Donald Tapscott

The Impending Demise of the University (http://tinyurl.com/pq4ypr)

The old-style lecture, with the professor standing at the podium in front of a large group of students, is still a fixture of university life on many campuses. It's a model that is teacher-focused, one-way, one-size-fits-all and the student is isolated in the learning process. Yet the students, who have grown up in an interactive digital world, learn differently. Schooled on Google and Wikipedia, they want to inquire, not rely on the professor for a detailed roadmap. They want an animated conversation, not a lecture. They want an interactive education, not a broadcast one that might have been perfectly fine for the Industrial Age, or even for boomers. These students are making new demands of universities, and if the universities try to ignore them, they will do so at their peril.

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The key point in Tapscott's quote is "teacher-focused, one-way, one-size-fits-all" education that resists students' desire for interaction. As an undergraduate, I took a religion course with a really bright professor who insisted on reading his notes to the class. The students did everything we could to engage him in conversation, and we succeeded about half the time. In fact, he only made it halfway through his notes before the semester ended. Unfortunately, his final exam covered the entire course, not just the half he lectured on.

Addressing the Problem of Faculty Resistance to Using Educational Media in Active Learning Instructional Strategies

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It occurred to me as I was preparing for this session on technology-enhanced active learning strategies that I was planning a lecture, which seems not only incongruous, but perhaps a bit hypocritical. :-) Instead, let's use an active learning strategy to explore this issue, which surely is one of the most critical ones facing us as a profession. I will introduce the topic with a lecture, but the majority of our time will be spent in a small-group, interactive session to ascertain the extent to which faculty members use media and technology-enhanced active learning strategies and explore how we can effectively encourage instructors to use these strategies. I will make notes as we go, which will be available on the screen and afterwards on a website at the URL on the last slide of this presentation.

Active Learning Instructional Strategies

- Problem-based learning

- Inquiry-based learning

- Project-based learning

- Experiential learning

First, however, let's calibrate: These are various approaches to active learning instructional strategies. What they have in common is that they are student-focused; students' learning in these approaches is framed by problems or projects relevant to their lives and ambitions. These approaches require active student engagement; the role of the instructor is to set up the project/problem/experience and then serve as a resource for students as they proceed.

Why do so few faculty members use technology-enhanced active learning strategies in their instruction?

1. Fear of using technology, which may not work
2. Fear that incorporating technology will detract/distract from their lecture/teaching (technology will become an end in itself rather than being a means to educational ends)
3. Perception of a lack of institutional support/rewards (little technological or pedagogical resources; no incentives or recognition for using technology)
4. Perception of a lack of cultural support from peers
5. Perception that developing online courses owned by the institution threatens jobs
6. Perception that using technology takes too much time (to learn, to set up, to implement)
7. Perception that technology is not relevant/helpful to teaching in their subject area
8. Perception that face-to-face classroom instruction is the best instruction
9. Faculty members view their role as experts/information providers, not teachers designing experiential education
10. Faculty members are busy as is; they see no need to expend time and energy on learning technology or new pedagogies
11. Faculty members are unaware of the degree to which students might enjoy/gain from technology-enhanced active learning strategies

Note: this is an edited list of the comments received in the session.

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Now we will use "active learning strategies" in this session. Please form five or six-person groups (just pull your chairs together). Introduce yourselves and choose a spokesperson. You have seven minutes to develop a response to the question before we begin our reports, which I will record on the screen.

What can institutions do to encourage/assist faculty members to at least consider using technology-enhanced active learning strategies (TEALS)?

1. Provide faculty members training (and incentives to undergo training) in technology and in using TEALS
2. Provide rewards for faculty members who use TEALS
3. Develop an institutional career teaching track and a career research track
4. Develop policies whereby faculty members who develop online or blended courses "own" the courses
5. Provide stipends for students to assist faculty members to use technology in their courses
6. Foster professional learning communities within departments whereby faculty members cab collaborate with others in their discipline who are using technology
7. Provide appropriate hardware and software along with 24/7 tech support (including workshops
8. Identify faculty members who are savvy in using TEALS and provide them with release time/ stipends to work with departmental/school colleagues on using technology to enhance learning
9. Recruit faculty members who have the orientation and skills to use TEALS
10. Designate "technology rich" classes whereby students who take these classes get free hardware (e.g., an iPod like in the Duke iPod program; see http://tinyurl.com/ly4rub).
11. View the problem as an organizational culture one that can be addressed using a futures approach to organizational and faculty development. This technique is described at http://tinyurl.com/6nmm3b

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Several years ago, Duke announced that all entering freshmen would be give an iPod. The next year, Duke changed the conditions of the iPod giveaway: only those students who enrolled in classes designated as iPod classes would get a free iPod. Guess what happened to enrollments in those classes where professors did not use iPods in their instruction. :–)

Summary

- A copy of our work in slide format will be available at http://horizon.unc.edu/conferences (linked in the description of the ED Media 2009 conference)

- An extensive discussion of this issue is available in Innovate-Ideagora (http://tinyurl.com/apsouf)