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**E-LEARNING AND ADVENTIST FAITH DEVELOPMENT:  
ARE THEY COMPATIBLE?**

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## **Introduction**

Technology has dramatically impacted every part of higher education. The current rise of e-learning, which mainly takes the form of a college or university class delivered online, presents exciting new possibilities for Adventist higher education. E-learning, which has been around for ten years, has now emerged from being a radical idea to something which is regarded as mainstream and used by most colleges and universities, everywhere in the world. Many adult students who cannot easily access a college or university campus and a classroom environment, find e-learning education, flexible and convenient.

But will e-learning have a lasting role in Adventist higher education? I have heard some of my colleagues argue that e-learning is necessary to accomplish the great mission of Christ to “go ye into all the world” and provide for the needs of all students, not just those who can come to a physical campus. Others have argued back that the online environment is a very poor substitute for the faith-affirming interactions that take place in a face-to-face traditional class. So, will e-learning cause the loss of those faith-affirming, visual, verbal and non-verbal contacts which are found in traditional face-to-face classrooms? Without prayer, thoughtful devotionals, or the caring face of a Christian professor, will there still be opportunity to share and develop faith in the online environment?

While there are many challenges and considerations, I firmly believe that online classes can indeed be Christ-centered and affirm a student’s faith. I also believe that e-learning can be delivered in such a manner that will provide for authentic Christian community and faith-affirming communion. But, from personal experience in both taking and teaching online courses for the past eight years, it will not be easy. Indeed, the online environment will require a studied intentionality on the part of the professor and the design of the course content to achieve these goals. This paper attempts to show some ways to achieve the goals of Adventist higher education which are to develop Christian community and affirm Adventist Christian faith through e-learning.

## **Dramatic Changes in Higher Education**

The transformation in higher education in the last ten years has been staggering. Thomas Friedman (2005) describes a twenty-first century fundamentally changed by technology and transportation. His conclusion is that this has resulted in a, “global, Web-enabled playing field that allows for multiple forms of collaboration—the sharing of knowledge and work—in real time, without regard to geography, distance, or, in the near future, even language.” (p. 176). How have colleges and universities been affected by these technological changes? The Chronicle of Higher Education (2005) reported that “Technology has altered almost every aspect of higher education, from libraries to teaching to student life. But in many

ways we have only seen the beginning of the changes technology will bring.” (p.1).

One of the most positive ways that higher education has changed has been to reach out to adult students through the use of e-learning. Palloff and Pratt (2001) make the point that nontraditional students (working adults returning to college or students who are unable to attend classes on campus) make up a rapidly growing population in higher education. In fact, fewer than one in five college students today is a traditional 18- to 22-year-old undergraduate living on campus. The vast majority of higher education students are working adults who are trying to obtain degrees while holding down full-time jobs. Many are working parents, people with disabilities, night workers or those who live in remote areas and look to online classes to help them further their educational experience.

In 2002 some 1.6 million students took at least one online course; that included 11% of U.S. higher education students. A September 2003 survey of chief academic officers in U.S. colleges and universities noted that a significant number of higher education institutions were embracing online learning. Indeed, 48.9% of public institutions offered online degree programs while only 21% of private institutions offered online programs. The overall percent of schools identifying online education as a critical long-term strategy grew from 49% in 2003 to 56% in 2005. Overall online enrollment increased from 1.98 million in 2003 to 2.35 million in 2004 (Allen & Seaman, 2005).

In a futuristic article, Witherspoon (2005) looks down to the higher education world of 2020 and foresees that e-learning will have become the core of many institutions approach to teaching and learning. This will have been necessitated by adult students and their need for career and lifelong learning, by their own personal learning needs, by an increasingly mobile workforce, by the worldwide accessibility of new technologies and significant advances in technology-based pedagogy. Lynch (2004) observes that the next 50 years will see a “learning revolution unlike anything witnessed since the beginning of the printing press. Adults want and need to be able to learn things on-demand - whether it is at 3:00 am or 10:00 pm.” (p. 2). The reality, she notes, is that students are more mobile now and want to learn in their homes, their cars, their offices, on the manufacturing floor, and even while traveling. And yes, students, want to obtain this new required knowledge just before or at the very time they need it.

