

The 2010 Conference presentations were among the best at an ACCESS conference. There was a nice blend of theory and praxis as well as scholarship and application. The content ranged from student to administrative concerns. It's evident that the ACCESS membership is very engaged in the field of Christian distance education.

### **Faith integration in online courses**

\* Karen Jacobs, LeTourneau University

\* Wayne Jacobs, LeTourneau University

**T**he most powerful way to allow students to develop a Christian Worldview and see the difference in a Christian college or university is to integrate faith into the academic curriculum. This transformation occurs as a result of constant immersion in God's Word so that the mind is renewed. This immersion can and should take place in online courses so that students can see how the course content and Scripture are tied in together. Integration should start through the process of prayer and then be supplemented by determining the foundational ideas and principals for the curriculum and school. Instructors should reflect on Scriptures which are relevant to their field, provide targeted and specific devotionals, ask questions which cause students to see the integration of their faith and the course content and use assignments to help students think through the issues that affect their faith. Creating courses and modifying courses can be done through intentional purpose statements, using comprehensively integrated Christian textbooks (when available), deductive devotionals, mission statements and scriptural ties to the content. Instructors should seek to find novel ways to share their faith and show how faith intersects their content. An instructor who is passionate about demonstrating and sharing their faith in the classroom is a powerful tool of God for Christian discipleship. Integration of faith into online courses does not need to be a difficult process. It can cause a greater understanding of how an individual's worldview is integrated into every part of their life.

*\* Wayne serves as Dean of the School of Education and Professor in Online and Traditional programs*

*\* Karen serves as Assistant Dean of the School of Business and Instructor in Online, Traditional and Adult learning programs*

### **Standardized formats and presentation methods**

\* Rod Minatra, Southwest Baptist University

**T**he idea is to reduce the development time for adjuncts and familiarization time for students. This session addresses a standard look/feel and organization of the online course and standard introduction modules (surveys, introductions, podcasts) along with standardized delivery sequence.

*\* Rod is the Associate Professor and Chair of the Adult Education Business Programs*

## **Understanding Group Dynamics of Virtual Learning Communities**

\*Michael Freeman, Lancaster Bible College

**T**o be an effective facilitator of online learning, it becomes important to understand the nature of your audience. For many successful online programs, this often involves cultivating meaningful interaction among students. One of the common complaints about online education is the feeling of isolation that can often accompany this learning environment. By understanding the structure, characteristics, and dynamics of virtual learning communities, educators can be purposeful in designing courses that promote healthy group formation and minimize stress and isolation. This presentation will review current research into Virtual Group Dynamics and provide practical propositions for integrating these theories into your online classroom.

*\* Michael serves as the Online Course Developer in the Office of Biblical Online Education at Lancaster Bible College and Graduate School. His duties include working with faculty in the creation and maintenance of online courses and hybrid programs. Additional responsibilities include faculty training, student support, and Moodle administrative duties. He is also a faculty member serving both undergraduate and degree completion students.*

## **Spiritual Formation Assessment**

\* Steve Lowe, Erskine Theological Seminary

**O**ne of the fundamental questions we have to address in spiritual formation in theological distance education is how do we capture an assessment in a moment of time that involves a process which unfolds across time and across the human lifespan? Are we measuring spiritual development as a means of justifying our existence as a theological aberration within the traditional theological delivery system? Are we measuring spiritual formation for the purpose of satisfying accreditors who require us to answer such questions in an effort to keep us honest? Can we humans really assess the work of God and do we have any right to do so? These and many more questions will need to be answered by us before we are asked them by our critics. We need to be prepared to give an answer for the hope and faith we have in God to work in and through various forms of theological instruction (including distance education) to accomplish his purposes in the lives of his children.

