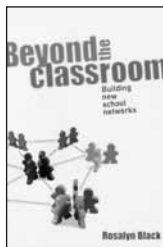


Review

Reviews of youth-related books and resources / BY ANNE HUGO



Beyond the classroom: Building new school networks

Rosalyn Black, ACER Press, 2008, \$34.95, ISBN: 0864319231, 123pp.

This quietly persuasive book argues that Australia's youth are everyone's responsibility and new models of schooling must support them.

Based on findings of an Education Foundation research project, this book appeared as that foundation aligned itself with the Foundation for Young Australians. Lead researchers on the New School Ties: Networks for Success project (Roslyn Black, with Jack Keating, Julian Waters-Lynch and Peter Cole) envision schools that are "a central part of a networked learning system" with a mandate to "provide interlinked educational and other services for the entire community and for every stage of life" (p.25). However, the barriers to educational success can be overcome only if there is collaboration between "all schools in a locality, between school systems, between federal and state governments and between school education and the other sectors that support the learning and wellbeing of young people. Without this, other strategies will not succeed" (p.1). To prevent collaboration being "left to chance" or becoming a burden to teachers and schools (p.44), investment is needed to develop cooperative teacher practice that will free teachers to work with each other and with experts outside school walls. Firmly grounded in research, each chapter ends with a viewpoint from an expert (Carolyn Atkins, Jehan Loza, Sally Morgan, Alan Reid, Eric Sidoti, Liz Suda and Marion Webster).



Educating the Net Generation: A handbook of findings for practice and policy

**Australian Learning and Teaching Council
2009, ISBN: 9780734040732, 82pp. Available
from: <http://www.netgen.unimelb.edu.au/>**

Many believe students enter the higher education system influenced by a digital culture that has profoundly shaped their educational experience and expectations. It is also argued that tertiary staff are ill-equipped for educating the Net Generation, whose sophisticated use of emerging technologies is incompatible with current teaching practice. This view is countered by Australian research published by Australian Learning and Teaching Council, conducted by researchers at three Australian universities who found that the "rhetoric that university students are Digital Natives and university staff are Digital Immigrants is not supported". The first two stages of their investigation resulted in this handbook, which outlines policy guidelines for using emerging technologies in higher education, and an accompanying toolkit. The researchers found that despite their high use of new technologies, students "don't necessarily want or expect to use these technologies to support some activities, including learning." Their use of tools like wikis, blogs and photo-sharing sites had a positive impact on how they engaged with their study and their peers, but that use often took place outside their university's infrastructure, and this raises "complex questions about academic integrity including issues of authorship, ownership, attribution and acknowledgement".

Acknowledgement: *TL Infobits*, n.36, June 2009; ISSN: 1931-3144, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill <http://its.unc.edu/TeachingAndLearning/publications/tlinfobits>



How to do your research project: A guide for students in education and applied social sciences

**Dr Gary Thomas, Sage Publications Ltd,
2009, \$55.95, ISBN: 1847874436, 272pp.**

Believing that "research can give you a buzz" (p.272), Gary Thomas (Head of School, Professor of Inclusion and Diversity at the University of Birmingham) presents a roadmap for doing a research project. With effortless language devoid of jargon, he covers practicalities like ethics, research tools and data gathering, and how to analyse information. However, the basis is sound research design. This he sees as progressing from purposes to questions, from there to decisions about approach, then to a design frame. Then come data-gathering methods and analytical methods. All these elements form the design roadmap. Avoiding debates on qualitative vs. quantitative research, he shows how the research process is guided by design frames – which might or might not use "words or numbers" in data collection and analysis. He explains how concepts get confused with each other, e.g. methodology is not simply about presenting methods used to do research but "about a discussion of those methods" (p.70), and "approach" is not just whether a method will be used, but rather "about how you think about the social world" (p.71). This book will help all researchers, whether at the undergraduate or PhD level, to think, inquire and actually do research.