Computer-Based Integrated Learning Systems by Gerald D. Bailey (Ed.).
Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Educational Technology Publications 1993,
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Reviewed by Blair W. Kettle

This book consists of 15 articles written by a combination of academics,
school administrators, teachers, and consultants. Interestingly, it is men-
tioned nowhere in the book that the same set of articles was published in 1992
as a special issue of Educational Technology magazine (Vol. 32., No. 9).

If you have never heard of an Integrated Learning System, it is a
computer-based instructional system that is designed to deliver a substantial
portion (up to 25% or more) of the instruction required by the average student,
in any given subject, in any given grade. These Systems are also characterized
by their ability to provide teachers, parents and students with reports of
student progress, and by a very high price tag.

In Chapter One the Editor provides the rationale for both the book and
the organization of its chapters. He argues that despite the substantial sums
of money being spent on Integrated Learning Systems (ILSs) each year by
United States school districts, there has been very little "balanced, critical
coverage to this major new education industry" (p. 3). His objective with this
book is to help to remedy that problem.

In support of the Editor, there has been very little academic periodical
literature devoted to the subject of ILS. The Educational Resources Informa-
tion Center (ERIC) has catalogued less than 90 articles on the subject since it
first appeared in that database in 1987. The problem (which Professor Bailey
acknowledges) may be that most researchers and professionals who write on
the subject of computer-assisted instruction don't perceive it as being such a
radically new development to warrant more attention than it has thus far been
given.

The chapters in this book are organized around eight metaphorical road
map signs which are intended to (1) define, (2) provide historical background
on, (3) show research evidence which supports, (4) list the planning require-
ments for, (5) state vendors and, (6) practitioners beliefs about, (7) examine the
educational merits and shortcomings of, and (8) plot the future for ILS in
American education. While Professor Bailey may not win a prize for cartogra-
phy, the articles essentially do account for his road map signs.

Does the book provide balanced and critical coverage of ILS? The short
answer is no. However, school administrators and teachers whose schools or
school districts already own, or are committed to buying, an Integrated
Learning System would probably find some benefit from reading it. In a
nutshell, the book is an educational administrator's guide to purchasing and
implementing Integrated Learning Systems.

If you are already an evangelist for ILS, or if you have an inclination to
be one, or even if you sell ILS, this book will be a welcome addition to your

library. Except for Chapter 12, "Integrated Learning Systems and Their Alterna-tives: Problems and Cautions", by Cleborne Maddux and Jerry Willis, the rest of the articles tend toward the infectiously optimistic and positive. While Maddux and Willis deflate the balloon a little with comments like "the answer to the question of effectiveness of ILSs in general, or specific ILSs, is unknown due to the poor quality of research on the subject" (p. 127), the chorus in the chapters on either side their chapter keeps the book positively buoyant.

Professor Bailey begins this book with the belief that ILS ought to be dignified with a level of attention similar to "other electronic teaching/learning formats [such as] distance learning, hypermedia, multimedia, electronic cooperative learning, etc". (p. 3). If you combine this belief with a willing publisher, then a reason for such a book exists. However, readers who are surprised to learn that distance learning is an electronic teaching/learning format competing for atten-tion with the likes of hypermedia and multimedia, and that "computer-assisted instruction (CAI) came and went with other educational fads of the 1960s and 1970s" (p. 6), may want to read the paperback version in their libraries before they invest in the hardcover.

REVIEWER

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