*Teaching and Learning Materials and the Internet* by Ian Forsyth, London: Kogan Page, 1996. ISBN: 0-7494- 20596. 181 pages, paperback. £18.99.

For a variety of different reasons, increasing use is now being made of the Internet for the delivery of course materials and/or for the support of teaching and learning activities. The details of the mechanisms used will obviously vary from one situation to another, depending upon the types of problem to be addressed. These may involve mentoring, teaching, monitoring, recording, tutoring, assessing, and so on. In this book, the author attempts to review the educational and administrative considerations of offering courses, course materials or course delivery via the Internet.

The book is organised into eight chapters, an A-Z of the Internet (intended for novices) and a brief conclusion. A very short bibliography and a subject index are also included.

In the opening chapter the author describes the nature of the Netscape Navigator browser software and the visual appearance of HTML documents when viewed using this interactive tool. The second chapter discusses and debates the reasons why teachers would want to use the Internet for teaching and learning materials. Some of the important topics discussed in this chapter include interaction and the changing roles of teachers and learners – a movement away from teacher-centred delivery towards student-centred access. Chapter 3 explores some of the general considerations that need to be taken into account once a decision has been made to use the Internet as a support aid or as a delivery vehicle. The two major issues discussed relate to 'course character' (with respect to the amount of theory and practical work that a course contains) and the factors that influence the selection of appropriate course content (in relation to both new courses and the revision of existing ones). The main topic addressed in the fourth chapter is the relationship that exists between the Internet and instructional design. Here, the author draws a parallel with the widely used technique of computer-based learning (CBL), and suggests that much of the experience that exists in this field should be applicable to the Internet situation. Of course, while this is true, the Internet is capable of offering much more than a stand-alone computer running a CBL package. One of the attractive features of both Internet and intranet systems is the mechanisms

they offer for handling interactive forms. Facilities such as this are briefly discussed in chapter 5, while chapter 6 gets down to a consideration of some of the more specific details that need to be taken into account when establishing and maintaining a Web site. Some of the important topics discussed include structure and content, help facilities, navigation issues, screen design and security.

The main focus of Chapter 7 is on cost considerations and the economic benefits to be accrued from using the Internet for course delivery. Three basic 'schedules' are considered. These deal with course development costs, access costs, and revenue generation based on increased student access to resources. In the final chapter, the author describes some of the developing areas of the Internet, including the use of audio and video, video-conferencing, interactivity, virtual reality, access and equity, genre, teacher/learner roles and attitudes, searching for information, and the use of Internet services such as email, bulletin boards and chat facilities.

Dealing only with concepts, problems and issues, this is not a book that is likely to have great appeal for technically minded readers. It gives a very superficial, non-technical treatment of the Internet. Thus it would not be of much use to anyone who might want actually to get involved in setting up materials for Web access as it gives no guidance as to how the concepts it describes might be realised – for this, a more practical book on Internet techniques would be needed.

The reference section reflects another shortcoming in that many of the 'educational' references are quite dated, and there are no references whatsoever to Internet-related material.

Although this book does contain some useful ideas, bearing in mind the above criticisms, and taking into account the number of grammatical, stylistic and technical errors it contains, it is not a text I would strongly recommend.

*Philip Barker, University of Teesside*

*Flexible Learning in Higher Education* edited by Winnie Wade, Keith Hodgkinson, Alison Smith and John Arfield, London: Kogan Page, 1994. ISBN: 0-7494-1418-9. 154 pages, paperback. £16.95.

Developments undertaken under the auspices of the Flexible Learning Initiative (a project

funded under the former Universities Funding Council's Flexibility in Course Provision programme) have led to the accumulation of considerable expertise in flexible learning at Loughborough University. This book is the result of that institution's efforts to introduce flexible and more effective learning practices into its teaching programmes.

The book is aimed at educators and staff developers in higher education and is divided into three sections: broad issues, case studies, and the student view of flexible learning.

The first section covers six aspects. Student diversity is addressed in the opening chapter and deals with the need to provide flexible means of access and course design for both 'traditional' and non-standard students including mature, part-time, disabled and international students. Flexibility in course structures is addressed in Chapter 2 in relation to the increased flexibility offered by modularization, semesterization and credit accumulation. Some of the problems associated with such structures are considered. Phil Wild, in Chapter 3, focuses on the power of IT to facilitate the flow of information and to enhance learning, but suggests that development time and associated costs will continue to inhibit extensive use within the curriculum. The need for support for off-site learners is considered in Chapter 4, and in particular deals with the need to understand the 'situation' of the flexible learner and how it can affect the learning process. Writing course guides for flexible learning is treated in Chapter 5, and the need for an adaptive library resource and library service brings this section to a close.

