

## Faith Animating Online Learning Selected Bibliography

### A

Akkerman, Jay Richard. "Visualize More: Effective Online Teaching Methods." In *Best Practices of Online Education: A Guide for Christian Higher Education*, edited by Mark A. Maddix, James Riley Estep, and Mary Ella Lowe, 91–100. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing Inc., 2012.

[https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL\\_INST/2cm1pj/alma991027208629705576](https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL_INST/2cm1pj/alma991027208629705576)

- Abstract:
  - (Summary from Book Preface) "In Chapter 8, Jay Akkerman encourages online educators to develop online courses that appeal to the students' visual capacities. He gives a historical and theological basis for how the Church used visual art and icons to communicate Christian ideas before printing was the norm. Effective online courses use a variety of visual components" (xii).
- IFL Notes:
  - The basic insight of this chapter is valuable and not discussed much elsewhere: Christian teachers should attend to the visual aspects of their courses. This emphasis on the educational benefits of the visual stands within a long Christian tradition and finds expression, for instance, in magnificent stained-glass windows in cathedrals that both instruct and foster imagination. Although many instructors tend to be text-focused, visuals become even more important in an online environment. Akkerman recommends standardizing fonts, recognizing the role of negative space, paying attention to image resolution, and avoiding visual clutter. Faculty should also learn from leaders in visual design, such as magazines, as well as from their own students' approaches to creative assignments.

Appiah, John, and Safary Wa-Mbaleka. "Integrating Faith and Learning in Distance Education in the Ghanaian Context." *International Forum* 18, no. 2 (2016): 83–104.

<https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.1.1094.1525>.

- Abstract:
  - Seventh-day Adventist education is unique because it is holistic and redemptive in nature. All components of the curriculum are geared toward students' redemption by connecting them to Jesus Christ. Scriptures are expected to be an integral part of the academic programs to develop students' spirituality. Programs such as church services, group meetings, and weeks of prayer are organized to connect resident students to Jesus Christ. Distance learning students, however, do not benefit from these programs. This paper synthesizes the philosophy of Adventist education, defines distance education, and recommends ways to integrate faith and learning among distance education students to provide an opportunity for them to accept Jesus as their personal Savior and Lord. The paper can help other faith-based institutions to effectively integrate faith and learning in their curricula for distance learning.

- IFL Notes:
  - Appiah and Wa-Mbaleka speak from an Adventist perspective and an African context, but many of their insights apply to Christian colleges in North America. They underscore the need to think through how faith relates to every stage of course development and delivery. Facilitators could begin each course module with devotional reflections, use instructional materials that engage the biblical perspective, and encourage students in discussions to speak about their faith.

Ascough, Richard S. “Designing for Online Distance Education: Putting Pedagogy Before Technology.” *Teaching Theology & Religion* 5, no. 1 (2002): 17–29.  
[https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL\\_INST/122ppak/wj10.1111%252F1467-9647.00114](https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL_INST/122ppak/wj10.1111%252F1467-9647.00114)

- Abstract:
  - Theological schools are increasingly exploring online distance education as a mode of course delivery. Yet while online course delivery has the potential for effective, deep learning it can also have a number of pitfalls. This article introduces online distance education and examines in detail the pedagogical possibilities for online learning by providing a number of examples drawn from online courses. While championing the use of online course delivery for theological schools, it also sounds a note of caution by advocating that the use of technology should be driven by sound pedagogical principles. Putting pedagogy before technology will insure quality education no matter what the content or mode of delivery.
- IFL Notes:
  - This article comes from an earlier period in online education, and many of the insights also appear in other publications. Nevertheless, the subtitle, “putting pedagogy before technology” serves as a clear reminder that learning must remain the goal of online courses, despite certain enticements to incorporate technology for technology’s sake. Ascough addresses the benefits and possible pitfalls of online education. He notes, for instance, that instructors must guard against trying to include too much content in the course. The article then details four steps of course design: undertaking analysis; setting goals and objectives; selecting teaching strategies; and administering evaluations. Many of the examples come from an online Luke-Acts course that Ascough taught. The article might be useful to someone teaching online for the first time, especially in biblical studies.

Ascough, Richard S. “Welcoming Design—Hosting a Hospitable Online Course.” *Teaching Theology & Religion* 10, no. 3 (2007): 131–36.  
[https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL\\_INST/122ppak/wj10.1111%252Fj.1467-9647.2007.00340.x](https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL_INST/122ppak/wj10.1111%252Fj.1467-9647.2007.00340.x)

- Abstract:
  - A discussion about how instructors can host a hospitable online learning environment can address one of the fundamental philosophical and theological concerns frequently expressed about online learning – the loss of face-to-face

interaction and, with it, the loss of community building (cf. Delamarter 2005, 138). This perceived link between physical presence and community creation, sometimes articulated, frequently assumed, often stands in the way of instructors, administrators, and even institutions fully embracing online learning. This article will argue that when one gives due attention to hospitality, the potential for building online community is greatly enhanced, and with it comes a more effective pedagogical strategy for deep learning. It will conclude with some general recommendations for employing hospitality for building online learning communities.

- IFL Notes:
  - This article provides a theologically rich metaphor for an online course: hospitality. Ascough argues that “hospitality is central to effective constructivist student learning both on- and offline” (131). The different activities of the host align with duties of online teachers: welcoming guests, breaking the ice, fostering conversation, promoting participation, forming connections, giving feedback, avoiding authoritarianism, respecting privacy, and giving closure. Some of these connections (e.g., providing feedback) may stretch the metaphor, but Ascough makes a strong case that the metaphor fits with many of an instructors’ roles.
  - The metaphor has several advantages. First, it naturally connects to the emphasis on community among researchers in online education. Second, it provides a positive role for instructors in online courses. Instructors tend to be less central in online classes; as the saying goes, they move from being a sage on the stage to a guide on the side. The hospitality metaphor can help instructors regain a positive sense of their role instead of focusing on its seeming diminution. Third, hospitality has deep roots in Scripture (e.g., Genesis 18; Matthew 25:35; 1 Peter 4:9; Hebrews 13:2) and in Christian tradition.

Asumang, Annang. “Fostering Spiritual Formation at a Distance: Review of the Current Debates, and a Biblically Grounded Proposal for Maximizing Its Effectiveness as Part of Ministerial Formation.” *Conspectus: The Journal of the South African Theological Seminary* 22, no. 9 (2016): 2–38.

- Abstract:
  - Due to its enormous advantages, especially within the current context of massive technological advances, distance education has globally become a major component of tertiary higher education. Despite this being eminently true of the theological disciplines, controversies rage as to its efficacy for nurturing spiritual and ministerial formation. Doubters view the enterprise in pernicious terms; their main objection being that bodily absence undermines efficacy of formation at a distance, which in itself also lacks sound biblical and theological foundation. Enthusiasts on the other hand, rebuff these criticisms and question whether it is currently viable to foster the formation of theologically effective ministers without adopting the insights, methods, and tools of distance education. This article summarises the contours of these debates, and critically evaluates some of the proposals that have been propounded for its theological underpinnings. It concludes by proposing that the Pastoral Epistles provide the biblical mandate, appropriate models, and

pastoral principles for maximising the efficacy and effectiveness of ministerial formation through distance education.

- IFL Notes:
  - Asumang recommends that institutions be intentional about implementing distance education and that instructors take advantage of all the tools of interactivity that the internet provides. Instructors must also be deliberate about their pastoral engagement with students. Asumang writes, “Apparently minor teacher activities such as prayerful interest shown in the student’s personal development, brief encouragement expressed in the assessments and mere intentional and personalised attentiveness to students may have positive benefits far in excess of what sometimes may result from the same actions in residential settings” (19).
  - Although other scholars have noted how the letters from the Apostle Paul to the churches serve as examples of formation at a distance, Asumang notes the particular relevance of the pastoral epistles. Within these pastoral epistles, Paul modeled formation at a distance by being vulnerable and attending to the needs of the recipients. Paul also strove to connect on a personal level with the recipients, and he engaged in formational praxes, such as exhortations and prayers. Overall, the Pastoral Epistles “exude the intentionality which is a prerequisite of any effective formational program” (31).
  - Although Asumang’s discussion of specific online practices is relatively short, he rightly points to the usefulness of Paul’s pastoral epistles as particularly relevant models for distance educators in a Christian context.

## B

Babyak, Andrew T. “A Teaching Strategy for a Christian Virtual Environment.” *Journal of Research on Christian Education* 24, no. 1 (2015): 63–77.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10656219.2015.1008080>.

- Abstract:
  - The current landscape in education is changing rapidly as online learning programs are experiencing great growth. As online learning grows, many professors and students are entering into new learning environments for the first time. While online learning has proven to be successful in many cases, it is not a journey upon which Christian professors or students should begin without some preparation. This article articulates a basic Christian teaching strategy by providing recommendations for those who are entering the online environment for the first time or desire to improve their online teaching effectiveness. These principles and recommendations are presented so that Christian professors can create Christian virtual environments in which they can have a significant impact on their students’ spiritual development in an online environment. It is critical that professors design their courses with the needs of online students in mind, ensuring that students of all learning styles are able to excel. Furthermore, professors should understand that online teaching often takes more time than traditional methods of teaching,

increasing the importance of clear instructions and communication with students.

- IFL Notes:
  - This article contains many helpful insights for both new and experienced instructors. Babyak encourages instructors to “adapt a biblically based, relational pedagogy” (65), which includes acknowledging that instructors are on a learning journey as well. Instructors should encourage students in an online environment, pray for (and with) them, and refer to spiritual truths. The second part of the article lists nine practical tips for instructors; these tips are not specific to a Christian institution.

Baker, Jason D. “Characteristics of Successful Online Students.” In *Best Practices of Online Education: A Guide for Christian Higher Education*, edited by Mark A. Maddix, James Riley Estep, and Mary Ella Lowe, 101–6. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing Inc., 2012.

[https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL\\_INST/2cm1pj/alma991027208629705576](https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL_INST/2cm1pj/alma991027208629705576)

- Abstract:
  - (Summary from Book Preface) “In Chapter 9, Jason Baker addresses the theological foundations of students as image bearers of God. He provides practical advice for how students can succeed in online courses. This includes technological literacy, strong reading skills, the ability to communicate effectively in writing, good time management, and being an independent and autonomous learner” (xii).
- IFL Notes:
  - Baker addresses myths of online learning, including that online classes are easy or that they are all alike. He also lists qualities of successful online students. This short book chapter could be of some benefit to students but also to instructors who could address the myths directly at the beginning of the course and encourage students to develop these qualities for success.

Baltrip, T. Ryan. “Identifying Standards of Quality in Christian Online Theological Education.” Ph.D., University of South Florida, 2015.

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- Abstract:
  - As indicated by distance learning professionals at ATS-accredited schools, this study: (a) identified 24 standards of quality for Christian online theological education, (b) discovered insights on how well these leaders perceive they are implementing quality standards, and (c) identified areas of both success and challenge when trying to implement quality standards in Christian theological education. These research findings led to two conclusions and produced seven key themes for Christian online theological education. The implications of these findings and suggestions for future research were discussed in order to help Christian theological education not

only survive the educational revolution it is immersed in, but to thrive within it.

- IFL Notes:
  - At the beginning of the dissertation, Baltrip contextualizes the discussion of effective online teaching within theological and spiritual concerns, but most of the best practices themselves would apply to Christian and secular institutions. Baltrip lists seven of the most important themes for online theological education on p. 174, with further discussion in the following pages: “provide clear directions”; “require consistent involvement from instructor and students”; “aim at learning goals and objectives”; “practice clear instructional design”; “use various forms of learning interactions”; “develop critical and creative thinking skills”; and “encourage spiritual development.” He advocates for effective training of instructors and encourages instructors not to become frustrated in their efforts, even as they fall short of the ideal. Instructors and administrators could find value in Baltrip’s review of the literature on online theological education and his list of best practices.

Bauer, Christine, and Mary Jones. “Online Course Design Considerations.” In *Best Practices of Online Education: A Guide for Christian Higher Education*, edited by Mark A. Maddix, James Riley Estep, and Mary Ella Lowe, 163–72. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing Inc., 2012.

[https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL\\_INST/2cm1pj/alma991027208629705576](https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL_INST/2cm1pj/alma991027208629705576)

- Abstract:
  - (Summary from Book Preface): “In Chapters 15 and 16, Christine Bauer and Mary Jones focus on curriculum mapping and course design. They argue that once an institution decides to launch an online program, it is important to develop a curriculum map to ensure effective learning. Program development includes the establishment of program learning outcomes based on institutional and national standards. They recommend a Course Development Team (CDT) consisting of experts in instructional design and content to develop the on line course” (xii).
- IFL Notes:
  - This book chapter is a very helpful breakdown of the course design process (through the ADDIE system) and can serve as a useful checklist for instructors designing online courses. The section on integrating faith within a course subdivides into three sections: course content; student-to-student community; and student-to-faculty relationships. Under the first category, Bauer and Jones recommend such practices as devotionals and addressing Christian principles throughout the course. Under the second section, they suggest including a prayer request discussion board. Under the third category, they encourage faculty to share testimonies and speak of their own life experiences. The chapter underscores the need for faculty to be intentional about integrating faith into online courses, attending to the differences between face-to-face and online instruction.

Bauer, Christine, and Mary Jones. "Online Program and Curriculum Mapping." In *Best Practices of Online Education: A Guide for Christian Higher Education*, edited by Mark A. Maddix, James Riley Estep, and Mary Ella Lowe, 155–62. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing Inc., 2012.  
[https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL\\_INST/2cm1pj/alma991027208629705576](https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL_INST/2cm1pj/alma991027208629705576)

- Abstract:
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- IFL Notes:
  - This chapter is especially helpful to administrators, including step-by-step instructions for developing an online program. Nevertheless, it is of limited applicability to teachers. Additionally, little of the book chapter addresses specifically Christian concerns.

Beaudoin, Tom. "Faith in Music: Attempting a Free, Public, Online Course in Practical Theology." *Practical Matters*, no. 12 (2019): 39–52.

- Abstract:
  - The author reviews a free, open, online course on popular music that he taught from a practical theological perspective. By considering several dimensions of the structure and content of the course, and with continual reference to literature in practical theology and cultural studies, he attempts to identify its practical theological significance and to detail a critique opening onto a reconstruction for future iterations of such a course.
- IFL Notes:
  - The article unfolds as an autobiographical narrative about the author's approach to teaching an online course on music and faith. The students came from a variety of backgrounds and were not necessarily Christian. The article is a model for how a teacher of an online course can be intentional about the theological implications of every aspect of a course, from how and where to advertise the course to the teaching process itself. The author was particularly attentive to social justice concerns. Nevertheless, because the course was a kind of mini-MOOC (Massive Open Online Course), many of the concerns would not be applicable to instructors at institutions teaching online courses with more limited enrollments.

Blier, Helen M. “Webbing the Common Good: Virtual Environment, Incarnated Community, and Education for the Reign of God.” *Teaching Theology & Religion* 11, no. 1 (2008): 24–31. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9647.2007.00393.x>.

