

TOGETHER!

Spring 2007

Supporting Faculty Response to Technology

Are institutions doing all they can to support faculty towards a full integration, implementation, and adoption of technology?

SEE PAGE 3



Note from the Editor

Dear readers:

As new trends come along, it is important to keep in mind that innovation involves planning, assessment, communication, and consideration of all variables involved to make a successful adoption process in our institutions and for our constituencies. This issue of Together has been focused on helping you take advantage of all technology innovations for a successful Higher Education, while balancing the need for an informed and strategic integration.

Hope you enjoy this edition as much as I enjoyed working on it for you. As always, your invaluable feedback and contributions to our magazine are more than welcome. You can reach me at wlatorre@hets.org with any of your questions, comments, and collaborations.



Willmarie Latorre
Editor

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FACULTY SUPPORT

Supporting Faculty Response to Technology through the Diffusion of Innovation Theory

Are institutions doing all they can to support faculty towards a full integration, implementation, and adoption of technology? Certainly, some may argue they are, but probably many are not.

Kopyc (2006) sustains that, while faculty use computers every day to send e-mail messages or compose text with a word processing application, there is still something holding them back from embracing technology-enhanced education. This reluctance is of great relevance if we consider the large portions of funds institutions continually invest on technology infrastructure, support staff, and training. This should make us question ourselves: Is training and infrastructure enough? Can anything else be done to effectively integrate technology into current educational practices?

One of the main things to take into consideration is the need to promote practices, technology innovations, and opportunities among faculty members. Pushing technology on academics will not necessarily get technology into classrooms (Kopyc, 2006). While it is true that faculty need training and support to

integrate and use technology, they first need to fully understand the importance, advantages, and rationale behind the particular technology. “Innovators” and “early adopters” will emerge automatically after this has happened; these are the people needed to get the idea generally accepted and widely adopted. Collaboration and discussion opportunities among innovators and adopters will certainly produce positive results when implementing a new technology.

The concepts of “innovators” and “early adopters” are key elements of the Diffusion of Innovations Theory, formalized by Everett Rogers in 1962. The framework provided by the Diffusion of Innovations Theory offers an option for moving an innovation through a social system over time. It not only tells us how ideas are accepted, but also under what conditions they are most likely to be implemented. This innovation doesn't necessarily have to be a suddenly new invention or the most recent technology, as many tend to think. It is rather an idea, practice, object, or technology perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption.



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This theory identifies five essential characteristics that an innovation should possess in order to enhance the rate and effectiveness of the diffusion. The idea, practice, or technology should be able to be trialed or implemented by adopters; show visible results to others; be understood in a simple way; be compatible with the existing values, ideas, and past experiences of adopters; and have a superior advantage to the technology or practice being replaced or complemented. Rogers also proposed a five stage model for the diffusion of innovation: (1) awareness of its existence and function, (2) persuasion with regards to its value, (3) decision to adopt it, (4) implementation, and (5) confirmation, as the ultimate acceptance of the innovation after having used it.

Rogers stated that adopters of any new innovation or idea could be categorized as innovators (2.5%), early adopters (13.5%), early majority (34%), late majority (34%) and laggards (16%), based

on a bell curve. Innovators are characterized as venturesome, well-educated, and risk-takers that receive information from multiple sources. Early adopters are popular and educated social leaders open to new beneficial ideas who take the innovation to the early majority, pragmatist adopters who prefer their comfort zones, and late majority, more skeptical and traditional than the previous ones. Entering the last place in the adoption of the innovation are the laggards or skeptics, who usually act upon blocking a progressive change through the identification of the problems behind implementing the innovation. The skeptics have a significant role influencing the decisions of the late majority.

While it may seem appropriate to recruit the most innovative members of the respective social system to accomplish the adoption of the innovation, sometimes innovators can be perceived by others as eccentric and uncommon. This doesn't support the process of expanding the adoption to the majority. To Rogers, the best models of innovation are the opinion leaders, who play a critical role in the diffusion process. These leaders have credibility and receptive to change, are technically competent, and have access to the members of the social system.

Opinion leaders need, then, to diffuse the message to early adopters, who, in turn,



are horizontally networked with the rest of the majority. This is important because faculty early adopters, for example, are open to new ideas and are not afraid of taking risks, which is worth taking advantage of.


