Starting with Needs

A Strategy for
Reaching the
"Middle 60%"

Who are the "Middle 60%"?

- Comes from the "Diffusion of Innovation" Model
- Main researcher: Everett Rogers
- Has good Iowa roots
  - Ryan & Gross (1943)
  - Diffusion of hybrid seed corn among Iowa farmers (1928-1941)

Who are the "Middle 60%"?

- "The first farmers to adopt (the innovators) were more cosmopolitan (indicated by traveling more frequently to Des Moines) and of higher socioeconomic status than later adopters."

  Ryan, B. & Gross, N. C. (1943). The diffusion of hybrid seed corn in two Iowa communities. *Rural Sociology* (8) 15-24.
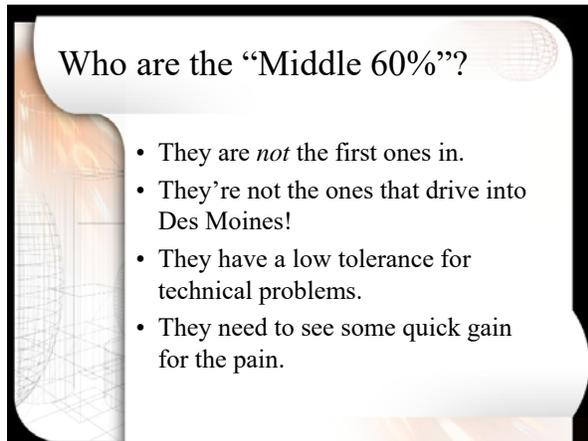
Who are the "Middle 60%"?
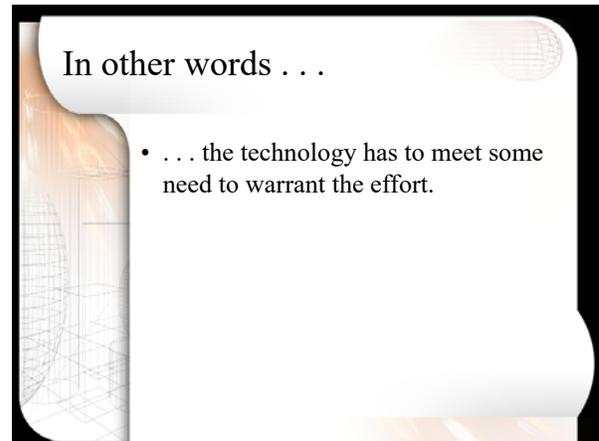

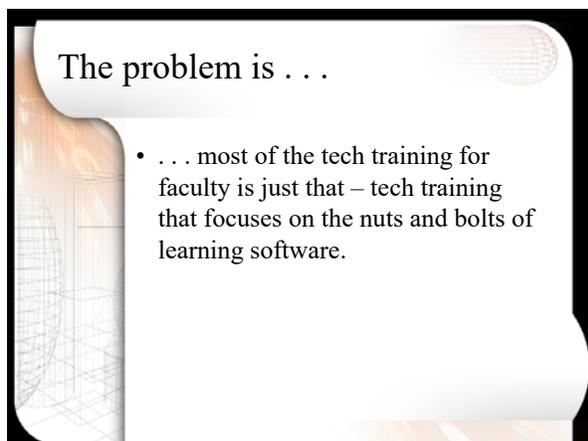Source: http://www.bgsu.edu/departments/tcom/diffusion.html

Who are the "Middle 60%"?

