Multimedia for Learning. Diane M. Gayeski (Ed.). New Jersey: Educational Technology Publications, 1993. ISBN o-87778-250-4 ($29.95 USA)

Reviewed by Brian D. Kerr

Have you ever wondered what exactly is meant by the term multimedia? Are you having trouble with the latest in computer technology acronyms? When you hear people speak of "HyperCard" do you think they are referring to the next step up from "Goldcard?" Have you spent much time lying awake at night pondering the possible applications for interactive technology, or what about virtual reality?

Well, Multimedia for Learning is the book for you! Diane Gayeski and ten other authors examine new perspectives concerning the latest in instructional/learning technology - that of multimedia. This compilation of papers is an attempt to increase our sensitivity toward multimedia. The authors are not only trying to promote a greater awareness of what is actually available - they want to emphasize the possibilities of the learner becoming "a more creative participant in the educational process." According to Gayeski, multimedia technology is key in facilitating a switch from "teaching mode to a full learning culture." Theoretically this will allow the learner to be in control of not only what s/he will learn but how s/he will learn.

My initial response to the book was very positive. It is well written and is quite thorough in its coverage of the subject area in relatively basic and reader-friendly language, given the technical dimensions of the subject matter. The topics discussed range widely. For example, the first chapter written by Gayeski herself, is truly an introduction to the subject - an overview. It even provides a glossary of current terminology. Other chapters provide a guide for developing multimedia; determining what is involved; getting started; and dealing with the various hurdles one might encounter. Chapters such as these are better suited to the beginner, while others may require a little more background knowledge for full comprehension. One author even delves into the latest multimedia platforms complete with some future forecasting. In addition the book provides the reader with insight on how to evaluate multimedia platforms for curricular uses and actual examples of how multimedia technology is being used in the training environment. There are also discussions on current and future possibilities for virtual reality technology.

Although a lack of familiarity with the topic may handicap some readers, the main points of the book can still be understood. The amount of information provided in each chapter is not overwhelming, and for the most part each author is quite effective in conveying the desired enthusiasm. The broad scope of multimedia becomes apparent quite early in the book,

and the usefulness of such a tool for instruction is obvious. Clearly, multimedia can be seen as an important aid in designing future instruction and not the reverse, as has been the case in the early years.

In this reviewer's opinion, the only shortcoming of this book can be attributed to the organization of the chapters. A careful examination of the Table of Contents may be required in order to plan the sequence in which the various topics and perspectives will be addressed. As a swimming instructor might warn: " Don't attempt to get in too deep, too early!" Specifically some of the later chapters could be rearranged to follow a more logical progression. Related topics sometimes seem to be separated by unrelated topics.

In conclusion, Multimedia for Learning is certainly a must for those unfamiliar with multimedia and the latest computer hardware/software, but because of its broad coverage and up-to-datedness it will suit pioneers as well.

REVIEWER

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Distance Education: A Practical Guide. Barry Willis (138 p). New Jersey: Educational Technology Publications, 1993. ISBN O-87778-255-5 ($29.95 USA).

Reviewed by Mary F. Kennedy

The Preface of Barry Willis' latest book on distance education emphasizes its practical nature, and its direction at two particular audiences - faculty and administrators. Distance Education: A Practical Guide is certainly not intended for educational technologists, or for those with considerable experience working in a distance education setting. This slim book is written at a very basic, extremely practical level.

That being said, *Distance Education: A Practical Guide* is well done. It uses clear and non-jargonistic language, and definitions of new or ambivalent terms are included in the text, as well as in the Glossary at the back. It is attractively laid out with an uncluttered, non-threatening appearance, achieved by the insertion of numerous sub-headings and many sections of prose in list form. It makes frequent use of subheadings in question form, which, despite mixed research findings regarding specific learning results, seem to be very appealing to readers.

Distance Education: A Practical Guide has eight sections or chapters. Section 1 is the introduction and overview, presenting a definition of