Foreword

The Handbook of Research on Teacher Education in the Digital Age is both timely and important at this moment in the world of our educational endeavor. Educators and those who prepare them are facing increased scrutiny on their practice, pressure to demonstrate their effectiveness, changing demographics and needs of our students, and an ever changing educational environment. This book brings together the relevant and current theoretical frameworks and offers the most recent empirical research findings to assist all educators in understanding the current landscape and then using the knowledge to improve practice.

We are all aware of the many challenges facing educators as they assist our learners in reaching their potential. We must not assume that every young teacher is savvy about educational uses of technology, even if they appear to be connected digitally and are skilled users of Twitter, Facebook, and text messaging. Overbay, Mollette, and Vasu (2011) suggested that our task is not about technology, but rather about people. We also know that teacher beliefs about technology are predictors of instructional technology usage and influence the decisions they make when planning for technology integration (Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2010; Miranda & Russell, 2012; Windschitl & Sahl, 2002; Zhao, & Frank, 2003). Thus, surfacing and explicitly addressing teachers’ beliefs about technology in their preservice and inservice lives needs to be part of the process when integrating new technologies into schools. This handbook brings together information that will allow teacher educators and practitioners to learn about the most current uses of digital technology, but also offer ways to think about and understand the complexity of changing human behavior.

Right now, learners and educators are able to find and use authentic data, images, simulations, animations, and other ways to gain understanding about our complex world (Hutchison, Beschorner, & Schmidt-Crawford, 2012; Yen, Lee, & Chen, 2012). Thus, it is an imperative to make sure that teachers are ready to teach with new technologies and in new ways. In this handbook, educators will gain insight into engaging their learners, and in particular, learn that “…there is more to mobile learning than simply having portable wireless devices accessible to students” (Hodges & Prater, 2014, p. 76).

Fortunately, this handbook delivers the breadth and depth of information that is needed and provides it in a manner that is accessible to all stakeholders. The book is divided into three sections based on the framework proposed by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999), which raises the importance of teacher learning, thinking, and practice. The three sections of the book (knowledge-for-practice, knowledge-in-practice, and knowledge-of-practice) stimulate questions, ideas, and new thoughts about what it means to be an educator in this digitally enhanced world.
The editors, authors, and reviewers are to be congratulated on their efforts to provide this exceptional addition to every library, professional development course, and teacher preparation program. I recommend this book highly to all who have an interest in the future of our profession and the dedicated individuals our learners need and deserve.

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Lynne Schrum served as Dean of the College of Education and Human Services, West Virginia University, and is currently a professor of curriculum and instruction and educational technology. Her research and teaching focus on appropriate uses of information technology, preparing school leaders and teachers for the 21st century, and effective and successful online teaching and learning. She is a past elementary and special education teacher. She has written and edited eleven books and numerous articles; she recently completed ten years as editor of the Journal of Research on Technology in Education (JRTE) (2002-2012). Schrum is also a past-president of the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE).

REFERENCES


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