



BOOK REVIEW
**Technology-Enabled Learning:
Policy, Pedagogy and Practice**

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Technology-Enabled Learning: Policy, Pedagogy and Practice

Sanjaya Mishra and Santosh Panda (Eds.)

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TEL: Policy, Pedagogy, Practice

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Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, many learners, teachers and other stakeholders who wanted to see greater use of technology and advocated options for flipped-classroom, blended and/or online forms of instruction challenged the traditional bricks and mortar, face-to-face model of provision. The pandemic accelerated this shift. In the wake of the pandemic, there is no way we can close Pandora's box, and neither should we seek to do so.

Technology-Enabled Learning: Policy, Pedagogy and Practice explores three facets of technology-enabled learning (TEL) and was published just at the right time to help us reflect on and shape the 'new normal' for education provision. The book draws on practical experiences of implementing TEL projects in diverse contexts and identifies both successes and challenges.

The book comprises five parts, with Part 1 comprising a prologue that sets the scene and Part 5 an epilogue in which the editors reflect on what has been learned. The core of the book is divided into three main sections that each contains multiple chapters:

- Part 2. ICT in Education Policy and National Development (two chapters)
- Part 3. Technology-Enabled Learning Strategy and Implementation: Case Studies (five chapters)
- Part 4. Research and Evaluating Technology-Enabled Learning (eight chapters)

As Santosh Panda observes in his Prologue in Chapter 1, “[t]oday, it is no longer valid to ask whether we need the assistance of technology for teaching, learning and development. What is more important is to apply TEL in the context of specific needs and ask questions about how to improve its effect/impact” (p. 12).

In Chapter 2, Sanjaya Mishra explores the use of technology from three perspectives: “learning *from* technology, learning *in* technology and learning *with* technology” (p. 27). The chapter briefly explores several common forms of technology use such as video learning, mobile learning, learning management systems, social media, open educational resources, massive open online courses (MOOCs), learning analytics and emerging technologies. The chapter reminds readers that the field is constantly evolving and therefore new possibilities for practice continue to arise.

In Chapter 3, Shafika Isaacs discusses COVID-19 education responses, as well as the nexus between open educational resources (OER) and open educational practices



(OEP) in Commonwealth member countries. The chapter is organised around a useful policy-as-practice framework that explores practice from above and below, and from pre- and current COVID-19-related perspectives (p. 36). Discourse analysis was applied to analyse 20 selected policy documents. The chapter reminds readers that there is always a lag – and sometimes a gap – between the good intentions set out in policy and the implementation of those policy intents in practice. It also cautions readers about the need to address and actively seek to disrupt “growing education inequality and exclusion” (p. 41).

Indira Koneru presents the first of five case studies in Part 3 of the book. In Chapter 4, the author explores how to design blended learning in ways that improve student learning in a rural area in the province of Andhra Pradesh in India. It is observed that blended learning requires an extensive upfront design phase and this may be a steep learning curve for teachers who are used to traditional classroom-based provision only. The author used a mixed methods research process to engage with teachers and students on their experiences of blended learning implementation in 18 courses. As might have been expected, well-designed blended courses had a positive impact on student satisfaction and learning gains, while other courses had little or no impact because of design weaknesses.

Jayashree Shinde presents a second case study from India, this time focused on the Department of Educational Technology of SNDT Women’s University. Chapter 5 also explores a blended learning approach and explains how the approach was developed, implemented and evaluated. The study emphasises the importance of proactive leadership, capacity building and mentoring, the need for commitment from all stakeholders, and systematic planning, monitoring and reporting. To this, we might add the need for systematic processes for closing the feedback loop – from monitoring and evaluation, back to continually improving practice.

In Chapter 6, Ioana Chan Mow, Agnes Wong Soon, Tara Patu, Mose Mose and Oloa Lipine present a case study from the National University of Samoa. The authors adopted a mixed methods research approach which included a pre-course survey, lecturer interviews and a post-course survey. While teachers as well as students were positive about the move to blended learning provision and valued the support they had received, infrastructure challenges related to internet access and access to appropriate digital devices remained a problem. These potential challenges need to be pre-empted and addressed in the initial stages of planning a blended learning initiative.

In Chapter 7, Silvanice O. Abeka and Joseph Bosire present a case study from Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology (JOOUST) in Kenya. Their discussion centres on Flow Theory, which involves finding an appropriate fit between current skills and expected levels of challenge, as well as between engagement-based learning and teaching. The authors make the following recommendations (pp. 102-3) that will likely resonate with other providers:

- Maximise feedback in student-to-student and student-to-faculty communication
- Adopt active and collaborative pedagogical approaches
- Remove the walls of the classroom (by extending into a virtual space)

The authors reach the following conclusion, namely that “to engage students in deeper understanding, blended learning must be designed specifically to encourage autonomy through interactions, collaborations and participation in challenging activities” (p. 106).

In Chapter 8, Sanjaya Mishra and Manas Ranjan Panigrahi discuss “Developing Institutional Capacities for OER-Based eLearning” based on a partnership between the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) and the Wawasan Open University (WOU) in Malaysia. Central to the initiative was the development and deployment of an OER-Based eLearning Course to build capacity. Some 40 participants from ten institutions in the region engaged with the course and although only eight participants completed the whole course (due in part to the heavy workload involved), the digital badging system meant that participants could receive recognition for the parts of the capacity development they had managed to complete.

