

Chapter 33

Ways to Mentor Methods'

Faculty Integration of Technologies in their Courses

Tom Jackson
Aurora University, USA

ABSTRACT

This chapter reveals the significant and authentic challenges that methods faculty face as they step into a zone of uncertainty when integrating computer technology into lessons, classroom teaching, and student learning. While faculty may perceive that current instructional strategies are successful as measured by classroom scores, a look into the student perceptions of classroom practices, students' preferences for learning efficiently using technology demonstrates how they are undernourished and dissatisfied with current instructional strategies. The lack of modeling of technology use in higher education is a problem as new teachers leave the academic venue and venture into the classrooms of today. Energetic K-12 students prefer to use familiar technology tools to probe for dynamic knowledge and stimulate personal learning. Pedagogy, at all levels, must "open-up" and encourage students to seek enriched information and answers to questions for which "clarification and improvement" is the best answer. In this chapter, several themes are explored including challenges faced by faculty, significance of non-integrated technology, pathways to implementation, overcoming wait-long-enough attitudes, effective mentoring-coaching models for success, and conditions to begin a successful technology integration process.

INTRODUCTION

It must fill a need, be flexible and non-complex to learn. Baule (2007) reminds us, "if it is more complicated that a light switch it will not be as successful" (p. 16).

Making practice visible exposes strengths and challenges. Improving classroom craft for professors in Colleges of Education is similar to playing a clarinet with virtuosity, demonstrating a dance with finesse, or playing a ball game with expertise, but for some professors, improvement of teaching craft is more risky. When playing in a ballgame, encouragement is offered by supportive friends, family, and fans as these community members

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vicariously experience increased levels of achievement. Newer, unrehearsed skills are practiced multiple times in the presence of coaching and mentoring before being implemented into real-world situations. Developing professional learning of the classroom craft, however, is most authentically assessed with others present, always with students and many times with administrators, and can result in personal efficacy evaluations recorded as either pass or fail. A sense of reduced confidence may permeate professors who have mastered the craft of lecturing. Professors who use elaborate verbal models to explain content to students with a high degree of success, as compared to using technology where the student-audience possesses the skill and practiced knowledge, will likely feel less confident. It is a dilemma that faculty might like to ignore, but can't, as new students with new learning preferences have arrived in the classroom. Prensky (2001) identifies the changes in students as dramatic, and names the new breed of learner "digital native". Prensky describes them as, "students [who] have changed radically. Today's students are no longer the people our educational system was designed to teach." (p. 1).

Prensky delineates the differences and he attributes changed attitudes toward learning models to the tools digital natives encountered as they developed:

A really big discontinuity has taken place... today's students have spent their entire lives surrounded by and using computers, videogames, digital music players, video cams, cell phones, and all the other toys and tools of the digital age. Today's average college grads have spent less than 5,000 hours of their lives reading, but over 10,000 hours playing video games (p. 1).

He concludes the following about today's students. "students *think and process information fundamentally differently* from their predecessors." (p. 1)

The digital native student acquires knowledge using visual models and engages in opportunities to encode learning and receive feedback in a socially constructive manner. The professor wonders how to transfer abstract lecture content into meaningful concepts using technology. Transparency at times like this, leads to feelings of uncertainty and reduced self-efficacy and hostile interaction with the technology, the uninvited visitor. Faculty who see themselves as accomplished at delivering content using traditional means are being pushed outside of their comfort zone.

While effective practice reminds faculty that growth comes through both reflection and risk-taking, reality and pride in previous accomplishments maintain a firm grip on the risks that will be attempted. Trust in a collaborative culture and authentic mentoring-coaching is required, and a willing attitude to follow the trailblazer's marks which carve-out the path for methods faculty to integrate technology into their courses will be necessary. Uncertainty, isolation, and resistance are the sign posts that indicate that effective coaching-mentoring is necessary to move into the technology zone.

This chapter delves into themes that examine the ongoing challenges of integrated technology, including understanding the need for pedagogical status-quo, why mentors-coaches and students are needed to fully engage higher education professors in teaching with, and effective use of technology.

CLARIFYING INTEGRATION ISSUES

Issues One and Two: Professorial Beliefs, and the Need for Support in a New Culture

Gladwell (2002) explains the tipping point as the point at which an idea or product reaches the necessary critical mass to become epidemic. In his words, "It's the moment on the graph when the line starts to shoot straight upwards". Why

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