### **E-Learning and the Mission of Adventist Higher Education**

Adventist education at all levels, primary through tertiary, is intentional in its mission. Intentional, as Rasi (1993) has noted, in that all teaching and learning is designed to “ensure that students under the influence of Christian teachers and by the time they leave school, will have freely internalized biblical values and a view of knowledge, life, and destiny that is Christ-centered, service oriented and eternity directed.” (p. 1). The challenge for Adventist education, especially higher

education, has always been how best to integrate and affirm faith in practical ways. Is this best done in a classroom setting only or can it be done through the vehicle of online or e-learning?

Allen and Seaman (2004) conclude that private institutions in the U.S. are producing online efforts at a significantly slower rate than public institutions. Tonkin (2004) notes that Christian colleges have successfully specialized in, and cultivated, “over successive generations”, spiritual development and intellectual development in a “high touch” face-to-face context. Roels (2004) suggests that this reluctance to embrace e-learning by Christian colleges and universities is because of the legitimate debate about whether the e-learning instructional method really fulfills the distinct educational mission of Christian colleges. She concludes, however, that e-learning may be one of the few options for a Christian education for working adult students who want to finish college or advanced degrees. In her words, “If, as a community of Christian educators, we value the lifelong pursuit of Christian education, e-learning may provide one important avenue for adult access to such knowledge and values.” (p. 4). Indeed, as Carnevale (2002), noted in a *Chronicle of Higher Education* article entitled *Virtual Faith*, Eastern University attracts students who are looking specifically for a Christian education. I believe these words ring true for many who desire higher education in an Adventist Christian setting.

So, if Adventist higher education is to be responsive to the future needs of a vast audience of adult learners who desire a Christ-centered education and if e-learning is to become a strong part of our educational mission to the world, how will it be intentional in that mission? As Akers (2001, p. 1) wrote, “Since distance ed is a novel instructional modality for most of us, what we say at this juncture about faith nurture via the Internet is largely theoretical. There are, however, some tried and true premises and procedures that might transfer over from the conventional classroom to this new instructional frontier....” At this point, perhaps it is wise to look further at this “new modality” and try to understand what exactly e-learning is and what it is not?

Some might believe that e-learning and technology in education is all about computers. And some faculty in higher education might think that designing and delivering an online class consists merely of converting old lecture notes, PowerPoint presentations, and multiple-choice quizzes, into the appropriate web accessible format? Many are unaware that e-learning courses in higher education include a vast array of some old and some very new technologies, including books, telephone and fax, traditional mail, video and DVD, broadcast and cable programming, streaming video, the Internet, e-mail, online synchronous and asynchronous discussion boards, and content-rich self-paced interactive multimedia on CD-ROM or DVD. All of these technologies can be used to supplement a traditional face-to-face classroom, or support a totally online class.

Indeed, there are many types of e-learning being delivered today. However, it seems that online delivery generally falls into three categories. Online materials, which are used to enhance a face-to-face classroom environment, fall in the “web-enhanced” category. The other two forms of online classes are, “hybrid courses” and then, those courses which are fully delivered online. It is now common in many face-to-face courses from elementary school to graduate school to routinely incorporate e-mail, web links, chat rooms, electronic white boards, self grading quizzes and so on. Clearly these are enhancements that contribute to the richness of the face-to-face class material. In short, web-enhanced courses are not “online” courses, but are courses which are taught in the traditional face-to-face setting and enriched with a website to distribute information and assist learning.

“Hybrid” is a popular name given to describe courses that combine traditional face-to-face lecture, discussion or lab sections, with online and other computer based learning. A hybrid course is one that often uses technology-delivered instruction (the Internet, CD-ROM, etc.) as a substitute for a portion of the instruction that a student would otherwise receive in a campus classroom or lab. Often hybrid courses meet approximately 50% of the normal classroom hours on campus while students complete the remainder of their work online.

