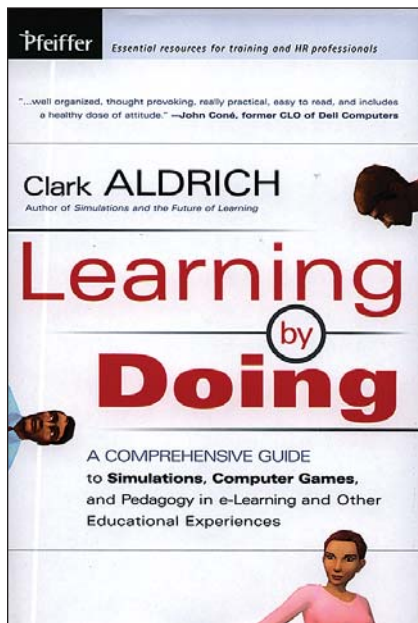


# Not Just for Kids



## Learning by Doing: A Comprehensive Guide to Simulations, Computer Games, and Pedagogy in E-Learning and Other Educational Experiences

By Clark Aldrich

Reviewed by Barbara Fillicaro



PERHAPS I should start from the beginning—my beginning, that is. I’m a novice when it comes to simulations and video games, and I don’t play on a PlayStation or Xbox. (Maybe that’s because I’m a woman, but I don’t want to bring gender into this review.) I think the primary reason I’m not a “gamer” is generational. But, I do like to play Solitaire or FreeCell on the computer. (I especially love FreeCell because I win a lot!)

Winning: It’s a powerful concept. And, when it’s associated with individual performance, it seems to be the antithesis of collaboration and compromise. Most people seem to be of the opinion that games and simulations don’t hold much promise for education because they glorify individual performance, winning, and, in some cases, violence and gore.

But in his new book, *Learning by Doing*, Clark Aldrich isn’t advocating carjackings and blood baths. Instead, he sees a convergence of methods borrowed from games and their players that is important for organizational learning.

Traditionally, training is conducted in the classroom. But with the advent of desktop computers, computer-based training came into vogue. The birth of the personal computer spearheaded the development of multimedia technology for the PC, and computer-game development followed. And, it wasn’t just teenagers who played the games.

The Atari and Commodore 64 kids may have grown up, but they—with their children—have lined up to play games and sims on high-tech consoles or PCs. Classroom lectures—boring to these gamers—are now being replaced by expensive web-based training, including games and simulations. *Learning by Doing* is a tool to help learning professionals better understand simulations and how to use them in their organizations.

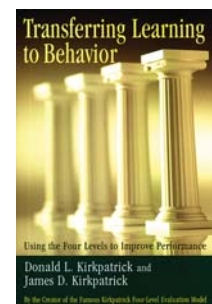
Specifically, the book explains “how to select, research, build, sell, deploy, and measure the right type of educational simulation for the right situation.” It

## A Bookish Assortment

**T+D** editors look at new releases that address a variety of workplace learning concerns.

### Transferring Learning to Behavior: Using the Four Levels to Improve Performance

By Donald L. Kirkpatrick and James D. Kirkpatrick  
(Berrett-Koehler, May 2005, \$39.95)



When the training’s over, what comes next? More and more C-level executives are asking that question and demanding answers. The four-level

model of analyzing reaction, learning, behavior, and results—as originally conceived more than 45 years ago by Donald Kirkpatrick—is being leveraged to confront one of workplace learning’s most daunting challenges: How do you ensure that the training is applied?

Donald Kirkpatrick is joined by his son, James, in this new book that starts as a snapshot of the uses of the four levels in this new century. The authors show that the disconnect between learning and behavior can be more than just problematic.

The biggest advantage of employing a well-respected process to address a hot-button topic is that it has the imprimatur of broad acceptance. Does that mean that the Kirkpatricks’ reengineered four-level approach will create performance improvement in your organization? Only you can decide. But this is certainly a solid road map to get you started.

—Rex Davenport

covers all kinds of approaches—simple ones that use basic or no technology and projects on the scale of computer games and flight simulators.

The book is organized into several sections. The first is an overview of the current gaming theories, and the second examines three content types: linear, cyclical, and systems. Section III is an overview of next-generation simulations and new models, and the fourth outlines the pedagogical aspects of using gaming and simulation for training.

In this follow-up to his previous book, *Simulations and the Future of E-learning*, Aldrich has pushed his thinking even further to help us understand how we can teach adults more effectively. He immerses readers in a lot of detail about gaming and simulations, but he never loses sight of his ultimate intention: how best to advance learning. And that's just one of many aspects that I liked about the book.

You can't understand simulations unless you understand how they compare to other learning methods, including the most traditional, such as lectures. Through his framework of learning methods, Aldrich provides a way to do that. In fact, his matrix probably should be hanging on the wall of every instructional designer's office or cubicle.

