

The Teaching and Technology Intersection: Supporting Faculty at the Crossroads

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Questions for discussion

1. On many campuses, academic technology and instructional development departments are quite separate units, often located on different part of campus. Staff who are experts in one area may have a limited skill level in the other. What effect does this have on faculty at your institution seeking to update their skills and improve learning outcomes?
2. Do faculty at your institution see the two skill sets as unrelated? Do they feel they have to address each area separately?
3. Are we in danger of losing focus on student learning outcomes as faculty are pressed to become proficient in technologies such as on-line course management systems, personal electronic response systems and Powerpoint?
4. Are faculty aware that expertise in technology does not automatically enhance educational outcomes, and that successful implementation requires thoughtful consideration and understanding of how people learn?

The Teaching, Learning and Technology workshop is described at:
<http://www.at.northwestern.edu/tlt-workshop>

The Teaching and Technology Intersection: Supporting Faculty at the Crossroads

Miriam Diamond, Brian Nielsen Northwestern University, Evanston, IL

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Powerpoint, personal response and course management systems - these mechanisms exist at the crossroads of academic technology and instructional development. Staff helping faculty use technologies are frequently not the same people who support faculty in enhancing teaching skills. Professors may feel torn or confused about where to turn for guidance. Roundtable participants will explore and discuss models of helping faculty utilize technology in ways that keep them on the path of enhancing learning outcomes.

Abstract:

On many campuses, academic technology and instructional development departments are quite separate units, often located on different part of campus. Staff who are experts in one area may have a limited skill level in the other. What effect does this have on faculty seeking to update their skills and improve learning outcomes? Do faculty see the two skill sets as unrelated? Do they feel they have to address each area separately? Are we in danger of losing focus on student learning outcomes as faculty are pressed to become proficient in technologies such as on-line course management systems, personal electronic response systems and Powerpoint? Are faculty aware that expertise in technology does not automatically enhance educational outcomes, and that successful implementation requires thoughtful consideration and understanding of how people learn?

In this session, we will work with participants to identify challenges faced when faculty on such campuses choose between improving their teaching skills and becoming more proficient with technology.

At our campus, we have identified a need for both areas of expertise to come together in several venues. We will highlight as a case study an intensive week-long Teaching and Learning with Technology program for faculty. Initially led by the office of Academic Technologies, this workshop event has evolved and is now also co-taught by staff from the teaching center. At the end of the week, participants complete and present the first phase of a technology project they intend to implement in their teaching. They also address a conceptual framework for how this project is intended to enhance learning outcomes for their students.

Materials shared with roundtable participants will include a published research article on the workshop program, sample teaching materials used during the week, and written comments from past participants in the program. Examples of course materials produced by past workshop attendees will also be presented.

The case will offer opportunities for roundtable participants to reflect upon and share their own experiences regarding the challenge of having to choose between addressing teaching issues and enhancing technological expertise..

Participant outcomes will include the exploration of how campus organizational structure may affect which skills sets faculty members develop related to course preparation and delivery. Session attendees will brainstorm and identify interventions that might usefully address the conflicts faculty may encounter, whether knowingly or unknowingly. Discussion of the case is intended to encourage participants to share insights and thus discover options for improving the climate for teaching and learning at their own institutions. It is hoped that a longer-term outcome will be an increase in the communication and number of interactions between faculty development practitioners and technologists among the institutions represented by roundtable participants.

This session addresses conference topics of learning-centered teaching, new forms of professional development, and ways that technology is contributing to a new model of teaching and learning.



Searle Center for Teaching Excellence
Northwestern University Library
Academic Technologies, NUIT

August 28 – September 1, 2006

What Is TLT?

- Integrating consideration of teaching and technology
- Acquaint faculty with 2 East



Who are we?