Opinion leaders and innovators should be involved in the whole conceptualization and planning process of the program designed to implement the adoption of the new technologies. After this, make sure to open opportunities for face to face encounters with the early adopters and, eventually, face to face events for the majorities. Even though mass media channels are useful in creating awareness about an innovation, if we want to change attitudes towards a particular innovation, it is important to use interpersonal channels. Not only these are more suitable for smaller, more self-contained social organizations, such as colleges and universities, but also the face to face exchange between two or more individuals has proven to be more effective in persuading individuals to accept new ideas. Decisions are many times prompted by the “buzz marketing power”, or word of mouth, of those who have already adopted the idea. Thus, the implementation of casual discussion groups, conferences, dialogues, and roundtables can support individual changes in attitudes towards the innovation.

If technology is going to be effectively

integrated into the educational practices of institutions, it is imperative that different types of adopters are identified. This classification will lead to the appropriate strategies for each group and the most strategic interactions among groups. Know your faculty, understand how they feel about technology, and explore their willingness and readiness to effectively implement it. If you identify, for instance, that there is a good group of early adopters, organize trainings, trials, and opportunities for experimentation, while


publicly recognizing their importance in the process, offering continuous feedback, and providing face to face support. For those in the early majority group, consider giveaways, strong support, and even the intervention of a renowned leader in the field. Make sure to understand the views of the skeptics in order to create strategies and arguments to convince the late majority and laggards. When the majority has been effectively persuaded, sometimes it could be necessary to establish procedures and regulations on the use of the technology.

As you can see, there are ways of supporting the implementation of new technology innovations, while assuring that your constituencies believe in the effectiveness of this new practice. Study and know your faculty, and establish a concrete plan that focuses on them as your main customer. A good idea cannot be fully implemented until the main customer



has bought it. In this case, even though the one receiving the education is the student, faculty members are the ones to buy the concept, derive new ideas from it, produce strategies, and take the product to the student.

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STUDENT SUCCESS

Useful Strategies and Tools to Deal with Student Retention and Success

Understanding factors and options available to cope with retention and ensure persistence and success is of outmost importance when trying to achieve institutional goals in this area.


The lack of retention, or dropout, is one of the biggest challenges for educational systems. Berge and Huang (2004) indicate that, in the case of online learning, the problem is even bigger, as dropout rates tend to be higher than for traditional courses. But, as they point out, in higher education, the problem of a student's lack of persistence is complex and multi-dimensional, so it's imperative to consider several variables and strategies regarding learner success at the individual, course, program, institutional, or systems level (Berge and Huang, 2004). For instance, retention issues, definitions, and strategies get more complicated with constant changes in learner demography, student roles in new learning contexts, educational options, and modes of instruction. When a voluntary decision is made to persist or dropout, it is made by the individual student, influenced by his or her personal circumstances (Berge and Huang, 2004). It is based upon the student's continual cost-benefit analysis of all social, organizational, economical, and psychological factors such as perceived opportunity, relevancy, stress,

responsibility, and satisfaction within the educational context.

Understanding factors and options available to cope with retention and ensure persistence and success is of outmost importance when trying to achieve institutional goals in this area. Berge and

Huang (2004) admit that it is also important for faculty and staff to fully understand the factors influencing students' performance and decisions to dropout or persist, since this "helps promote interactions that will yield positive impact upon students' decision". These factors could include lack of time, lack of motivation, limited student support, individual learning preferences, and an inexperienced instructor.

Vincent Tinto, from Syracuse University, suggests that persistence is impacted essentially by factors including expectation, advice, support, involvement, and learning (Abel, 2005). On their part, for Súilleabhain and Coughlan (2004), motivation and persistence may actually be diminished by common characteristics of e-learning courses as they are currently designed and



delivered. Abel (2005) adds the fact that, even though some institutions specializing in distance learning have adopted strategies to set expectations and provide student support, most students are looking to the interaction with faculty to judge whether the educational endeavor is worth it.


Berge and Huang (2004) propose a dynamic and customizable model for student retention that takes into consideration the significant variables and interrelation among personal, institutional, and circumstantial factors. The framework factors of the Model of Sustainable Student Retention address variables that institutions can manipulate to enhance student retention. It is an open-ended model constructed to be inclusive in

accounting for a large proportion of the possible variables. The framework aims to encourage commitment, enhance integration, improve delivery systems, increase person-environmental fit, and improve outcomes such as academic performance, intellectual development, perceived utility, and satisfaction (Berge and Huang, 2004). Furthermore, it can be used in online classrooms, blended classrooms, and in-person classrooms. This can be done by intervening in institutional management strategies, curriculum and instruction, and academic and social support strategies. Other researchers have tested theoretical models that look at academic and social integration of students

on-campus, the importance of teaching, learning and study skills, used of resources and services, financial aid, and family influences.