The case studies are from both arts and science sectors and include examples from Geography, Design and Technology, Mathematics, Education, Business, Design Engineering and English courses. In several of the case studies (e.g. Geography and Mathematics) the need for change from traditional teaching methods is related (at least in part) to increases in student numbers and worsening staff student ratios. Different methods for teaching large classes effectively are described. In the Mathematics case study, traditional lectures were largely replaced by a course textbook and study guide with support to students being provided in tutorials. Compulsory class tests prompted students to follow the programme of study, but the initial findings about the efficiency of the teaching methods are not entirely convincing.

Two case studies (IT for student teachers and the Business School post experience management education) highlight the problems of teaching students in the workplace. In teaching primary school teachers, the emphasis has been on the development of a flexible learning plan which involves the student in more critical self-directed work. The Business School case study explores more general issues associated with remote study such as off-campus support, isolation of the students from each other and from their lecturers, and the variability of workplace pressures. The case study in design and technology makes a useful distinction between flexible and distance learning materials, indicating that the intention in this instance was to produce flexible materials which require the student to use facilities only available within the providing department. In addition, tutorial support was available only at timetabled tutorial times, although the actual learning materials were available throughout the working day. The materials were in this instance produced using sponsorship from a commercial organization. The problem of production of appropriate learning materials is also addressed in the case study on the MSc in Engineering Design. Here, materials were produced with assistance from off-campus consultants.

The final section of the book explores student opinion of flexible-learning techniques. Student acceptance of new study techniques, student motivation and skill development are discussed.

Although published in 1994, this book still provides valuable information and advice on designing, structuring and writing flexible learning programmes in Higher Education. It should be noted, however, that the use of technology for communication with students and for the dissemination or presentation of learning materials is not addressed in any of the case studies, although this is probably a reflection of the book's age rather than an intentional omission.

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*Everything You Ever Needed To Know About Training – A Complete Step-by-step Guide to Training and Development* by K. Thorne and D. Mackey, London: Kogan Page, 1996. ISBN: 0–7494–2084–7. 216 pages, paperback. £18.99.

As universities develop well formed strategies

for research, teaching and information, it becomes increasingly important to have a well-trained workforce to implement these strategies. In Higher Education, the staff-training function may be carried out, inter alia, by the Staff Development Office, by individual academic departments, by the Computing Service or by external trainers. Yet however training is delivered, it has a set of processes in common. It is these that this book aims to tackle. The authors' objectives are to 'create a compendium of concepts, ideas and resources to help those who help others to learn', and in so doing they set out to disseminate good practice and synthesize a trainer's inherent knowledge and skills. The book is oriented towards the business sector, but this should not deter the educationalist. It is designed as a 'dip in' guide and is particularly effective in the provision of quick reference checklists. For example, using either the clearly set-out contents page or the index, one can quickly locate guidelines designed to help the trainer handle difficult people. Even the experienced trainer will find some key points which s/he may not otherwise have considered.

The book aims to be comprehensive, its nine chapters covering Being Professional, How People Learn, Designing a Training Programme, Delivering Training, Sources of Inspiration, Evaluation of Training, The Trainer as..., Training as a Career, and Training as a Business. Each of these, of course, could be expanded to fill a whole volume, but what the book lacks in depth it makes up for in breadth, and indeed deals with almost all aspects of training. Each chapter is subdivided so that particular subsections can be easily found. There are also three appendices, forms and models for training, useful contact names and addresses, and a recommended reading list.

The idea of the trainer as an agent of change runs through the book. Being able to identify training needs within the context of a business in a consultative role is seen as crucial. The authors promote self-evaluation and assessment on the part of the trainer.

The book begins with the premise that to deliver effective training you need to be comfortable with yourself. Although some readers may find aspects of this first chapter a little too self-evident (for example, see the checklist on preventing burnout), others may benefit from the down-to-earth, practical

advice. The authors constantly tread a fine line between stating the obvious and providing comprehensive information for the new trainer. Chapter 2 is concerned with how people learn, in particular recognizing the importance of designing courses for a range of preferred learning styles. Too often courses will appeal to a certain type of learner who shares the same learning style as the trainer. However, this important subject is not covered in sufficient depth.