- Searle Center for Teaching Excellence
 - Miriam Diamond
 - Greg Light
 - Susie Calkins
 - Dreana Rubel
- Northwestern University Library
 - Claire Stewart
 - Dan Zellner
- Academic Technologies
 - Brian Nielsen
 - Mary Schuller
 - James Altman
 - Max Anisimov



Featured Faculty

- Rick Gaber, Biological Sciences
- Yari Perez Martin, Spanish
- Martina Bode, Math
- Karl Simmons, Communication Studies



The Schedule

- Mornings in the Ver Steeg Lounge
- Afternoons in Library computer lab
- Featured faculty Monday – Thursday
- YOU are the featured faculty on Friday
- Morning snacks and lunch in Ver Steeg
- Afternoon breaks in 2 East
- Evaluations each day



The Software

- Monday: Powerpoint
- Tuesday: the Web, HTML, and Dreamweaver
- Wednesday: Personal Response Systems (PRS)
- Thursday: Student communication



Breakouts

- Copyright Issues
- Blackboard
- Imaging & Scanning
- Acrobat
- Working with time-based media
- Pachyderm
- Project Pad
- “I Didn’t Know You Could Do That!” (IDKYCDT)



Selected Comments, Attendee Evaluations Teaching, Learning, and Technology workshops, 2003-06

2003:

"Workshop was eye-opening and exceeded my expectations."

"This has truly broadened my own understanding and awareness of the possibilities inherent in the use of appropriate technology."

"A great strength of the workshop was the often seamless discussion of learning and technology."

"An exceedingly knowledgeable, informative, patient, and personable array."

"You have done an outstanding job of creating a positive learning environment, weaving the conceptual with the practical, and serving as true facilitators."

"Excellent in its breadth and depth."

2004

"This was an awesome experience. . . . It's the best Northwestern experience I've ever had in the four and half years I've been here. The staff was congenial and engaged, the other participants collegial and warm, and the knowledge learned very practical and applicable to our faculty lives. What a great way to have spent five days! I did not mind at all getting up in the morning and coming to class. BRAVO!"

Ji-Yeon Yuh, Assistant Professor in History, remarked that rethinking the potential of the web in her teaching "opened up a new space for the class to be a class." Without restricting student-to-student communication to the three hours a week they were in the classroom, the web itself became "a place where the class gets together. In the traditional classroom they talk to me," she commented, "but on the web they talk to EACH OTHER."

2005:

I received a broad overview of available technologies, well intergrated with holistic discussions of teaching and learning, amplified by presentations featuring "master technicians/teachers"

QUESTION: "I would recommend the workshop to faculty interested in enhancing their courses with technology and/or considering alternative methods of teaching." AGREE: 20% STRONGLY AGREE: 80%

QUESTION: "Participating in the TLT workshop program has contributed to my thinking about learning and teaching in higher education." AGREE: 10% STRONGLY AGREE: 90%

Those who have a desire to innovate and who are reflective about their teaching practices and focused on student learning will benefit the most.

A great strength of the workshop was the often seamless discussion of learning and technology.

Good blend of presentation, application, and practice.

Again as someone new to campus, I am tickled to find a cadre of faculty who think deeply about their work, and who put teaching as a high priority.

Extraordinarily positive

The workshop was very helpful. I especially appreciate the emphasis on the continuing availability of the workshop presenters as future resources and anticipate delving into at least a couple of the programs we explored much more and will no doubt be seeking the presenters' help.

Individual interactions with the facilitators were particularly useful.

I feel energized and hopeful about my own ability to integrate technology into my teaching. I also appreciated the refresher about learning styles, brain activity, assessment, etc.

I think the biggest testament to your ability to integrate the tech and the learning was that I sometimes looked around for Vicky or Greg to help me with a tech problem, and I assumed that Brian and Scott knew everything there was to know about the brain!

2006

Great job! Thank you very much! It was helpful to focus on the perspective of the learner in this context. I also feel that I have acquired a new sense of the importance of presenting material in a challenging format in addition to a more interactive one.

It was just tremendous -- thank you all so much!

I was aware that the breakout sessions were optional, but I think I attended all of them anyway. The breakout sessions were extremely useful, even when I was already somewhat familiar with the technology. I was happy to delay working on my project to attend the breakouts.

I honestly can't remember the last time I learned so much in 1 week! I'm very excited to use what I've learned and to share it with others.

It was a rewarding experience to work with instructors/mentors and fellow participants who are so dedicated to their teaching.

I took the "old Tilt" some years ago, and I am impressed and grateful for the way it has grown. The opportunity to interact both with staff and faculty colleagues was stimulating, a pleasure, and an enhancement for generating classroom teaching ideas. I wish there was some way to stay in touch or gather again with the group--for example, meeting again sometime next quarter. I would find it helpful also to be able to return via video, for example, to some of the presentations to ask: now how was it he did that? Because I am also getting ready to teach in the Fall there are things I am sure I will forget how to do. Thanks for a very beneficial week ; it is such a positive to be with people (and know they are "out there") who are exciting about teaching.