- Abstract:
  - Online technologies, recently embraced by seminaries to respond to changing student needs and demographics, compel practitioners to ask questions about the content, methods, and desired outcomes of teaching/learning experiences. Indeed, as Delamarter and Brunner have pointed out in this journal [*Teaching Theology & Religion*] (2005), many seminaries have turned to these strategies only to find that the issues are not technological; rather, they are pedagogical. This article discusses the insights generated by one such teaching experiment, a hybrid course on religious education for social justice. Through this educational experiment, the professor and students discovered that the format of the hybrid course proved to be an effective means by which to promote the praxis of social justice as well as develop some of the skills essential for effective ministry and education. The article begins with the rationale of the course design and content and continues with the perspectives of the students and instructor in reflection on the experiment. It concludes with some preliminary insights into the potential usefulness of hybrid learning for both peace and justice education as well as its value in the overall formation of educators and ministers.
- IFL Notes:
  - The fact that this article addresses one specific course in a seminary context limits its applicability somewhat. Nevertheless, some of the insights are more broadly applicable. The article notes the importance of institutional factors: “administrative approval, the support of a technological infrastructure and skilled IT personnel at the university, and a culture open to the possibilities of pedagogical innovation” (26).
  - Blier also emphasizes how the instructor’s role in an online course changes. Because the instructor is less central, student-student interaction increases. Students relied more on online resources for research, and their comments in discussions were often more deliberate than in-class comments, as they had more time to prepare. One interesting practice that Blier used was encouraging students to use some ritual before logging into the class in order to set apart the time as “sacred” and feel a connection to the community. This ritual could include “lighting a candle, wearing a piece of university logo clothing, using a particular mug, and viewing class pictures” (27). Such a ritual could help students feel like they are more part of the community, although one wonders how many students actually adopted it.



Borst, Michael J. "Online Discussions Improve Student Perceptions of Instructor Efforts to Relate Faith to Learning in Graduate Occupational Therapy Courses." *Christian Higher Education* 16, no. 4 (2017): 255–65. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15363759.2017.1328319>.

- Abstract:
  - This article presents the results of a retrospective controlled study conducted in a graduate occupational therapy program. The study examined the effect that an online discussion targeting integration of faith and learning had on student perceptions of instructor effectiveness in relating faith to learning. This study addresses the following question: Does the addition of a single online discussion targeting integration of faith and learning in graduate occupational therapy courses significantly increase student ratings on a course evaluation question addressing faith–learning integration? This study also asked two secondary questions: 1. Do online students and face-to-face students both respond favorably to the addition of an online discussion targeting faith–learning integration? 2. Do students in three different courses all respond favorably to the addition of an online discussion targeting the integration of faith and learning? Data were collected from three different courses taught by the same professor between Fall 2009 and Fall 2013 (four sections of each course; N = 138). The ordinal data were analyzed using nonparametric tests to determine significant differences and effect sizes. The results indicated that the addition of a single online discussion addressing faith–learning integration can significantly increase student perceptions of instructor effectiveness in such integration within graduate occupational therapy coursework, both in face-to-face and online learning environments. These findings provide support for the use of online discussions to challenge students to integrate Christian faith beliefs with what they are learning in their area of study.
- IFL Notes:
  - Because this article is a case-study of particular courses in occupational therapy, its findings have to be adjusted for other disciplines and courses. Moreover, one can ponder whether the minimalistic approach (adding one discussion) is the best way of conceiving of integrating faith and learning in an entire course. At the same time, the article provides a good example of how faith can be integrated in a domain where it is more difficult to see the relationship between instruction and the Christian faith. Students viewed a video or had a reading, to which they responded in a discussion by answering specific questions. The instructor would also post his own response toward the end of the discussion time. The instructor’s interactions in the discussion were mostly through questions. A course could have multiple such discussions, and the approach works in face-to-face courses, hybrid courses, and all online courses.

Bunt-Kokhuis, Sylvia, van de, and Nabil Sultan. "Servant-Leadership: The Online Way! E-Learning Where Community Building Is Key." *European Journal of Open, Distance and E-Learning*, 2012. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ979595>

- Abstract:
  - The digitalisation of educational communities has increased rapidly in the last decade. Modern technologies transform the way educational leaders such as teachers, tutors, deans and supervisors view and manage their educational communities. More often, educational leaders offer a variety of gateways, guiding the e-learners in their search for finding and understanding information. A new type of leader is required for understanding the needs and requirements of geographically dispersed e-learners. This calls for a compassionate kind of leader, able to reconcile the dilemma of high-tech versus hi-touch in the online classroom. This article examines servant-leadership and its implications for e-learning in the 24/7 classroom where community building is key.
- IFL Notes:
  - This article seems somewhat disjointed, with parts seemingly disconnected to the larger theme; its discussion ranges through various topics: servant-leadership, steps to building community, digital storytelling, the need to adapt to different cultures, service learning opportunities. Nevertheless, servant leadership is a helpful model for instructors to adopt. Servant-leadership qualities include "listening, forgiveness, empathy, humility, care for people and the organization, healing of relationships, awareness, persuasion, courage, giving feedback, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, authenticity, commitment to the growth and empowerment of others and building community" (1–2). The authors list attributes of e-learning on p. 3, along with the related servant-leadership qualities.
  - The article often uses language redolent of Christianity (e.g., shepherd leaders searching for lost sheep), but the deepest roots of the article are in Islam (with the shepherd leadership image from Confucianism). This article underscores that a successful online course does not arise from completing a checklist but is connected to the teacher herself/himself.

## C

Casimiro, Leni T. "Faith Presence: Creating Online Environments That Nurture Faith." *Journal of Adventist Education* 80, no. 1 (March 2018): 16–21.

- Abstract:
  - (No Abstract Available)
- IFL Notes:
  - This article is very similar to Casimiro 2017 but written for a more popular audience, focusing less on the empirical study, and with more direct application. As with other Adventist scholarship in faith and teaching, there is significant focus on piety and spiritual practices. Such connections to the Adventist tradition can be a model for teachers to engage with their own particular Christian traditions. The article also shows the wide range of different areas where faith can be integrated in a course, from the course

content itself to discussions to fieldwork to personal interactions with the teacher.

- Casimiro notes that devotionals should not simply be stand-alone but should be integrated into activities or discussions in order to encourage participation. This observation underscores the fact that faith should not simply be an appendix added to the course in order to fulfill institutional requirements, but instructors should rather attempt to get students engaged and interested in considering faith in light of the course.

Casimiro, Leni T. “Faith Presence: How Students Live Faith in the Online Classroom.” *International Forum* 20, no. 2 (2017): 90–108.

- Abstract:
  - With the increasing share of online learning in mainstream education systems around the world, there is no doubt that online learning has become a disruptive innovation in the current era. Even Christian schools, with their distinctively faith-integrated curriculum that aims to transform students’ lives, are increasingly engaged in the new modality. However, Clayton Christensen, the guru of disruptive innovation, believes that changing people’s lives is something hard for online learning to accomplish. Challenged by this argument, this paper attempts to answer the question: Is it possible to instill faith through online education? Course materials, discussion transcripts, and written interviews of students in three fully online classes in a Christian graduate school, were examined to find out if students experience faith presence in their classes. Results showed varying levels of faith presence in the three classes. Further observations and interviews revealed conditions for achieving faith presence in the online environment.
- IFL Notes:
  - Casimiro advocates for an “Integrated Community of Inquiry” model that adds “faith presence” to the three elements of the widely used Community of Inquiry model: cognitive presence, social presence, and teaching presence. Within the model, faith presence is the matrix for each of the other presences. “Faith presence” can be defined as “the exercise of faith in a teaching-learning situation as a result of faith-learning integration” (94). The study uses the “The Integration Profile” developed by David Miller to study three different online courses in education, health, and business. Casimiro thus shows that it is possible to engage with faith in a variety of online classes. Ways of increasing faith presence include incorporating devotionals into courses and integrating the Christian perspective into course content and discussions.

Cassell, Sandra K., and Brenda Merkel. “Integrating Salt & Light in Online Courses.” *Christian Business Academy Review* 13, no. 1 (2018): 11–16.

- Abstract:
  - The distinctiveness of Christian higher education and the positive outcomes of integrating faith and learning has been a continuous publication topic. With recent technology advances and increasing demand for distance learning,

Christian professors are now searching for effective ways to integrate salt and light into their online courses. This article will address two topics. First, it reviews scholarship to discern whether professors not only have a spiritual calling but also a professional obligation to educate in a manner that is broader than discipline alone. Second, it offers best practices for integrating salt and light into online higher education business courses.

- IFL Notes:
  - This article applies the principles of effective Christian online education—drawing heavily upon Jung 2015—to the area of business education. At the same time, although some of the examples relate to business, most of the insights apply to a range of online courses. Cassell and Merkel break online courses down into six different elements and discuss how faith relates to many of these elements. For instance, videos are an important element of online courses, and instructors can introduce the Christian worldview in an introductory video. Even feedback can be an opportunity to show students that the instructor cares. The article ends by noting that instructors can only meaningfully engage faith when they themselves are mature believers. Although the article is relatively basic, it provides a model for how instructors can consider how faith relates to each element of a course.

Cunningham, Aliel. “Envisioning Christian Presence and Practice in Online Teaching Contexts.” *International Journal of Christianity and English Language Teaching* 6, no. 1 (2019): 3–19.

- Abstract:
  - Sweeping changes across the landscape of higher education have made colleges and universities around the country and around the world reassess their mission and reevaluate their priorities. One paradigm shift that is affecting both Christian and non-Christian institutions alike is adjusting to how new technological platforms for course offerings are changing the way curriculum content is shared and interactions with others is mediated. This shift can be seen most readily in the almost universal trend toward offering more courses online either through blended learning or completely online program models. As this trend continues, Christian educators (especially those in ELT training or teaching) need to wrestle with how this change in the mode of instruction can open up new opportunities to teach in ways that are distinctly Christian and reflect the presence of Christ into a now virtual classroom. This article seeks to contribute to this conversation and prompt further discussion and shared reflection on this topic.
- IFL Notes:
  - This article is autobiographical, describing Cunningham’s entry into teaching a language assessment course online. Cunningham attempts to translate the David I. Smith and James K. A. Smith edited volume, *Teaching and Christian Practices* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), into an online setting. The article addresses five themes. First, online instructors should convey Christian presence. They can do this, for instance, by letting students know that they are praying for them and soliciting prayer requests. Second, instructors should

foster hospitality. Third, instructors should approach the curriculum as “formative practice.” In other words, the students do not simply receive knowledge passively but rather learn through participating in the course community. Fourth, and relatedly, instructors must encourage course community. Finally, instructors should form personal connections with students’ desires, aspirations, and expectations.

- Although the article is somewhat abstract, the five themes are helpful points of orientation for online instructors. Whereas many discussions of faith and learning integration, including in online learning, focus on cognitive aspects of Christianity, Cunningham recognizes the need to attend to deeper formational elements of online courses in the vein of situative/situated approaches to learning as exemplified by the Smith and Smith edited volume. Such an approach opens up an entirely new set of questions about ways that the course is *forming* learners.

## D

Dalton, Valerie, Bligh Grant, Theresa Smith-Ruig, and Kay Hemsall. “Developing the Virtuous Self in an Online MBA: Reflections on Instruments and Processes.” *International Journal of Business and Management*, vol. 10, no. 10 (2015): 1–8.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ijbm.v10n10p1>

- Abstract:
  - The relationship between virtue ethics and leadership is profound and has been the subject of sustained examination (see, for example, Fontrodona et al., 2012). The core of these debates has centred on the way in which a life of the good, conceived as a process of self-awareness built through experience and reflection, has the capacity to comprise the people who inhabit, lead, and constitute organizations. Prima facie management education ought to entail the explicit development of the virtuous self, rather than this being a residual element to overall education. This requires a more reflective approach to management teaching practice. We are challenged in this endeavour by our status as providers of online education. Our central concern in this paper is to provide an account of a Leadership Development ePortfolio, particularly its development to a program of online leadership skill development. This includes, among other skills, the development of reflective practice skills, development of self-awareness, self-mastery (Senge, 1990), and a consideration of how to apply those skills to others (e.g.: mentoring) and with others (e.g., team learning, service learning). We argue that introducing these elements to a program fosters the development of ethically virtuous management graduates.
- IFL Notes:
  - Although this article centers on a course in an MBA program and is not specific to a Christian context, many aspects of the article can be adapted to a range of disciplines in a Christian context. The article models how instructors can engage students’ character and connect them to mentors in their local contexts (i.e., where they live while they take the course remotely). A portfolio with various self-reflections can be an effective tool for cultivating students’ virtues at a distance.

Delamarter, Steve. "Theological Educators and Their Concerns about Technology." *Teaching Theology and Religion* 8, no. 3 (2005): 131–43.

[https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL\\_INST/122ppak/wj10.1111%252Fj.1467-9647.2005.00237.x](https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL_INST/122ppak/wj10.1111%252Fj.1467-9647.2005.00237.x)

- Abstract:
  - Based on results from interviews with theological educators at forty-five seminaries in North America, the author begins by listing twenty-six concerns expressed about technology in theological education, particularly the concerns about electronically mediated distance education. These concerns are categorized loosely under three headings: Practical and Personal Concerns, Pedagogical and Educational Concerns, and Philosophical and Theological Concerns. More important than the list is the sociology of decision-making surrounding technology among theological educators. In the final section of the article entitled, "how concerns about technology function within institutions," the author discusses how it is that these concerns are allowed to function in very different ways across the spectrum of theological education today.
- IFL Notes:
  - Although the article—which is closely related to the 2004 article by Delamarter—is fifteen years old, it remains insightful because it addresses the culture of institutions succeeding with online teaching. This culture is ultimately formed by everyone, so the article would be helpful to administrators, faculty, and even students. After describing the different concerns that administrators and faculty have voiced regarding online education, Delamarter divides institutions into a typology of three stages, although he recognizes that they do not always fall into easily separable categories and that they do not always progress in a linear fashion. Stage three institutions have matured with respect to online education. People at such institutions tend to have nuanced views of such delivery, neither completely positive nor completely negative. Administrators and faculty also tie online education to the mission of the institution and have developed best practices. Such best practices also inform face-to-face teaching.

Delamarter, Steve. "A Typology of the Use of Technology in Theological Education." *Teaching Theology & Religion* 7, no. 3 (2004): 134–40.

[https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL\\_INST/122ppak/wj10.1111%252Fj.1467-9647.2004.00203.x](https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL_INST/122ppak/wj10.1111%252Fj.1467-9647.2004.00203.x)

- Abstract:
  - This essay explores the terrain of technology in theological education and offers a typology for how technology is used in seminary contexts. The author surveys 43 seminaries in North America to gain insight into the attitudes of faculty toward the use of technology in their teaching and for use in the preparation of ministers. Reflections on the typology in the concluding section offer fuel for subsequent work on the topic.

- IFL Notes:
  - Despite the date of this article, its typology is still useful. Delamarter observes three stages among institutions with respect to online teaching, and he further subdivides these. The stages are not necessarily linear; institutions can move back and forth among them. Stage three institutions, which have achieved a mature culture surrounding online instruction, can serve as models for faculty and administrators. Delamarter claims that faculty at such institutions have found that lessons from online instruction inform face-to-face teaching and that online teaching opens new opportunities for achieving the institution's mission. At the same time, institutions usually do not reach stage three because the faculty push for online teaching; rather, institutional crisis and visionary leadership tend to be the motivations.

Deulen, Angela A. "Social Constructivism and Online Learning Environments: Toward a Theological Model for Christian Educators." *Christian Education Journal* 10, no. 1 (2013): 90–98.

