

2013

## Let's Get Practical 2

Michael Simonson

*Nova Southeastern University*, [simsmich@nova.edu](mailto:simsmich@nova.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [https://nsuworks.nova.edu/fse\\_facarticles](https://nsuworks.nova.edu/fse_facarticles)



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

---

### NSUWorks Citation

Simonson, Michael, "Let's Get Practical 2" (2013). *Fischler College of Education: Faculty Articles*. 107.  
[https://nsuworks.nova.edu/fse\\_facarticles/107](https://nsuworks.nova.edu/fse_facarticles/107)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Abraham S. Fischler College of Education at NSUWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Fischler College of Education: Faculty Articles by an authorized administrator of NSUWorks. For more information, please contact [nsuworks@nova.edu](mailto:nsuworks@nova.edu).

# Let's Get Practical

**Michael Simonson**

The massive (1,000 pages) fourth edition of the *Handbook of Research on Educational Communications and Technology* (HRECT4) has been published, with online access free to members of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology. Its 74 chapters build on the excellent scholarship of the previous three editions of the handbook, and provide summaries of many interesting, even important, topics. The analogous reference in the field of distance education is

Moore's *Handbook of Distance Education* (3rd ed.), released last year.

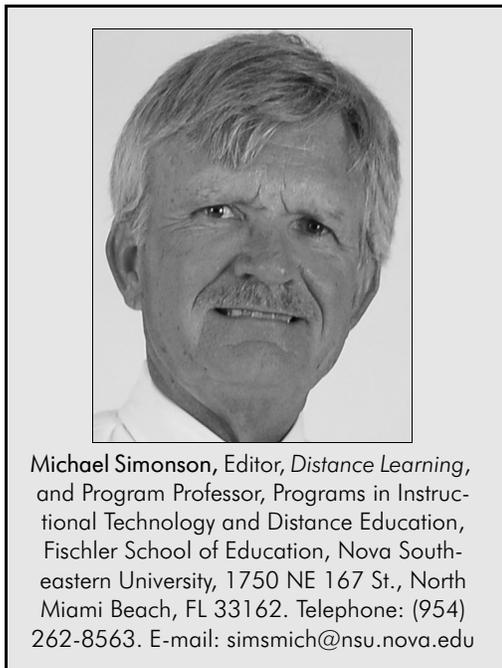
A summary of Moore's work was published in the *Quarterly Review of Distance Education* (volume 14, number 1) with the title "Let's Get Practical!" That serves equally well as the title for the following review of HRECT4.

Certainly, the editors of HRECT4 are to be commended. The chapter authors have provided valuable information about the topic of their chapters, and have done so as scholars. Academic scholarship, such as writing handbook chapters, is unique in the landscape of intellectual property. Scholars write for impact, not for money.

However, those interested in distance education may be left a little disappointed as HRECT4 almost completely ignores distance education. There are minor references to our field, but generally the literature of distance education is missing, and in at least one instance what is published in HRECT4 is misleading (the reference to the U.S. Department of Education's meta-analysis about online learning). Additionally, there is little that readers will find that is practical in the 74 chapters of the HRECT—no best practices, no best science, no design guidelines: few recommendations at all.

It is likely that those with long careers in educational technology will not recognize much of the contents in HRECT4. There is

... continues on page 83



no discussion of media, little of technologies, and almost nothing readers for who are not in higher education. Obviously, writing about practical issues and current events was not a goal of this edition.

The first and second editions of the HRECT are landmark publications that should be on every serious educational technology scholar's bookshelf. The third and fourth editions should be reviewed if not owned. One can hope that when the fifth edition is planned, editors will return to the framework used by the editors of the

first two handbooks and provide theory and research that guides practice, rather than theory only.

*And finally*, but then I didn't like *Rocky IV*, either.

## REFERENCES

- Moore, M. G. (Ed.). (2013). *Handbook of distance education* (3rd ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Spector, J. M., Merrill, M. D., Elen, J., & Bishop, M. J. (2014). *Handbook of research on educational communications and technology* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Springer.

MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR EDUCATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY HAVE FREE ACCESS TO THE FOURTH EDITION OF THE *HANDBOOK OF RESEARCH ON EDUCATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY*.