Distance education students need the same kinds of services as on-campus students, but expect the services to meet their needs for flexibility and convenience. To meet these evolving needs, colleges are creating innovative ways of reaching their students through student support (Geisel, 2006). Social software tools, such as the wikis and the blogs, can support students and staff beyond the classroom (Bryant, 2006). These tools can expand discussion and provide new ways for students to collaborate and communicate within their class or around the world. Social networking strategies widen the possibilities for education and support the effort to increase student motivation and interaction.


Another useful resource to complement retention strategies is the Online Monograph of Student Support Services. This tool, developed by a group of student support community college professionals with extensive experience in the creation and delivery of services to online students, provides a repository of strategies and best practices for student support (Geisel, 2006). This online publication was created as part of the Online Student Support at Every College project, based at the Tyler Junior College, supported by the Northeast Texas Consortium of Colleges and Universities.



The collection of best practices identified and organized through the Online Monograph of Student Support Services allows readers to identify innovative online support services and practices that are specific to certain student areas. Sections include innovative applications for both web-based freshman and distance learning course orientations, financial aid, library access, career planning, student news, and testing. It also provides information on website planning, advising, student readiness, freshman orientation, technical support, online orientation, library services, student news, testing, and career planning, all in the context of the online student (Geisel, 2006). The first year of this grant, the project partnered with community colleges and professionals throughout Texas identified as leaders providing online student services. To access the monograph, visit:

<http://www.onlinestudentsupport.org/monograph/>.

It is essential to not only recognize retention and persistence problems among students, both online and on campus, but also to search for the best strategies and tools available to deal with this problem. Student success is influenced by diverse individual, social, and environmental variables that can and should be identified through different means. Institutional and curricula planning need to integrate this component in order for desired retention levels to be accomplished.



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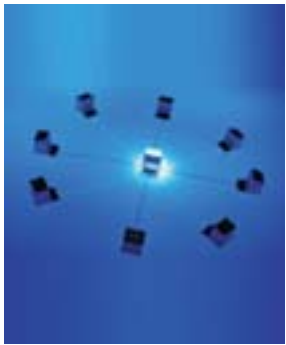
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E-LEARNING

The Integration of an Effective E-Learning Strategy in the Healthcare Education Context



The integration of e-learning into existing medical curricula should be the result of a strategically formulated plan based on a needs assessment, evaluating beforehand the impact of this modality on the quality and efficiency of medical education.

The current social, scientific, pedagogical challenges and the continuous emergence of new knowledge are making e-learning an interesting consideration for health professional formation, both medical and nursing education. According to Skirton and McMullan (2006), e-learning, especially as a blend of methods, provides a more flexible and effective learning environment, opportunity for collaboration between institutions, and an overall more efficient delivery of education. However, even though the value of e-learning has been recognized, more advancements and attention are needed in order to fully comply with an educational model centered in true learning through strategic and student focused teaching.

Harris (2005) sustained that, so far, the use of medical e-learning materials has made total sense as a way of extending the usual

self-learning process of many medical students. Medical education has traditionally been a model based on fact-transfer and knowledge-testing, depending mostly on the student self-education. He suggests that e-learning, which he acknowledges as a more efficient means of self-education for the student, has the potential of becoming a student-centered methodology if the focus is re-oriented towards e-teaching, as a strategic way of creating and deploying computer-based educational tools the provide the student with customized information, guidance, examples, cases, practice, motivation, and knowledge facilitation (Harris, 2005). Harris (2005) believes that it is possible to create e-teaching programs that improve medical decision-making skills across international boundaries. In order to accomplish this, e-teaching programs should be able to:

- facilitate a learning process whereby students actively construct knowledge;
- provide students with practice skills in situations similar to those they will be used (contextual and problem-based learning);


- offer robust simulations based on practical experience; and
- use the most efficient mix of media to enhance learning, while stimulating different cognitive processes.

Although other authors are not as radical as Harris in strikingly differentiating between e-learning and e-teaching for medical education, overemphasizing the importance of the latter, they support the idea of educators in the medical setting becoming facilitators of learning and assessors of competency, instead of being mere distributors of content (Ruiz, Mintzer, and Leipzig, 2006). This is of utmost importance in this moment in the history of health professions education. Education for the health professional is moving away from a curriculum based on structure and process to one based on competency (Hersh, Bhupatiraju, Green, Smothers, and Cohen, 2006). In competency-based curricula, the focus is on the expected outcomes of the learning activity and the professional competencies that learners are expected to attain. According to Hersh et al. (2006), implementing this will require educators in this field to start making better use of educational technology, including e-learning to reach distant and time-constrained students and physicians and other non-traditional learners.

