peer review is uncertain. Gould argues that, as new technology provides authors with a direct, unsupervised route to publication, the peer review situation is nearing a tipping point, beyond which the nature of academic research will be profoundly altered. Gould proposes that, rather than tossing out peer review altogether, the process can be saved and made stronger.

The book begins by outlining and examining the peer review process as it currently exists by breaking it down into four steps. The process begins with the researcher coming up with a topic, moves on to the preparation of the manuscript, submission to the editor, the manuscript being sent to reviewers, then finally the comments and revision process. Gould discusses many criticisms of the current peer review system such as gender bias, exposes their research to possible data theft, and reviewers being more critical of works that oppose their personal viewpoints. While the various criticisms and faults of the peer review system are discussed throughout the book, the author does not use the book as a soapbox. He supports such criticisms by providing evidence. For example, he pays particular attention to the outcomes of the Peters and Ceci study that suggested that article rejection rate was not related to the quality of the articles but instead was related to author standing, the author's institution, peer bias, and poor performance by the reviewers.

Several chapters are dedicated to providing a history of peer review, detailing