Teaching Machines: Learning from the Intersection of Education and Technology (Tech.edu: A Hopkins Series on Education and Technology)

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The allure of educational technology is easy to understand. Classroom instruction is an expensive and time-consuming process fraught with contradictory theories and frustratingly uneven results. Educators, inspired by machines' contributions to modern life, have been using technology to facilitate teaching for centuries.

In *Teaching Machines*, Bill Ferster examines past attempts to automate instruction from the earliest use of the postal service for distance education to the current maelstrom surrounding Massive Open Online Courses. He tells the stories of the entrepreneurs and visionaries who, beginning in the colonial era, developed and promoted various instructional technologies. Ferster touches on a wide range of attempts to enhance the classroom experience with machines, from hornbooks, the Chautauqua movement, and correspondence courses to B. F. Skinner's teaching machine, intelligent tutoring systems, and eLearning.

The famed progressive teachers, researchers, and administrators that the book highlights often overcame substantial hurdles to implement their ideas, but not all of them succeeded in improving the quality of education. *Teaching Machines* provides invaluable new insight into our current debate over the efficacy of educational technology.

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