The integration of e-learning into existing medical curricula, as stated by Ruiz et al

The integration of e-learning into existing medical curricula, as stated by Ruiz et al (2006), should be the result of a strategically formulated plan based on a needs assessment, evaluating beforehand the impact of this modality on the quality and efficiency of medical education. Still, it is imperative to determine the potential effects of its adaptation to the variety of medical specialties and clinical settings. Other aspect to be considered is the possibility of simplifying the e-learning creation and development process, since this tends to create reluctance and resistance on the adopters and executors of this technology. Ruiz et al. (2006) propose the incorporation of e-learning as part of a blended strategy to cope with resistance issues, facilitate adaptation, and expand curricula options. Some institutions use this approach in medical undergraduate education for self-instruction and cooperative learning. Asynchronous alternatives are being applied to medical continuing education.

Nonetheless, the biggest challenge in integrating e-learning to instruction for health-related professions is the integration of the new competency-based paradigm (Hersh et al., 2006). This implies following certain specific standards to enhance the e-learning process in this context. These standards include the Sharable Content Object Reference Model (SCORM), Learning Object Metadata (LOM), the Reusable Competency Definitions Draft Standard for Learning Technology (RCD)



and the Simple Reusable Competency Map. According to Hersh et al. (2006), this has only started to be used by the health care sector, with MedBiquitous taking the lead in adapting e-learning standards such as SCORM and LOM to health care. This organization is dedicated to advancing healthcare education through technology standards that promote professional competence. As such, it has launched the MedBiquitous E-Learning Discourse (MELD), an online community that allows professionals in the field to collaborate and solve real-world problems in the design and implementation of healthcare e-learning through knowledge sharing and the development and proposal of unique solutions (<http://meld.medbiq.org>).

Other organizations sharing and publishing supplemental materials for an effective medical or healthcare e-learning include the Association of American Medical Colleges, whose MedEdPortal organizes a repository of curriculum and assessment materials oriented towards competencies

in medical education. The International Virtual Medical School (IVIMEDS) is an international organization intended to set new standards for e-learning in medical education through a partnership of medical schools and institutions, using a blended-learning approach. The organization's website hosts a repository of free materials for its member medical schools (Ruiz et al., 2006).

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HIGHER ED TRENDS

Technology Trends in Higher Education: Are We Ready?

We could say that probably every six months technology is taking us to a new place, bringing us new ideas, expectations, possibilities, and, of course challenges. Our lives have been so driven by technology that, sometimes, if we don't get adjusted to these changes, we are not able to keep working normally as we used to. Take for example updates and platform changes to Windows. If you forgot or preferred not to update your operating system with the latest plug-ins and downloads, it will be really difficult for you to use some of the latest software available in the market. Today, there is a whole new operating system in the market and we will always be asking ourselves: What's next?

Adapting changes can be uncomfortable sometimes, but they are usually necessary to cope with the challenges and the need of being globally competent. In many instances, changes will be good and will just be there to make either our work better or far more competitive and effective. Have you noticed the importance that many technological innovations throughout history? Have you noticed the way they are transforming the corporate world as we knew it? The case is no different for learning technologies in Higher Education. Imagine you are flying over and educational

institution in a fast-paced timeline, can you see what innovations are capable of doing for our teachers, our learners, and all our future professionals? Many things have changes and many will keep constantly changing over the next years. It is just a matter of knowing when to adapt, why to adapt, and how to effectively adapt to innovations that will definitely bring new perspectives and challenges.

So, what's next in learning technology in Higher Education? Different researchers and organizations have been looking at the trends in educational technology for the next five years and even for the next decade, as well as at the strategies to effectively adopt trends and their benefits. Abel (2005), for instance, envisions the emergence of more Course Management Systems (CMS), distance learning platforms, and Internet technology on campus and in classrooms. Tools will also keep being created to help students and faculty be more productive, efficient, and effective. These include:

- systems that help students take notes and study from notes more effectively;
- systems that help students organize course materials;


- tools to help students interact with faculty, helping faculty understand the degree of student learning;
- ePortfolio tools to capture student accomplishments;
- online search engines for academic content to help them find the right materials

