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**CLAYTON, Susan J. (ed.)** *Going the distance: library instruction for remote learners*. **London: Facet, 2007. 232pages. ISBN: 9781856046190. £39.95.**

This book is timely and relevant. Dispersed faculties, the increasing number of part-time, distance learners, staff and students, full or part-time, who expect to be able to access and utilise information resources anywhere and anytime, mean that increasingly I.L. and library support services need to address remote access issues. Similarly, collaboration with faculty, timing, course-specific content and student–centred approach are all of general relevance.

Written by 26 North American contributors the book is very much a product of its context and a victim of the format. It is an excellent introduction and a good reference source toolkit, but not a recipe book. Perhaps because of the delay between writing and publication it does not address opportunities presented by emerging technologies. There is also a degree of repetition, which might have been avoided by more effective collaboration and editorial intervention. In my view, it did not live up to its promise to deliver real, practical, expert *examples* of design, delivery, collaboration and assessment and there are few tried and tested methods and examples.

The book is well referenced and directs the reader to U.S. Guidelines (such as the ACRL IL website on information literacy; ACRL "Guidelines for Distance Learning Library Services"; the AAHE website; OCLC Precepts of Libraries and Information services). The University of Melbourne and the UK's e-Learning Centre are also mentioned. Key issues are addressed (if not answered): the need for andragogic learning pedagogy to meet different learning styles, diverse cultures, backgrounds, experience and age groups; flexible, multitiered, responsive models with a self-paced, stepped or tiered, modular but nonsequential, manageable, dip in and out, chunked and customised content; a point of need approach; active rather than passive learning opportunities; opportunities for feedback and support and practical issues such as access in a non-standard IT environment; scalable programmes that are easily revised and, wherever possible not software-specific or dependant (don't use video clips with audio); the opportunities offered and difficulties attendant on integrating 'Library' content in course-management software and VLEs.

I fully endorse the benefits of "contact sports" opportunities presented by VLEs for the Library, information literacy and information sources to be made more visible, accessible *and* integrated within the course. For example, the opportunity for informal discussion, ongoing support, and the contribution of additional information in a timely way, offered by VLE discussion fora, which provides opportunities for push and pull, promotion and feedback and brings small class intimacy to large classes (social networking sites such as del.icio.us may have a role here). Similarly, VLE quizzes offer assessment, electronic journaling reflective assessment and web logs informal assessment

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opportunities, though a realistic appraisal of time taken to assess assessments and the shelf-life of 'new' technologies in a constantly evolving technological environment should be considered. All of the above is discussed in the section on assessment, which also gives examples of what worked and what didn't (the thought "small sample test first" comes to mind). Though I suspect that quizzes may not stand the test of time, just as issues raised in discussion fora go stale when translated into FAQs, perhaps peer-reviewed, electronic journaling may prove to be a more dynamic opportunity for reflective assessment?

I liked some of the catchy, take-home, common sense messages for example, the 3 Ps of presentation skills: "planning, poise, polish"; "meet students where they are – online"; "small nuggets attached to specific learning applications"; "clarification and skill reinforcement opportunities"; "project-critical need to assemble the appropriate skills mix"; "cyber-sloth" and at the end of the day "the quality of the interaction is paramount".

There is interesting and stimulating discussion of key issues such as marketing; copyright; plagiarism and accreditation and retention issues. It was refreshing to contemplate real opportunities to move away from the "first click here" approach and "one-shot" multi-tasking sessions to a modular approach, tied to course content in any I.L. environment, and not just for distance learners.

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