Chapter 3 describes methods for designing a training programme. Following a short section on developing the initial idea, there is a very useful overview on designing a learning solution. The importance of having SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timed) objectives is emphasized. The section on the production of materials is brief, but as the authors point out, 'the breadth and scope of the various methods merit a book in their own right'. Chapter 4 details ways of delivering training. This chapter again veers between the obvious (be careful what you eat and drink the night before a course), and the need to outline all the steps to successful delivery for the less experienced trainer. It again includes useful checklists to which even experienced trainers might wish to refer, foe example one on using external speakers. Appendix 2 expands on the material in this chapter by providing a model for evaluating other trainers' delivery. The section on dealing with the unexpected is useful pre-course reading for any trainer.

Chapter 5 outlines ways in which the trainer can find sources of inspiration for developing training programmes. It includes methods of generating ideas and guidelines for creative problem-solving. However, techniques such as mind mapping are not covered in enough detail, and no examples are given on how to create a mind map. Chapter 6 on evaluation of training is well presented and thorough within the scope of the book. It emphasizes the importance of detailed evaluation of the training and development function in addition to assessment of individual training programmes or events. The chapter contains useful checklists on what and how to evaluate, with examples of evaluation forms in the appendices. Chapter 7 considers the evolving role of trainers and the many different situations in which they may find themselves, ranging from coach, mentor or facilitator to assessor, author and conference organizer. Each section is clearly outlined with

checklists and points to consider if you wish to be successful in any or all of these roles..Here, as elsewhere, a question and answer technique is used to good effect to respond to frequently asked questions. Chapter 8 deals with training as a career, and tackles the important issues of career progression and personal development. Chapter 9 discusses training as a business. The step-by-step approach covering aspects such as assessing the marketplace is very valuable, particularly for those who may have little idea as to how to set up a business.

For new trainers this book provides an overview and general introduction to the world of training. More experienced trainers will probably value the checklists and reference points. No one book can provide 'everything you ever needed to know about training', but this is a useful broad-brush overview. It is unusual in that it does not merely describe the processes of training but includes information on training as a career and as a business. It is well presented, and in the manner of good training it is simple to follow and does not baffle the reader with jargon or unnecessary detail. Any book which forces readers to rethink and question their approach to their job is a worthwhile addition to the bookshelf.

*Debra Fayter, University of York*

*Multimedia Marketing for Design Firms* by Curtis B. Charles and Karen M. Brown, New York: John Wiley, 1996. ISBN: 0–471–14609–9, 222 pages, paperback (includes CD-ROM for Windows/Macintosh). £34.95.

Effective marketing is essential for almost any business. The ability to inform customers about products and services in a compelling manner is critical to winning sales and maintaining a profitable customer base. Today, advances in multimedia personal computing are offering new possibilities for marketing, and this book is aimed at firms engaged in the business of architecture and design who might wish to take advantage of the new developments. It demonstrates how such companies can successfully market their ideas and win clients by exploiting the capabilities of multimedia desktop computers.

The book is composed of seven chapters of varying length. They evolve from an exposition of desktop-publishing (DTP) technology, through digital video, to multimedia presentation management. There is no bibliography, but there is a subject index and a CD (Windows or Macintosh) supports the text. It contains software, a presentation of rendering samples, and some animation.

Chapter 1 provides a simple but comprehensive introduction to DTP. It is argued that the process of design traditionally involves the skills of many people: artist, designer, composer, editor and even paste-up artist. The authors emphasize that the multimedia computer allows all these tasks to be performed by one individual, levering resources and reducing co-ordination problems. The chapter is informative, and avoids using DTP jargon, defining technical terms where necessary. The authors discuss particular DTP software packages for integrating text with graphics, and highlight some dangers in selecting software for DTP.

Computer visualization and its potential for marketing design concepts to clients is introduced in Chapter 2. The chapter explains the importance of creating realistic pictures and experiences through which clients can appreciate designers' ideas. Through multimedia technology, dynamic and stimulating electronic simulations can now replace the static, cardboard models of buildings and other complexes. Clients can investigate photo-realistic images and take virtual walks through architectural structures. Various aspects of visualization are discussed, including 3-D modelling, parametric modelling, animation, virtual realities, and use of the Internet for conducting online design business. Following this discussion is a practical demonstration of how to use the 3-D Studio graphics package for rendering a building.

