



Empowering Learners With Mobile Open-Access Learning Initiatives

Mills, Michael, and Walke, Donna, eds.
IGI Global, 2017

Book Review

Tags: assessment | curriculum development | open access learning | student learning

Reviewed by: Christina Geuther, *Kansas State University*

Date Reviewed: August 11, 2017

Empowering Learners with Mobile Open-Access Learning Initiatives is a well-designed book giving an overview and awareness to mobile activities as they can be provided in an educational setting. The anthology was compiled by Michael Mills and Donna Wake, both from the University of Central Arkansas. Most of the studies are North American, but there is ample diversity of circumstances in the populations studied and techniques showcased. The book is separated into four parts: practice, curriculum, assessment, and theory.

This book will likely become a historic piece of educational observation on today's environment, but just as importantly, it is future-looking. So how is the future looking? The authors are clearly optimistic about the future of higher education. The evidence shows the effectiveness of mobile technologies to provide a more equal and motivated voice in society.

Considering the Wabash Center for Teaching in Learning in Theology and Religion's audience, this book would be most effective for those in curriculum development and assessment. It is easy to read, but scientifically formatted. Each chapter constitutes a separate study contributing to the overall discussion, and new vocabulary is introduced and defined at the conclusion of each chapter. The publisher, IGI Global, is an established publisher of Information Science and this text could be useful even as a textbook for courses in Information Science and Technology.

The book could have been enhanced through a greater diversity of authorship and a wider distribution of geographical locations. Mobile technology is world-reaching, but much of this book's arguments were grounded in a Western cultural understanding of the world. It would

have been helpful for that to have been disclosed in the preface as a both a limitation of this volume and a signal for further study about student learning in online open-access models of education. There was some effort by the authors to attend to issues related to physical and learning disabilities and learning needs of underprivileged communities. However, the only examples the authors provide outside of the United States were Kenya and Portugal.

The real value of the book is its comprehensive structure of presentation and approach to mobile technology as a discipline. It does not make light of the common lay person's experience with mobile technology. Rather, there is a sense of power behind today's and the future's possibilities for reducing social barriers in education. *Empowering Learners with Mobile Open-Access Learning Initiatives* would be an excellent contribution to a higher education library, and that is said without hesitancy even when the examples of technology in the book could be somewhat fleeting given the rapid changes in technology and online learning.

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