[https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL\\_INST/122ppak/gale\\_ofa326851740](https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL_INST/122ppak/gale_ofa326851740)

- Abstract:
  - While many theories exist to explain the phenomenon of learning, one of the oldest and most supported models is Vygotsky's social constructivism. Although once a forgotten voice, many of the newer Western studies support this model. The present paper discusses social constructivism as an andragogical model for Christian educators teaching in online learning environments and offers possible frameworks and strategies for doing so.
- IFL Notes:
  - This short article provides a helpful summary of social constructivism, although the focus is on Lev Vygotsky. Social constructivism has figured large in the literature on online teaching. Deulen provides an example of how Christians should look at the literature in the field of online learning and ask questions about how this literature relates to faith. In particular, she notes how the emphasis of Scripture on community—exemplified by the preponderance of the phrase "one another" in the New Testament—connects well to the communal context of learning in a social constructivist model. Moreover, Deulen finds that the social-relational aspects of the Trinitarian God model such community for human beings. Of course, one could expand on the brief discussion of the theological significance of social constructivism. The article tends to be abstract with little discussion of concrete ways of forming community in an online class.

**E**

Esselman, Thomas. "The Pedagogy of the Online Wisdom Community: Forming Church Ministers in a Digital Age." *Teaching Theology and Religion* 7, no. 3 (2004): 159–70. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9647.2004.00206.x>.

- Abstract:
  - While electronic learning is transforming the face of higher education today, some in the theological community question whether it is appropriate for the specific goals of graduate level theological formation for ministry. Drawing on the work of one theological faculty, this article answers yes. The author describes the school's hybrid model of distance education pedagogy. He discusses the underlying teaching and learning principles that guided the faculty in their development of this model, and, in particular, the pedagogical ideal of the learning cohort as a "wisdom community." Web-based instruction can be effectively designed to nurture wisdom communities for integrative learning. The author describes the "pedagogy of the online wisdom community" from his experience of Web-based distance education teaching. The growing demand for ministry formation programs, particularly in mission areas, underlines the urgent need for continued study of the role of technology in theological pedagogy.
- IFL Notes:
  - The article focuses on theological education, and thus some of its insights will not be appropriate outside that discipline. Esselman writes, "In the theological setting, wisdom involves the transformation of the person, a dynamic process that unites heart and mind in a holistic movement toward maturity in discipleship" (164). An online wisdom community encourages participants to engage with their experiences, read texts critically, and place one's whole self in dialogue with such texts. Technology facilitates learners' connections with one another and one another's experiences and collaboration in interpretation. The article underscores how online courses can be personally engaging and transforming in a holistic way.

Etzel, Gabriel Benjamin. "Implications of Theological Anthropology for Online Pedagogy in Graduate-Level Ministerial Training." Ph.D., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015. [https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL\\_INST/122ppak/proquest1696782234](https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL_INST/122ppak/proquest1696782234)

- Abstract:
  - The thesis of this dissertation is that by utilizing a biblical-theological framework, best practices of online graduate-level ministerial training can be presented in such a way that the role of the faculty, the objectives of the classroom, and the purpose of the institution are focused more effectively on the formation of students as ministers of the gospel. It is argued the role of the faculty member should be a model for students to follow, which necessitates institutions prioritize theological competencies ahead of technological and



pedagogical competencies when hiring faculty, and institutions prioritize the faculty member's ongoing spiritual formation in the development and evaluation of theological, pedagogical, and technological competencies. In addition, it is argued the objectives of the classroom should be formation-centered, which necessitates the faculty member should utilize social presence within online courses that prioritizes the formation of students over the learning of students, and the faculty member should create community with and among students, beyond social presence, that prioritizes the formation of students over the learning of students. Finally, it is argued the purpose of the institution should focus on the ministerial effectiveness of the student, which necessitates online graduate-level ministerial training should extend beyond the online classroom by utilizing the student's local church context for the spiritual formation and ministerial preparation of the students, and online graduate-level ministerial training should elevate the formation of the student as a minister of the gospel within the local church over the retention of the student of the knowledge gained by the student.

- Chapter 1 introduces the resource, *Best Practices of Online Education: A Guide for Christian Higher Education*, as one of the only resources seeking to present a comprehensive approach to the integration of theology, pedagogy, and technology. Chapter 2 considers how theological anthropology affects pedagogy and concludes with a presentation of David Powlison's Comprehensive Internal model as a biblical-theological framework. Chapters 3 and 5 focus on Powlison's epistemological priorities-- articulation biblical truth; critiquing, debunking, and reinterpreting alternative models; and, learning from defective models as it applies to online graduate-level ministerial training.
- IFL Notes:
  - This dissertation is a good example of establishing online teaching in biblical and theological foundations. At times, the author is heavy-handed in critiquing other models. Nevertheless, the author rightly notes the rich resources provided by the theology of the image of God, the Apostle Paul, and the example of Jesus. Readers can find a useful summarizing chart on page 156.

## F

Forrest, Benjamin K., and Mark A. Lamport. "Modeling Spiritual Formation from a Distance: Paul's Formation Transactions with the Roman Christians." *Christian Education Journal* 10, no. 1 (2013): 110–24.

[https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL\\_INST/122ppak/gale\\_ofa326851742](https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL_INST/122ppak/gale_ofa326851742)

- Abstract:
  - This article proposes that Paul's letter to the church in Rome can identify processes involved in offering a spiritually formative education from a distance. When Paul wrote the letter to Rome, he wrote to a church he had never visited. We argue that his relationship with the recipients is analogically similar to the relationship between professor and student in an online,

educational paradigm. Paul modeled how to offer this spiritually formative relationship by emphasizing the gospel message, grounding his scriptural authority, personalizing his message, anticipating questions, enlisting the community, encouraging the recipients, praying for needs, and explaining the marks of true Christianity.

- IFL Notes:
  - The article persuasively argues that Paul is a model of distance education. The authors note, for instance, that Paul grounds his message in the gospel, refers to Scripture, prays for the recipients, is transparent, holds people accountable, and invites them into dialogue. The article then connects the different aspects of Paul’s instruction to effective online teaching in a Christian context.
  - One issue with using Paul as an example is that Paul clearly prefers being face-to-face with the people he is forming (see, e.g., 1 Thessalonians 2:17)—a problem that the article acknowledges. The technology of online education, however, offers certain advantages to residential education (again, the article acknowledges this as well). Moreover, one significant difference between distance education and Paul’s letter to the Romans is that Paul is writing to a preexisting community of people who would read the letter together and discuss it. By contrast, online courses often must form the community entirely, and the students are usually geographically separated from one another (although the “geographical connections” item touches on this issue). The online context thus presents some additional challenges and opportunities compared to Paul’s context.

## G

Garrison, D. R. *E-Learning in the 21st Century: A Community of Inquiry Framework for Research and Practice*. 3rd ed. New York: Routledge, 2017.

- Abstract:
  - The third edition of *E-Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* provides a coherent, comprehensive, and empirically-based framework for understanding e-learning in higher education. Garrison draws on his decades of experience and extensive research in the field to explore technological, pedagogical, and organizational implications. The third edition has been fully updated throughout and includes new material on learning technologies, MOOCs, blended learning, leadership, and the importance and role of social connections in thinking and learning, highlighting the transformative and disruptive impact that e-learning has recently had on education.
- IFL Notes:
  - This book lays out the community of inquiry model that is perhaps the most important and widely cited framework for online instruction. The framework involves three presences (cognitive, social, and teaching) that overlap to form an educational experience. The framework is not specifically for a Christian context, but it is strongly based in social constructivism, which many Christian scholars note connects well to the communal aspects of Christianity. This book is relatively short but full of both theoretical discussion and practical application,

with more of an emphasis on the former. The integrated community of inquiry model, associated with Leni T. Casimiro and the Adventist Institute of Advanced Studies in Silang, Cavite, Philippines, adds “faith presence” to this framework as the matrix in which the community of inquiry develops.

Garrison, D. Randy, Terry Anderson, and Walter Archer. “Critical Inquiry in a Text-Based Environment: Computer Conferencing in Higher Education.” *The Internet and Higher Education*, vol. 2, no. 2–3 (1999): 87–105. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1096-7516\(00\)00016-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1096-7516(00)00016-6)

- Abstract:
  - The purpose of this study is to provide conceptual order and a tool for the use of computer-mediated communication (CMC) and computer conferencing in supporting an educational experience. Central to the study introduced here is a model of community inquiry that constitutes three elements essential to an educational transaction—cognitive presence, social presence, and teaching presence. Indicators (key words/phrases) for each of the three elements emerged from the analysis of computer-conferencing transcripts. The indicators described represent a template or tool for researchers to analyze written transcripts, as well as a guide to educators for the optimal use of computer conferencing as a medium to facilitate an educational transaction. This research would suggest that computer conferencing has considerable potential to create a community of inquiry for educational purposes.
- IFL notes:
  - This is a foundational article for considering communities of inquiry in online contexts. While this article does not approach the question of community and social presence from a faith- or virtue-formation perspective, it has some valuable insights into why students’ experience not just of intellectual engagement (“cognitive presence”) but also of the other elements of the class (“social” and “teaching” presence) are so helpful for online students’ learning. Garrison develops the model at greater length in the book *E-Learning in the 21st Century*.

Glanzer, Perry L., and Nathan F. Alleman. *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Teaching*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2019.

- Book Summary:
  - There are thousands of Christian professors, many of whom claim “Christian” as their primary identity and teaching as their primary responsibility. Much of the current literature about the integration of faith and learning focuses on the differences between Christian scholarship and Christian teaching. As a result, few books explore how Christian identity, or a particular Christian identity (e.g., Baptist, Anglican), shapes teaching. In addition, few works examine what identity-influenced teaching outside of one’s professional identity looks like in the contemporary university. One distinguishing feature of this book is that it addresses both those subjects by exploring responses of Christian professors to questions about how them. By drawing upon a mixed-methods survey of over 2,300 Christian professors, this book reveals the wide range of wisdom that

contemporary professors offer about how they practice faith-informed teaching. The second unique quality of this book is that it situates the findings of this study within the wider scholarly conversation about the role of identity-informed teaching. It describes the tensions within this conversation between those who advocate for restraining the influence of one's extraprofessional identities and those who, in the name of authenticity, promote the full integration of one's primary identities into the classroom. It then sets forth an original position that draws from empirical research to provide a nuanced approach to this issue. Overall, the book charts new ground regarding how professors think about Christian teaching in particular, as well as how professors should approach identity-informed teaching in general.

- IFL Notes:
  - This book does not address online education per se, yet it contains many insights into Christian teaching in general. Based on the survey data, Glanzer and Alleman distinguish two broad ways that instructors adapt their teaching in light of their faith commitments: spiritual addition and Christian transformation. Those adopting the first approach add objectives, content, and methods that are relevant to their faith. Christian transformation approaches, on the other hand, involve more radical reconceptualization and transformation. For instance, someone adopting the spiritual addition approach might add the objective that students become familiar with the Lutheran hymn tradition in a music class. Christian transformation could involve language teachers reorienting an entire course around loving people of a particular culture—a change that would naturally affect all objectives, content, and methods in the class. Although the surveys presumably concentrated on faculty teaching mostly in-person classes, many of the ways that they were allowing faith to animate their teaching could apply in an online teaching context.
  - The book follows the contours of the survey data, showing the various ways that faith-informed teaching takes place. Such teaching can be centered on the Christian metanarrative, incorporate Christian and Christian-inspired classroom practices, and involve the teacher as a model of virtue. (See especially the summary table of different approaches on p. 101.) Chapter five highlights ways that different Christian traditions influence teaching. Baptists and Evangelicals, for instance, tend to highlight the importance of Scripture, whereas Reformed, Quakers, and those in Wesleyan traditions may emphasize general revelation. Several chapters address faith-informed teaching in pluralistic universities and assess different teaching contexts.
  - Chapter eight briefly addresses institutions that are beginning to take the form of a “Christian-pluralistic online hybrid” (192). The authors express concern that students in such contexts can be more instrumentalist in their educational goals and perhaps have less patience for attempts at bringing faith into the classroom. Those teaching online classes can also often be hired under different terms or with different requirements compared to traditional faculty, and they may not receive as much training or encouragement to draw on their faith commitments in teaching. Christian colleges and universities must thus pay close attention to hiring practices and professional development in these areas.

- The book ends with a short concluding chapter that examines ways that Christian teaching can truly become *outrageous* in response to oppression. Drawing on examples from Poland and China, the authors describe how Christian education can continue even outside of institutional support and still maintain vitality and strength. One wonders if the online environment could be a place where such “outrageous” teaching could take place in contexts of oppression as well.
- Overall, this book contains a wealth of insights not only into how faith can influence teaching but also in how teachers are already drawing on faith commitments in the classroom. Many of the insights apply in an online environment just as in an in-person context.

Gresham, John. “The Divine Pedagogy as a Model for Online Education.” *Teaching Theology & Religion* 9, no. 1 (2006): 24–28. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9647.2006.00257.x>.

- Abstract:
  - In addition to the pragmatic concerns that often drive the use of technology in theological education, there is a need to develop theological justification and direction for online education. Several Roman Catholic Church documents propose the “divine pedagogy,” the manner in which God teaches the human race, as a model for catechesis or religious education. This can provide a rich resource for developing a theological pedagogy for online education. This is especially relevant to the justification for online education, because critics sometimes refer to the incarnational character of the divine pedagogy to argue against the disembodied nature of virtual education. This article addresses such criticisms and more constructively, relates several aspects of the divine pedagogy such as adaptation, community, and participation to teaching and learning in the online environment. (This paper was presented at Theology and Pedagogy in Cyberspace II conference in Evanston, Ill. on April 17, 2004.)
- IFL Notes:
  - Divine pedagogy, the process in which God teaches humanity, is a helpful model for understanding online teaching. Drawing from the Roman Catholic tradition, Gresham argues that theologians have understood divine pedagogy to be a process of adaptation, to include communitarian dimensions, to elicit the active participation of the audience, and to use signs and symbols to convey a message. Online education thus has a theologically rich comparison. Face-to-face education is not necessarily more incarnational, as instructors can be standoffish in person.
  - At a Protestant and Baptist university, instructors might emphasize more the divine pedagogy through Scripture itself, whereas this article naturally sees a more general pedagogy at work, stemming from its Roman Catholic approach.
  - Although the divine pedagogy model is helpful, there are two potential problems for emphasizing it as the central model. First, divine pedagogy can easily slip into an instructivist (students as passive recipients of knowledge from an instructor) rather than constructivist model. The article avoids this by noting that divine pedagogy creates a community, but this point is often lost in thinking about divine pedagogy. People can think of God as infinitely wise and knowledgeable and human beings as simply needing to be passively receptive of the message. Second, the divine pedagogy model could make instructors nervous because it

parallels the instructor to God. Given the importance of humility among instructors, could a divine pedagogy model that places God and online instructors in parallel erode such humility, even implicitly? Once again, the problem lies more in our own implicit assumptions about divine pedagogy rather than in the model itself. We could emphasize—and the article does indeed allude to this, albeit without using the term “humble”—that divine pedagogy is a humble act. Yet such nuance could be lost.