Concentrating on the use of film footage, Chapter 3 examines the role which digital video plays and the key tasks involved in using video in a multimedia presentation. A detailed plan of the steps required to add video to a presentation is suggested, and a diagram summarizes the whole process of weaving multimedia elements together to create a composite product. Some useful advice on marketing with video is also presented as a dialogue between the author and a practising design consultant.

Chapter 4 explores online marketing. Design firms should not overlook this critical development given the explosive growth in the World Wide Web. Predictions indicate that 1998 will see one hundred million people

connected – a potential customer base worthy of any company's attention. To guide companies through the process of getting connected, an outline plan is provided. Illustrations of company Web sites complement the text by showing what existing businesses are doing online. The chapter concludes with an useful commentary on future prospects for online architecture.

More technical aspects of multimedia presentation and design are introduced in Chapter 5. The effects of project scale and complexity are considered, together with the problems created by having a wide range of electronic formats and standards in which digital information, whether text, images, sound or video, can be stored. Again, industry standard software for assembling and managing the various components of a multimedia presentation is discussed, featuring Macromedia and Authorware. Comments on multimedia from an educator's perspective conclude the chapter.

Chapter 6 treats delivery media, evaluating their relative advantages and disadvantages. The media discussed range from traditional paper, through compact disk technology, to video-conferencing. Client circumstances often dictate the choice of media and, as the authors warn, it is pointless developing a presentation which requires equipment the client does not own. Again, practical advice is offered about how to make the delivery decision and overcome potential problems which may arise.

Finally, presented as an interview between the author and members of an award winning design firm, Chapter 7 summarizes many of the points made in preceding chapters and puts them into a real context by using the experiences of an actual design firm – a useful case illustration.

This book meets a number of objectives: it is easy to read, offers much practical advice on multimedia marketing for design, provides case-study illustrations, assesses the merits and demerits of many industry standard packages for undertaking the work involved, and shows how to exploit multimedia technology to impress clients and secure contracts. The book is specifically aimed at firms in the business of architecture and design, but it is also a good text for a wider audience interested in multimedia marketing. Informative without being over-technical, this is a book suitable for both laymen and designers. Surprising, then, that in a work written by designers for designers, all the illustrations are in black and white!

*Peter Dwyer, University of Teesside*

*Multimedia, Hypermedia and Virtual Reality: Models, Systems and Applications (Lecture Notes In Computer Science, 1077)* edited by: P. Brusilovsky, P. Kommers and N. Streitz, Selected papers from the First International Conference, MHVR 94, Moscow, September 1994, New York: Springer-Verlag., 1996. ISBN: 3–540–61282–3. 309 pages, paperback. No price indicated.

Springer in their *Lecture notes in Computer Science* series allow current research ideas to meet the academic community in a faster but more complete form than would otherwise be possible. The concept of a book dealing with issues in multimedia, hypermedia and virtual reality, while looking at these areas from the perspective of design models, systems requirements and potential applications, is a good one. In practice, however, this book represents little more than a collection of papers on these topics (24 in all) grouped rather loosely into six sections. However, each is headed by a useful introduction which tries (in most cases successfully) to outline the contributions. Many of the papers are well-written and thought-provoking, but a few represent poorly worked-up research papers or trivial attempts at scholarship. Overall, the book has an annoying lack of consistency in layout, typography and style, but for all that it is still worth a read.

The first section deals with hypermedia architecture models. The topics range from computer-based support for systems engineering to document linking and embedding for distributed hypermedia databases and 3-D hyperdocuments. The third paper in this section (by Keith Andrews and Michael Pilcher) will be of particular interest to researchers exploring VRML models on the World Wide Web, and provides a wealth of practical help and support including the VRweb tool ftp and http site addresses.

The second section takes enhancing multimedia support as its theme. CPN (Coloured Petri Nets), neurocomputing image-encoding, and animated help systems fall under this category. The paper by Claire Dorman on designing online animated help for multimedia

applications is both informative and very accessible. Her exploration of simulation, animation and visual rhetoric is compelling.

Next we have an excellent group of papers on virtual-reality technologies and applications. Dede, Salzman and Loftin's paper on virtual reality for learning Newtonian mechanics, Hand's paper on augmented and alternative realities, and Tegolo's paper on dynamic visual icons and their fusion into a user's virtual space are all extremely thought-provoking. Two other papers deal with hardware and performance issues. Pose and Regan propose the concentric sphere method to reduce virtual-reality latency – this poses the interesting question: Did the ancient Greeks have a concept of virtual reality? While they probably did not, their view of the heavens is the inspiration behind Pose and Regan's virtual-reality modelling approach.

