

## BOOK REVIEW

# Teaching Naked: How Moving Technology Out of Your College Classroom Will Improve Student Learning

*Reviewed by Lynda R. Louis, Dillard University, New Orleans, LA, USA*

*Teaching Naked: How Moving Technology Out of Your College Classroom Will Improve Student Learning*

José Antonio Bowen

© 2012 by Jossey-Bass

352 pp.

\$36.00

ISBN: 978-1118110355

All higher education institutions are faced with educating the millennial generation. Technology is such a vital part of the lives of students today. As a result, academia faces the inevitable task of determining how technology will or should be used in education, both in and out of the classroom. Dr. José Bowen's *Teaching Naked: How Moving Technology out of Your College Classroom Will Improve Student Learning* gives an excellent and thoughtful look into this issue. His focus on technology is driven by four factors: technology a) is unstoppable,

b) is driving the new global marketplace, c) has radically altered the availability of knowledge, and d) has shifted the nature of the classroom.

Bowen offers readers a look at how technology can and should be infused into the learning environment. His premise is "that higher education is deeply intertwined with new technologies." He offers a comprehensive look into the impact of technology on such topics as teaching, learning, critical thinking and writing skills, and assessments. While he admits that face-to-face interaction between students and faculty will remain standard, there is need to modify the traditional model of education to better aid students and teachers in using technology in the educational process. This is required because students are already heavy users of technology (smart phones, the internet, social media, etc.). He states that the paradox of *Teaching Naked* is that "technology can be harnessed to enhance the widely desired goal of increased student

engagement and faculty-student interaction but that it is most powerful used *outside* of class as a way to increase naked, non-technological interaction with students *inside* the classroom.”

Bowen addresses the ‘why and how’ of the *Teaching Naked* paradox and gives specific examples and guidance to its intended audience, faculty and higher education administrators, on how to leverage technology and face-to-face class time as a way to improve learning and ensure survival of the brick-and-mortar schools. Accompanying the book is a website: [www.teachingnaked.com](http://www.teachingnaked.com) (incorrectly cited on page 7 as [www.teachingnaked.org](http://www.teachingnaked.org)) that gives extensive tools that can be used to implement a naked classroom.

The paradox of *Teaching Naked* is presented in three sections. The first, *The New Digital Landscape*, has three chapters that address significant implications for higher education caused by major changes in technology and in expectations of today’s higher education students. Section two, *Designing 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Courses*, has five chapters aimed at guiding faculty through the course redesign where the use of technology is primarily outside the classroom. This allows students to better prepare for face-to-face interaction. This section, the heart of the book, gives emphasis to the “naked” pedagogy of using technology in a new manner that maximizes ‘deep learning’. The final section, *Strategies for Universities of the Future*, has three chapters that examine institutional changes required to support the new course designs highlighted in section 2, and to ensure that there is enough learning taking place at the physical institutions that will guarantee survival against emerging “newer and more innovative competition.”

Chapter 1-*The Flat Classroom and Global Competition*, explores the explosion of online learning (e-learning) options’ and how they have altered marketing of higher education. This chapter cites many options available to students and faculty today, such as Learning Management Systems (LMS), YouTube and iTunesU lectures, Kahn Academy, Open Yale Courses (<http://oyc.yale.edu/>), MIT Open University ([http://ocw](http://ocw.mit.edu)

[mit.edu](http://ocw.mit.edu)), Google Code University, Udacity, etc. The chapter examines four basic business models for higher education in the United States (free, elite university, for profit and community college, and lastly none of the above) and how technology has created new competition, new expectations and a global marketplace. With technology, there is an abundance of content, a myriad of new learning environments, multiple points of entry to each concept and easy and cheap ways to increase student diversity and population. It ends by noting the challenge is to determine how to take advantage of the possibilities afforded by technology to improve learning across the curriculum.

Chapter 2-*Social Proximity and the Virtual Classroom*, examines the notion of physical proximity as a factor in learning. Bowen purports that for today’s students face-to-face contact is not important when it comes to social networking, enjoyment, or learning. He offers ways faculty can embrace the concept of virtual classrooms by embracing virtual communications (email, Facebook, Twitter, Skype, Virtual Classrooms (such as Adobe ConnectNow, Vidyo, WebEx, Nefsis, Adobe Acrobat Connect Pro), LMS such as Blackboard, Scholar 360, and OLAT, Fronter Platform, eCollege, desire2learn, etc.). One of the strengths of the book is definitely displayed in this chapter. For each topic, Dr. Bowen offers extensive guidelines and examples of what is possible to achieve in using these tools. For instance, under the topic *Embracing E-Communication* he offers five things to consider in implementing an E-Communication strategy (e.g. limit forms of communication), and under *Facebook* there are eight factors to consider when using Facebook (e.g. online discussion). The chapter ends by examining economic and curricular implications of virtual classes, including the rising cost of gas.

Chapter 3-*Games, Customization, and Learning*, examines the value of games in learning. It suggests that instructors can redesign courses to mimic the concept of gaming, which allows for teaching and learning. Dr. Bowen shows that through gaming, instruc-

tors can move first exposure to content out of the classroom (away from the lecture) and into some form of preclass first exposure. He presents 16 subsection discussing qualities of good games and learning principles that make games good teachers. Among them are *Pleasant Frustration, Interaction, Challenge and Consolidation, Just in Time or On Demand* (focus on skills that global employers seek), *Sequential Problem Solving*, and *Lateral Thinking*. He gives perspectives on the value of using customized Apps, as well as free games. Many examples are cited and several online resources are given (Education Games Research at [www.edugamesresearch.com](http://www.edugamesresearch.com), Emerging Ed Tech at <http://www.emergingedtech.com/>, etc.). There is an excellent outline of Lee Sheldon's (2010, 2011) course that was designed as a multiplayer game with nomenclature of a game. Students advance in the course by amassing points, using levels instead of grades, etc.

