**Technology: No Longer the New Kid on the Block**

Ruby Evans
Florida A & M University

In the early nineties, visionary college and university administrators began to make changes in strategic plans so that students could take advantage of the impending information explosion. Realizing that computer literacy was no longer equivalent to proficiency in programming languages, these individuals pushed the envelope that supported use of computers as repositories for, conduits of, and electronic portals to educational resources. As the 20th century came to a close, instructional issues—including efficiency, effectiveness, and expansion of access—combined to provide symbiotic support for increased computer usage in teaching, learning, and administration.

The last decade of the 20th century revealed an unprecedented upsurge in the integration of technology and active learning strategies in classroom instruction. Use of the personal computer and its associated technological innovations—the Internet, E-mail, word processing packages and web sites—became the rule in many college and university environments (Evans, 1999). Technological literacy became the new literacy for the 21st century. The phrases learner-centered, learning-centered, and student-centered became popular phrases. Ultimately, the omnipotent data-knowledge-information trilogy emerged as a lead player in the sustained integration of computers and related technology in formal educational settings.

Higher education's movement toward greater integration of technology in instructional delivery can be attributed to myriad factors, including:

1. Societal demands.
2. Employer need for more technologically literate workers.
3. Increasingly important role of technology in work and personal lives.
4. Need for alternate forms of communication.
5. The shift from a teaching to a learning paradigm (Boettcher, 1999).
6. Finite resources.
7. Efficiency; time, accessibility.
8. Introduction of technology into the curriculum beginning with pre-school instruction.

To be sure, information technology is changing the way people live and learn (Spector & de la Teja, 2001). Technology, no longer regarded as a passing fad, is a medium that continues to gain value as an increasingly pervasive form of communication and data transfer, and one which continues to impact the infrastructure of formal education and its delivery (Evans, 2001). In new learning environments, spanning PreK-20 higher education (pre-school to graduate school), students are expected to cooperate and collaborate, exhibit critical thinking skills, demonstrate problem-solving skills, and demonstrate competence in basic technological literacy. Technology, no longer the new kid on the block, is becoming a well-respected member of the educational community.

## References

Boettcher, J. (1999). The Shift from a Teaching to a Learning Paradigm. Syllabus Magazine, 13(1), 50-52. Available online @ http://www.syllabus.com/syllabusmagazine/aug99_magfea2.html

Evans, R. (2001). An internal educational partnership for learning: Faculty and reference librarians-A virtual dynamic duo. T.H.E. Journal: Technological Horizons in Education, January 2001. Available online @ http://www.thejournal.com/magazine/vault/A3262.cfm

Evans, R. (1999). Serving modern students in a modern society at the community college: Incorporating basic technological literacy. T.H.E. Journal: Technological Horizons in Education. Available online @ http://www.thejournal.com/magazine/vault/A2292.cfm

Spector, J. M. & de la Teja, I. (2001). Competencies for online teaching. ERIC Clearinghouse on Information & Technology. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED456841). Access: http://ericit.org/digests/EDO-IR-2001-09.shtml