A fully delivered online course is a course that takes place entirely over the Internet. Students are not required to meet in a face-to-face classroom. In a well-designed, fully online course, which many consider to be true e-learning, students participate in many types of learning activities: class discussions, content material, tests, small group activities, student-to-student interaction and student-to-faculty interaction. As Downes (2006) notes, fully online courses are delivered today by “thousands of universities and colleges” through a system called LMS—learning management system. This software (with names such as WebCT, Blackboard and Desire2Learn), “takes learning content and organizes it in a standard way, as a course divided into modules and lessons, supported with quizzes, tests, and discussions, and in many systems today, integrated into the colleges or university’s student information system.” (p.1-2). So, while online courses are designed and delivered differently than face-to-face (f2f) classes, students are taking basically the same course, for the same credit, which will count toward a degree or professional development.

As we have looked at how online courses are prepared, it must not be forgotten that there must be a teacher and instructional methodologies in place to offer the course. What are the methodologies that work best in e-learning? And do they differ significantly from those employed in a typical classroom? And what about the integration of Adventist faith in an online, e-learning environment? These questions are tremendously important and must be addressed. Perhaps we must begin with the basics of widely accepted good teaching practices in higher education which apply equally as well to face-to-face instruction as to online education.

Chickering and Gamson (1991) have provided seven principles for effective college and university teaching which appear to apply well for both traditional and online instruction. These principles have helped thousands of faculty members and higher-education institutions examine and improve their teaching practices. These principles are:

- Encourage genuine and personal contact between students and instructors
- Develop reciprocity and cooperation among students
- Encourage active learning
- Give prompt feedback
- Emphasize time on task
- Communicate high academic expectations
- Respect the diverse talents which each individual student has and their unique ways of learning.

Graham et al (2000) developed a list of "lessons learned" for online instruction that correspond to these original seven principles. One of their most salient points is that instructors must give detailed prompt and personal feedback to each student. Sadly, they found that neglecting acknowledgement feedback in online courses is common, because such feedback involves purposeful effort and many faculty just don't have or take the time to be personal. They urge online instructors to set clear timelines for responding to e-mail messages, such as stating, "I will make every effort to respond to e-mail within two days of receiving it" or "I will respond to e-mails on Tuesdays and Fridays between three and five o'clock."

In summary, Chickering and Gamson's tried and true principles can serve as reliable guides in all interactions with online students. They also serve as important guides in the development and implementation of all e-learning materials and e-learning assignments. Tonkin (2004) makes the point that if we try to use e-learning and the Internet to mirror a campus classroom, we miss the value of e-learning. "Rather, models of teaching and learning that build upon the strengths of Internet technologies, student traits, and our distinctly Christian traditions hold great promise for continuing and expanding the influence of Christ-centered education." (p. 558). Let's now look at how these principles may be operationalized in e-learning.

### **The Teacher is the Key in E-Learning**

The role of faculty members, in both secular and Christian higher education, continues to evolve as technology and the Internet become increasingly important in teaching. The time honored lecture method of delivering or providing information, in many cases has shifted to that of faculty members facilitating learning. Some have even called this role change as a change from information supplier to knowledge guide. Indeed, vast amounts of information

are readily available online. The use of powerful search engines, such as Google, and online encyclopedias, such as Wikipedia, provide the latest source of both historical and modern information, all at the click of a computer key. In short, faculty members must now play an even more profound role as they guide students to make sense of the overabundant array of the world's knowledge. Nowhere is this truer today, than in the Adventist higher education classroom.

Adventist Christian education has placed a special emphasis on the notion of a "place" in which to develop "Christian community". That place and community has always been actively cultivated by dedicated faculty. Arthur Holmes (1987) believes that Christian colleges especially exist to educate students in a "climate of faith and learning" and he believes that faculty are the key to creating that climate and community. In George Knight's (1980) view, every Adventist teacher is an "agent of salvation" and Christian teaching is a serious ministry which must intentionally involve a professor in the life of each and every student in their classroom. As Roy (2002, p. 7) has also stated, Adventist teachers "will generally behave in an interactive manner with students, functioning as facilitators and mentors." He goes on to note that teachers will develop connections between the heart and the head recognizing that students are to be valued as "creatures in the image of God who are thinkers and decision makers." Sadly, Winslow (2006) notes that many professors in Adventist graduate programs have insecurities about speaking of their religious convictions. He urges Adventist educators not to fail our students, a significant number whose only encounter with the Adventist church will be through Adventist education. He states that, "We must pray for the Holy Spirit to help us overcome our insecurity about our spiritual heritage and religious identity, which so often produces fear of overtly incorporating religion into our graduate curricula." (p. 32).