The section on hypermedia for group collaboration is a little disappointing in that it concentrates on the concepts and techniques available to support CSCW (Computer Supported Co-operative Learning) and video-conferencing. While these are well enough presented, a more detailed exploration of the experiences of users and uses would have provided a better balance here.

Hypermedia and multimedia for learning is a particular theme of many of the papers in this book as well as being the focus of attention for the fifth section. The paper by Kommers sets the scene with two proposals for Ph.D. research into media support for collaborative design. We might be left questioning where this leaves the reader, except that it is immediately followed by two papers, one by Boyle and Davies (hypermedia environments for learning to program) and another by Millwood and Mladenova (educational multimedia: how to allow for cultural factors) which specifically set out to answer some pertinent and practical courseware-design questions. Petrushin's paper on HELENA (a shell for creating educational hypermedia applications) and Morozov's on multimedia lectures and the LECTOR-MM authoring system, show what can be done even with minimal resources.

The book finally turns to personalized hypermedia. The areas of concern are largely support for individual structuring of information which may be based on a metaphor (such as Waterworth's 'archipelago, island, building, floor' metaphor, or the 'personal book' of Subbotin and Subbotin) or adaptive hypermedia (Brusilovsky's excellent paper and Zyryanov's short contribution). It is particularly gratifying to find that the focus of the book turns to user-modelling and cognitive issues even if a little belatedly.

This, then, is a book which has the potential to excite, inform and teach. It is not a book to be read from first page to last, but a random dip into its covers will often come up with an interesting trinket and the occasional valuable treasure.

*Steve Green, University of Teesside*

*Educational Multimedia and Hypermedia 1996: Proceedings of Ed-Media 96 World Conference on Educational Multimedia and Hypermedia (June 17–22)* edited by Patricia Carlson and Fillia Makedon, Boston MA: Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education, 1996. ISBN: 1–880094–21–5. 880 pages, paperback. $45.

This is a large volume documenting the proceedings of the 1996 Ed-Media conference held in Boston. It contains over 260 contributions, and deals with – as it says on the cover – educational multimedia and hypermedia. Inside, however, the preface explains that the book also incorporates the World Conference on Educational Telecommunications (Ed-Telecom 96), so the book contains some straight telecommunications papers, too: for example, on educational TV. The definitions of the terms *multimedia* and *hypermedia* are also a little stretched in places. An example is in the very first paper which investigates motivation in drill-and-practice software that is barely multimedial. And there are methodologies for formal software specification, AI papers on good old Intelligent Tutorial Systems, and suggestions for email metrics. So, what we have in this book is a rich pot-pourri, with the titular thread running through most of the contributions, but by no means all of them.

The preface goes on to explain that at the conference there were over 300 presentations in 22 major areas. Unfortunately, we are not told what those areas were: the editors of the proceedings have abandoned any useful sense of structure and have simply collated the contributions in named alphabetical order within five sections: full papers, panels, round tables, short papers and posters/

demonstrations. Of the five, the full-papers section is by far the biggest, with over 100 papers, most about six pages long. There are 73 short papers, of a single page, five panel discussions at three pages each, three single-page round tables, and summaries of 81 posters or demonstrations. In organizing them by the type of their presentation and alphabetically, the editors have made it difficult to extract coherent themes. So, within the full papers, there are contributions on classroom use of technology, computer-assisted language learning, navigation and data visualization in hypermedia systems, cognitive modelling, hypermedia architecture, learning by authoring, interface design and HCI, some case studies on learning strategies using hypermedia as a tool, and much more. In some contributions there is a tendency to include a few pictures in a CAL system and call it multimedia, although there are also some on the most actively developing hypermedia and multimedia fronts. A small number of papers deal with the Web, Java and HTML (I would imagine that there will be many more this year) and some interesting multimedia applications – for example, using virtual reality in urban planning, and to teach basic science concepts.

Since this is a (more or less) comprehensive collection of conference papers, many simply say 'this is what we are doing', or offer the exposition of pet authoring systems, etc. It is a common complaint in the field that too much work is done in isolation from the past and from contemporary work elsewhere: there is little feeling of development, of work building upon past successes. The field is changing rapidly, but through technological upgrading, not theoretical success. And the lack of a central spinal theory or model of learning upon which everyone agrees and upon which specific studies could take their place is felt everywhere and reflected in this book. Do we really need in 1996 another paper to tell us as part of its conclusions that 'adaptive hypermedia based on student learning styles provides the ability to individually tailor the presentation of course material to each student'?