- They are *not* the first ones in.
- They're not the ones that drive into Des Moines!
- They have a low tolerance for technical problems.
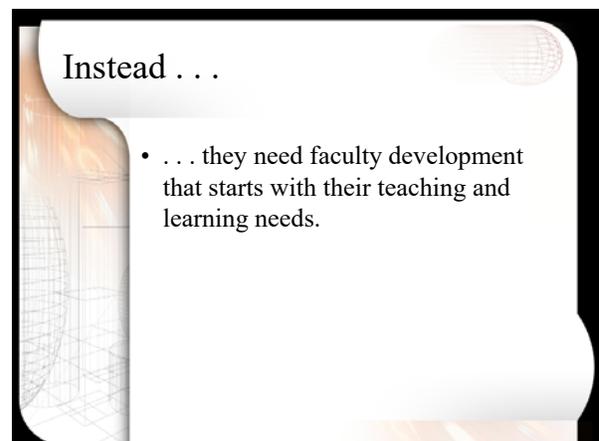- They need to see some quick gain for the pain.

In other words . . .

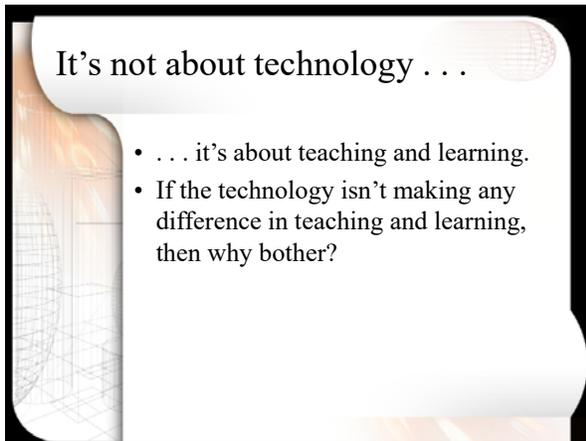- . . . the technology has to meet some need to warrant the effort.

The problem is . . .

- . . . most of the tech training for faculty is just that – tech training that focuses on the nuts and bolts of learning software.
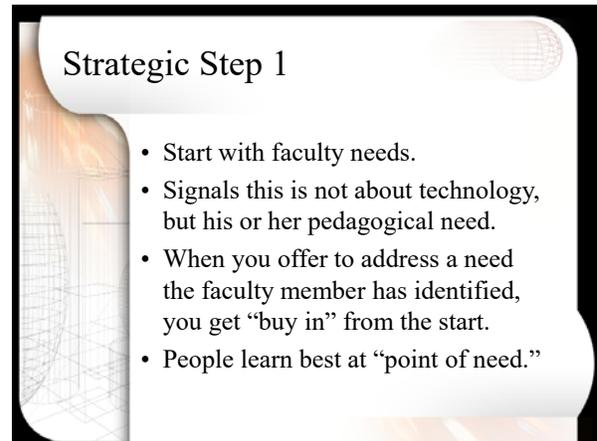
Instead . . .

- . . . they need faculty development that starts with their teaching and learning needs.

It's not about technology . . .

- . . . it's about teaching and learning.
- If the technology isn't making any difference in teaching and learning, then why bother?

Strategic Step 1

- Start with faculty needs.
- Signals this is not about technology, but his or her pedagogical need.
- When you offer to address a need the faculty member has identified, you get "buy in" from the start.
- People learn best at "point of need."
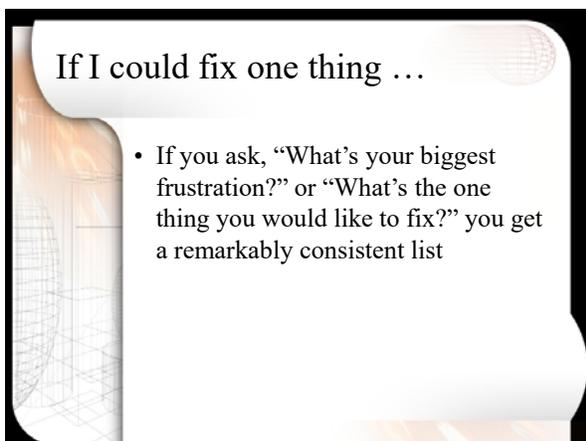
If I could fix one thing …

