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Book Review

THE EXPANDING ROLE OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION. Edited by Pamela J. Tate and Marilyn Kressel. San Francisco: Josey-Bass (Higher Education Series 44, 1984. Pp. 115)

*Reviewed by D. Parker Young**

The role of telecommunications in higher education is continually expanding and administrative and policy issues have been raised by that expansion. *The Expanding Role of Telecommunications in Higher Education* is a sourcebook which addresses some of those issues. It consists of six chapters, by different authors who in the words of the editors “. . . focus on the broad questions that colleges and universities must answer in order to prepare learners for life and work in an information society.” Chapter titles include “The Turning Point: Telecommunications and Higher Education;” “Television in Higher Education;” “A Management Perspective;” “How Computers are Transforming Higher Education;” “Telecommunications and Higher Education: In Search of a Public Policy;” and “America’s Changing Workplace: The Challenge Ahead.”

In chapter one, Marc Tucker contrasts the acceptance of broadcast technologies in higher education with that of computers and calls for university administrators to participate in policy formulation concerning telecommunications. Peter Dirr, in chapter two, foresees the increased use of newer communications technologies to reach large numbers of non-traditional learners. Higher education must take a more active role in the information society and devise ways to make greater use of old and new technologies according to Joseph Welling in chapter three. Robert Gillespie discusses the vast amount of work to be done in coordinating the infusion of computer technology into the fabric of higher education in chapter four. Chapter five is given to an examination by Michael Goldstein of state and federal regulations and their impact on higher education’s use of technology in higher education. The need for cooperative efforts among business, labor, government and higher education in providing training and retraining for workers is the message presented by Glen Watts in chapter six. A final chapter by the editors is included in which they “. . . highlight some themes that emerge from the

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preceding chapters, add others, suggest next steps for colleges and universities in the telecommunications arena, and refer readers to resources that deal more fully with such areas as research, program, development, and innovative uses of specific technologies.”

The title of this book is indeed descriptive in that it does address the ever-expanding role of telecommunications in higher education. Each author has done an excellent job in focusing upon the issues and questions. Several others also point out exemplary programs and pilot projects. In short, the book in 115 pages does give the reader a quick overview of the current status of the role of telecommunications in higher education. It is very readable and well organized.

The book does not really address the issue of how telecommunications affect the quality of education. Will the new technologies encourage the traditional student to abandon the traditional postsecondary patterns of education? Can the new technology transmit the values and the socializing influences that the traditional residential experience has? How is peer interaction in the teaching and learning process affected by the new and expanding technologies? These and other similar questions, which ought to be addressed, were not discussed in this book. They do, however, represent fertile ground for further study.

In summary, *The Expanding Role of Telecommunications in Higher Education* is a very good sourcebook for an overview of the issues raised by these technologies. It makes for interesting and thoughtful reading for all who are concerned about, and have a vital stake, in the future of higher education.