Kaushal Kumar Bhagat and Fong Soon Fook present in Chapter 9 the first of the discussions in the research-focused part of the book. They explore some of the challenges involved in researching the impact of TEL at the Universiti Malaysia Sabah. They also note the challenge in TEL research of trying to identify appropriate dependent, independent and extraneous variables, as well as appropriate sampling and data analysis strategies.

In Chapter 10, Martha Cleveland-Innes, Nathaniel Ostashevski and Dan Wilton investigate the impact that practice of the fourth iteration of a MOOC has on TEL. Approaching the study from a Community-of-Inquiry perspective, the authors



investigated participant responses to a targeted in-course discussion forum, as well as through a post-course survey. Analysis of the feedback encouraged the authors to conclude, “[i]t is clear that programmes like the TELMOOC that can reach educators when they have time, on their own digital devices, and that engage them in meaningful discussions situated in their own contexts, have considerable value” (p. 138).

Leigh-Anne Perryman then uses a theory-of-change model in Chapter 11 to evaluate the long-term impact of professional development on MOOCs. The author notes the inherent limitations in relying only on quantitative data, and suggests that a quantitative investigation should ideally be followed by a more qualitative engagement to evaluate the impact on the professional lives of individual participants.

In Chapter 12, Shironica P. Karunanayaka presents 21 stories about digital education leadership from teachers in secondary schools in Sri Lanka. Following an action research approach, the author notes the need for teachers first to develop digital literacy, then to successfully integrate this digital literacy into their own practice, and then to provide digital education leadership for others. The author observes that the teachers involved in the study found the discussion of the concepts “digital footprint” and “digital identity” a useful part of the process.

The author of Chapter 13, Cheryl Brown, agrees on the importance of digital education leadership. She observes that COL’s Digital Education Leadership Training in Action (C-DELTA) programme, which is the focus of the entire book, aims to develop:

- participants’ digital literacy, knowledge of digital education; and
- ability to lead and implement digital education initiatives in their various contexts.

She notes that the openly licensed nature of the initiative (all resources are available as CC-BY-SA) has allowed diffusion beyond particular projects and project partners, and that there is evidence about its impact on a wider community of learners and educators.

In Chapter 14, Michael Paskevicius explores student access to appropriate study materials across ten of COL’s TEL partner countries – Bangladesh, Fiji, India, Kenya, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Saint Lucia and Uganda. Based on analysis of feedback received in response to a 32-question survey, the author observes that

learners are accessing both prescribed and unprescribed learning resources. Teachers therefore need not only to ensure the quality of the OER they prescribe, but also to skill learners/students to evaluate the quality of the resources that they find for themselves.

In Chapter 15, Santosh Panda changes tack somewhat by exploring the notion of return on investment from an open online course on OER. The author looks at the relationship between the inputs in the form of course design, development and implementation and the short-term outcomes in relation to immediate reactions, satisfaction and planned actions. Attention is also given to reported changes in knowledge, attitudes and skills and how these manifested in the longer term in implementation and behavioural impact, both in workplaces and in individual/institutional operations. Data was collected through an online survey instrument sent to the 1419 participants who completed the course (of the 4079 who had initially registered). Based on analysis of the 127 responses received, the author reaches the following conclusion (p. 208):

With an ROI of 212.42% from the viewpoint of benefits accrued to the participants and an ROI of 254.1% based on the cost involved for the organisation, [...] the online course on OER is good value for money and justifies COL's investment.

In Chapter 16, Michael D. Sankey discusses benchmarking in relation to TEL provision. He identifies ten TEL domains of practice (i.e. policy; strategic plan; IT support; technology applications; content development; documentation; organisational culture; leadership; human resource training; technology-enabled learning champions) and provides some illustrative performance indicators (p. 217). The author reckons that TEL has become “mission critical” for most higher education institutions and use of an appropriate benchmarking tool can help improve practice. TEL has indeed become mission critical for all institutions in the wake of the pandemic, climate change and other widespread disruptions of traditional campus-based education provision.

In the final chapter, the editors Santosh Panda and Sanjaya Mishra, provide an epilogue in which they reflect on the three key focus areas – policy, pedagogy and practice (p. 237):

While on the one hand we accelerate policy–capacity–technology as a theory-of-change model for the effective implementation of TEL, we also need to engage in capacity building in institutions and focus on our collective understanding of



“learning” in a “networked” society, making use of resource-based learning within and beyond the Commonwealth in the broader sense as well as in the contexts of socio-cultural and educational ecologies. TEL has become a necessity, and building resilient education systems should address the complexities and adopt the solutions identified in this book.

Summary and Commendation

This book focuses on the work of COL’s TEL initiative which is primarily centred on higher education provision within selected Commonwealth countries. Only one of the chapters focuses on feedback from schoolteachers, hence we need to look to other publications for further insight into TEL integration into schooling, TVET and adult education contexts. However, many of the issues explored in the book will resonate across these other sectors and the inter-related nature of policy, pedagogy and practice is key in all educational contexts.

In summary, I recommend this book as a basis for reflection for teachers and educational administrators who are emerging from the COVID pandemic to a new normal that requires greater use of TEL. There is always something to be learned from those who have made the journey before us.

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