## H

Hale, Dale. “Online Faculty Development.” In *Best Practices of Online Education: A Guide for Christian Higher Education*, edited by Mark A. Maddix, James Riley Estep, and Mary Ella Lowe, 121–28. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing Inc., 2012.  
[https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL\\_INST/2cm1pj/alma991027208629705576](https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL_INST/2cm1pj/alma991027208629705576)

- Abstract:
  - (Summary from Book Preface) “In Chapter 11, Dale Hale focuses on the importance of providing continual training for online teachers. He argues that institutions need to have a training and development plan for online teachers” (xii).
- IFL Notes:
  - This book chapter is relatively basic. There are two main takeaways: 1) faculty must be intentional about learning the technology and methodology of online teaching, which will require a change from traditional faculty behavior; 2) institutions must be intentional about training faculty in these new ways.

Hege, Brent A. R. “The Online Theology Classroom: Strategies for Engaging a Community of Distance Learners in a Hybrid Model of Online Education.” *Teaching Theology & Religion* 14, no. 1 (2011): 13–20. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9647.2010.00668.x>.

- Abstract:
  - One factor contributing to success in online education is the creation of a safe and vibrant virtual community and sustained, lively engagement with that community of learners. In order to create and engage such a community instructors must pay special attention to the relationship between technology and pedagogy, specifically in terms of issues such as course design, social presence, specially tailored assignments, learner expectations, and objectives, and facilitation of sustained engagement with the course material, fellow learners, and the instructor. Several strategies for accomplishing this goal are presented here based on the author's experiences teaching second-career students in hybrid introductory theology courses at a mainline denominational seminary.
- IFL Notes:
  - This article is a case study of a particular course at a theological seminary, so it may not be relevant to everyone. At the same time, it may be helpful for instructors to read about different concrete examples of online courses. This

article focuses almost entirely on the structure of the course, including the weekly blogging and community-building discussion thread.

Heinemann, Mark H., and James Riley Estep Jr. "Educational Theory and Online Education." In *Best Practices of Online Education: A Guide for Christian Higher Education*, edited by Mark A. Maddix, James Riley Estep, and Mary Ella Lowe, 3–16. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing Inc., 2012.  
[https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL\\_INST/2cm1pj/alma991027208629705576](https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL_INST/2cm1pj/alma991027208629705576)

- Abstract:
  - (Summary from Book Preface): "In Chapter 1, James Estep and Mark Heinemann argue that a constructivist educational approach is needed for effective online teaching and learning. They give practical essentials of educational theory and processes that focus on the aim, content, teacher, learner, environment, evaluation, methods, and Triune God" (xi).
- IFL Notes:
  - This chapter includes a helpful but limited discussion of different educational theories (constructivism, Bloom's taxonomy, transactional distance theory, and connectivism) and their application to an online environment. The authors also briefly address the main elements of online teaching, including aims, content, learner, teacher, environment, methods, and evaluation.
  - The specific relation between faith and online teaching remains unclear in this chapter. Although the authors note that consideration of the Triune God can be included in thinking through all the "essentials of online learning," it was unclear how such consideration could change any of these categories. Indeed, the authors claim, "Christian education remains Christian by its theological orientation and assumptions, not by the methods of delivery" (5). Listing "Triune God" alongside various other essentials (aims, content, learner, etc.) can give the impression that faith integration is simply another element to be added on rather than a central component to the course.

Hess, Lisa M. "A Begrudging, Recalcitrant Academic Observes What She's Learning: Distance Learning in Leadership Formation." *Teaching Theology & Religion* 17, no. 3 (2014): 264–71. <https://doi.org/10.1111/teth.12210>.

- Abstract:
  - Neither advocacy nor condemnation of distance learning, this essay offers observations and critical reflection on four years' longitudinal engagement with distance learning pedagogies for formation in higher theological education. Instead, readers are invited to curiosity, communal-institutional discernment, and intense ambivalence. Theological, pedagogical, contextual, and ethical concerns are examined, as well as potential opportunities for innovation amidst age-old practical theological challenges. A moral imperative emerges for those within and outside historic faith traditions, and some plausible impacts on educational and communal life are explored, especially faculty grief.

- IFL Notes:
  - This article is a series of personal reflections from someone who was accustomed to teaching face-to-face but who worked on developing some hybrid courses. Although the article may not be useful for most faculty interested in teaching online successfully, it does underscore the strongly emotional ties that faculty can have with face-to-face instruction. The author notes some of the advantages of online education, such as the greater levels of participation by all students.

Hess, Mary E. "What Difference Does It Make? E-Learning and Faith Community." *Word & World* 30, no. 3 (2010): 281–90.

- Abstract:
  - (No Abstract Available)
- IFL Notes:
  - This article addresses education not only in schools but also in churches. It lists some of the potential benefits of online teaching, such as the capacity to engage a range of senses, and it gives a theologically rich model of teaching as kenosis. Kenosis, or "emptying," refers to Jesus's emptying himself and becoming a human being (see Philippians 2). Online instructors must similarly adopt a posture of kenotic humility, as the online environment removes them from center stage.

Hilton, John, III, Kenneth Plummer, Ben Fryar, and Ryan S. Gardner. "Comparing Spiritual Outcomes between Students in One General Education Distance Religion Course with Students in the Same Face-to-Face Course." *Religion & Education* 43, no. 1 (2016): 95–116. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15507394.2015.1045385>.

- Abstract:
  - This study compares outcomes relating to religiosity in one general education religion course. Using a validated instrument measuring affective outcomes, we surveyed 789 students enrolled in the same general education religion course at a private religious college. Two hundred sixty-nine were enrolled in distance sections of the course, and 520 were in face-to-face sections. Although no significant differences were found between groups, small differences did emerge within groups. These results have implications for distance education in which affective outcomes are important. Additional results and limitations are discussed.
- IFL Notes:
  - Much of this article is a discussion of methodology and a description of the results of the study. The study affirms that online education can be effective in achieving spiritual outcomes. Instructors who are teaching online would not necessarily benefit from it, unless they are interested in different ways of gauging spiritual formation or they doubt the efficacy of online education.



Hines, Travis S., Thomas R. McGee, Lee “Rusty” Waller, and Sharon Kay Waller. “Online Theological Education: A Case Study of Trinity School for Ministry.” *Christian Higher Education* 8, no. 1 (2008): 32–41. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15363750802201284>.

- Abstract:
  - This article explores one seminary’s methodology for addressing the challenges and opportunities that online theological education presents in a Master of Divinity program. An implementation model for online courses is presented to foster holistic theological development, thus ensuring the establishment and progression of a spiritual and learning community. Implications for research and practice in Christian higher education are discussed.
- IFL Notes:
  - The article focuses on seminary education and thus may be of limited relevance to most instructors. These are three of the most important points: 1) it is helpful to have clear guidelines for students and instructors in discussions; 2) with distance students, instructors can emphasize the unity and closeness that they have through Christ (“one body”); 3) instructors must think clearly about how students can pursue research in a distance setting.

Hockridge, Diane. “Challenges for Educators Using Distance and Online Education to Prepare Students for Relational Professions.” *Distance Education* 34, no. 2 (2013): 142–60. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01587919.2013.793640>.

- Abstract:
  - There are many challenges for educators in using distance and online education to adequately prepare students for their future professions. These challenges are accentuated in disciplines that prepare people for relational professions, which require people skills and a certain maturity of character. Educators in many disciplines, including theology, have questioned the suitability of distance and online education for preparing students for relational professions. This paper describes research that investigated educators’ concerns about distance and online education in Australian theological education institutions. These concerns focus around “formation” or character development, which is considered an essential element of theological education. The study used a questionnaire and interviews to explore theological educators’ understandings of formation and what educational practices can be used to encourage student formation. The coding of participant responses identified a number of categories of understandings and practices of formation. These provide a detailed and nuanced understanding of formation, which may assist educators in the development of formational learning in a variety of contexts and modes of study. It was also found that concerns about formation at a distance cluster around particular categories and practices of formation. Further exploration of these concerns and strategies for addressing them is recommended. These findings may be of interest for other disciplines which prepare people for relational professions or place value on character development.

- IFL Notes:
  - This article is helpful in listing practices that theological educators are already using in spiritual formation, such as mentoring/supervision, reflection, etc. (see pp. 150–51). Many of these could be adjusted for character formation more broadly. Assessment strategies, however, remain somewhat unclear and were not within the purview of the article. The article shows that formation is possible in an online environment but notes that learners often prefer face-to-face, so this concern can be addressed directly.

Hockridge, Diane. “Learning Design for Formational Learning in Non-Campus-Based Learning Contexts.” In *Teaching Theology in a Technological Age*, edited by Yvette Debergue and James R. Harrison, 237–62. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015.

- Chapter Summary
  - This chapter outlines an emerging framework for designing learning to foster spiritual formation of students studying theology in non-campus based learning contexts. It draws on insights from learning theory which suggests that designing for technology-enhanced learning must consider three learning theory perspectives: associative, cognitive and situative. These are explored in the light of insights from theological educators about the nature of theological learning and used to identify kinds of learning that are desirable in theological education. The chapter then considers helpful pedagogical approaches for these kinds of learning, drawing on examples from Learning Design practice in other disciplines and on recommended pedagogies for formational learning in the professions. It concludes by describing how research in the field of Learning Design is being used to guide a design-based research project to develop and trial a framework for Learning Design for formational learning in fully online theological degree courses.
- IFL Notes:
  - This article helpfully summarizes different learning theories (associationist/associative; cognitive/constructivist; situative), explaining how they work together, and giving examples of how instructors can use each learning theory in the classroom. Teachers do not need to pick one learning theory but rather can draw on the insights of all three categories in different situations. The parts of the article that discuss Ridley College specifically (especially at the end) will likely be of little relevance to most readers.

Hockridge, Diane. “Reimagining Christian Formation in Online Theological Education.” In *Reimagining Christian Education: Cultivating Transformative Approaches*, edited by Johannes M. Luetz, Tony Dowden, and Beverley Norsworthy, 327–43. Singapore: Springer, 2018.

- Abstract:
  - (No Abstract Available)
- IFL Notes:

- The 2015 article by Hockridge is more helpful in addressing the three different learning theories/perspectives. This chapter is less useful to most instructors in that it focuses on one college and addresses the methodology for evaluating the program.

Hockridge, Diane. "What's the Problem? Spiritual Formation in Distance and Online Theological Education." *Journal of Christian Education* os-54, no. 1 (2011): 25–38. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002196571105400104>.

- Abstract:
  - The past decade has seen rapid and substantial changes in teaching and learning practices in Australian higher education institutions. Web-based technologies are increasingly used to offer flexible and online learning to both on-campus and distance students. These changes are also occurring in theological education institutions. There are however, concerns expressed in the theological education sector about the suitability and efficacy of distance or online learning for studying theology. These concerns tend to focus around the concept of "formation" which is generally considered to be an essential component of theological education. This article explores these concerns around distance and online learning and examines them in the context of a broader debate around the purpose and goals of theological education. It suggests that two broad approaches to developing formational distance and online theological education can be discerned in the literature. These focus on the importance of understanding the learning environment and understanding the learners and their contexts. It also considers whether theories and practices from the wider higher education sector might be relevant in the theological education context, and points to the need for further data collection and research in the area.
- IFL Notes:
  - The most valuable part of this article is its description of the two approaches to formation: a focus on the learning environment, and a focus on the learners and their contexts. These are not mutually exclusive, of course. The second is perhaps less obvious than the first and fits with the suggestions developed in the literature on online teaching about the need to remember that, even though students may not be part of the campus community, but they are still part of their local communities. Those local communities provide opportunities for further formation.

## J

Jackson, Christopher Dwight. "The Phenomenon of Social Presence in the Pauline Epistles and Its Implication for Practices of Online Education." Ph.D., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014. [https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL\\_INST/122ppak/proquest1647768220](https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL_INST/122ppak/proquest1647768220)

- Abstract:

- Many theological institutions have adopted online educational formats. Proponents of online formats in theological education have typically given pragmatic justifications for the use of online formats while the most vocal detractors of online formats base their objections on theological concerns. This thesis gives a greater theological foundation for the use of online formats in theological education by demonstrating that Paul believed that Christian formation could be effected from a distance via the epistle. Specifically, this thesis shows that Paul held beliefs about the capability of the epistle to act as a personal proxy. Paul therefore displays an educational strategy that utilizes the strengths of both face-to-face education and distance education via the epistle while compensating for weaknesses in each format. Paul's practice would suggest that theological institutions might have the opportunity to do the same: take stock of the strengths and weaknesses of both face-to-face and online formats, utilize the strengths of each, and compensate for the weaknesses of each.
- IFL Notes:
  - Jackson provides an overview of different examples of instruction at a distance in the Bible, including from the Old Testament and the New Testament. The dissertation focuses on Paul as the most important example, noting that Paul exerts a kind of social presence through his epistles. Jackson gives a balanced view in which online is not necessarily superior but can still have a place in instruction.

Jeffery, James R. "Can Adventist Faith Be Nurtured in an Online Class." *Journal of Adventist Education* 69, no. 5 (2007): 36–41.

- Abstract:
  - (No Abstract Available)
- IFL Notes:
  - This is an excellent short article that goes beyond pious practices to indicate how Christian instructors can show compassion and empathy toward students in their courses. The article also outlines various best practices for any online course. For instance, Jeffery suggests sending a personal message to each student at the beginning of the class. He includes devotionals in each of his modules and deliberately encourages community from the very beginning.

Jung, Joanne J. *Character Formation in Online Education: A Guide for Instructors, Administrators, and Accrediting Agencies*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015.  
[https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL\\_INST/2cm1pj/alma991027208629805576](https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL_INST/2cm1pj/alma991027208629805576)

- Book Description:
  - The unfortunate reputation of online education today is one of little or no effort on the professor's part and little or no learning on the student's part. A missing element in much online education is the kind of mutual engagement between student and instructor that provides not only a higher level of learning but also lasting character formation within the student.

- *Character Formation in Online Education* stems from author Joanne Jung's years of experience teaching online courses with the aim of improving the teaching environment for professors and the learning environment for students. By replicating, customizing, and incorporating the best and most effective practices of what a great professor does in on-campus classes, reimagined for an online delivery system, Jung shows how a higher level of learning and transformation can be achieved through online learning communities.
- Handy and practical, this user-friendly book provides guidance, helpful tools, and effective suggestions for growing learning communities in online courses that are marked by character growth in students—the kind of growth that is central to the mission of Christian higher education.
- Table of Contents:
  - Introduction: Rising to the Challenge
  - Part One: Rising to the Challenge
    - 1. Log On to Learn: Inspiring Students Through an Online Course
    - 2. Charting a Course: Basics to Developing an Online Course
    - 3. Partnerships That Deliver: Tag-Teaming With a Course Designer
  - Part Two: Elements of Online Character Formation
    - 4. Taking Online Classroom Technology to Greater Depths: The Heart and Community
    - 5. Conversation Friendly: Collaborative Learning Tools
    - 6. Premium Blend: The Hybrid Course
    - 7. But I Teach Math!: Integrating Faith and Learning
    - 8. Social Media: Forming Character With 140 Characters
  - Part Three: Building Better Outcomes
    - 9. Assessment: It's About Stewardship
  - Appendix A: Coming to Terms With Terms
  - Appendix B: iFLIP Catalog
- IFL Notes:
  - This is a very helpful book for those teaching online, hybrid, and even traditional classes. The book covers all aspects of course design and implementation. Toward the beginning of the book, Jung focuses on the character of the online professor (chapter 2), and this theme comes up repeatedly. Even the chapter on integration of faith and learning underscores that instructors must be models of integration themselves, as students will look to instructors as models. The book repeatedly stresses that online teaching can be great teaching and sets a high bar for instructors. Jung's specialty is in Christian conversation, and this comes up particularly in her insightful and thorough overview of online discussions.
  - The book is strongest in discussing online education in general rather than character formation in particular. At times, the character formation can be mostly in terms of pious practices. Some greater engagement with specific virtues and the wider conversation on character formation in the academy would be welcome.