So, what strategies will a professor use to facilitate an online course and to intentionally integrate faith and learning? Adventist colleges and universities have traditionally fostered and encouraged fellowship and faith integration in contacts between faculty and students. Unfortunately, online students may never see each other or their professor. Thus the need for Adventist online faculty to intentionally transform online exchanges and the online environment into a place where spiritual needs are met and spiritual growth is fostered. Jiang and Ting (2001) have shown that the quantity and quality of faculty interactions with students is directly linked to what student's learn. This intentional interaction must provide for both public and private interactions with students.

In addition, faculty members must establish clear expectations for faculty-student interactions and provide timely and supportive feedback, including making each student a matter of prayer. Laird (2004) states that the integration of Christian principles must be more intentional in the online setting than in the face-to-face environment. He also notes that this integration is crucial because it is what sets Christian educators and their online classes apart from any that might be taken at a public institution. In his private Christian institution, all online courses are

required to articulate in their design, faith integration strategies for each class assignment, forum exercise, instructor example, online project and personal learning journal assignment. His conclusion is that this is part of “who we are as Christian educators”.

Teachers in a face-to-face classroom have become used to lecturing and leading out from the front. In an online environment, facilitation skills will become a necessity for the professor to develop. Facilitation skills seem to fall into three categories: facilitating synchronous (live) events, moderating asynchronous (communication at different times) discussions and coaching learners. It will be important for teachers to respond to each participant’s messages during the course. All participants will want to be heard from and it will be important for teachers to make sure that all class members continue to be comfortable in the online setting. As the class leader, online teachers should not be afraid to show their personalities and to draw out the personalities of their students. One may use biographies, photos and introductions to encourage a sense of community.

It is key that teachers make connections with class members without dominating the course. Having stated that, however, online teachers should not abandon online learners to their own devices. Even a well-designed course can fall apart through inattention on the part of the instructor. If participants are not becoming routinely involved in discussions, they should be encouraged with behind-the-scenes personal e-mails. Above all else, an online class must be kept alive and community encouraged. For five years now I have taught several graduate classes in Educational Administration in a “hybrid” fashion. Half of the students were on campus in the face-to-face setting, while the other half were at a distance. In order to connect these two groups of students, I have held regular chat room discussions where we have joined together as a community of learners. For both groups and for me, this has always been a very fulfilling experience. It’s amazing how fast a two-hour structured class can go when everyone is involved in sharing opinions and collaborating with each other.

### **Community and Faith in E-Learning**

The educational literature is filled with articles urging that e-learning is the wave of the future. But will that sense of Christian community, so often displayed in student teacher interactions in a classroom, be lost? Will the open dialogue with its connectedness and feeling of belonging be lost in the online process? Palloff and Pratt (1999) caution that those who venture into online learning must be purposeful and intentional in creating a feeling of community. They note five outcomes which will facilitate community in an online class: a) active interaction involving both course content and personal communication with each student; b) collaborative learning as evidenced by comments directed primarily from student to student rather than from student to instructor; c) socially constructed meaning (developed by, and in, the online community); d) sharing of resources among students; and finally e) expressions of encouragement and support exchanged

between students and a further willingness to evaluate critically the work of fellow students.

