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Book Review

McKenzie, J. (1993). **ADMINISTRATORS AT RISK: TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGIES FOR SECURING YOUR FUTURE** Bloomington, Indiana: National Education Service.

Administrators at Risk author Jamieson McKenzie encourages us to “leave the comfort zone” of what is considered a typical school learning environment and to “take a hero’s journey of discovery and adventure.” This book consists of essays originally written for *AppleLink*, an electronic newsletter available to school districts nation wide. *Administrators at Risk* not only provides the rationales and research behind the needed changes of technology use in elementary and secondary school systems but provides a detailed step-by-step approach from assessment to staff development training needed to use today’s technology to its potential.

J. McKenzie shares his experience as a former school superintendent, author and, now, technology consultant with school personnel who have the responsibility to educate and train the work force, employers, and leaders of the next generation. Although written for an elementary and secondary school audience, this book is applicable for college administrators and department chairs as his ideas concerning the use of technology and learning are in concert with the same learning paradigms faced in higher education.

Chapter one begins with a question asked of position applicants at every level: “But what technology skills do you have?” As this question is appropriate for all levels of management, service and teaching positions, it is a fair question for those attending and graduating from our educational institutions. McKenzie warns that schools that continue to exist as “Smoke Stack Schools” (schools run to prepare workers for industry assembly-line type positions) will not be able to compete in our complicated ever changing rapid paced environment.

This 5 X 9 paperback book lists for \$19.95. The text is 163 pages with a six-page reference section of current research articles, and books on technology and education. Included in the text are two valuable assessment instruments and principles for staff development for new technologies.

The Innovation and Environmental Scanning Index (page 5) is designed to measure a school’s commitment to manage the future. This Index can be completed by all school leadership groups including the administration, technology committee, and school council/board.

The District Technology Self-Assessment Form (page 134) asks 13 questions about school system technology plans, uses and outcomes. The final score (range 13 - 65) indicates the school's level of strength in the use of technology. A score below 45 simply indicates a need for improvement.

McKenzie lists nine principles for staff development for new technologies (page 78). These principles include the need for supporting staff training and long-range educational plans, and promoting experiential learning with technology.

Chapter eight, "The Saga of Amy and Susan: A 'Future Perfect' ILS," is illustrative of how technology can play a different role in student learning. McKenzie deconstructs present uses of integrated learning systems (ILS) by giving examples of how new technology is being used to perform typical learning functions such as drill and practice. McKenzie suggests creating goals for the development of "thinkers" which involves pertinent problem solving skills focused on the specific needs of each student rather than the perpetuation of rote practice skills as the way to teach the same concept to all students.

Chapters ten through thirteen provide a step-by-step approach to transform the use of technology from a new way of doing old things to a new way to learn and problem solve. In addition to an approach to staff development and restructuring the school environment for the best use of technology, McKenzie provides research back-up for his ideas and works to motivate the transformation of our teachers into "everyday heroes" who will teach a generation of "everyday heroes." These heroes are people who employ their creative powers and energy to try to make life better for the community.

Again, examples given are consistent with elementary and secondary school environments. However, these examples do apply to higher education. As elementary and secondary school teachers take advantage of the use of technology to create a learning environment specific to the needs of each young learner, these teachers will turn to higher education faculty for advice and assistance. Also, students coming from the elementary and secondary schools, who have moved away from the "Smoke Stack School" paradigm, will expect more from the higher education institutions they choose to attend.

Lastly, in step with the growing use of quality management principles in education at all levels, McKenzie incorporates the terminology of quality management in his text in the way it was intended to be incorporated; direct, logical, and purposeful.

In summary, *Administrators at Risk* supports and encourages the use of technology in education in ways in which this technology was designed to be used. Information on assessment, staff development training, and ILS use is given in detail. The author genuinely desires our schools to provide an environment that serves the education and training needs of our future work force and leaders. This book is an excellent reference for education leaders and faculty at all levels.

James A. Stakenas, Executive Assistant to the President, Westfield State College.