

# Handbook of Online Learning

edited by K. E. Rudestam & J. Schoenholtz-Read  
(2nd ed.; Los Angeles: Sage, 2009, 501 pages)

The second edition of the *Handbook of Online Learning* is a natural addition to the libraries of those engaged in the online learning agenda. Edited by Kjell Erik Rudestam and Judith Schoenholtz-Read, this collection of papers targets a broad readership: students, faculty, trainers, program planners, instructional designers, and administrators. Additionally, it is structured in a “first things first” way, beginning with a chapter that considers the impact of online education on adult education that positions the field and then continuing with eight chapters that examine the evolving theories and philosophies of contemporary online education (Part I, chapters 2–9 included). The next section, “Implementation of Online Learning” (Part II, chapters 10–19), is subdivided into three sections: “Programs and Goals” (five chapters); “Faculty and Students” (two chapters); and “Administration and Supports” (three chapters). Michelle: I’m not sure the chapter count (in the text for Part I and in brackets for Part II) corresponds with the number of chapters she has noted, i.e., chapters 2-9 and 10-19. What do you think? Although readers will gravitate to different chapters based on their professional interests, the solid cross-pollination of the issues throughout the text is such that even selective reading will broaden their understanding of this evolving field.

Rudestam and Schoenholtz-Read, no strangers to online education, are experts in psychology and education, respectively. Rudestam holds a PhD in psychology from the University of Oregon and Schoenholtz-Read an EdD from the Department of Counselling Psychology at the University of British Columbia. In addition to co-editing the first edition of the handbook, each has dedicated expertise in adult and distance education—Rudestam is the co-editor of the *Encyclopaedia of Distributed Education*, and Schoenholtz-Read has been studying retention in distance education courses for 12 years. The book’s contributors are also recognized international experts, who individually and collectively share their many experiences and suggestions for working effectively in this medium. As suggested in Chapter 1, “The Flourishing

of Adult Online Education,” the “adoption of the online environment as the teaching vehicle of the future in higher education and corporate training demands a re-examination of our core beliefs about pedagogy and how students learn” (p. 1).

The value of a resource such as this handbook is significant given the growth in online education. Nearly all institutions of higher learning across the world now include various aspects of online learning within their systems. These institutional players include non-profit traditional distance-learning universities, traditional non-profit universities, military online universities, for-profit universities, for-profit e-learning organizations, corporate online universities, and online learning digital-content responsibilities (pp. 8–10). Although online education is clearly here to stay, whether online teaching and online learning are superior experiences is another matter. Additionally, the emergence of Web 2.0’s, blogs, wikis, tagging, podcasting, e-portfolios, second life, and social networking tools has made first-generation online education a thing of the past. There is much to learn.

This edition of the handbook includes revisions to 8 of the first edition’s original chapters, as well as 11 new chapters on topics such as globalization, emerging technologies, virtual libraries, and accreditation of online programs and institutions. This updated and new material offers readers important opportunities for personal professional development and continuing education by helping reader-educators develop and deliver online experiences that metaphorically, in Yeats’s words, should be more about the “lighting of a fire” than the “filling of a bucket.”

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