Meyer and Wessman (2005), two nursing educators, have shared the development of Christian community in their online nursing classes. They wrestled for four years with the challenge of providing a classroom environment that would encourage a Christian connection, student-to-student and from student-to-faculty. Their article and excellent experiential diagram show the dimensions of Christian community experienced in their e-learning courses. In summary, they used the Dietrich Bonhoeffer model of Christian community and intentionally tried to create an online milieu that would give opportunity for "Christ-like love, ministry and confession. How could we experience community worship experiences as prelude to work, and how should we craft learning experiences that blended reflection through both dialog and solitude?" (p. 17). Their conclusion is that it can be achieved but not without unique challenges and determined effort on their part. They note several things that must be intentionally done through the online class, including intentional, natural and pervasive integration of Scripture throughout the course; letting individuals choose the balance between group engagement and solitude; affirmation of self-disclosure; providing feedback (proof) that a faculty member has been listening (reading) to the asynchronous chat responses; affirming helpful behavior; risk-taking encouraged; individually tailored approaches; and encouraging responses to apologies from group members. Their summarizing comment is that they are slowly beginning to see glimpses of God's grace and love through their intentional building on their online Christian community of nursing students.

A similar experience is related by Strevey (2005) in an article entitled *Is Faith-Based E-Learning Possible?* She notes that faith integration should be based on the specific mission of the Christian college or university that offers the online course. In her experience, "This is accomplished through building positive student self-image and Christian character, integrating faith with learning and living, and integration of spiritual, educational and leadership development." (p. 23). In her online nursing classes, weekly devotionals relate Scripture to the work world, an online prayer forum is included with each course and character development of students is affirmed by faculty through their postings to students. As an intentional Christian online approach, she notes that all faculty are "encouraged and expected to share their faith in the online classroom."

Often personal issues are shared more readily online than in a face-to-face setting. Because of these opportunities, faculty members need to be in tune and supportive of this interaction. In one of my recent online classes, a non-Adventist doctoral student shared privately with me the sorrows associated with his four-year-old son and his struggle with a brain tumor. This young man, his wife and their dear son were the subject of many special prayers by me and other class members when they eventually learned of his situation. This happened in an online chat session. In the first part of the hour long session with 5 class

members, we began with a devotional on faith and vision. Then we branched into other technology topics of specific relevance to school administrators. Towards the end of the hour long class session, the young man posted the following comments, which then led to this exchange between the class members.

Participant 1: Thank you to everyone who has been so concerned about my son. I really appreciate your kindness.

Teacher: We will continue to pray for you and your son, Tom (not his real name). Tell the others a little about him. You've had some real concerns.

Participant 2: I am sorry to hear that. How old is his son?

Participant 3: I will be praying for you.

Participant 1: Okay, I am generally a very private person about my family, but this situation needs all the help we can get. My four year old son, whom I referred to earlier, experienced dramatic seizures starting on December 28, 2005. At this writing, he has experienced about 100+ seizures, both tonic-clonic and grand mal. The good physicians have told us that he has a cyst/lesion/mass on his right temporal lobe. We have spent the better part of the last month in many different hospitals.

Participant 2: We will certainly add him to our prayer list here at home.

Participant 1: Sorry, there is more. He is scheduled to undergo brain surgery this spring. Obviously we are all concerned. The mortality rate is only 10% so his chances are very good.

Participant 4: My friend's son (2 yrs old) had an orange size tumor in his brain which had given him similar problems. They removed it and he is a healthy new boy, so take this story as hope for the future.

Participant 1: Anyway, that's why I haven't been on this thing (asynchronous discussion board) as much as the rest of you. Thank you.

As many have written and noted, online learning provides great flexibility in meeting the needs of many students who might not otherwise be able to easily access an Adventist Christian undergraduate or graduate degree program. Indeed, the online experience can be developed so that Christian community with its gifts of faith, hope and Christ's love can be freely shared.

## **E-Learning and Course Content, Design and Interactions**

To this point we have dealt with the role of the Christ-like professor and the development of Christian community in the online environment. We have looked at some of the strengths of the online learning environment: instruction anyplace, anytime or at any pace; often there is high quality written dialog; the classes are student centered; there is a level playing field for class members with tendencies for anonymous interactions; access to tremendous resources and the possibility of creative teaching. On the other side are some weaknesses. There are issues with equity and accessibility of technology; different computer literacy skills of learners; students must be motivated and self-disciplined; issues with undefined or not clearly defined online, teaching qualities. In this section, we look at course content in online learning and how that can be responsive to the needs of the online learner.

