

Foreword

Learning opportunities and learning outcomes have been influenced by the digital age. The digital age allows learners to engage in the pursuit of knowledge in a variety of ways, ranging from online learning, through to the access to information on the internet and collaboration and communication with other learners through social media. The world of teaching and learning is very different from what it was 20 years ago. This volume examines the many ways in which teaching and learning have been changed. It provides us new perspectives on teaching and learning in this new and sometimes frightening world.

It was in 2000 that I was first invited to participate in online learning at Teachers College, Columbia University. I had been teaching face-to-face courses for Teachers College for a few years at that time, and I was intrigued by the idea of teaching online, though I was also quite nervous about how this might work. After a very brief introduction to online teaching, I was on my own with my new course. The course was on transformative learning, with which I am very familiar, so the content was no problem. But, the format of the online course was a different story. I really had no idea how to set up the course. I experimented. I felt frustrated and lonely in my attempts to create an online course. I don't mean to be critical of Teachers College. There was help available, but I really did not even know what to ask.

My first TC course started in September of 2001. One week later, we experienced what is now known as 9/11. I was living in Canada, but I listened, with the rest of the world, to the reports of the planes flying into the World Trade Center. My thoughts were of my unseen Teachers College students. And this is the way we started our course. I asked everyone if they were safe and to tell the group about their experiences. I abandoned my "schedule," and I went with the moment.

I think this first experience with online learning informed my way of teaching in the digital age. I went on to engage students in the planning of the courses, I involve them in the evaluation of their own learning, and I leave most of the decisions about our courses to the students. It is their learning, after all, and it only makes sense that they make decisions about it. I am not very well informed about the latest technologies, and, I must admit, I do not participate in social media. I live in a remote rural area of Canada where high speed internet is not available. So, in many ways, I do not live in the digital age.

But I am interested and intrigued by the impact of the digital age on learning opportunities and learning outcomes. This is where this volume, the *Handbook of Research on Learning Outcomes and Learning Outcomes*, comes into play. I think this volume can inform readers who are in, or not in, the digital age. If I can learn from the chapters in the volume, which I have done, then all readers can do so.

Patricia Cranton
University of New Brunswick, Canada
April 27, 2015

Foreword

Patricia Cranton *'s interests are in transformative learning and authentic teaching. She is a retired Professor of Adult Education affiliated with the University of New Brunswick. Her most recent books include Stories of Transformative Learning, with Michael Kroth (2015), A Novel Idea: Researching Transformative Learning in Fiction, with Randee Lawrence (2015), A Guide to Research for Educators and Trainers of Adults, with Sharan Merriam, (2015), a third edition of Planning Instruction for Adult Learners (2012), and The Handbook of Transformative Learning (2012), co-edited with Ed Taylor.*