*\* Steve is the Associate Dean for Distributed Education Erskine Theological Seminary. He has served as Associate Dean for the last 11 years during which time the Erskine Distance Education Network (EDEN) has grown to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse and geographically distributed student body. He served as Co-Director with his wife Dr. Mary Lowe of the recently completed three year National Consultation on Theological Distance Education funded by a grant from the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion.*

## **Video feedback ~ community development in online faculty training**

\* C. Damon Osborne, Ph.D. Mount Vernon Nazarene University

**A**s an integral part of an online faculty training course, video feedback is coupled with traditional textual feedback in order to model effective means of developing community among online course participants. Although specific tools, such as YouTube, iMovie, and Apple computers are discussed, the core principles are easily transferrable to other technologies. Specific techniques pertaining to the content of the video and written feedback are also included, in an effort to provide a clear model that other faculty trainers could readily employ in their training setting.

*\* Damon serves as Associate Professor of Education/Coordinator for Online Curriculum Development for MVNU. He teaches courses involving educational technology in addition to overseeing the online initiative for the university.*

## **Assessing for Quality ~ Practical techniques, tips and tools**

\* Glenn C. Hoyle, Ph.D., Moody Bible Institute

**T**his presentation will review the state-of-the art techniques and tools in assessing online and distance learning programs. Practical assessment approaches will be stressed with an emphasis upon how accreditation requirements can be satisfied and a culture of assessment developed among your faculty and adjuncts. In addition, this session will specifically address methods and approaches for assessing spiritual formation. Specific tools, such as LiveText, Taskstream, Adobe video portfolios and others will be discussed.

*\* Glenn is the Manager of Instructional Effectiveness and is responsible for the instructional effectiveness, including assessment, of distance learning classes at the Moody Bible Institute, and supervises faculty selection and development.*

## **Track 1.3: Active learning in the online environment**

\*Wayne Jacobs, LeTourneau University

\*Karen Jacobs, LeTourneau University

**E**ven though many online courses are preloaded with information in a template, active learning can be included in creative ways to provide learners with successful ways of interacting with course content. In this presentation, several methods are discussed with the intent on utilizing multiple methods in online courses. Adapting the online classroom to utilize active learning does not necessarily require substantial changes or increased expenditures for specialized equipment. It can, however, improve learning and engagement among students. In addition, the regular use of feedback during a course can help the instructor see the course as students see it and help identify ways to support student learning more effectively.

*\* Wayne serves as Dean of the School of Education and Professor in Online and Traditional programs*

*\* Karen serves as Assistant Dean of the School of Business and Instructor in Online, Traditional and Adult learning programs*

## **Developing Relationships with Online Learners**

\*Kristin Bird, Sevenstar Academy

**D**eveloping relationships with students is a key to the success of their learning experience. This session will provide tips and techniques for motivating students by first creating a relationship

with them. Showing personal interest, recognizing accomplishments, student conferences, as well as helping them become more involved in Community/Christian service activities (as well as many more) will lead to more solid relationship-building with students. This in turn will allow us to demand more academic rigor from them. Audience participation will help enhance this session. Together we will build a knowledge base of ideas to pull from as we help our students learn and grow.

*\* Kristin is the Principal of Sevenstar Academy, an online Christian School. She is working on the Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instructional Leadership from NorthCentral University. She received the MA in teaching in elementary education from University of Pittsburgh*

#### **D.E. Technology Decisions**

*\*Amy Earnest Donovan, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary*

**D**istance Education requires stable and flexible technologies that meet the needs of instructors and students. This session is oriented for non-technical attendees and technology managers. The presenter will explore the major factors that should drive technology selection, replacement and ongoing maintenance and support. Topics include the following:

- How a non-technical Program Director can approach technology when there are limited funds or internal technical staff
- Keys to interacting with internal technical staff and vendors
- Importance of standardization
- Pitfalls and lessons learned in the trenches related to instructional technology
- Current and emerging options for hosted distance education technologies that are fully vendor managed
- How to stretch scarce resources

