Book Review of the *Encyclopedia of Female Pioneers in Online Learning*

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ABSTRACT

Bainbridge, Susan & Wark, Norine. (2022). The Encyclopedia of Female Pioneers in Online Learning. Routledge. 492 pages. ISBN 9781003275329 (eBook). https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003275329.

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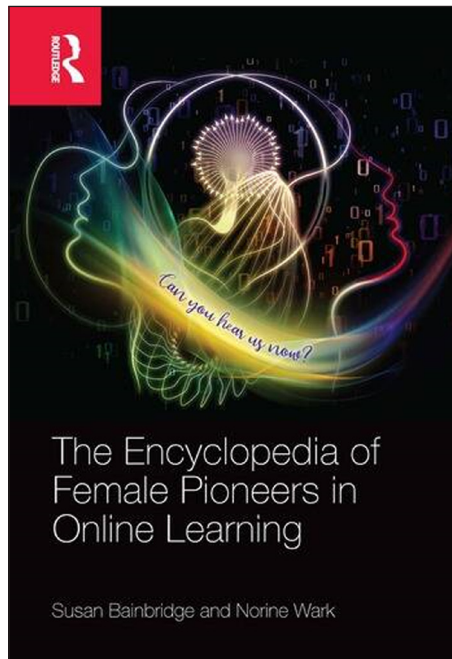
INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of this book titled *'The encyclopedia of female pioneers in online learning'* is to record and disseminate the voices and contributions of women who pioneered online learning. The pioneers themselves contributed the majority of the content. Because of this, this book serves as a timeless, living record of these women's experiences, stories, and accomplishments at a time when the majority of the world switched from traditional, print-based correspondence to a bewildering array of immersive-learning experiences that are enhanced by technology. The goal of these direct contributions, combined with a qualitative research study on the pioneers' interview data, is to further inform readers about the struggles and successes of these female pioneers and their experiences, perceptions, and driving forces. For policymakers, administrators, educators, historians, researchers, writers, and students interested in topics related to distance education (DE), online learning, and educational technology. However, the concluding chapter –Final Thoughts– summarizes the key implications that the content of this book may hold. This groundbreaking book profiles 30 famous female academics, including some of the first to develop an online course, design learning management systems, and do ground-breaking research on e-learning. The book's potential candidates were found via a two-step recruitment process (described in greater detail in the Research Methodology section of Chapter 32). In a nutshell, the authors' initial step was generating a list of probable candidates. This list was contrasted with a collection of definitions and guiding terms that the authors had decided to make up the profile of a pioneer. The founding date was a second criterion chosen by the author. That is, a potential contender had to have started their founding operations sometime between 1970 and 2000 to be taken into consideration for the book. If a woman started her pioneering work after 2000, it had to be because online education had only recently been available in her nation or the work was original in some other way (e.g., initiating the use of new technologies and pedagogies).

CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

There are two sections to this book. The first chapter, Initial Thoughts, is followed in Part One by a chapter on each pioneering woman in online learning. The chapters are arranged alphabetically by the pioneers' last names. A photo and a brief history of each pioneer are shown at the start of each chapter. The biography gives a quick overview of the pioneer's training, professional background, significant accomplishments, current position, and research interests. The pioneer's interview data are next briefly qualitatively thematically analyzed about the typical interview profile created from the study data. A comparative chart of these results is included in the discussion of this analysis. An embedded YouTube link and a QR code are located after the thematic analysis that provides access to the recorded interview. This recording is followed by a transcription of the interview, which has been edited and verified by the pioneer. The chapter

concludes with a chronologically ordered presentation of the published works that the pioneer has chosen to share with readers. The discussion of this investigation includes a comparative chart of these results. An integrated YouTube link and a QR code that give access to the recorded interview can be found after the thematic analysis. The published works that the pioneer has decided to share with readers are presented in the chapter's conclusion in chronological sequence.

The presentation of the qualitative research study that was done on the pioneers' collective interviews opens the second section of the book. This section's first chapter discusses the research methods used before presenting the results of the data analysis process. When necessary, external references are incorporated into the discussion of the findings and conclusions to add further context and help put the research findings in the perspective of existing literature. Reviewing the research study's limitations brings the chapter to a close. The last chapter in this book, Final Thoughts, summarizes the key findings derived from the compilation of this book and the related research project. The concluding chapter of this book provides a summary of the main conclusions reached throughout the writing of this book and the associated research study. The chapter's conclusion begins by highlighting the book's major takeaways for decision-makers, managers, teachers, academics, writers, students, and other stakeholders interested in distance education (DE) and online learning. This chapter's conclusion outlines potential directions for further study.

OVERALL IMPRESSION AND RELEVANCE TO THE FIELD OF DISTANCE EDUCATION AND E-LEARNING

In order to make learning available, accessible, and feasible for the various learner population around the world, the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 has caused a significant surge in online learning. Many programs have sought to close the gender gap in access to knowledge and information, and understanding how access has changed and enhanced women's abilities to study and gain power is essential to understanding how society is changing. Women are empowered when they have access to education, and their capacity is strengthened by the knowledge learned, leading to more informed decisions, active roles in the workforce, and academic advancement.

Women can be encouraged and motivated by online learning to actively participate in social or cultural movements and to alter their traditional roles as mothers, caretakers, and household managers. However, with their greater usage of digital spaces and online learning opportunities, women in the 21st century are becoming more conscious and engaged, upending their marginalized status. When women actively teach online and take part in online discussion forums, they not only empower themselves but also other people. Women who want to learn or teach at home may find inspiration in this book. Online education is presently the most cost-effective, sustainable, and dominant form of education. The publication of this book currently is significant for future advancement. For those who want to innovate in the field of education, it is a great source.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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