Abel (2005) indicates that a significant aspect to take care of with the emergence of learning technologies is the need for pedagogical tools to support faculty who do not wish to become “course developers”. While not everyone is entirely comfortable with technology, most faculty understand the potential of the Internet. They should understand that there are ways of taking complete advantage of technology without giving completely away their role in the classroom and without having to become full “course developers”. Innovative tools will be created to allow faculty to monitor student study interactions; determine which materials are most difficult and why; self-assess their teaching; allow administrators to determine which courses, and under what conditions, are having retention problems; and foster the attainment of learning objectives to be better tracked within the context of a course or a curriculum. Finally, Abel (2005) sustains that there will continue to be an emergence of Learning Technologies for Student Achievement. These will be

marked and influenced by student tools to enhance proven study methods, easy publishing to Internet for the majority of faculty, the assessment of quality and learning outcomes via the learning interaction, and the merging of classroom and online environments. The next step in this Learning Technology for Student Achievement is what Abel (2005) calls the Mobile Learning (m-learning), made accessible through the use of personal digital assistants (PDAs), next generation mobile phones, MP3 players, laptops, and other portable devices.

According to the 2006 Annual Horizon Report (EDUCAUSE, 2006), a collaborative effort between the New Media Consortium (NMC) and the EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative (ELI), the six areas of emerging technology likely to have a significant impact on teaching, learning, or creative expression in higher education the next five years include:

- Social computing
- Personal broadcasting
- Cell-phone-accessible educational content and services
- Educational gaming
- Augmented reality and enhanced visualization
- Context-aware environments and devices




The EDUCAUSE and NMC report (2006) suggest that the two technologies that appear on the nearest adoption horizon are social computing and personal broadcasting. As the practice of online communication and collaboration has increased, dynamic knowledge creation and social computing tools and processes are becoming more accepted. Social computing refers to the application of computer technology to facilitate interaction and collaboration, replacing face to face encounters with virtual collaboration tools. Mobile and personal technology is increasingly being viewed as a delivery platform for services of all kinds (EDUCAUSE, 2006). On the other hand, since devices such as cell phones or mp3 players are almost everywhere now, it will be easier and common sense to start delivering content to those devices, and even fostering collaboration through them. Strategies will go from podcasting to even video blogging (vlogging), as personal broadcasting impacts campus constituencies. The 2006 Annual Horizon Report also sees the delivery of educational content and services to cell

phones just around the corner.

Further in the horizon, but close to the next reality in Higher Education is the exploration of the science of gaming, context-aware environments and devices, and their application for teaching and learning (EDUCAUSE, 2006). Another imminent innovation is the use of augmented reality and enhanced visualization as part of educational strategies, particularly in disciplines such as medicine and engineering. This technology will allow bringing large data sets and creating three-dimensional representations of abstract data.


In 2002, Rossman, in *The Future of Higher (Lifelong) Education*, had already envisioned new and smaller technologies transforming education and continuing learning, especially with new wireless devices appearing every day and as more speed kept empowering learning. It seems like technology will keep changing the delivery and consumption of Higher Education as we have known it for years. As Rossman (2002) had proposed, students



will be able to not only connect to the Internet through their cell phones, as they already do right now, but also access course modules from their own personal wireless phones, use electronic textbooks with music and video with automated age-appropriate tutor, and access a vast library including reference books. Students will continue using conferencing software for group work and will have the opportunity to learn through innovative and exciting games. Also institutions will be able to access a complete personal profile of the learner for a unique personalized program adapted to his or her particular needs and talents (Rossman, 2002).

Although these and other innovations for Higher Education are about to get to us anytime now, there is still the concern with regards to the process of scaling them to a widespread use. There still will be gaps among those campuses that can and cannot afford these approaches, between students than have access to Abel (2005) indicates that a significant aspect to take care of with the

emergence of learning technologies is the need for pedagogical tools to support faculty who do not wish to become “course developers”. While not everyone is entirely comfortable with technology, most faculty understand the potential of the Internet. They should understand that there are ways of taking complete advantage of technology without giving completely away their role in the classroom and without having to become full “course developers”. Innovative tools will be created to allow faculty to monitor student study interactions; determine which materials are most difficult and why; self-assess their teaching; allow administrators to determine which courses, and under what conditions, are having retention problems; and foster the attainment of learning objectives to be better tracked within the context of a course or a curriculum. Finally, Abel (2005) sustains that there will continue to be an emergence of Learning Technologies for Student Achievement. These will be technology and those who don't, and between faculty that are willing to adopt the innovation and those who are not.