## K

Kelsey, David H. "Spiritual Machines, Personal Bodies, and God: Theological Education and Theological Anthropology." *Teaching Theology & Religion* 5, no. 1 (2002): 2–9.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9647.00112>.

- Abstract:
  - Programs of theological education in Christian traditions are exploring “distanced learning” as one way to address certain challenges to their educational excellence. A major strand in a twenty-year old discussion of the nature and purpose of theological education has urged that analysis of theological schooling’s failures and assessment of proposed remedies ought to be framed explicitly in theological terms as part of an ongoing inquiry into what makes theological education properly theological. This essay tries to show how following that advice can make a practical difference in assessing the merits of distanced learning. It does so by raising questions about the theological-anthropological assumptions, respectively, of theological education and of distanced learning.
- IFL Notes:
  - This is a widely cited article because it questions the fundamental assumptions upon which online learning is based. Yet very few scholars have adopted (at least in print) its arguments critiquing online education from a theological perspective. Kelsey’s critique can force instructors to consider important points: is online education necessarily disembodied? are there ways of engaging the body even at a distance?

Kemp, Stephen. “Social Presence in Online Learning.” In *Best Practices of Online Education: A Guide for Christian Higher Education*, edited by Mark A. Maddix, James Riley Estep, and Mary Ella Lowe, 41–53. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing Inc., 2012.  
[https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL\\_INST/2cm1pj/alma991027208629705576](https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL_INST/2cm1pj/alma991027208629705576)

- Abstract:
  - (Summary from Book Preface) “In Chapter 4, Stephen Kemp focuses on the research and practice of how transactional distance can be broken in online courses and how social presence can be optimized in online and real life social contexts. He includes a list of best practices for developing social presence in online courses” (xi).
- IFL Notes:
  - Much of the beginning of the article is a history of research that would be less helpful to most instructors, but the best practices and next practices are certainly useful. The best practices for fostering social presence include weekly threaded discussions, forums for the entire class to engage, and an expectation that faculty post daily. Kemp also lists “next practices” that are not common today but could become more widespread. For instance, instructors could eventually encourage collaborative activities even with those outside the course. These next practices

highlight the formational and educational opportunities afforded by students' local contexts.

## L

Ledbetter, Neal Brian. "Best Practices of Online Undergraduate Spiritual Formation at Select Institutions of Christian Higher Education: A Delphi Study." *ProQuest LLC*. Ph.D., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017.  
[https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL\\_INST/122ppak/proquest1972878176](https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL_INST/122ppak/proquest1972878176)

- Abstract:
  - The purpose of this research project was to establish consensus among experts regarding best practices of online undergraduate spiritual formation with a specific focus on the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU). Prior to this project, there was no consensus regarding best practices of online spiritual formation at the undergraduate level. Even less research existed with regard to the practices used among CCCU member institutions. Therefore, this project sought to identify the best practices implemented by CCCU member institutions to provide effective spiritual formation in their online undergraduate programs. This project was a mixed methods exploratory sequential design utilizing the Delphi Method. Sixteen expert faculty and administrators teaching in or overseeing Christian ministry departments within CCCU member institutions were enlisted to participate as panelists in this study. Round 1 gathered answers to 16 open-ended questions that were developed based on the CCCU definition of spiritual formation. Round 2 utilized a four-point Likert type scale with panelists evaluating the importance of 78 thematic practices that emerged from round 1. Round 3 utilized a simple agree or disagree dichotomous scale evaluating the importance of the remaining practices to online undergraduate spiritual formation. After three rounds of a Delphi Study with experts in the field of online spiritual formation at the undergraduate level, thirty consensus best practices were identified.
  - Chapter 1 outlines the purpose and driving questions of this project related to best practices of online undergraduate spiritual formation.
  - Chapter 2 reviews the precedent literature regarding the theological and theoretical foundations for Christian education and spiritual formation, as well as reveals a gap in the literature related to undergraduate online spiritual formation among CCCU member institutions.
  - Chapter 3 articulates the design of this project and the use of the Delphi Method.
  - Chapter 4 reveals the findings from each of the three rounds in this Delphi Study.
  - Finally, chapter 5 analyzes and evaluates the findings of this project, including the thirty consensus best practices that were identified and their contribution to precedent literature, educational practice, and advancement of online Christian education.
- IFL Notes:

- These best practices, which are summarized on page 144, are a helpful list of ideas for faculty to consider when designing a course. Ledbetter further groups them according to four imperatives on p. 158: instructors should ground spiritual formation in the Bible, use collaborative learning, attend to their role as instructors, and focus on transforming the learner and giving tools to apply the course content to the world. Although the best practices are helpful, many of them involve readings and are not necessarily specific to an online environment (as the conclusion of the dissertation acknowledges).

Lee, HeeKap. "Jesus' Teaching Model and Its Embedded Constructivist Principles." In *Faith-Based Education That Constructs: A Creative Dialogue Between Constructivism and Faith-Based Education*, edited by HeeKap Lee, 71–83. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2010.

- Abstract:
  - (No abstract available)
- IFL Notes:
  - This chapter does not address online teaching per se, but social constructivism is one of the most important learning theories in online education literature. Lee provides an excellent summary of Jesus's teaching approaches, highlighting how Jesus inspired learning through essential questions, opened space for learners to explore hypotheses, and encouraged learners to transfer the application to other contexts. Jesus thus exemplified constructivist approaches, although his teaching strategies were simultaneously broader than constructivism alone.

Lee, HeeKap, and Calvin G. Roso. "Jesus and Bloom: How Effective Was Jesus in Requiring People to Think Critically?" In *Faith-Based Education That Constructs: A Creative Dialogue Between Constructivism and Faith-Based Education*, edited by HeeKap Lee, 103–23. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2010.

- Abstract:
  - (No abstract available)
- IFL Notes:
  - This chapter does not address online instruction per se. Yet questions are an important component of online courses, due to the prominence of discussion boards. As a result, Christian instructors in an online environment can consider and learn from how Jesus asked questions. This chapter categorizes all of Jesus's questions in the Gospel of Matthew according to Bloom's taxonomy, finding that Jesus used all levels of the taxonomy, with the highest levels being comprehension (73%) and evaluation (47%). The questions also by and large satisfied Walsh and Sattre's Quality Questioning Assessment, with only three not achieving the highest level due to ambiguity in the question. Three appendices provide the data.
  - Some of the categorizations of questions in this book chapter are interpretive and thus subjective. After all, Jesus does not generally use the verbs associated with Bloom's taxonomy. Moreover, the book chapter uses Bloom's original rather than revised taxonomy. Nevertheless, the chapter provides great material for instructors to consider when developing questions for their courses.



Lowe, Mary E. "Spiritual Formation as Whole-Person Development in Online Education." In *Best Practices of Online Education: A Guide for Christian Higher Education*, edited by Mark A. Maddix, James Riley Estep, and Mary Ella Lowe, 55–63. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing Inc., 2012.  
[https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL\\_INST/2cm1pj/alma991027208629705576](https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL_INST/2cm1pj/alma991027208629705576)

- Abstract:
  - (Summary from Book Preface): "In Chapter 5, Mary Lowe addresses the question of whether persons can be spiritually formed in online courses. Based on developmental psychology, she develops an ecosystem of spiritual formation that includes the whole person. Human ecology theories tell us that whole person development (intellectual, social, moral, emotional, psychological, and spiritual) is instigated through social interactions through the continuum of our ecosystems" (xi).
- IFL Notes:
  - This book chapter provides a powerful critique of those who argue that spiritual formation cannot take place through online courses. Lowe urges instructors to recognize that students are already being formed from many directions, including from some relationships at a distance (via social media). Instructors should take such whole-person formation into account. Due to the theoretical nature of the piece, it will not be as useful to faculty looking for best practices. The ecological model of online education, which is mentioned briefly here, receives fuller treatment in other works by Mary and Stephen Lowe.

Lowe, Stephen D. "Adult Learning Theory and Online Learning." In *Best Practices of Online Education: A Guide for Christian Higher Education*, edited by Mark A. Maddix, James Riley Estep, and Mary Ella Lowe, 17–30. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing Inc., 2012.  
[https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL\\_INST/2cm1pj/alma991027208629705576](https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL_INST/2cm1pj/alma991027208629705576)

- Abstract:
  - (Summary from Book Preface) "In Chapter 2, Stephen Lowe provides both a theological and educational framework for understanding adult learners. He includes characteristics of adult learners based on Malcolm Knowles' theory of andragogy and current research in contextualized and situated models of adult learning" (xi).
- IFL Notes:
  - The article provides a helpful overview of research into andragogy, or adult education. Because many learners in online education are older than the typical college age, such research is helpful. At the same time, little in this article engages with a specifically Christian educational context.

Lowe, Stephen D., and Mary E. Lowe. *Ecologies of Faith in a Digital Age: Spiritual Growth Through Online Education*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2018.

- Book Description:
  - Technological innovation has changed nearly everything about human life, including how we teach and learn. Many Christian professors and institutions have embraced new technologies, especially online education. But as followers of Jesus Christ, we face the same call to grow in our faith. So how should we think about and approach Christian education in light of new technologies? Is it possible for us to grow spiritually through our digital communities? Steve Lowe and Mary Lowe, longtime proponents of online education, trace the motif of spiritual growth through Scripture and consider how students and professors alike might foster digital ecologies in which spiritual growth -- even transformation -- can take place.
- IFL Notes:
  - This book gives a solid biblical and theological foundation for teaching online, addressing critics who argue that community cannot form in online education. The authors could have addressed some of the limitations of online communities, including some of the ways that people can be shaped in negative ways by an online environment (as does *Digital Life Together*, by Smith et al.). Jeffrey Voth also makes this argument in his review of the book. The book lays out a model (the ecosystems model, present in other publications by Lowe and Lowe), and as a result, the book does not address specific strategies to a great degree—potentially a shortcoming (see the same point in the review by Janine Lim). The most attention the book gives to actual strategies is in the discussion of tools like Facebook, Twitter, etc.—certainly not an exhaustive list of ways to create community. Even discussions, one of the main ways of building community in an online class, receive scant mention, if any mention at all. More could also be said of how instructors might engage the students’ contexts outside of the course (see the relatively undeveloped comments on pp. 92–93).
  - The book focuses on classrooms where students are Christians, but most insights of the book would apply in contexts like Baylor where Christians and non-Christians are present in the classroom. In fact, many of the insights on the importance of community would apply to face-to-face classes as well.
  - Overall, the book fills a needed gap for strong biblical and theological foundations to the online education, and Christian instructors could benefit from reading it. Indeed, the book is a model of an approach to online education that is fully informed by faith rather than simply adding faith as an appendix. The model connects well to social constructivism, the dominant pedagogical theory in online instruction.

Lowe, Stephen D., and Mary Elise Lowe. “Spiritual Formation in Theological Distance Education: An Ecosystems Model.” *Christian Education Journal* 7, no. 1 (2010): 85–102.

[https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL\\_INST/122ppak/gale\\_ofa225247404](https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL_INST/122ppak/gale_ofa225247404)

- Abstract:

- This article sets forth a model of student spiritual formation in Christian distance education that integrates the biblical concept of spiritual development that takes place within the spiritual ecology of the church as the body of Christ with Bronfenbrenner's Ecology of Human Development theory. The ecosystems model views spiritual formation as an ecological phenomenon whether the ecosystem exists in physical, spiritual, or cyberspace environments, thereby offering evidence for the possibility of student spiritual formation in Christian distance education settings regardless of physical proximity.
- IFL Notes:
  - This article is widely cited in the literature. The ecosystems model is helpful, although it has been critiqued for drawing more inspiration from biology than from Scripture. Yet the model is related to the body of Christ metaphor in Scripture. The model has connections to the Aristotelian idea of friendship of virtue. It is not entirely clear how instructors can always make use of the local context of their students; much of the discussion of this article remains at the level of theory instead of presenting concrete strategies for applying the theory.

## M

MacLeod, Meri. "Assessing Online Learning." In *Best Practices of Online Education: A Guide for Christian Higher Education*, edited by Mark A. Maddix, James Riley Estep, and Mary Ella Lowe, 173–81. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing Inc., 2012.  
[https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL\\_INST/2cm1pj/alma991027208629705576](https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL_INST/2cm1pj/alma991027208629705576)

- Abstract:
  - (Summary from Book Preface): "In Chapter 17, Meri MacLeod focuses on developing learning assessments for online courses. She shows how new interactive media can enhance student learning and expand the types of assessment available for the teacher. She provides such assessment strategies as developing rubrics, collaborative assessments, peer review, and self-reflection" (xiii).
- IFL Notes:
  - This is a helpful overview of assessment. MacLeod addresses the differences between formative and summative assessment, as well as different assessment strategies, principles, and trends. Little of the discussion specifically pertains to Christian education.

Maddix, Mark A. "Developing Online Learning Communities." *Christian Education Journal* 10, no. 1 (2013): 139–48. Originally published as Maddix, Mark A. "Developing Online Learning Communities." In *Best Practices of Online Education: A Guide for Christian Higher Education*, edited by Mark A. Maddix, James Riley Estep, and Mary Ella Lowe, 31–40. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing Inc., 2012.  
[https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL\\_INST/2cm1pj/alma991027208629705576](https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL_INST/2cm1pj/alma991027208629705576)

- Abstract:
  - The Christian higher education landscape is changing with the development of online courses and programs. Faculty and administrators are struggling with developing effective learning in an online format. One of the ways effective learning and social interaction can be developed is through online learning communities. The article provides a definition and rationale for online learning communities and best practices gained from the precedent literature and experience in teaching and developing online programs.
  - (Summary from Book Preface) “In Chapter 3, Mark Maddix expresses the importance of developing community in online courses. Maddix indicates that effective online learning takes place in supportive learning communities, which is especially important in fostering personal and spiritual formation. He concludes the chapter with a list of best practices in online learning communities” (xi).
- IFL Notes:
  - This is a very helpful article/book chapter on community in an online course. The piece reviews the literature on community and lists best practices, such as making requirements for online discussions clear and employing learning activities that foster interaction. The article briefly addresses theological debates surrounding online community, but little of the remainder of the piece interacts with theology or Christian educational contexts in particular.

Maddix, Mark A. “Generating and Facilitating Effective Online Discussion.” In *Best Practices of Online Education: A Guide for Christian Higher Education*, edited by Mark A. Maddix, James Riley Estep, and Mary Ella Lowe, 107–19. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing Inc., 2012.