*\* Amy Donovan serves as the Chief Information Officer for Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary with responsibility for Information Technology and Media Services. She is currently working towards a MA in Religion with a Missions Concentration at Gordon-Conwell. In October Amy will travel to Cape Town, South Africa to provide technology support for the 3rd Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization. Prior to Gordon-Conwell, Amy was on staff for six years as an Information Technology Manager for the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention in Richmond, VA. Amy has also served in technology roles for Circuit City Stores, Inc. in Richmond, VA and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) in Washington, D.C..*

#### **The state of Christian distance education**

*\*Jason D. Baker, Ph.D. Regent University*

**N**ow that distance and online learning are no longer on the fringes within higher education, where exactly are we as Christian distance educators? What's the current status of online learning in general? What are the trends within the larger industry? What's happening in the Christian distance learning sector and what challenges and opportunities face us in the coming years? This presentation will draw from recent industry reports and current literature to help assess the state of Christian distance education.

*\*Jason serves as Professor of Education at Regent University. He teaches in the Ed.D. program, conducts research and writing into online learning, and manages the BakersGuide.com Christian Distance Education website.*

### **Library Access for Distance Students**

Melinda Thompson, Director of DE, University of Dubuque Theological Seminary

Mary Anne Knefel, University Librarian, University of Dubuque

Jonathan Helmke, Assistant Director for Library Systems and Technical Services, University of Dubuque

**A** discussion about the planning, implementation, and ongoing support issues involved in providing information literacy training and materials access for students in their Distance M.Div. program. Special attention will be paid to assessment and e-reserve/copyright issues.

### **Please Inspire Me**

David Shankle, LeTourneau University

Dr. Ray Thompson, LeTourneau University

**A**ccording to Bill George (2007), people are looking for meaning and significance in their work. Specific principles and actions can be taught and emulated to help inspire others. Action points and best practices are the focus of this presentation. Specific learning objectives will include:

- Making the case why inspired faculty are great faculty
- Display the importance of vision and discuss how vision can be communicated effectively
- Steps to hiring the right faculty
- Equipping faculty for success - mentorship
- Specific steps to keep faculty motivated and inspired

By working through the learning objectives presented above, distance learning administrators will be equipped to inspire, motivate, and lead their faculty. At the ACCESS Conference, best practices are not just about the end product of educating students. It is about preparing faculty to incorporate the passion of Ephesians 3:19 into the educational environment. How much does inspiration matter in respect to performance? According to Bill Hybels (2007) inspiration can be a major performance motivator. Inspired faculty can be effective faculty that ultimately educate students and open up opportunities to instill a Christian worldview in the online environment.

*\*David Shankle is the Director of Distance Learning and Administrator of the online programs for the School of Graduate and Professional Studies*

*\* Dr. Ray Thompson serves as Assistant Dean of the School of Graduate and Professional Studies*

### **How to Create Student Engagement in Quality, Christian Online Courses**

Kristin Bird, Sevenstar Academy

**T**he rapid growth of online learning has led some educators to believe that "if you build it, they will come". However, Christian online educators must do more than simply use the online curriculum and learning management system to deliver curriculum with the hopes that learning will occur, especially if we want them to learn about God. Instead, skilled online teachers must harness the power of their learning management system and associated technology tools to maximize student engagement in their online learning experience. When students are not engaged in their learning, they may become bored; do poorly on tests and assignments; get discouraged about the courses, the curriculum, and themselves; and in some cases even drop out

of class. Online instructors need to make sure they are engaging all students by including a variety of methods of instruction and assessment to engage and retain students.

### **Getting Faculty Buy In for Online Course Development**

\*Kevin Mahaffy, Moody Distance Learning

**F**or many faculty, the jury is still out on distance education though the judge has already rendered a verdict! While most newer faculty embrace online courses, older faculty often hold chair positions that dictate whether online courses will or will not be successful. This session will discuss practical ways to get faculty buy in for course design, development, and approval. Discussion will occur to discover successful practices used at other institutions.