
Book Review

Reviewed by Denis A. Coelho

Email: denis@ubi.pt

Constructive Ergonomics

by: Pierre Falzon (editor)

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Book editor and co-author Pierre Falzon argues that the objective of ergonomics must be the development of individuals, based on setting up situations of action that lead to increased success and to the acquisition or construction of know-how, knowledge and skills. The book advocates that ergonomics cannot remain satisfied with a limited and static view of adaptation, a view that would restrict its goal to designing systems that are suited to work as it is defined at a certain point in time, to workers as they are at a particular moment, and to organisations as they operate here and now. Rooted both in the academic world and in the world of practitioners of the domain, it details a constructive, developmental view where ergonomics seeks to eliminate the factors and conditions that encumber performance and hinder development. Interesting and thought-provoking, the work the book show-cases proposes an alternative framework and revised objectives for the science and practice of human factors and ergonomics (HFE). Central to this proposed revision is viewing development as a fundamental goal of HFE as well as a pre-requisite for health and performance, while advocating a constructive view of interventions, grounded in actual practice and supported by integration models from economics and management theory. An exploration of a contemporary, developmental view of ergonomics, the book proposes a redefinition of the ambition of the discipline and describes the elements of its scope.

Mostly written by French speaking authors, it was professionally translated to English. This notwithstanding, the authors manage to leap past the cultural boundaries defined by their language, providing a conceptual background in the first section entitled 'Resources and conditions for development' and providing in the second section entitled 'Dynamics of action and dynamics of development' a set of methodological tools for intervening in real-life contexts. These attributes make the book potentially useful to experts and students alike both within and beyond the cultural and geographical scope of the authors' affiliations.