

Two Book Reviews – Managing E-Learning Strategies – Design, Delivery, Implementation and Evaluation & The E-Learning Quick Checklist

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Two Book Reviews –

Managing E-Learning Strategies – Design, Delivery, Implementation and Evaluation

The E-Learning Quick Checklist

Author: Badrul Khan (2005). *Managing E-Learning Strategies – Design, Delivery, Implementation and Evaluation*. 424 pages. Softcover. Hershey, PA.: Information Science Publishing. *E-Learning Quick Checklist*. 213 pages. Softcover. Hershey, PA.: Information Science Publishing.

Reviewed by: Stephen Murgatroyd, Chief Executive, Innovation Expedition and Visiting Professor, University of Middlesex, UK.

Despite its title, this substantial book has nothing to do with strategy. It is rather an attempt to outline best practices for the design, development and delivery of e-learning courses, programs and activities. The term “strategy” does not appear in the index, is not a subject for a chapter and is not at all a focus for this book.

The book is designed for individuals pursuing formal studies in distance education and e-learning as well as those who are challenged with the task of developing e-learning courses or programs. It contains practical and useful advice, check-lists and a summary of suggested management issues for each section. For those new to the world of e-learning, the book will be very valuable.

The book looks at e-learning from eight perspectives – institutional, management, technological, pedagogical, ethical, interface design, resource support and evaluation and uses a definition of e-learning which is learner centred. Despite the claim, the book is missing a real focus on the design and development of authentic tasks from which significant self-directed learning can be derived for learners at any age. That is, the notion of knowledge is problematic. For a book proclaiming learner centeredness, it is still focused strongly on the instructor and institutional requirements for learning.

Each of the eight topics is looked at in a chapter. Each chapter has several short, trite and pedantic sections which hint at a topic and offer some slight insights, sometimes based on research. These sections are often too short to be useful, or raise issues which are not then fully explored or resolved. The chapter ends with substantial checklists – the heart of the book. The checklists often provide more insights than the longer sections of the chapter.

There are other issues with the book. The book cries out for case studies – there aren't any substantial studies, though very short references are made to examples and there are a couple of vignettes. The book cries out for examples of obvious mistakes that have been made by those of us who have designed programs, courses and activities, and there are many – there aren't any. The book cries out for references to the extensive and valuable evaluative work of WCET on student services using the web – such references are absent, even though there is a short section on student services. While there are references to research studies, many of them are from the US – which is generally in a “catch up” mode in this field rather than leading. For readers based outside of the US, some of the references cited will be problematic, since they assume a US audience – the material on copyright, for example. But generally, there are some resources here which are helpful.

The E-Learning Quick Checklist is an accompanying volume containing all of the checklists from the main text. At slightly less than half the price of the main text, it is a valuable resource to have on the desk as the design work for a new program or course begins or as a workshop on e-learning takes place. In many ways, the checklists is a better summary of the main ideas from this author and represents better value for money.

