

Review

Reviewed Work(s): *Evaluating Online Teaching: Implementing Best Practices* by Thomas J. Tobin, B. Jean Mandernach and Ann H. Taylor

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establish why they do what they do in assignments, and contribute to the overarching conversations on how college degrees can be shown to matter. With this theme, their book complements earlier work by Blumberg in *Developing Learning-Centered Teaching* (2008), and more recent books such as Hora et al., *Beyond the Skills Gap* (2016), Brighthouse and MacPherson, *The Aims of Higher Education* (2017), and Ascha Cooper et al., *Becoming a Student-Ready College* (2016).

Jankowski and Marshall are on solid and provocative ground in *Degrees that Matter*. Using existing published research on assessment and institutional effectiveness, examples from campuses, their experiences, and the work of NILOA, the authors strongly and meaningfully provide leadership in ways to create, connect, and communicate what happens in the classroom to stakeholders. The Learning Systems Paradigm promotes collaborative campus processes to design assessment practices that may be confidently adopted and valued by diverse constituencies.

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Thomas J. Tobin, B. Jean Mandernach, and Ann H. Taylor. *Evaluating Online Teaching: Implementing Best Practices*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. 284 pp. ISBN: 9781118910368. \$45.00 USD

MARCY L. BROWN

As any instructor who has taught online will say, it's very hard to distinguish between the design of an online course and the delivery of said course, at least as far as students, administrators, and even some online instructors themselves are concerned. Existing rubrics and scorecards, like those created by the Online Learning Consortium (OLC) and Quality Matters (QM), tend to focus on the evaluation of course design. This text does an admirable job trying to separate out the design from the delivery, and then provides some practical guidance for evaluating the delivery or teaching component of an online course.

The authors are very clear about the target audience for the book, which is comprised of three groups: administrators of online programs, faculty

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who teach (or want to teach) online, and support staff who work closely with online faculty. The book uses an evidence-based approach by presenting a theoretical framework of best practices for online teaching, but then spends significant time helping readers figure out how to apply the theory within their institutions. The evidence base includes several best practices for online teaching based on large studies, the Pennsylvania State University faculty competencies for online teaching, and seven core principles for teaching with technology as outlined by the TLT (Teaching, Learning, and Technology) Group.

Evaluating online teaching shares some similarities with evaluating face-to-face teaching, but there are just as many differences as similarities and the authors articulate those differences and try to address them. For instance, what is the online equivalent of visiting a class? Should observation take place while the online class is under way, or after its completion? What part of the class is design and should be evaluated separately from teaching practices?

The work is divided into four sections. The first addresses the planning process, the second addresses formative evaluation of online teaching, the third explores summative evaluation, and the final section contains a broad discussion of implementing an evaluation culture and customizing evaluation strategies. Each section presents questions that must be answered relative to the reader's own institution, demonstrating that there isn't usually a one-size-fits-all approach to online teaching evaluation (just like other forms of evaluation).

There are three engaging—and helpful—components of the book that guide the reader to apply the theory. The first is a set of case studies scattered throughout each section. These explain how a particular individual or institution applied the evaluation principles under discussion. The second is that many chapters conclude with what the authors call a “thought exercise.” These exercises present questions and invite the reader to try to answer them relative to their own institution. The third engaging component of the book includes the sample forms and checklists found in the figures and tables, which can be adapted to the reader's specific needs. For instance, section 2 contains a quick online teaching evaluation, and section 3 contains a list of observable online teaching behaviors.

The chapter titled “Administrative Review Tools” discusses a number of rubrics and evaluation tools that can be used to evaluate online teaching, a few with which this reviewer was not familiar. Of particular interest

were the “Peer Review Guide for Online Teaching at Penn State,” and the “Online Instructor Evaluation System” used at Park University. These tools are summarized in the book, but the reader should feel empowered to do additional research on tools mentioned here that may be useful at one’s home institution. And the chapter on using data analytics to evaluate online teaching offers some intriguing ways to “automate” evaluation criteria.

The fourth section of the book, on developing a culture of evaluation, is the lightest in terms of information that can be put immediately into practice in one’s own workplace. This says more about the nature of the topic than the skill of the authors, though building said culture is something with which many colleagues in all types of institutions seem to struggle. There is helpful how-to information on the implementation cycle, which could be very useful if assessment in a broader sense is relatively new to your campus.

Overall, this book provides a great deal of useful information, and the thought exercises alone could segue into some interesting faculty discussions or development opportunities. Recommended for anyone involved with the design or evaluation of online courses.

MARCY L. BROWN spent fifteen years as a research librarian before her second career as an instructional designer and online instructor. She currently teaches online for Ocean County College and serves as an instructional designer for several institutions including universities, companies, and professional licensing organizations.

Laura J. Massa and Margaret Kasimatis. *Meaningful and Manageable Program Assessment: A How-To Guide for Higher Education Faculty*. Sterling, VA: Stylus, 2017. 172 pp. Hardcover: 978-1620365632 (\$95.00); paperback: 9781620365649 (\$27.61)

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The purpose of Massa and Kasimatis’s book is to provide a practical manual for creating and conducting programmatic assessment plans. The introduction of the book discusses the increasing importance of assessment in this changing world of higher education and the need for training manuals to help guide faculty who are working within the assessment field with little to no formal training. The authors have used their expertise as assessment leaders on their campuses to guide the discussions and topics in the