[https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL\\_INST/2cm1pj/alma991027208629705576](https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL_INST/2cm1pj/alma991027208629705576)

- Abstract:
  - (Summary from Book Preface) “In Chapter 10, Mark Maddix discusses how to generate and facilitate effective online discussion. He uses the Community of Inquiry Model (CIM) to evaluate student learning in online discussion. He provides best practices for online discussion, such as developing clear guidelines and expectations for discussion, developing a discussion board rubric, facilitating discussion on a regular basis, developing assignments that encourage active learning, and generating good questions for discussion” (xii).
- IFL Notes:
  - This chapter provides an overview of the community of inquiry model before listing best practices for online discussions, such as providing clear requirements for participation, developing rubrics, and encouraging students to take responsibility for the discussions. Many of these best practices are included in other publications, so there is little that is new in the strictest sense. There is also very little that connects to specifically Christian concerns.

Maddix, Mark A., and Estep, J. R. “Spiritual Formation in Online Higher Education Communities: Nurturing Spirituality in Christian Higher Education Online Degree

Programs.” *Christian Education Journal*, vol. 7, no. 2 (2010): 423–36.

[https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL\\_INST/122ppak/gale\\_ofa239092347](https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL_INST/122ppak/gale_ofa239092347)

- Abstract:
  - Spiritual formation is one of the recognized benchmarks of higher education that is Christian. A communal commitment to spiritual formation is indeed part of the Christian higher education community's DNA, and is in fact reflected in the criteria, for accreditation in both the Association of Biblical Higher Education (ABHE) and the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). However, as many Christian institutions of higher education begin to engage in online instruction, even offering entire degree programs online, how can they affirm their campus's commitment to the spiritual formation of students?
  - This article addresses the question of providing intentional Christian nurture toward spiritual formation in online degree programs. The aim of the article is to inform participants of the challenges and opportunities, for student spiritual formation in online degree programs so as to better equip participants to develop Christian nurture initiatives for online students from an informed perspective. To do so the article includes two parts: (a) the development of a theoretical matrix for online spiritual formation, based principally on precedent literature and the experience off the two authors; and (b) a survey of actual Christian nurture and spiritual formation models specifically designed for online programs.
- IFL Notes:
  - The article acknowledges the challenge of fostering spiritual formation online. Spiritual practices occur at four levels: individual practices, one-on-one practices, small or medium groups, and church worship. Maddix and Estep list domains of spiritual formation on p. 432 along with websites with spiritual formation resources. Although the article focuses on spiritual formation, the categories could be helpful to instructors thinking about character formation online more broadly.

Maddix, Mark A., James Riley Estep, and Mary Ella Lowe, eds. *Best Practices of Online Education: A Guide for Christian Higher Education*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing Inc., 2012.

[https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL\\_INST/2cm1pj/alma991027208629705576](https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL_INST/2cm1pj/alma991027208629705576)

- Book Summary:
  - The book provides best practices from online educators who are engaged in online teaching and program development in Christian higher education. It also explores the distinct aspects of teaching and developing online courses and programs from a Christian perspective and within Christian higher education institutions. As such it is can serve as a ready resource for academic administrators and professors, novices and veterans at online program development and instruction.
- Outline:
  - Foreword and Preface.

- Section I, Theoretical and Theological Foundations of Online Education, contains the following:
  - (1) Educational Theory and Online Education (Mark H. Heinemann and James Riley Estep Jr.)
  - (2) Adult Learning Theory and Online Learning (Steve D. Lowe)
  - (3) Developing Online Learning Communities (Mark A. Maddix)
  - (4) Social Presence in Online Learning (Stephen Kemp)
  - (5) Spiritual Formation as Whole-Person Development in Online Education (Mary E. Lowe)
  - (6) Challenges and Opportunities for Online Theological Education (James Riley Estep Jr. and Steven Yates)
- Section II, Generating and Facilitating Effective Learning in Online Education, contains the following
  - (7) Best Practices in Online Teaching (C. Damon Osborne)
  - (8) Visualize More: Effective Online Teaching Methods (Jay Richard Akkerman)
  - (9) Characteristics of Successful Online Students (Jason D. Baker)
  - (10) Generating and Facilitating Effective Online Discussion (Mark A. Maddix)
  - (11) Online Faculty Development (Dale Hale)
- Section III, Developing and Assessing Online Course and Programs, contains the following
  - (12) Evaluating Course Management Systems (Eric Kellerer)
  - (13) Developing Effective Infrastructures for Online Programs (Gregory W. Bourgond)
  - (14) Developing Online Programs (David M. Phillips)
  - (15) Online Program and Curriculum Mapping (Christine Bauer and Mary Jones)
  - (16) Online Course Design Considerations (Christine Bauer and Mary Jones)
  - (17) Assessing Online Learning (Meri MacLeod)

Meyer, Kimberly R., and Joann P. Wessman. "Cyber Classrooms: Building Christian Community." *Journal of Christian Nursing* 22, no. 4 (2005): 16–21.  
<https://doi.org/10.1097/01.CNJ.0000262180.79993.6f>.

- Abstract:
  - (No Abstract Available)
- IFL Notes:
  - This is a very helpful article that shows a deep integration of Christian ideas of community, as represented by Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Life Together*, and online teaching. Instructors could benefit from looking at the table of dimensions of Christian community along with the related elements in online courses on p. 19. Although one could add many more specific practices to the list of ones in this article, the online course described in this article is a model for thinking theologically about a course.

Morris, Raymond E. "Teaching to Make Disciples in A Higher Education Online Learning Environment: A Comparison of the Literature of Online Learning, the Objectives and Practices of Three Christian Colleges, and the Letters of Paul." Ph.D., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012.

[https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL\\_INST/122ppak/proquest1039661295](https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL_INST/122ppak/proquest1039661295)

- Abstract:

- This dissertation explores engaging students in spiritual formation and discipleship in the online environment. This researcher begins with the proposition that the letters of Paul are examples of distance teaching and distance learning. The effectiveness of the letters of Paul in engaging their recipients in spiritual formation and discipleship are an established fact. Therefore, it may be concluded that distance teaching and learning is a valid and effective means of engaging spiritual formation and discipleship growth. This research does address issues of the medium of technology in engaging students in spiritual formation and discipleship. However, the focus of the research is not the technology itself, but rather the use of technology for accomplishing purposeful and relational elements that lead to spiritual formation and discipleship. This research combines information gleaned from literature of online learning and teaching, interviews with program directors and selected professors of online programs of three Christian colleges in the southeastern part of the United States, and principles found in the letters of Paul, to develop a proposed paradigm for online teaching. The purpose of the paradigm is to provide a focus in the online instructional process of the Christian college and the Christian teacher for spiritual formation and discipleship. This research does not address the issue of cognitive outcomes because other researchers have addressed this issue. The research includes psychological considerations that specifically address spiritual formation from a developmental perspective. This is included in order to demonstrate that college students, whether traditional or non-traditional, tend to be at crucial points in their lives with regard to spiritual formation. College students in undergraduate programs fit a developmental profile that suggests they are at an important juncture for examining faith issues. Therefore, the research was limited to undergraduate programs in Christian colleges. The research also addresses sociological considerations for spiritual formation in the online learning environment.
- Some researchers are concerned about a sense of isolation for the student in the online environment. Consequently, a significant amount of literature exists that propose ways to build community in the online environment. While faith development is often seen as personal and internal, there is a Biblical emphasis upon the faith community. Therefore, this research addresses the sociological implications of building a supportive faith community in the online environment that affects spiritual formation and discipleship. The research also gives significant attention to the Biblical pattern of making disciples, which is highly relational between the teacher and student. Attention is given to a methodological similarity between disciple making and the more

modern concept of mentoring. The purpose of this part of the research is to identify the potential role of the teacher as a mentor in a disciple making relationship. The paradigm that is developed from the research is divided into three primary functions for both the program and the individual teacher. Those functions are program and course design, personal and relational aspects of online teaching, and assessment. Each of these categories is specific to engaging spiritual formation and discipleship in the online environment.

- The design element has five components. The first component is that mission and purpose of making disciples should be clearly addressed in the design of the program and of the courses. A second component is that content should be included which is suitable for stimulating spiritual formation. The third component is that courses should include directive content, which would provide instruction in spiritual formation. The fourth component is that emphasis be made in each course for the teacher to gain knowledge about each student, sufficient that he/she would know how to encourage spiritual formation for each student. Finally, the courses offered should contain practices and content for regular spiritual exercises such as prayer, Bible reading, and personal reflection.
- The personal element has four components. First is the importance of the presence of the teacher in the online environment. Second, is the teacher should endeavor to build a relational learning and faith community in the online class. Third, the teacher should exemplify an appropriate level of transparency in order to communicate a genuine sincerity and to personalize the learning experience. Finally, the teacher should be an encourager.
- The assessment element emphasizes the importance of including spiritual formation as part of the regular assessment process. It is emphasized that assessment not only measures outcomes, but it also drives what is included in a course. If spiritual formation outcomes are not measured, it is likely that spiritual formation will not be emphasized in a course.
- IFL Notes:
  - This dissertation is not the best resource for online instructors, but it does indicate the need to make spiritual formation objectives explicit (when appropriate) from the beginning of the course. The one emphasis that is not common elsewhere is “optimism,” which Morris says a teacher needs in order to encourage students to grow throughout the course.

## N

Nichols, Mark. “A Comparison of the Spiritual Participation of On-Campus and Theological Distance Education Students.” *Journal of Adult Theological Education* 12, no. 2 (2015): 121–36. <https://doi.org/10.1179/1740714115Z.00000000041>.

- Abstract:
  - Distance education has a well-established heritage as an effective means of formal higher learning. Despite this, its role in theological education is actively resisted by many evangelical Christian theorists. The main reason for this reluctance to endorse theological distance education is the concern that



distance students do not have an adequate formation experience as they learn. Formation is a term representative of development as a Christian disciple, typically measured in terms of spiritual maturity. This study compares the spirituality characteristics of on-campus and distance students studying the same undergraduate degree programme at Laidlaw College, a theological education provider in New Zealand. The Christian Spiritual Participation Profile (CSPP) instrument was applied. Findings indicate no significant difference across all measures, including those related to the propensity for further spiritual growth. Significant differences were found between full-time and part-time students, the latter experiencing better overall formational development.

- IFL Notes:
  - This article provides more support for the idea that spiritual formation can occur at a distance. Instructors in theological education should take formation in the local church context into account. Instructors should also take the type of student likely to be studying online into account; such students might be more mature than traditional on-campus students. Although the article focuses on spiritual formation within a seminary context, the insights can be adjusted for character formation more broadly.

Nichols, Mark. "The Akadameia as Paradigm for Online Community in Theological Distance Education." *Journal of Christian Education* 54, no. 1 (2011): 5–23.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/002196571105400102>.

- Abstract:
  - Discussion in theological education literature associated with the use of online technologies is caught up in concerns related to the efficacy of online community with the on-campus seminary experience. Terminology is also inconsistent, and unchallenged assumptions make progress in research and practice difficult. Despite this, many examples of online distance-only theological education are emerging. Online theological distance education (OTDE) is emerging as a major form of theological education. Considering the complementary role of theological education within the church and drawing from primary research data investigating the spiritual formation experiences of distance theological education students making use of online tools, this article suggests that OTDE prioritise the requirements of the academy. Adopting the perspective of akademeia (Greek: the 'academy') makes it possible for online theological education providers to deliberately educate in ways complementary to the ministry and formational relationships students already have within the church. Critical to understanding the relevance of community to theological study is the distinction between the ekklesia as community, and the akademeia as community. The term 'allēlon of dialogia' (Greek: 'one-anothering' of ideas) is introduced as a means of describing the form of community most appropriate to theological education. Adopting the perspective of the akademeia serves to legitimise distance theological education, which is frequently criticised on the grounds that it cannot be as formative as seminary-based theological education.

- IFL Notes:
  - This article makes a strong case that one needs to recognize the inherent limitations of an online “community.” Theological educators cannot replicate the local church, and indeed they should take the local church into account in thinking through spiritual formation. These limitations apply both to on-campus and distance education. Rather than simply surveying the downsides of online “community,” however, Nichols provides an identity for this community that instructors can embrace: *akademeia*, based around dialogia. It would have been helpful if Nichols offered more discussion of this relationship between *akademeia* and *ekklesia*. For instance, there is probably much wisdom to glean from church history on this relationship. Moreover, Nichols explicitly does not address hybrid education, which might overcome some of these limitations. Although the discussion revolves around theological education, instructors more generally can consider the formational potential of online learners’ own contexts.

Nichols, Mark. “The Formational Experiences of On-Campus and Theological Distance Education Students.” *Journal of Adult Theological Education* 13, no. 1 (2016): 18–32. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17407141.2016.1158495>.

- Abstract:
  - Theological distance education is frequently criticised on the grounds that it is not formationally equivalent to on-campus provision. This study presents the findings of primary research into the formational experiences of ten on-campus and ten distance education students studying the same undergraduate theology or ministry degree programme at Laidlaw College, a theological education provider in New Zealand. Analysis of interviews finds clear evidence of formational activity and transformative learning across both student groups. Distance respondents had stronger ecclesial connections than on-campus ones, and an equivalent transformative experience. Findings suggest that the context of church fellowship provides a suitable formational context for theological distance education.
- IFL Notes:
  - This article continues the study of Nichols 2015, but it includes more discussion of mechanisms of formation. This study argues persuasively that distance education is not inferior to on-campus education and even has some advantages. Instructors should recognize that distance students are often members of local communities, and those communities are important loci of formation. Part-time students often engage more deeply in integrating their studies into their work.

## O

Osborne, C. Damon. “Best Practices in Online Education.” In *Best Practices of Online Education: A Guide for Christian Higher Education*, edited by Mark A. Maddix, James Riley Estep, and Mary Ella Lowe, 81–90. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing Inc., 2012.

[https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL\\_INST/2cm1pj/alma991027208629705576](https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL_INST/2cm1pj/alma991027208629705576)

- Abstract:
  - (Summary from Book Preface) “In Chapter 7, Damon Osborne provides a list of best practices in online teaching. These practices include preparing the course prior to teaching the course, establishing social presence in the online course, facilitating effectively, maintaining boundaries between online work and life, and bringing closure to an online course. These practices provide the online teacher with techniques for effective online teaching” (xi–xii).
- IFL Notes:
  - This book chapter contains many insights for teaching online. Much of the chapter focuses on having a significant social presence through videos and online discussions. The section on boundaries was particularly helpful; faculty must attend to their own needs as well early in the course. Finally, closure at the end of the course is important. The best practices apply within Christian and secular contexts.

Osborne, Damon. “Fostering Online Communities of Faith.” In *Faith-Based Education That Constructs: A Creative Dialogue Between Constructivism and Faith-Based Education*, edited by HeeKap Lee, 208–26. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010.

- Abstract:
  - (No Abstract Available)
- IFL Notes:
  - This is a helpful overview of best practices in building community through an online course. Some of the most important items were that the non-subject-matter related discussion thread often is not significant in building community and that instructors should frequently post in text and video to increase social presence. Devotional material should require engagement; otherwise, students will often ignore it. The book chapter also emphasizes the idea that instructors must be intentional about forming community and that many aspects of the course contribute to this community.

## P

Purper, Cammy, A. Greg Bowden, Jeannette Guignard, Shari Farris, Mitch Hovey, and Mary Crist. “Faith Integration in the Higher Education Online Classroom: Perspectives and Practice.” *International Christian Community of Teacher Educators Journal* 15, no. 1 (2020): 1–12.