Ditto for his framework of simulations. The term "simulation" is ambiguous and can have many meanings. Those differences matter, for example, in the types of learning they can enable and in the cost of development and deployment. Aldrich has helped everyone in the learning community by providing persuasive, carefully differentiated categories. The framework is not purely theoretical; it has immediate practical applications—pairing types of simulations with content, learning objectives, deployment, and relative costs.

Aldrich also is a skilled writer. He illustrates his disdain for turgid academic prose by writing clearly and energetically, and with a wonderful sense of humor.

He knows how to present the material. No chapter is more than 25 pages and its information is appropriately grouped. Within each chapter, specific development questions relate to the gaming model being discussed. And the next-chapter

previews help readers decide whether to move on to the next chapter or skip ahead.

Because simulations are heavily visual, the author uses diagrams throughout the book to aid readers in envisioning the content. Other graphics, such as screenshots, are used judiciously throughout to further illustrate his points. Another way Aldrich guides readers in their study of games and simulations is by including a brief bibliography at the end of each chapter, instead of publishing an overall list of references at the end of the book.

I have only a single complaint about the book: no glossary. As a novice in the gaming world, I would have benefited from a glossary to define such terms and concepts as API and "muscle memory."

*Learning by Doing* is about the connections between gaming and simulations, and how they can be used by educators and learning professionals. I like the way Aldrich approaches the subject matter: He doesn't deal with it narrowly. Rather, he relates it to the broader topic of learning. If you're a training manager considering deploying learning games or simulations, buy this book. It's a rare find because it addresses a broad audience. Your technology manager can benefit from it, while your instructional designers and developers gain a better understanding of the nuances of delivery. For those reasons, I give *Learning by Doing* the highest rating—four cups of coffee.

*Learning by Doing: A Comprehensive Guide to Simulations, Computer Games, and Pedagogy in E-Learning and Other Educational Experiences*, by Clark Aldrich. Pfeiffer/Wiley and Sons: San Francisco. 400 pp. \$50.00.

**Barbara Fillicaro** is an instructional designer, trainer, and educator based in Niles, Illinois; barbiejf@earthlink.net.

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## Extreme Facilitation: Guiding Groups Through Controversy and Complexity

By Suzanne Ghais  
(Jossey-Bass, April 2005, \$40.00)



Whether you're an experienced facilitator or just starting out, Suzanne Ghais gives you the strength to conquer the most difficult sessions. She asserts that her method, extreme facilitation,

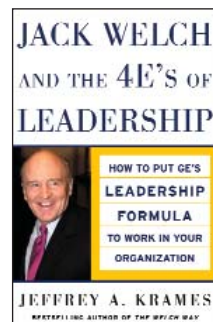
will help you in situations that are "controversial, complex, large-scale, emotional, or otherwise exceptionally difficult." Her work with CDR Associates prepared her to write this book, which, she says, assumes that conflict will occur and thus picks up where others leave off.

Ghais doesn't try to fit every situation into a mold; she emphasizes that extreme facilitation is a creative process that varies among groups and situations. However, there are common elements to her method, and her outline of them demonstrates the depth of her knowledge and experience.

—Eva Kaplan-Leiserson

## Jack Welch and the 4Es of Leadership

By Jeffrey A. Krames  
(McGraw-Hill, May 2005, \$21.95)



Is it déjà vu? No, just another book waving the Jack Welch flag on its cover. This time it's from the best-selling author of *The Welch Way*, Jeffrey A. Krames.

In this newest addition to his arsenal of leadership publications, Krames details and explains Welch's tactics for

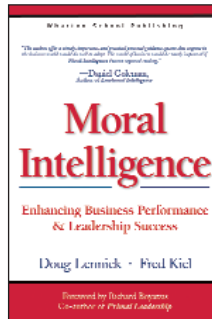
developing capable leaders. Known as the 4Es, these qualities are embodied by Welch-like leaders: energy, edge, and the ability to energize others and execute plans. According to Krames, those “Es” have been the saving grace for many an organization—including Home Depot and Honeywell—and a majority of the book is devoted to telling their stories.

One difference between this work and other biographies or dissections of GE is that Krames attempts to take his knowledge farther and show its real-life applications. How well he achieves that endeavor, however, is less concrete.

—Josephine Rossi

### **Moral Intelligence: Enhancing Business Performance & Leadership Success**

By Doug Lennick and Fred Kiel  
(Wharton School Publishing, May 2005, \$24.95)



Can a person learn to be moral? Authors Doug Lennick and Fred Kiel think so. Chapter 3 is a good place to start the learning. It presents an equation for setting up moral

alignment and worksheets to help readers identify the principles they live by, their core values, and their belief system. It's a good exercise because I assume most readers to be like me: a person who knows what she believes, but hasn't really taken the time to ponder the connection between moral compass, goals, and behavior.

The authors illustrate the prominence of high morals in big businesses—American Express, Burger King, and Northwestern Mutual Insurance to name a few. These examples support the logical business case for MI.

—Sabrina E. Hicks