As online education moved from being a fad to a money-maker, many institutions, businesses, and individuals jumped at the chance to offer online courses. As mentioned in previous chapters, not all courses are created equally, and not all curricula have been designed to work well online.

Perhaps because of the way online education has been introduced on many university campuses, faculty who have not taught online may be suspicious of colleagues who do. Fear about the quality of an online curriculum may deter faculty from participating in its development. As well, those who have had a bad experience in developing a course for their institution may be negative toward online education as a whole. How can administrators and faculty make sure that online education is considered equally important (but not more or less so) than on-site classes in an institution that offers both?
Rahman (2001) emphasized that leaders among faculty and administrators must support online programs if they are going to survive, much less thrive. As well, the faculty in general must support and participate in online education at their institution for the programs to be successful. It takes the entire university/college community working together to make sure that online programs are worthwhile and receive the support at all levels needed for program development and implementation.

Sometimes that support is difficult to get, as many faculty familiar with teaching on site and leery of technology do not see the need for online education and do not want to teach an online course, much less participate in a fully online curriculum. Johannesen and Eide (2000) described teachers feeling threatened by new technology and fearing that in the push for online experience they might become superfluous. Although Johannesen and Eide pointed out that teachers will not be made redundant by computer technology, many teachers worry that automated academic programs will take over not only online education, but hybrid on-site classes as well. There is concern about the continuing importance of teachers to guide learners or help them make meaning from diverse sources of information. If the Internet becomes the key provider of information, and learners can access it on their own to complete predetermined assignments, there is a fear that teachers may not be necessary. Even feedback and grading can be automated functions of an online system. The changing nature of education naturally involves changes in academic structures and the expectations of teachers and administrators, as well as learners. However, fears and concerns about changes within academia must be faced and alleviated before more faculty agree to support, in principle if not in their personal practice, online education.

Hagner and Schneebeck (2001) categorized university faculty based on a modification of Everett Rogers’ 1995 adopter classifications. Entrepreneurs who bask in technology and enjoy risk-taking activities form one group; these innovators are comfortable working on their own. Risk aversive types are unsure of how to use technology and wonder if they will be successful teaching online. They need training and other assistance before they will take the leap into online education. Reward seekers look at online education as a means to an end—greater rewards from the institution. They are pragmatic about their careers and teach online because the experience will help them gain tenure or promotion. Reluctants, or computer illiterates,

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