Pedagogical Applications and Social Effects of Mobile Technology Integration

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IGI Global, 2013

Book Review

Tags: mobile learning | online education | technology

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Date Reviewed: February 6, 2015

This edited volume of seventeen articles explores the impact of mobile technologies on the field of education. In the Foreword, authors Greg Levitt and Steven Grubaugh believe "we are at the forefront of a computing paradigm shift that will change how teachers and students interact with the world of educational connectivity, content, pedagogy, and learning" (xiv). Since the introduction of the first touch screen cell phones in 2007, mLearning [mobile learning] educators have been engaging the possibilities and potential of this technology for education. The editor argues that the capabilities of mobile technologies make "each student's end user experience with mobile learning . . . much richer than it might be on a computer" (xiv). The authors represent a variety of disciplines including education, management, engineering, computer science, and instructional technology.

The volume is divided into two sections. The first offers fourteen chapters on the theme of pedagogical applications for the best practices in mobile technology integration (xvii). These articles explore a variety of platforms including e-readers, i-Pads, GPS devices, and various mobile phones and tablets. These devices give mLearning "two distinct features... [one,] it allows educational processes to take place anywhere and at any time; and two, it includes any kind of handheld device which is small and easy to carry and that uses a communication technology" (194). Several articles engage BYOD [bring your own device] programs, new literacies, digital storytelling, microblogging, web 2.0 and 3.0, social media, and flipped learning. They examine the impact of moving from static information to interactive and socially connected, collaboratively produced information with Web 2.0 and 3.0 tools. They argue that mobile devices shift pedagogy from a teacher-centered classroom to a student-centered one (124). The second section provides three chapters on the subjects of social applications and tools for effective mobile technology integration (xviii). The articles examine user-generated

content and the social implications of mLearning for global learning.

Even though none of these articles specifically address theological education, mLearning will impact theological education in the near future. Seminaries and Schools of Theology have been slow to incorporate new technologies into instruction. However, as the text points out, the adoption rate of mobile devices worldwide has outpaced all past technologies including radio, television, desktop computer, and laptop computers (206) and theological education will need to address this societal change. The power and the challenge of mLearning is that it is constantly changing. What an author explores in an article today might be outdated by the time it is published. The epistemological questions and approaches of this text will remain valid for years, but the technological applications will only be valid for a few years. Designing a twenty-first century theological curriculum requires faculty to prepare students to live, work, and do ministry in an increasingly complex, technologically savvy world, and this volume is a good discussion starter.

Two important technological issues are highlighted for schools to consider: what is their capacity to integrate mLearning devices with their existing platforms, and will the school provide the device or ask students to use their own (197). For administrators and faculty who want to investigate mLearning, chapter 13 "Quality Education for Children, Youth, and Adults Through Mobile Learning," and chapter 14 "The Changing Roles of Faculty and Students when Mobile Devices Enter the Higher Education Classroom," provide an excellent introduction to the field, suggest implications for pedagogical practices, and outline advantages and challenges of this technology for learning. This book is recommended for theological libraries which support institutions with online education programs.

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