- Abstract:
  - Online instruction in higher education has grown dramatically in recent years, and more faith-based colleges and universities are including online courses as a part of their educational offerings. The integration of faith in learning is an important goal in many of these faith-based institutions; however, the practice of faith integration in online settings presents unique challenges for faculty

members. The purpose of this article is to provide support for faculty members teaching online in Christian colleges and universities with faith integration by presenting a series of strategies for their use. Approaches to faith integration are grouped utilizing a model presented by Dulaney et al. (2015) and adapted here for online contexts. Recommendations for working with students of differing faith backgrounds are also provided.

- IFL Notes:
  - This article is highly recommended for online instructors at Christian institutions. The authors build on Dulaney et al. 2015 by dividing faith and learning into three categories: inside integration (dealing with course content), outside integration (involving real-life experiences), and mentoring. Inside integration in an online course can include scriptural references, video devotionals, and faith-based readings. Outside integration can connect to students' contexts. Students can be encouraged, for instance, to engage in service learning in their local communities. Students can also interact with non-local experts via Zoom. Mentoring demands close connections between instructors and students. These three categories thus require some adjustments in an online environment, but they can serve as a helpful guiding framework for online instructors.

## Q

Quinn, Mary E., Laura S. Foote, and Michele L. Williams. "Integrating a Biblical Worldview and Developing Online Courses for the Adult Learner." *Christian Scholar's Review* 41, no. 2 (2012): 163–73.

[https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL\\_INST/122ppak/proquest920195970](https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL_INST/122ppak/proquest920195970)

- Abstract:
  - The article focuses on the development of online courses for adult learners using the Four-Lens Model within the context of a biblical worldview. It emphasizes that the integration of faith and learning must be kept in the forefront of course development. Examples as well as suggestions of the integration of faith and learning using the adult learning theory model are provided.
- IFL Notes:
  - Overall, this is a helpful resource. The authors use four lenses for developing online courses: learner, process, educator, and context. With regard to the first, instructors must keep in mind that the learners are created in the image of God. Through using the process lens, instructors can open opportunities for reflecting on their Christian worldview in light of course content. The educator lens encourages instructors to align their teaching philosophies, roles, and practices to Scripture. Finally, the context lens means that instructors should foster a learning community with plenty of opportunities for interaction.
  - The worldview focus might seem somewhat reductive considering James K. A. Smith's argument in *Desiring the Kingdom* that attending to worldview

analysis without recognizing the formative impact of lived practices ignores major forces that shape people's beliefs and actions. Instructors could thus consider the intentional and unintentional formative practices of online course as well.

## R

Rasmussen, Jay. "Online Instruction: Reflections of a Rookie Instructor." *Journal of Christian Education* 54, no. 1 (2011): 64–68. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002196571105400107>.

- Abstract:
  - (No Abstract Available)
- IFL Notes:
  - This short article consists of accessible reflections on author's experiences of teaching online, along with helpful suggestions for specific practices. The author used video devotions throughout the course, as well as discussion prompts that related to faith issues.

Roberts, Jennifer J. "Online Learning as a Form of Distance Education: Linking Formation Learning in Theology to the Theories of Distance Education." *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 75, no. 1 (2019): 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v75i1.5345>.

- Abstract:
  - Distance education (DE) has a long and complex history. It accounts for more than one-third of all higher education students in the world and, because of its very nature, has produced some of the top graduates worldwide who were unable to study fulltime and on-campus for various reasons. One of the most prestigious graduates of the DE system was the former state president of South Africa, the late Nelson Mandela. Online learning is a form of DE and fast becoming the preferred method of instruction and delivery.
  - Critiques of online learning, and of DE itself, will argue that, because of the separation of the teacher and the student, only academic skills can be taught and learnt using this medium. The so-called 'softer skills' – those that focus on the development of the person – are best taught in a face-to-face, traditional environment.
  - This article focuses on a review of DE theories and models. A particular emphasis is placed on online learning theories, and how the teaching of formational learning skills can be successfully incorporated into this educational setting. The article draws from a range of studies that have been conducted, based on conceptual and empirical research evidence from various authors. Drawing from Garrison, Anderson and Archer's Community of Inquiry framework for online education, it presents key elements that relate to the formational (spiritual) training of theology students. The article examines research that both supports and cautions against online learning for formative development. It concludes by suggesting a blended model of both face-to-face and online learning, where meaningful interactions between the learner and teacher take place, is desirable. The article highlights the important role that

DE (and specifically online education) can play in developing the human component of education.

- IFL Notes:
  - This is a review of scholarship with a useful bibliography. Much of the review is too basic to be of much specific help to online instructors.

Roels, Shirley J. “Global Discipleship and Online Learning: What Does Blackboard Have to Do with Jerusalem?” *Christian Scholar’s Review* 33, no. 4 (2004): 451–70.

- Abstract:
  - Shirley J. Roels believes Christian educators must decide whether God’s command to make “disciples of all nations” is central to their Christian educational mission, and if so, whether online learning is now a preferred vehicle to fulfill that calling. While this article considers elearning as a means for global Christian higher education, it also addresses worries about its effects on both students and Christian educational institutions. The author concludes that in an age where technology has changed our sense of place, Christian higher education should not be as bounded by physical location. Instead the future can be one of global Christian partnerships that support mutual teaching and learning about cultural discipleship.
- IFL Notes:
  - This article contains thoughtful reflections on the potential of online learning to serve the global church. However, this article is more applicable to administrators than instructors.

Rose, Ellen. “‘Would You Ever Say That to Me in Class?’ Exploring the Implications of Disinhibition for Relationality in Online Teaching and Learning.” In *Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Networked Learning 2014*, edited by Sian Bayne, Chris Jones, Maarten de Laat, Thomas Ryberg, and Christine Sinclair, 253–60. Edinburgh: Ninth International Conference on Networked Learning, 2014.  
<https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/fss/organisations/netlc/past/nlc2014/info/confpapers.htm>.

- Abstract:
  - Despite years of study and theorizing, we know very little about students’ and instructors’ experiences of relationality in online courses. This paper reports on a two-university qualitative study that sought insight into the nature and experience of relationality in asynchronous, text-based courses in which teacher and students do not come face to face. Interviews with 20 instructors and 20 students from a variety of disciplines revealed that their experiences of connection with, or disconnection from, each other were profoundly influenced by the phenomenon of online disinhibition. The online disinhibition effect is defined as the tendency of people to behave in unrestrained ways when interacting with others online. These behaviours have been classified as “benign” or “toxic.” Disinhibition has long been identified and recognized by psychologists as a factor in computer-mediated communications, but there is little research illuminating the role it plays in online teaching and learning, and what there is tends to be inconclusive. While several studies show that students do tend to behave in unrestrained ways when

interacting online, students in the online course studied by Conrad (2002a and 2002b) demonstrated increased inhibition. Both students and instructors in the current study reported on many instances of benign and toxic disinhibition, although stories about the latter were more prevalent. Benign disinhibition was manifested in stories of shy students who participated more freely online, and in stories of students who disclosed more about themselves than they would face-to-face. Toxic disinhibition was manifested in stories about angry and abusive emails and posts. Students also indicated that their awareness of the possibility of anger erupting easily through miscommunication resulted in an “excessive niceness.” Thus inhibition may be a paradoxical response to the increased possibility of disinhibited behaviour in online learning environments. This study found that disinhibited behaviour, whether in its benign or toxic form, is a factor that powerfully affects the nature of student-student and student-teacher relationships in online courses.

- IFL Notes:
  - Although this article does not address faith in online teaching, its discussion of online disinhibition and finding that this phenomenon is a significant factor in online education should be something for instructors to consider. At the same time, the author does not provide suggestions on how to avoid toxic disinhibition. The article certainly underscores the need for instructors to consider how they will make expectations for discussion boards clear and handle conflicts when they arise.

Roso, Calvin G. “Faith and Learning in Action: Christian Faith and Service- Learning in a Graduate-Level Blended Classroom.” *Christian Higher Education* 18, no. 4 (2019): 316–31. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15363759.2019.1579118>.

- Abstract:
  - Service-learning (SL) is proven to have positive effects on student learning outcomes, critical thinking skills, student empathy, personal and interpersonal development, cultural awareness, and intrinsic motivation to study. Past studies on how SL is implemented have focused on either SL in the traditional classroom or the online classroom with little research on the effectiveness of SL in blended (face-to-face and online) classrooms. The researcher could identify no previous research to date on the application of service-learning taught from a Christian faith perspective in a blended classroom setting. The purpose of this research was to study academic, societal, and spiritual benefits of implementing SL in a Christian university blended graduate classroom. The following questions guided the study:
    - How does a SL experience enable students to understand the course concepts?
    - How does a SL experience enable students to apply course theory to real-world problems?
    - How does a SL experience enable students to apply course theory to their Christian practice? Results of this single-institution case study revealed that students believed service-learning in a blended graduate-level course was effective in connecting theory to practice. The outcomes of this study suggest that SL should be included in more graduate-level courses and that blended

environments are favorable to SL activities. Because SL is effective in connecting theory to practice, SL activities should be used to help students better understand how their Christian faith can enable them to serve others at home, in their community, and through their profession.

- IFL Notes:
  - This article serves as a great example of what service learning might look like in a hybrid classroom. Other than its advocacy of service learning as a strategy for encouraging students both to live out their faith and make sense of course content, it does not offer many specific teaching strategies.

Rovai, Alfred P., Jason D. Baker, and William F. Cox Jr. "How Christianly Is Christian Distance Higher Education?" *Christian Higher Education* 7, no. 1 (2008): 1–22.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15363750701285941>.

- Abstract:
  - The study reported in this paper investigated sense of community and perceived learning in on-campus and online courses at both a Christian university and a state university using a population of graduate students (N = 350). Results suggest that the Christian ethos, with its influence on all facets of university life, manifests itself in stronger online as well as on-campus sense of community among students at the Christian university. However, this added community capital does not result in greater perceived learning among students at the Christian university in either on-campus or online courses. Additionally, participants in on-campus courses felt stronger sense of community and greater perceived learning than their online peers at both universities, exposing both a community gap and a perceived learning gap in courses delivered at a distance. The community gap manifests itself mostly in the social dimension of community, which consists of feelings pertaining to community spirit, cohesion, trust, safety, interactivity, interdependence, and sense of belonging. Significant differences were not observed in the learning dimension of community, which concerns the degree to which learning community members share group norms and values and the extent to which their educational goals and expectations are satisfied by group membership.
- IFL Notes:
  - This article, although somewhat dated now, has an insightful discussion of community in an online class. Students generally report greater experiences of community in on-campus rather than online classes. In response, the authors of this study suggest different strategies. First, institutions can simply accept diminished community among online cohorts. Second, they could enhance institutional engagement through a variety of means, such as broadcasting chapel services. Third, institutions could blend learning in a way broadly similar to the Apostle Paul's model. Fourth, they could extend the school's community, incorporating students' local contexts. Although the article's conclusions remain somewhat open-ended, they can encourage instructors to consider how community will function in their courses.



## S

Sasse, Benjamin. "Theologians and Utilitarians: Historical Context for the 'Distance Learning' Debate." *Modern Reformation* 7, no. 3 (1998): 32–38.

- Abstract:
  - (No Abstract Available)
- IFL Notes:
  - Sasse presents a very thoughtful early critique of distance education. The critique draws upon situated/situative models of education that emphasize participation in practices in community, although Sasse does not refer to that branch of educational theory. Sasse also is not entirely clear on how the school environment shapes students in a positive way. Since the time when this article was written, technology has become more ubiquitous and advanced in connecting people to one another; perhaps the conclusions are less firm as a result. Nevertheless, Sasse's article still raises important questions about the academic environment and also serves as a warning against those who embrace technology too quickly, putting it before theological concerns.

Seebach, Elizabeth, and Lori Charron. "Envisioning a Lasallian Online Pedagogy: Twelve Virtues of a Good Teacher in a Digital Environment." *AXIS. Journal of Lasallian Higher Education* 6, no. 2 (2015). <https://axis.smumn.edu/2018/01/02/envisioning-a-lasallian-online-pedagogy-twelve-virtues-of-a-good-teacher-in-a-digital-environment/>

- Abstract:
  - This paper examines the question, "How do we remain true to our Lasallian pedagogy when teaching online?" To answer the question, focus groups applied online teaching strategies to "The Twelve Virtues of a Good Master" (Agathon, 1785) which are seminal to Lasallian teaching practices. Practical applications are given for each of the virtues: gravity, silence, humility, prudence, wisdom, patience, reserve, gentleness, zeal, vigilance, and piety.
- IFL Notes:
  - Drawing from the educational tradition of Jean-Baptiste de La Salle, this article lists the virtues of a good teacher and discusses how each of them fits within an online environment. The conclusions are broadly applicable to those outside the Lasallian tradition. At the same time, the article is a model for engaging a specific Christian tradition and drawing out insights from that tradition in a new context (the online educational environment). The article does focus on the virtues of an instructor and has less to do with course design.

Smith, David, Kara Sevensma, Marjorie Terpstra, and Steven McMullen. *Digital Life Together: The Challenge of Technology for Christian Schools*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2020.

- Book Description:
  - Digital technologies loom large in the experience of today's students. However, parents, teachers, and school leaders have only started to take stock of the

ramifications for teaching, learning, and faith. *Digital Life Together* walks educators, leaders, and parents through some of the big ideas that are hidden in our technology habits. Moving beyond general arguments for and against digital devices, the book draws from extensive interviews, surveys, classroom observations, and school records to examine the real impact of technology on Christian learning.

- Based on a three-year, in-depth study of Christian schools, authors David Smith, Kara Sevensma, Marjorie Terpstra, and Steven McMullen offer resources to inform conversations in school communities about the role of digital technologies in students' formation. With a wealth of new research findings, short, readable chapters, and accompanying discussion questions, *Digital Life Together* sets the stage for individual reflection, book club discussions, professional development conversations, or strategic reflection by school leaders.
- IFL Notes:
  - The book largely concerns technology in the classroom, not online teaching. Moreover, much of the focus is on K-12 education. Nevertheless, parts of the book are applicable to online education at the collegial level. The book achieves a balanced view on technology; it offers both advantages and disadvantages in learning. In a parallel way, online education has benefits and drawbacks, and Delamarter 2004 highlights how mature online education programs have administrators and faculty who have balanced views regarding online education.
  - The book raises questions not only about how instructors and students *use* technology but also about the practices surrounding technology. In this regard, the authors owe much to the conversation surrounding situated learning and its application to theology by James K. A. Smith. The book thus moves beyond simply asking how the Christian worldview can be integrated into technological use but asks at a fundamental level how technology shapes us, often unconsciously. Chapter 29 (and elsewhere), for instance, raises questions of distraction with multiple devices, and chapter 30 speaks of how people often use technology to work quickly or find quick answers to complex questions. The book speaks of taking Sabbath rest from technology and encouraging students to dwell with deep questions and materials. Online instructors do well to think about the deep ways that practices surrounding the internet might influence online education, and how the learning environment in the course itself could shape students in subtle ways.
  - Chapter 34 addresses how the relationship between teachers and students changes with technology. Students can access almost limitless information online, so the teacher is not simply a supplier of facts. Rather, the teacher and students tend to have a more collaborative relationship: “The process of Christian learning was not secured by the teacher already having all the right answers, but rather by the teacher’s ongoing investment in being in close dialogue with students as their learning progressed” (270). This transformation of the role of the teacher is magnified in an online learning environment where the teacher is not physically present (but the search engine is so close at hand) and shows the deep relationship between technology and constructivism.