- If you ask, "What's your biggest frustration?" or "What's the one thing you would like to fix?" you get a remarkably consistent list
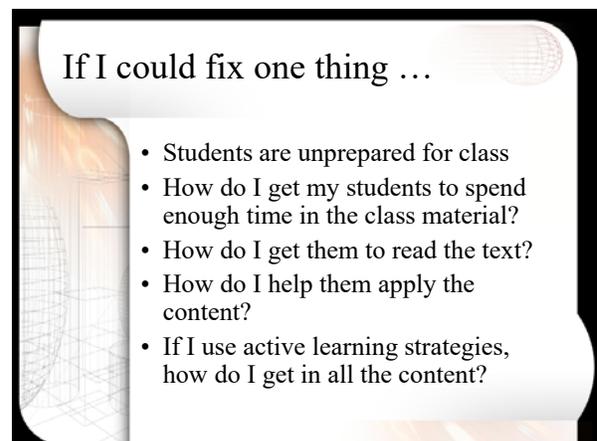
If I could fix one thing …

- Students are unprepared for class
- How do I get my students to spend enough time in the class material?
- How do I get them to read the text?
- How do I help them apply the content?
- If I use active learning strategies, how do I get in all the content?

Strategic Tip

- Avoid the lose/lose clash of coverage vs. process.
- Recognize the validity of both.
- Find a solution that honors both (e.g., The "Classroom Flip").

Strategic Step 2

- Focus faculty *development* on identifying instructional strategies that have helped other faculty address the need.

Strategic Step 3

- Focus individual faculty *training* on immediate skills needed to implement the strategy.

Go with the flow

What is your Instructional Need?

What is an appropriate Instructional Strategy?

How does IT (network, CMS, etc.) support the strategy?

What are your personal development needs?

The Matrix

- Provide a matrix of needs, related strategies and tech support.

The Matrix

Need	Strategy	CMS Support
My student's aren't prepared for class discussion because they haven't kept up with the reading.	Use more frequent quizzes over the text readings.	**Online quizzes** can be set up to be made available right up to the time class starts and then turn off. Students must read the material & take the quiz before class.
	Encourage their engagement with the readings through discussion of key points with others in the class.	Set up discussion groups for the class in the **Threaded Discussion** area in which regular discussion of text reading can be done.

Strategic Tip

- The tech may just be a tool to allow other things to happen in the classroom.

Strategic Tip

- Don't throw all of the features of the technology at faculty in training sessions.
  - Overwhelms them
  - Unconnected with needs
  - Not at point of need

Try the psychoanalytic approach

- Give the faculty "permission" to try a single strategy in part of a class to meet a single need.

Oh, what a relief it is!

- Faculty feel relief at not being expected to "do it all."

Strategic Step 4

- "Innovators" and "Early Adopters" will be first, but limit their "front time"
  - Middle 60% faculty will discount their work
  - Get Middle 60% success stories in front of the faculty

Support

- Have a plan for local support
- Need a TLM-type
  - Teaching & Learning Mentor
  - at intersection of pedagogy and tech
  - connection between academic side and tech staff
  - Faculty status helps

Other Questions?

Response from Faculty

- "I'm finally able to teach the way I've always wanted to teach."
- "I can now use class time for discussions and learning activities I didn't have time for before. . . . [Now] we're able to focus on higher levels of learning in class."
- Class time is now used "for expanding on the topics and discussing them at a deeper level because they have been prepared before coming to class."

Response from Students

- "The class encouraged me to spend more time collaborating with other students."
- "[It] helped me dig inside myself and find out what I truly thought."
- "[It] helped me to internalize topics better because I had to think about the issues."
- The discussions were something that I spent a significant amount of time thinking about. . . . Because of this I remember a significant portion of what was discussed."

Strategic Tip

- Take advantage of support resources
  - Paul Bower's Webagogy site
  - www.imowa.org
  - www.merlot.org
  - two.merlot.org