

*Book review***Blueprint for Computer-Assisted Assessment**

By Joanna Bull & Colleen McKenna

202 pp, RoutledgeFalmer, London, 2004, ISBN 0-415-28704-9 (pbk), £24.99

This recently published book is a revised version of a TLTP project on the Implementation and Evaluation of Computer-assisted Assessment (CAA). It provides an excellent review of issues in both the practice and research associated with the use of CAA and similar learning technologies whilst avoiding the pitfall of becoming focused on specific tools or software. It examines the pedagogical implications of introducing CAA into the curriculum for formative or summative purposes, defining CAA as “the use of computers in the assessment of student learning”.

This comprehensive book is divided roughly into two parts: the first eight chapters address the educational questions whilst the remaining three deal with technical, operational and support issues. There are also five very useful appendices providing exemplar materials to illustrate and extend points raised. The text presents a clearly written and balanced perspective on the use of CAA and its strengths and weaknesses. With chapters on

- Objective tests
- Writing questions
- Feedback
- Scoring and analysing objective tests
- Constructing tests

the text caters for those interested in the design of CAA elements whilst other chapters such as ‘*contexts for CAA*’ and ‘*beyond objective testing*’ consider the wider aspects of this important and increasingly-used approach to assessment of learning. The many positive aspects of the holistic use of CAA are well explained and supported whilst recognising and discussing the inevitable constraints that also accompany any learning technology or assessment method. All of the points raised are well supported by an extensive and up-to-date references section.

The book is intended for staff considering, or already involved with, computer-assisted assessment and provides a practical, research-based guide on a very important modern educational issue. It will serve as a valuable reference text and I have purchased my own copy for that reason.

Reviewed by Allan Jones

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