The next section begins at Chapter 4-*Designing College More Like a Video Game*, which continues the theme of Chapter 3. The chapter examines research findings on brain development and learning and applying this research to course design. He examines several models of learning, including Bloom's (1956) taxonomy, Anderson and Krathwohl (2001, pp. 67-68) revised taxonomy, and Fink's (2003) taxonomy of significant learning.

The next 3 chapters of section 2 are the heart of Bowen's theory: Chapter 5- *Technology for Information Delivery*, Chapter 6- *Technology for Engagement*, and Chapter 7-*Technology for Assessment*. These chapters give demonstration of how outside-of-class technologies improve student learning. He continues to advance his belief that the best use of technology is as a conduit for out-of-class content delivery. He gives extensive examples in each chapter of how best to use technology to accomplish desired outcomes. For instance, when examining engagement, he offers ways to implement teaching naked using motivational reading (13 items) and using the syllabus as a motivational tool. One of the most compelling topics is *Implementation: Googling before Class*. Here he describe

how one can build a pre-class Google search into an assignment. As for assessments, Dr. Bowen points out the obvious – students have instant access to the internet and it is fruitless to ignore that fact. He suggests ways to better assess learning by using technology, especially the internet, such as giving multiple-choice tests before class, but to “design the questions to make use of or analyze something that might be found” on the internet. He also suggests that the redesign for assessment must incorporate well written rubrics for the courses. He again discusses use of games as a good assessment tool that incorporates a grading rubric and a table of criteria and standards for achievement.

The final chapter in this section, Chapter 8- *The Naked Classroom*, gives a footprint for how to structure classrooms so that everyone becomes an active participant. He notes seven necessary components of face time that cannot be eliminated. Then he gives an excellent discourse on the place for lecture within the naked classroom concept. The heart of the naked classroom concept is picking the right pedagogy to create an active learning environment. To ease reluctance, there are suggestions on how to overcome student resistance.

The book ends with three chapters as the final section *Strategies for Universities of the Future*: Chapter 9-*The Educational Product in the Internet Age*, Chapter 10-*The Naked Curriculum*, and Chapter 11-*The Naked Campus*. The theme, as noted above, is on institutional change needed to support new course design while guaranteeing survival of the physical institution. One of the most compelling parts of Chapter 9 is a reminder that “college is a combination of products: learning, experiences, personal growth, connections, and a degree.” Bowen then reminds the reader, that because of free courses from the likes of Yale or MIT, the product is really learning and not the degree. After giving thoughtful arguments about the product, he concludes that the product of higher educational institutions is really hybrid and for survival in the global marketplace institutions must find the hybrid that is right for it.

Chapter 10 focuses on what deans and administrators can do to affect the curriculum for a naked classroom environment. For the curriculum to be successful faculty have to be on board, and Dr. Bowen suggests ways deans can engage the faculty, from meetings to focusing on learning outcomes and rethinking units of learning. Chapter 11 concludes Dr. Bowen's arguments by focusing on the physical campus. Topics range from having an integrated infrastructure to support all phases of technology, distributing technology tools to faculty, reconsidering pricing (even to the point of offering discounts or creating "learning-based" pricing), and identifying and serving your market (local, national and global).

This book is a good value and read for its intended audience who is looking for suggestions on how to take advantage of the technology that has become such a vital part of all our lives. The reader should not let the fact that the author is a music professor by trade hinder their embrace of his paradox. The strength of the book is that Dr. Bowen offers suggestions that have merit in all fields of study, many of which he mentions (such as chemistry, history, mathematics, etc.), and for all sizes of institu-

tions. The book is laden with examples about various subject matter and contains an extensive list of resources and cited references that will help steer readers to their desired area of interest.

## REFERENCES

- Anderson, L. W., & Krathwohl, D. R. (Eds.). (2001). *A taxonomy for learning, teaching and assessing: A revision of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives*. New York, NY: Longman.
- Bloom, B. S. (Ed.). (1956). *Taxonomy of educational objectives. The classification of educational goals. Handbook I: Cognitive domain*. New York, NY: David McKay.
- Fink, L. S. (2003). *Creating significant learning experiences: An integrated approach to designing college courses*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Sheldon, L. (2010). *Syllabus. T366: Multiplayer game design, section 13353*. Indiana University-Bloomington, Department of Telecommunications. Retrieved from <http://gamingtheclassroom.wordpress.com/syllabus/>
- Sheldon, L. (2011). *The multiplayer classroom, designing coursework as a game*. Boston, MA: Course Technology PTR, Cengage Learning.

*Lynda R. Louis is an Assistant Professor of Computer Science at Dillard University, New Orleans, LA (USA), where she serves as coordinator of the Computer Science program. She had over 30 years of experience in the corporate world before embarking on a teaching career. Her research interests include IT outsourcing, user support, e-learning, and web design. She is on the editorial review board of two IGI Global journals. She holds a BS in mathematics from Clark Atlanta University and both an MS and Ph.D. in Computer Information Systems from Nova Southeastern University's Graduate School of Computer and Information Sciences.*