

***The Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) presents***  
**Rethinking higher ed: Beyond {the buzzwords}**  
**November 7-8, 2013**  
**Sheraton Centre Toronto**

**Day Two**  
**November 8, 2013**

**Session 5A | Teaching: Back to the future**  
*Reimagining the classroom experience*

*Facilitator: Steve Joordens, University of Toronto, Scarborough*  
*Eileen Herteis, Mount Allison University*  
*Norm Vaughan, Mount Royal University*  
*Steven Mintz, University of Texas System*

Facilitator Steve Joordens asked the discussion panel, comprising Eileen Herteis, Norm Vaughan and Steven Mintz, what the right balance is between traditional and online learning strategies. For Vaughan, the balance seems to be working well right now. In the mixed-mode approach to education, the mix of traditional and online components encourages students to take responsibility for scheduling and preparation. Herteis replied that she isn't sure what a traditional approach is anymore. It's often assumed that something that's not online is traditional, and therefore something online is innovative. Mintz was more critical, observing that distance learning often has a bad reputation, and for good reason. It's sometimes the worst vision of a correspondence course: it has no social vision, collaboration or creativity. The web offers a great opportunity for students to engage with public projects: annotated texts, digital stories, simulations and immersive environments. We don't want to produce passive recipients of knowledge, but generate active creators of knowledge.

Joordens then asked about the difference between teaching and learning, and what role technology has in that debate. Herteis asserted that we need to stop using divisive language like teaching being in opposition to learning. For her, the first question shouldn't be "should I be using technology for this," it should be "how are my students going to learn this?" We need to assess faculty incentives: we have a lot of money for teaching innovation, but it seems to only go to teachers who use technology. Mintz concurred, saying that the largest course he ever taught was 592 students, and it was terrible. Joordens teaches a class of 1800. Can you imagine a student straight out of high school walking into that environment? We need to move from the industrial teaching model to a social one, and how we do that in a cost effective manner is a great intellectual challenge that all of us face.

Finally, the panel was asked whether embracing technology necessarily sucks the humanity out of the material, or whether there is a way to retain it. Vaughan gave an example of how UBC has a program where an advisor follows the student all the way through university. Teaching for him is about relationships, and technology can enable that as well as impede it. Herteis responded that, of course, we need a human component. The content is often the least important thing; we're trying to get students to apply human characteristics, like respect, to their behaviour. Technology can allow students to practice this, the online environment can give them the confidence to try or practice it online first before bringing it to the small seminar environment. Mintz gave examples of how implementation can

change the effectiveness of technology: in large classes we can use teacher-peer mentors to break up very large courses and give a personal dimension to those classes. Student mentors can also help other students in those courses. We can think of many interesting strategies to socialize education, like team-based teaching.