- The last chapter, chapter 39, draws out some larger conclusions, which are adapted here for the online environment. Successful online programs invest the necessary time and reflection in the process of developing a program. They also integrate the program with the mission of the school (a point also made in Delamarter 2004). These schools develop a culture of learning in which faculty and staff experiment and learn from their experiences. Christian schools should also work to reflect on and ultimately develop patterns of shared Christian practices surrounding technology. Because college instructors contribute to the culture at a university, these conclusions are relevant for them as well as for administrators.

Smith, Ruth. "An Investigation of Blended Course Design for Holistic Transformation." *Journal of Christian Education* 53, no. 1 (2010): 61–71.

[https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL\\_INST/122ppak/scopus2-s2.0-84055178539](https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL_INST/122ppak/scopus2-s2.0-84055178539)

- Abstract:
  - Many tertiary Christian educators in both academic and theological contexts share the desire for holistic transformation in their own and students' lives. How, though, might they create or design such a space? There is debate around the capability of programs that are partially or fully online to effect this. This article highlights the student voice as graduates reflected on their holistic growth and development during their period of tertiary study. Among multiple elements that were seen as significant by participants, three themes emerged strongly. These three aspects all constituted 'spaces' in which God acted and spoke in students' lives. In-depth sharing online had transformative impact when faculty and students regularly interacted in ways that genuinely and openly explored issues in a warmly hospitable, non-judgmental and safe environment. Integrating into these discussions readings that were chosen for more than just their intellectual content, and encouraging reflective sharing.
- IFL Notes:
  - This is an accessible article based on the idea of "creating space for God" through online discussions that engage the whole self, instructors modeling Christ-likeness in in-person meetings, and opportunities for reflection.

Sommers-Johnson, Rhoda. "Did Jesus Utilize Constructivist Teaching Practices?" In *Faith-Based Education That Constructs: A Creative Dialogue Between Constructivism and Faith-Based Education*, edited by HeeKap Lee, 124–38. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2010.

- Abstract:
  - (No abstract available)
- IFL Notes:
  - This book chapter is a helpful addition to the body of literature on constructivist elements in Jesus's teaching practices. The chapter examines passages from the Gospel of Mark and categorizes the teaching practices, finding that many are compatible with constructivist approaches. The

chapter's focus on larger passages in Jesus's life allows readers to see the context of Jesus's teaching as opposed to studies that focus on specific teaching techniques (such as Jesus's questions). Although the article does not address online education, constructivism is the dominant theory of learning in the field, and online instructors can thus learn from Jesus's example.

Strevy, Sonia R. "Is Faith-Based E-Learning Possible?" *Journal of Christian Nursing* 22, no. 4 (2005): 22–24. <https://doi.org/10.1097/01.CNJ.0000262181.62067.be>.

- Abstract:
  - (No Abstract Available)
- IFL Notes:
  - This article provides a great model of a deep integration of faith and learning. The course fosters Christian leadership concepts and encourages students to reflect on their faith constantly during the course through a variety of opportunities: weekly devotionals, prayer forum, discussions, connections to spiritual counselors, and the model of the instructor.

Stuart-Buttle, Ros. "Interrupting Adult Learning through Online Pedagogy." *Journal of Education and Christian Belief* 18, no. 1 (2014): 61–75. <https://doi.org/10.1177/205699711401800107>.

- Abstract:
  - This paper considers online pedagogy in relation to Christian adult learning and asks how this might be interpreted by theological educators. The online community of inquiry is proposed as one recognized pedagogical approach and illustrated by reference to a continuing professional development programme for online adult learners across the church school sector in the UK. In seeking an online pedagogy that is also theologically informed, attention is given to Belgian theologian Lieven Boeve's work concerning a theology of interruption. Insights gained from this are considered alongside reflection from the author's experience as online educator. The paper concludes that online pedagogy can be interpreted as interruptive when influencing and shaping the online environment for adult theological learning.
- IFL Notes:
  - This is a clear and accessible overview of constructivist pedagogy and the theory underlying the community of inquiry model. The discussion is optimistic about the opportunities for dialogue through online communication. Lieven Boeve's theology emphasizes that God's perspective interrupts human belief complexes, calling them into question. Online education opens space for such dialogical interruptions—potentially even more than face-to-face classes. The article does a good job of explaining *why* online classroom spaces can potentially provide a productive space for dialogical learning but does not significantly address the *how*—i.e., what are some specific classroom practices for cultivating such interruption?

## T

Thorne, James A. "Biblical Online Education: Contributions from Constructivism." *Christian Education Journal* 10, no. 1 (2013): 99–109.

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- Abstract:
  - The biblical educator is interested in a pedagogy that provides a paradigm supported by biblical theology for those engaged in the online education enterprise. Constructivism provides student-centered knowledge, truth-oriented perception, individually transformed information, and an actively constructed worldview. The following essay analyzes the constructivist paradigm as it is employed in biblical education online both from a biblical perspective and as it relates to the art and science of providing biblical education online. The conclusion is that Constructivism provides a helpful paradigm for biblical online education.
- IFL Notes:
  - The article argues that Christian education must be grounded in a biblical philosophy of education, which in Thorne's view is presuppositional in character. Thorne advocates a moderate constructivism that recognizing both objective reality and learners' active needs to construct knowledge to make sense of this reality. Give the importance of constructivism within online education more broadly, this article raises important questions for Christian instructors in an online environment. At the same time, the primarily theoretical worldview approach can be broadened to include Christian practices.

Tonkin, Shauna E. "The Christian Ethos and E-Learning." *Christian Scholar's Review* 33, no. 4 (2004): 557–67.

- Abstract:
  - Shauna E. Tonkin considers how time-honored methods of teaching and learning are being challenged by new concepts of instruction emphasizing student needs. The use of Internet based education, or e-learning, is a relatively new concept that is taking an increasingly central role in higher education. E-learning introduces philosophical and procedural differences in the teaching process that may seem at odds with the purpose of Christ-centered education. Although our understanding of e-learning is incomplete, the Internet can be a viable means of delivering instruction. This paper outlines a basic framework for creating and delivering online instruction in a manner compatible with our Christian values and perspectives. Ms. Tonkin is Dean of the Center for Professional Studies at Regent University.
- IFL Notes:
  - This article has some benefit for instructors in laying out the main elements of online courses that they must consider. Tonkin lists fundamental biblical values for fostering learning, including the need for Christian intellectual

investigation, the value of community as a context for learning, and respecting others. Much of the material (such as the section on learning outcomes) is not specific to a Christian context. Moreover, the article tends to discuss online teaching and learning at an abstract level. Nevertheless, instructors just beginning to teach online may find this article helpful.

Troftgruben, Troy M. “Decentered Online Bible Instruction: How Active Learning Enhances the Study of Scripture.” *Teaching Theology & Religion* 21, no. 1 (2018): 33–46.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/teth.12418>.

- Abstract:
  - The field of biblical studies lends itself well to decentered online learning – a kind that uses active learning to engage primary texts and their interpretations. Not only does such an approach work well in online and hybrid formats, it more readily welcomes readings that are more contextual, constructive, and collaborative. Three aspects best characterize a decentered approach to active learning online: an orientation toward primary texts, collaborative inquiry, and enhanced learner initiative. This essay describes the significance of each in turn, along with naming some best practices. I argue that this approach not only shifts focus toward learners and the learning environment, it works particularly well for teaching Bible courses online and in hybrid formats where interpretation of primary sources is the fundamental goal.
- IFL Notes:
  - This is a helpful article for classes that are centered on texts. Troftgruben stresses the need to be oriented toward the text while collaborating with other learners in a community that the instructor has intentionally fostered. Students should engage in peer-instruction and should have multiple opportunities and venues to share their insights. Troftgruben finds that consistent small groups can be effective contexts for such courses.

## W

Waldner, Leora S., McGorry, Sue Y., and Widener, Murray C. “E-Service-Learning: The Evolution of Service-Learning to Engage a Growing Online Student Population.” *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, vol. 16, no. 2 (2012): 123–50.  
[https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL\\_INST/122ppak/eric\\_sEJ975813](https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL_INST/122ppak/eric_sEJ975813)

- Abstract:
  - E-service-learning (electronic service-learning)—online course instruction and/or service—holds massive potential to transform both service-learning and online learning by freeing service-learning from geographical constraints and by equipping online learning with a powerful and much-needed tool to promote engagement. Students are increasingly pursuing their education online, yet few are exposed to service-learning in their online coursework. To remain relevant, service-learning must also go online. How do we transition service-learning from hightouch to high-tech? E-service-learning provides the answer. Through an

extensive literature review, this article identifies four emerging types of e-service-learning endeavors and presents best practices. Armed with these best practices, we call on our colleagues to increasingly integrate e-service-learning into their online courses and to study the outcomes of such efforts to ensure the relevance of service-learning in the 21st century.

- IFL Notes:
  - This article, although it does not specifically address a Christian educational context, provides a good overview of e-service learning and suggestions for integrating it into online classes. Such service can provide the sense of interaction that students need in online classes and can take advantage of the geographical distribution of students. The article’s best practices are an excellent guide to instructors who want to implement e-service learning in their courses.

Watson, James E. “The Inclusion of Intentional Ethos Enablers in Electronic Distance Learning Opportunities of Christian Institutions.” *American Journal of Distance Education* 22, no. 4 (2008): 195–206. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08923640802429860>.

- Abstract:
  - Communicating the Christian ethos of Christian institutions constitutes a significant portion of the effort and monies of these institutions. Included in the purview of ethos enablers are faculty input and advising, student services, required chapel/worship, ministry formation/field experiences, admissions procedures, and opportunities for students to interact with one another in informal settings. Each of these is included in the core functioning of campus-based Christian institutions. As these institutions move more and more to providing distance learning opportunities, it is questioned if equal importance is being given to these ethos enablers in interactions with distance learners. The purpose of this study is to describe what is being done and how effective selected Christian institutions perceive themselves to be in including intentional ethos enablers in their distance learning opportunities.
- IFL Notes:
  - Watson argues for the importance of attending to “institutional ethos” in online settings by Christian colleges/universities. The article may be of most interest to administrators, but instructors can also benefit from it, as they significantly contribute to institutional ethos. Christian universities need to cultivate an explicitly Christian ethos in online settings, but they struggle to encourage church attendance, participation in spiritual events, and adherence to community standards. Watson also notes that constructivism, which is very important within online education in general, can create some barriers to instructors who are looking to *form* their students by teaching a set of beliefs and way of life. Watson claims that constructivism “does not allow for faculty members to transfer values and principles or an ethos to students” (197). Instructors can wrestle with Watson’s arguments, recognizing the benefits of constructivist approaches alongside the need to balance constructivism with positive formation.

Westbrook, Timothy Paul. "Global Contexts for Learning: Exploring the Relationship Between Low-Context Online Learning and High-Context Learners." *Christian Higher Education* 13, no. 4 (2014): 281–94. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15363759.2014.924888>.

- Abstract:
  - Current research on culture and distance education suggests that cultural variables influence student success online. When online courses are writing-based, they may provide easy information dissemination; however, the low-context medium may restrict the learning experience and class dynamic due to the lack of nonverbal communication. Students who come from a high-context culture may find low-context, online cultures to lack cues they would normally expect when meeting face-to-face. Judging that text-based online communication is low-context, this study explores the impact low-context communication makes in the learning environment of students from high-context cultures by investigating Hall's definitions of contexting and Hofstede's (1980) dimensions of culture in view of online learning. The article concludes by offering suggestions for how to better serve high-context cultures in low-context online courses in Christian institutions of higher education.
- IFL Notes:
  - This article contains useful reflections on cultural self-awareness and the gap that may exist between one's own expectations about online learning and the expectations our students may have. (The remarks about syllabi are especially pertinent.) The conclusion provides a very useful one-page list of practical suggestions for helping students who may not share American instructors' expectations about learning online. Given the greater geographical distribution of online learners, instructors would do well to consider potential cultural barriers to learning.

White, Roger. "Promoting Spiritual Formation in Distance Education." *Christian Education Journal* 3, no. 2 (2006): 303–15.  
[https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL\\_INST/122ppak/proquest205415428](https://baylor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01BUL_INST/122ppak/proquest205415428)

- Abstract:
  - For many in Christian higher education modeling Christ-likeness in the classroom is considered a primary means and evidence of integrating faith and learning. But when the face-to-face relational dimension is removed in an Internet-based course, how will Christian distinctives be realized? This paper considers issues related to personally connecting with students in online course environments and facilitating faith development by promoting the affective and relational dimensions of distance education instruction. Although Christ and computer at first seem incompatible, spiritual formation can be nurtured in distance education through the creative ways in which faculty and students interact.



- IFL Notes:
  - This is an early article on the topic but sets up a useful theological framework for thinking about how online learning relates to spiritual and moral formation. White emphasizes the need to model Christ, who overcome distances between God and humanity through the incarnation. Paul's letters serve as further models of distance education, and White points to various ways that these letters engage their audiences. The article contains lists of strategies for online teaching in addition to the theological grounding of these principles. White appears to primarily have the religion classroom in mind, but his theological framework and suggested practices can easily be applied to other classes and disciplines.

## Y

Yacapsin, M. S. "Graduate Student Preferences for Practicing Faith in Online Coursework." *Journal of Research on Christian Education* 23, no. 3 (2014): 271–82.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10656219.2014.908153>.

- Abstract:
  - The purpose of this investigation was to gain a better understanding of the expectations graduate students hold regarding the amount of and types of faith-related activities utilized in online coursework. Two groups of participants surveyed were enrolled at two different, faith-based institutions in Pennsylvania, United States; one a Catholic university and one a Christian college. Results of the survey and subsequent response analysis indicated that 82% of the students preferred the instructor utilize faith activities more frequently in online coursework, despite having enrolled at the institution for its academic reputation.
- IFL Notes:
  - This article contains useful information on graduate students' expectations regarding the role of faith in the online classroom, namely that they often expect and want instructors to integrate faith and learning. Yacapsin mentions some of the ways of bringing faith into the classroom, such as prayer and journal reflections. More research is needed to see if the conclusions of the article are widespread beyond the two institutions the author investigated and also if they are applicable to undergraduate contexts.

## Z

Zuck, R. B. *Teaching as Paul Taught*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1998.

- Book Description:
  - Though books on Paul's life and writing abound, very few works have examined the apostle's teaching techniques. In this companion to 'Teaching as Jesus Taught,' Roy Zuck probes Paul's pedagogy to discover principles for effective teaching today. According to Zuck, the apostle Paul stands as a master teacher. "Analyzing and following Paul's educational goals and strategies," Zuck writes, "can help us

become better teachers of God's Word. Examining his pedagogy can acquaint us with a number of important principles and procedures in teaching." 'Teaching as Paul Taught' explores the many New Testament references to Paul's teaching as well as the historical and cultural context in which the apostle taught. Zuck carefully organizes this extensive material around fifteen key questions regarding the teaching ministry of Paul. Over twenty tables and questions for reflection at the end of each chapter aid readers in following Paul's example. The result is a comprehensive and practical handbook for everyone involved in a teaching ministry.

- IFL Notes:
  - The Apostle Paul has emerged in discussions of online education as an important model of instruction and formation at a distance. As a result, this book discussing his teaching style (which is largely known through his epistles) is relevant to online instructors. Given the importance of discussions in online courses, chapter eleven on Paul's use of questions to motivate learning is especially relevant.