

Learning in the Digital Age

Ruth Sabeen, UCLA

*Assistant Vice Provost/Director, Educational
Technology, retired*



Overview

- High-impact changes
- Positioning for progress
- Ideas on where to start
- Overarching strategies

Proposition

Seldom has the academy been so intensely subject to the influence of the culture around us and the impact of technology.

Key question: how do we respond to this?

Technology

- Pace of change -- a treadmill of opportunity and choices
- Not just wiki, but wikipedia, wikiversity
- Not just cameras everywhere, but public news coverage as it is happening
- Blogs + RSS => participate + publish
- Mashups, Second Life, Social Software

Impact on Personal Lives

- Assume we can find answer to anything
- Research everything that is high value to me & my family - investment, health
- Negotiate decisions with expert service providers
- Home & office, work & family intermingled.

Social

- Retain contact with an increased number of individuals
- Engage with people we've never met nor expect to meet
- Contact is contextual, immediate, spontaneous, negotiated

Impact on Professional Lives

- Discipline & practice specific -- brief half life of information requires JITL
- Expertise in finding accurate information
- Practical + formal credentialing challenged by evidence of work

Commercial

- Customer driven -> personalized
- Dominant influence comes from consumer network
- Comparison driven - price, value, flexibility, speed
- Promiscuous consumers

Imagening Possibilities

- Learning as enculturation into a practice
- Immersive, collaborative experiences
- New forms of literacy
- New forms of scholarship
- Publishing as a living document
- New ways for students to engage in research

John Seely Brown, "New Learning Environments for the 21st Century"

Student View of IT in Instruction

- 27,846 respondents, 103 institutions, respondents: 49.2% from doctoral
- 51.5% agree that “overall, instructors use IT well in my courses”
- 59.6% are neutral or disagree that IT in courses increases their course engagement
- Students who say instructors use IT well are more likely to report a positive impact on their academic experience.

*ECAR Study of Undergraduate Students and Information Technology,
September 2007*

Positioning for Progress

- What are our biggest concerns?
- What is our vision for the educational experience?
- What is holding us back?

Biggest Concerns (1 of 99)

- Loss of rigorous learning
- Cost in the face of shrinking resources
- Impact on scholarly campus life
- No one will come to class
- Becoming a “guide on the side”
- Your concern

Biggest Concerns (2 of 99)

- Your concern
- Your concern
- Your concern
- Your concern
- Your concern
- Your concern

Vision of Educational Experience

- Rigorous learning
- Active participation in research
- Knowledgeable citizen
- Prepared to succeed professionally
- Potential to contribute significantly
- Your vision

Vision of Educational Experience - continued

- Your vision
- Your vision
- Your vision
- Your vision
- Your vision

What is holding us back?

- Time constraints: finding the balance between research and teaching
- Support for faculty
- Rules, policies and practices that inhibit experimentation and change
- Copyright/intellectual property support
- Your view

What is holding us back?

- Your view
- Your view
- Your view
- Your view
- Your view

Strategies for Progress

- Open up course content
- Offer format and curriculum flexibility
- Buy, borrow, and build new expertise
- Review policies and practices
- Focus the IT infrastructure on education
- Become a “learning campus”

Open Revolution

- An MIT initiative launches a movement
- Offers students and faculty ready access to content, activities, and tools
- Provides access to communities of learners around open course content

Open Content

- Open Courseware Consortium

<http://www.ocwconsortium.org> -- google across all OCW courses or by university

<http://ocw.mit.edu> - 1550 courses from all 34 departments

- Rice Connexions: <http://cnx.rice.edu> 4478 reusable modules woven into 251 collections

- MERLOT: <http://www.merlot.org> 17,476 materials; 49,600 members

Open Content at UC?

What needs to change for us to become active contributors?

- > copyright & licensing support
- > support for “publishing”
- > recognition for scholarly work
- > shared IT infrastructure

Format and Curriculum Flexibility

“The most competitive students will veer away from the synchronized long march to graduation, in favor of more individualized and creative learning experiences that weave together a tapestry of...educational experiences.”

*Ann Kirchner,
Alma Mater in the Time of TiVo*

Format and Curriculum Flexibility

- RPI launched the “Studio” concept almost 2 decades ago
- Virginia Tech changed views on Math education with the Emporium a decade ago
- UCF offers courses in a range of formats from fully f2f to fully on-line
- MIT iLabs pioneered remote access to instrumentation
- What models at UC Davis can be adapted?

Buy, Borrow and Build Expertise

- Students put responsibility on their instructors
- Rarely attribute problems to their own IT limitations
- Recommendations for optimizing technology effectiveness for learning:
 - Developing instructor technology skill sets;
 - Training instructors how to effectively integrate technology and pedagogy;
 - Improving speed, reliability, and support of network and academic applications;
 - Increasing awareness about how students differ in technology savvy and access to technology resources.

*ECAR Study of Undergraduate Students and Information Technology,
September 2007*

Review Policies and Practices

- How well do the following support your vision?
 - Course approval criteria and process
 - Course evaluation
 - Hiring, promotion and rewards for faculty
 - Course and classroom scheduling
 - Course credits (for instructors & students)
 - Other

Focus the IT Infrastructure on Education

- Redefine infrastructure as “whatever it takes” for instructors and students
- Is educational software available everywhere?
- Can instructors easily give students access to the research infrastructure?
- Is the end user experience location centric?
- Does your course selection process measure up to the best of the commercial sties?

Become a “learning campus”

- Define the Informal Learning Landscape
- Intentional support for social learning
- Move from location centric to location independent learning discourse
- Enhance the quality of life
- Support multiple ways of learning

Shirley Dugdale and Phil Long, ELI Webinar, “Planning the Informal Learning Landscape”, 2007

Ruth Sabeau
rsabeau@ucla.edu