

Quality Issues in ICT-based Higher Education



Subject area

General.

Description

This book is an edited collection of contributions covering a number of issues in the area of 'quality' when using ICT-based approaches in a number of contexts.

Authors

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Publishers/Suppliers

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HE teachers.

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The text sets out, in chapter one, four main questions that the editors, through the contributors, will address:

- Can the use of ICT-based approaches enhance the quality of learning and teaching?
- Does the use of ICT-based approaches enhance the quality of learning and teaching?
- How does the use of ICT-based approaches enhance the quality of learning and teaching?
- Are we fully enabled to maximise the quality of the benefits that can arise from the use of ICT?

In addressing these questions too few of the twenty five contributors appear to offer any useable measures for lecturers to answer them in their own teaching. I found too little evidence of any structured evaluation of ICT-based approaches against more traditional ones and one could, in the most part, replace ICT-based with, for example, group-based or investigation-based and ask the same questions. The series editors' foreword tells the reader that this text is "the partner volume to Educational Development Through Information and Communications Technology" by the same editors and having not had access to this text I cannot comment on whether it sets the current volume in a better context.

Chapters which address a wide range of issues including e-learning, ICT and the disabled student, e-Mentoring and postgraduate supervisor development are all very readable and relevant in their own right. However, I find it difficult to report on anything which is strikingly novel and I cannot grasp the overall structure of the collected works. I am left at a loss as to how the contributors and chapters came together.

Three chapters of the sixteen on offer, for me, stand out and are worthy of further comment. Chapter fourteen addresses computer anxiety and as someone who delivers an ICT module to first year undergraduates this made a poignant read. Whilst the work discussed relates to the teaching of computer technology the approach is easily mapped onto any other learning environment providing the lecturer with additional skills to support the 'computer-anxious' student. Since I, like many readers, use postgraduate teaching assistants in the computer laboratory this chapter is one to refer them to if only to raise awareness of the issue.

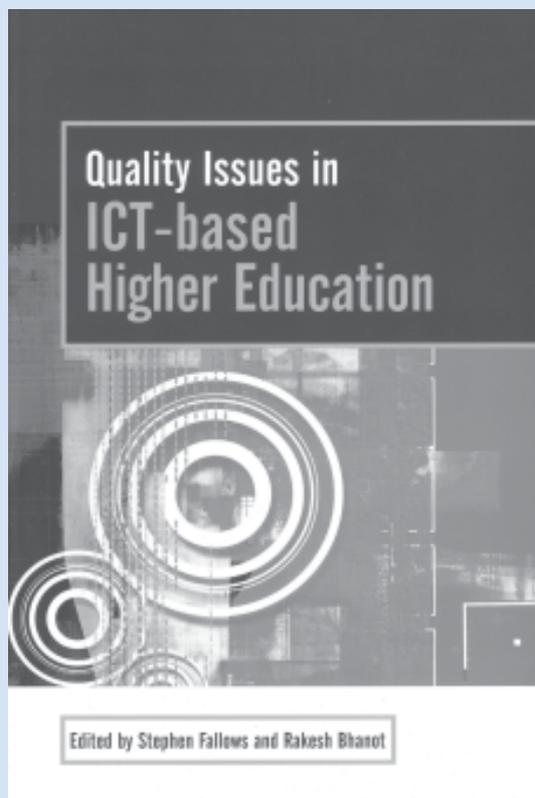
Chapter fifteen addresses the issue of plagiarism or as the authors more aptly call it, countering the on-line 'paper mills'. This chapter guides the reader carefully through the issue of detecting plagiarised papers, tracking down plagiarised papers and combating internet-based plagiarism. I would argue that making students aware of the detection, tracking and combat we, as lecturers, can and are willing to employ will in itself prevent many from trying. If nothing else this chapter provides a number of very useful, web-based, references.

Summary Review

range: * poor to ***** good

Academic content	****
Usefulness to student	**
Usefulness to teacher	****
Meets objectives	**
Accuracy	*****

Quality Issues in ICT-based Higher Education



From the publisher...

Quality Issues in ICT-based Higher Education

Edited by Rakesh Bhanot, Stephen Fallows

Providing a wide-ranging account of the quality issues surrounding the use of ICT in higher education, this book develops useful advice and guidance on key areas including:

- * devising an institution-wide strategy
- * developing course materials
- * providing distance and e-learning courses
- * using ICT-assisted assessment
- * adopting professional support processes.

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Continued from page 39

Chapter eight, which would be my personal recommendation, addresses ICT and quality in the research process. Unlike chapters addressing learning and teaching this chapter really does deliver. From conducting a literature review to using data analysis software ICT is made central and its benefits clearly articulated. However, the author is also eager to explain that using ICT may result in better research but that it will not cause better research. In my view this is the best chapter of the sixteen and one worth directing both staff and students to.

In conclusion what we get from this text is a wide-ranging account of some of the quality issues surrounding the use of ICT-based approaches to most things from developing institution wide strategies to developing course specific material and computer-based assessment. This coupled with the breadth of contributors should offer something for everyone but as outlined above personally I only found something in three of the sixteen chapters.

The use of ICT in education lends itself to more student-centred learning settings. But with the world moving rapidly into digital media and information, the role of ICT in education is becoming more and more important and this importance will continue to grow and develop in the 21st century. In this paper, a literature review regarding the use of ICTs in education was provided. It can be used as a tool to overcome the issues of cost, less number of teachers, and poor quality of education as well as to overcome time and distance barriers (McGorry, 2002). Use of ICT in education develops higher order skills such as collaborating across time and place and solving complex real world problems (Bottino, 2003; Bhattacharya and Sharma, 2007; Mason, 2000; Lim and Hang, 2003).