

Book Reviews

Orchestrating multimedia: An introduction to planning and storyboarding educational multimedia. 1998, by Marilyn Welsh. ON: Irwin Publishing, 165 pages. ISBN 0-7725-2462-9. Accompanying CD-ROM.

Review by Katy Campbell

Marilyn Welsh is the Director of the Centre for Educational Effectiveness at Seneca College of Applied Arts & Technology in Ontario and, as such, has worked with teachers, faculty, trainers and developers to design instructional multimedia. Her roots in teaching, performing, and managing are evident in this practical guide to instructional development.

Orchestrating multimedia is a clear and comprehensive guide to the complex process of multimedia development, unique in that it is aimed at the educators who are, increasingly, finding themselves responsible for or involved in these projects. This target audience finds themselves, as subject matter experts with no formal training in technology-based teaching and learning, expected to not only adapt and effectively implement technology approaches in their classrooms, but to design, produce, and (hopefully) evaluate multimedia products as a matter of course in their institutions. This book and accompanying CD-ROM are a nicely designed and executed response to the needs of this group.

The book, written to reflect a systems approach to designing instruction, is a linear, phased approach to a multimedia project, taking the reader from needs assessment, through task analysis, defining roles, managing the process, writing a proposal, developing objectives, structuring the material, and flowcharting and storyboarding. The underlying assumption, that most multimedia projects will be realized by a production team or assistants is possibly flawed, depending on the institution and/or complexity of the product. Welsh takes a creative and idiosyncratic approach to the sequencing of steps in a systems ID model, but it seems to make sense in this carefully-defined context. Actually, those of us in instructional design can confirm that the process is very organic and reflective of the needs of the team members, institutional culture, and instructional requirements and content, although generally one should not specify tools before defining outcomes.

Each of the three main chapters refers to the interactive CD-ROM, which contains examples, and exercises. The author's intent was to present faculty-designed products as examples of achievable materials, and the excerpts chosen reflect this.

The book contains reproducible worksheets and forms for each step in the development process, as well as appendices that explore learning style differences,

copyright issues, and multimedia terms. Although none of the appendices cover the theoretical or legislative bases of these issues in any detail, including them raises awareness and points readers to additional resources and references.

This package will appeal to developers such as have been described precisely because it permits them to "roll up their sleeves" without burdening them with the philosophical or theoretical underpinnings of learning theory and instructional design. Nevertheless, well-supported applied research provides the basis for suggestions and tips that accompany each chapter. This is an eminently usable resource and could justifiably be given to each faculty member as a good introduction, or review, of the course development process for either teacher-directed or distributed learning environments.

Reviewer

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Research In Distance Education 4, edited by Terry Evans, Viktor Jakupec and Diane Thompson. Revised papers from the fourth Research in Distance Education conference, (Deakin University 1996), Geelong: Deakin University Press, 1997. ISBN: 0-9498-2367-8, 255 pp.

Reviewed by Rafael Cota Rivas

I was expecting something else from this book, something sophisticated and somehow cryptic for the majority of people, but I was mistaken. The book is simple enough to understand, and even better, it triggers your motivation to ask yourself questions about the different topics and techniques described in all of the chapters. It's the kind of book that makes you wonder about the things beyond your daily work, back to things that you have already forgotten and forward to things that you didn't know were there.

This book is a compendium, the fourth actually, of papers from the Research in Distance Education (RIDE) conference held at Deakin University in December 1996. The work includes a total of 19 chapters from numerous different authors. Each paper is related to distance education, and, in most of the cases, to the research in the distance and open education.

The first chapter is written by the editors, Terry Evans, Viktor Jakupec and Diane Thompson. They have done very good work, not only in selecting the papers, but also in the organization and arrangement of them. The book can be read without a particular order, but if you prefer to read it sequentially, you will find out that there is a logic to the order to the papers and the editors decision to lay the book out in this manner.