Nevertheless, the conference lives up to its claim as a world event with contributors to the proceedings from the USA, Canada, Mexico, Australia, Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Korea, Russia, Europe and elsewhere (although all papers are in English). It is gratifying to see the spread of work in CAL (or whatever) world-wide, if a little disheartening to see sometimes that same wheel being invented one more time.

There is a list of publications on the AACE Website (http://aace.virginia.edu/aace/pubs/publist.html). At the time of writing, the list has not been updated to include this book, although it does contain the proceedings from the 1995 conference and gives an idea of the fields that were covered. It would be useful if some more detailed breakdown of the contents could be given when these current proceedings are listed. Many of us will be using the Web route to find information on such conference books, and being given a large range of general topics covered is not that helpful.

The method of production, with everyone presumably supplying camera ready copy to their own standards, means a variety of fonts, sizings and spacings. But in a book of this size, this is actually quite beneficial since it breaks its potentially monolithic nature.

Overall, as a record of a conference, the book does its job, even if a little basically, but I would have preferred to have some sort of thematic structure. It would also have been nice to have had some commentary or evaluation of the conference – even the preface is simply the conference welcome speech.

As in any collection of this size, there are some papers etc. that do not really contribute that much, but its wide-ranging nature means that there is plenty to interest the CAL practitioner or researcher who wants to dip and browse.

*Bill Hubbard, Sheffield University*

*Aspects of Educational and Training Technology, XXIX: Implementing Flexible Learning* edited by Chris Bell, Mandy Bowden and Andrew Trott, London: Kogan Page, 1997. London ISBN: 0-7494-1874-5. Hardback. No price indicated.

This book may be regarded as something of a memorial, as it comprises the proceedings of the last conference of the Association for Educational and Training Technology (AETT) held in Plymouth in 1995. The reason for this conference being the last in the series is that the AETT ceased to exist as an independent organization on 31 December 1995 when it was transmogrified into the Learning Technologies Group of the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA).

Reviewing the proceedings of a conference is not quite so straightforward a task as reviewing a conventional text. How can one assess the value of such a publication to those who were not actually present at the event? The benefits of conference attendance generally emerge from the complex set of personal interactions, both formal and informal, which take place throughout, rather than from the papers themselves. As a result, taken in isolation, proceedings from even quite spirited conferences often seem curiously devoid of life when taken in isolation. One measure of success might be that taken as a whole, the papers provide a snapshot of current thinking in the subject area of the conference theme, in this case Implementing Flexible Learning. Thus, experienced readers keep abreast of most recent developments, while those new to the area may acquire a fast track into the literature. However, this publication does not achieve that kind of success. Perhaps this is due to the rather nebulous nature of the theme, illustrated by the following quotation from the keynote address by Professor Henry Ellington of Robert Gordon University:

'[flexible learning] is now gaining widespread acceptance as a generic term covering virtually all situations where the learner has some control over the way in which learning occurs.'

And on reading the papers presented, the impression given is that in a number of them do not represent the mainstream academic activity of their authors: those which reference relatively little new work in refereed journals.

However, this does not mean that the book should be regarded as a failure. Many of the papers report interesting and innovative teaching developments which might provide readers with food for thought for their own classes., although this would have been made more likely by some attempt at categorization of the subject areas covered. In view of the broad definition of flexible learning given above, it might have been expected that the conference organizers would have focused interest groups by addressing a number of themes through parallel streams. If one bases one's view on this book, it did not occur: there is no logical structure to the collection of 34 papers which follow the keynote address. Given this lack of structure, the provision of both an author index and a subject index would have been a welcome addition, but some sample titles may give an indication of the kinds of areas covered: Providing flexible opportunities for overseas students at masters level using peer support: Implications for student and lecturer a computer-based introduction to learning skills; Automated assessment of IT skills models of knowledge; Learning and representation for multimedia learning environments.

The Editorial refers to the period of decline experienced by the AETT in the 1980s and 1990s, when membership of the association declined and conference attendance fell steadily from year to year. There is an expectation that the merger with the larger SEDA organization referred to above will provide a new lease of life. It is to be hoped that this will prove to be the case.

*Lorraine Warren, University of Lincolnshire and Humberside*