Chapter 13
Preventing 21st-Century Faculty to Engage 21st-Century Learners: The Incentives and Rewards for Online Pedagogies

Kristine Blair
Bowling Green State University, USA

ABSTRACT

This chapter provides a constructive critique of the gap between the institutional rhetoric of technology and the academic reality of delivering curriculum digitally. As part of the analysis of the material conditions within the academy that inhibit the development of engaged online pedagogies, including ones with the potential for service-learning and community literacy components, this chapter establishes benchmarks for both institutions and units, not only to assess and sustain the success of such initiatives, but also to foster the professional development training of current and facilitate faculty to foster online learning as an important example of the scholarship of teaching, learning, and engagement. Ultimately, 21st-century colleges and universities need to develop ways to align technology with both pedagogy and policy to bridge the divide between the academy and the community to maintain relevance in both realms in the digital age.
INTRODUCTION

I recently received the following email:

Dear Educator

Last chance! You only have 5 more days to register for this 60-minute webinar that will provide you with vital strategies to utilize Facebook, Twitter, and other social networks to recruit students to your college.

Companies like higheredhero.com aggressively market audio conferences to higher education professionals to help them “keep up to date with changes in their fields, and learn valuable insights that boost their performance” (higheredhero.com email, 2010). In addition to the topic area listed above, webinars include “YouTube on Campus: Marketing Strategies to Drive Student Recruitment,” The Wiki Workshop: Tools & Tips to Build Enhanced College Courses” and “Alumni Newsletters: Keys to Transitioning from Print to Digital.” Clearly, in the digital era, universities understand the need to move away from print-based recruitment methods to instead rely upon the technologies students commonly use in their literate lives outside the academy. Despite this emphasis, however, universities give far less attention to the impact of these same technologies on the academic labor and material conditions of faculty as scholar-teachers. Ironically, just as student affairs administrators, the primary audience for many of the higheredhero webinars, are encouraged in one session to engage faculty in the recruitment process, academic affairs administrators often overlook the need to provide faculty with appropriate support and reward structures for developing online pedagogies that may aid in both the recruitment and retention of non-traditional learners across the disciplines represented throughout this volume.

Despite Boyer’s (1990) call to embrace a “scholarship of teaching” paradigm in the preparation and evaluation of current and future faculty, all too often tenure and promotion processes privilege traditional definitions of both research and teaching and, as a result, limit institutional recognition of pedagogies—from distance education to service-learning—that engage external communities whose access to both educational and technological opportunities has been limited. As Hull and Schultz (2002) note:

There is worry about a growing digital divide, one associated with schools (where access to technology and its meaningful use is unequal), with disparate technology and other resources, and also with workplaces in which low-income people of color are shut out of high-tech, well-paying jobs. How can teachers, researchers, and other educators join forces to bridge such divides? (p. 41)

Such research has stressed the existence of varying types of digital divides among diverse cultural groups; yet I shall also contend that university faculty continue to represent what Prensky (2001) has termed “digital immigrants,” personifying a type of divide that hinders their ability to develop online outreach initiatives, despite the strong evidence within this section of Higher Education, Emerging Technologies, and Community Partnerships, that advanced training in the form of certificates, degrees, and other professional development models are needed.

Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to provide a constructive critique of the gap between the institutional rhetoric of technology (Hawisher & Selfe, 1991) and the academic reality of delivering curriculum digitally. As part of my analysis of the material conditions within the academy that inhibit the development of engaged online pedagogies, including ones with the potential for service-learning and community literacy components, I establish a series of benchmarks for both institutions and units not only to assess and sustain the success of such initiatives, but also to facilitate the professional development training of current