



Book Review of *Evaluating Online Teaching: Implementing Best Practices*

BOOK REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Thomas J. Tobin, B. Jean Mandernach & Ann H. Taylor (2015). *Evaluating online teaching: implementing best practices*. Jossey-Bass. 301 pages. ISBN 978-1-118-91036-8.

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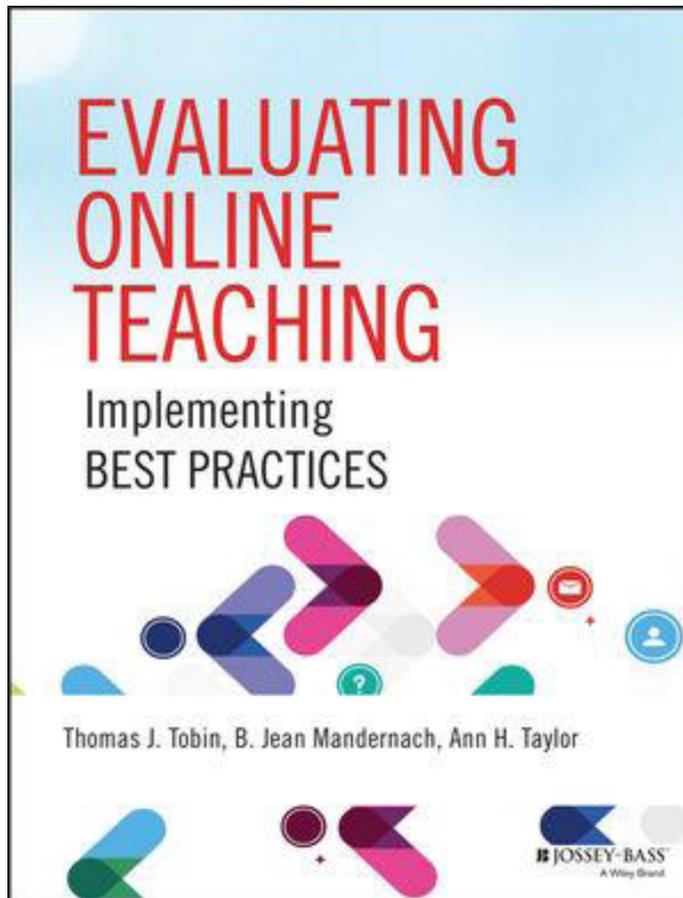
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INTRODUCTION

This is a book review on *Evaluating Online Teaching: Implementing Best Practices*, written by Thomas J. Tobin, B. Jean Mandernach and Ann H. Taylor. The purpose of this book is to be the first comprehensive book in outlining strategies to measure the quality of online teaching effectively and provide the tools and guidance needed by faculty staff and administrators. The book also addresses the challenges faced by colleges and universities in developing effective online teacher assessments including organizational structure, institutional governance, teacher, and administrator attitudes as well as possible constraints to be encountered. Through a combination of case studies and theory, the text provides practical solutions to address challenges and suggest effective and efficient online teaching assessments.

STRUCTURE & CONTENT

Each chapter begins with a real-life story or case study of the challenges a person or institution faces concerning online teaching assessment that helps determine relevant content according to specified standards. The book is divided into four sectors: 'Planning, Formative Evaluation, Summative Evaluation and Sustaining a Culture of Evaluation', where each sector contains between one to four chapters.

The first part contains Chapter 1 in the Planning sector; this chapter begins with a description of the basic theories of the book: Chickering and Gamson's seven key principles for good teaching. This chapter outlines the common challenges in evaluating online instructors. Chapter 2 guides inquiries to develop an awareness of institutional factors, as well as implementation and impact that should be considered in creating an online teacher assessment protocol. Chapter 3 discusses the decision-making process by considering the focus, nature, and purpose of developing online teaching evaluation procedures.

In the second part, the book identifies formative assessment to obtain feedback during the course to improve the teaching and learning process. Chapter 4 presents the differences between formative and summative assessments including the challenges of gathering information in developing formative assessments for online courses. The authors note that formative assessment is often less formal than summative, but there are still several considerations that need to be

addressed when planning formative assessment. In order to run an effective and continuous formative, 'SCARF' was introduced. The word 'SCARF' serves as a mnemonic tool for steps in a circle: (Solicit) gather desired information, (Compile) collect and analyze findings, (Adjust) teach accurately based on feedback, and (Report) report (Feedback) feedback to stakeholders.

The third part about summative evaluation is described as the assessment conducted at the end of the course or program in evaluating the overall quality of teaching. Chapter 5 addresses issues related to the assessment for large number of students which could be adapted for online education including Student Education Quality Assessment (SEEQ), Student Assessment of Their Learning Goals (SALG), and Student Teaching Effectiveness (SRTE). Chapter 6 looks at summative assessments from an administrator's perspective and suggests ways in which traditional face-to-face administrative evaluation models could be adapted to online formats. In particular, this chapter provides a table identifying observable online teaching behaviors with seven good teaching principles from Chickering and Gamson. In chapter 7, the authors share several tools and frameworks for summative assessment which could be adopted in class. Among the tools and job descriptions discussed are checklists for online interactive learning, quality online course initiatives, quality thing rubrics, online instructor assessment system, and online peer review. For chapter 8, it discusses how data analysis could be used as one of the evaluation processes.

The last part of the book focuses on maintaining a culture of online teaching evaluation. Chapter 9 explains the need to make holistic assessment planning for both formative and summative assessments. Chapter 10 shows the way to overcome the challenges that may hinder the implementation of changes in the way online teaching is evaluated in an institution. In addition, the ways in which training such as teacher recruitment, and development should be in line with the assessment are discussed in chapter 11. At the end of this book, all materials are grouped together in chapter 12. To implement online teaching method that could suit the demands of the university, this book is helpful especially to the educators in guiding them to an appropriate online teaching.

Overall, the book focuses on core teaching behaviors that demonstrate quality teaching. Online teaching and learning could be another alternative in addition to face-to-face teaching in the classroom. Additionally, the meaning of being a good teacher in online teaching could also be determined by evaluating the feedback from students. Determining, measuring, and evaluating meaningful teaching are the reflective process which educators must face in improving the quality of online teaching. Moreover, online teaching is a new form of teaching, which has been applied since twenty years ago and will continuously be conducted in the future.

CONCLUSION

The proposed combination of case studies and explanations from the authors could address the challenges and develop effective and efficient online teaching assessment. Suitable rubrics, forms, and worksheets could be used according to the needs of their respective institutions. Online learning assessment is differed in terms of function, purpose, and focus of assessment from traditional classroom assessment. This book could be a guide to faculty and administrators in developing appropriate assessment to online teaching and learning. Readers can learn how to evaluate online learning performance, review the best steps to develop students' assessment of online learning, and find tools to gather informal feedback in understanding online learning assessment.

The book also examines strategies to drive changes in the campus environment as well as assessment structure which includes online learning as a component. Assessment could assist institutions in rethinking more effective processes in assessment for online learning with the aim of improving the quality of teaching and learning, student success performance, and institutional effectiveness. This book is relevant to be used as a reference for online teaching and learning assessments especially in the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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