Some have proposed recurring to the funding of experimental classrooms as a way of coping with adoption and acceptance, but there are still many questions regarding existing financial and technological gaps that will definitely not disappear with the simple emergence of a new learning technology alternative.

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INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF EDUCATION

Integrating Podcasting as a Mobile Learning Technology in Higher Education




Podcasts do not automatically become learning objects. If a learning object is simply published by RSS syndications, it becomes a podcast but a podcast becomes a learning object if it includes a learning objective and has educational value."

Podcasting might not be a new technology, but it is an innovative method of Web-based broadcasting that may be used for automatically transferring digital audio content to mobile devices (Cebeci and Tekdal, 2006). Podcasting or audiocasting is a simple realization of audio content syndication that targets mobile digital devices via audioblogs on the Web. Nowadays, podcasting uses the enclosures in RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feeds for syndication and distribution of audio content to mobile music players on the Web.

According to Cebeci and Tekdal (2006), the word "podcasting" originates from the words iPod and broadcasting. It can be

best described as "radio" content to which a listener subscribes through the Internet. As Van Cleve (2006) explains, the RSS makes a path from the source where the podcasts are found on the Internet to the music library on the subscriber's computer. This enables the user to simply open their music library and find a new podcast waiting. The listener receives a new podcast as soon as it's available, which can then be played anytime on either a computer or portable MP3 player.

Currently, podcasting has been proposed as a potential e-learning tool that could have a great impact on mobile learning. To Cebeci and Tekdal (2006), its basic advantage in education is the portability and convenience of listening to learning resources anytime and anywhere without requiring extensive technical knowledge; since content is available anywhere, learning is no longer tied to a particular location. Actually, podcasts can be automatically downloaded to almost all kinds of mobile devices, such as MP3 players, cellular phones, PDAs, and mobile computers. Learning materials can be listened to in their own time, pace, and place. It also has an instant-application potential for education since millions of young people have already bought mobile music players (Cebeci and Tekdal, 2006).



Podcasting can be integrated with Web-based e-learning models, especially when recording live conversations in lectures is easy and can be done with the use of simple devices such as portable speech recorders or even MP3 players with recording functionality. In terms of pedagogic characteristics, podcasting offers the possibility of learning through listening, which could be more attractive for many than reading (Cebeci and Tekdal, 2006). In this sense, it could be even more attractive to students if course content is mixed with short length fragments of popular songs as insertions or speech backgrounds. On the other hand, while there is an ample access to a varied range of audio resources in the Web, podcasting provides better cognitive-based personalization in learning, using information about learning preferences or style to deliver targeted learning content (Van Cleve, 2006). At the same time, students are able to use the information in a way that complements their personal learning style and familiarity with the material.

Few universities have started to fully apply podcasting in education. As part of the "Academic iPod Project", Duke University, in collaboration with Apple Computer, Inc., distributed free charge iPods with 20 GB hard drive to first year classes of their university degree programs in 2004 (Belanger, 2005). They also started to publish the audio courses on music, language, economics, history and theology. Also, the School of Education at

Drexel University implemented a smaller iPod Project compared to Duke's Project in 2005. This was part of a strategy to allow students to create and use podcasting materials, discovering its advantages as learning and teaching medium.

Regardless of the aforementioned advantages and uses of podcasting, there are some issues to consider in integrating podcasting as part of the educational strategies. First of all, as Cebeci and Tekdal (2006) explain, a podcast without a learning goal will not be useful to support learning; incorporating podcasts into e-learning systems require design and translation work to achieve the pedagogical needs. Cebeci and Tekdal (2006) go further: "Podcasts do not automatically become learning objects. If a learning object is simply published by RSS syndications, it becomes a podcast but a podcast becomes a learning object if it includes a learning objective and has educational value." To Van Cleve (2006), the point should be to complement the classroom experience with an outside medium that's easily accessible to students. E-learning coordinators can work directly with a professor to examine the course itself and figure out how material can be presented to facilitate a student's learning experience.

Besides the need for specific methodologies to integrate podcasting effectively into educational practices, it is important to consider the limitations inherent to the use of such technology.

Chinnery (2006) mentions several aspects to be taken into consideration, including the limited visibility of the device's screen, limited capability for nonverbal communication, limited availability of space for messages, and potential limited social interactions as factors that could impact the learning potential of this technology. He mentions, as well, the unequal access of student populations to this technology and the high costs to educational institutions of trying to provide the technology to the student populations.

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