Those who specialize in developing online courses declare that there are certain basic questions that should guide the online course development process. Let's begin with the most basic question a teacher must ask. Who will be the learners in my class? Will they be working professionals wanting to take one course or will they be pursuing a degree? By knowing your audience, teachers are able to tailor a curriculum designed to meet their student's needs. It will also influence their online instructional strategies, and most of all, it will help to insure that all class participants will be satisfied enough to overcome the gaps of time and distance. The topics, which you will cover in your online class, need careful reflection. Will the students profit by reflection, sharing with each other, brainstorming or by exploration? Online courses must always be designed to allow for significant and active participation between students and from student to teacher. Accessibility to the teacher is key to a student successfully completing an online class.

What is the online course curriculum? It must be kept in mind that delivering a course online shapes course content in specific ways. What works in a face-to-face format may not work at all on the web. In the web-based environment it is incumbent on the teacher/facilitator to actively engage all participants by using provocative questions, sharing ideas, case studies and collaborative activities. Assignments should be in small chunks with lots of bulleted lists. When reading online, most readers don't read the whole page, so the main points should be highlighted with bullets. Along with bullets, there should be lots of graphics that help make a point or reinforce a point.

There are some great books that will strengthen the online teacher with essential elements and countless tips to implement those elements. Perhaps the easiest to read is *Essential Elements: Prepare, Design, and Teach Your Online Course* by Elbaum, McIntyre, & Smith (2002). This book offers an easy-to-follow guide that is based on a model developed from experience with developing hundreds of online courses. Another excellent resource is *You CAN Teach Online! The*

*McGraw Hill Guide to Building Creative Learning Environments* by Moore, Winograd, & Lange (2001). Emphasis is given to helping teachers personalize the online learning experience for the student. Various teaching styles are discussed and hints for applying web-enhanced experiences are given. Appropriate attention is also given to the task of translating content of the course to an online mode. Hints and tips are included for creating syllabi, assignments, discussion questions and other tools that will increase interactivity. Once the course is "designed," they step the reader through many of the details and mechanics of actually converting the materials to online format.

One of the great things about using the online environment is the tremendous variety of resources available to both teachers and students. Links to a multitude of additional websites can further students' understanding. However, activities should be short and well directed with the information and directions, being "chunked." Most learners can handle about 2-4 directions then they forget what they are supposed to do. Information should be broken into several pages and/or activities.

Shelton & Saltsman (2004) in their online article *Tips and Tricks for Teaching Online: How to Teach Like a Pro!* summarize some of the best ideas and practices gathered from successful online instructors. They repeatedly stress that online learners are "eager for communication" and urge online instructors repeatedly to communicate regularly with individuals and the class. They note that teachers should use class-wide e-mail announcements, group e-mails and "chat archives to facilitate accessible, public communication in the online course." (p. 7). They fear that a lack of communication will lead to students feeling isolated and cheated out of an educational experience that they have paid for and want to be successful at. They urge the adding of emotion to e-mails using the "emotion expressed in parentheses (\*smile\*) or to include emoticons, such as ☺ for happiness or :-0 for surprise or dismay" (p.8). In addition, they go on to urge quick responses by teachers to e-mails and the creation of collaborative working groups of no more than four students. In the steps they outline they conclude that online will be effective, will engage the learner and alleviate the fear and frustration from students who may be taking their first ever online class. Another very useful book along these same lines is *147 Practical Tips for Teaching Online Groups: Essentials of Web-Based Education* by Hanna, Glowacki-Dudka, & Conceicao-Runlee (2002). This book contains a very comprehensive collection of strategies for teaching effectively online, starting with pre-instruction preparation and progressing through actual online teaching.

Online teachers should always be interested in finding out how the class is going for the participants. These assessments should not just be done at the end of the class, but at regular intervals throughout the course. It is necessary to be open to possible changes in behavior, attitudes, usage and practice even as the class is progressing through a semester or designated time period. In addition, instructors need to look at the nature of the discussions that have taken place

and what themes have emerged. It may even be necessary to change collaborative activities to reflect where the group's interests may lie.

In conclusion, just giving information is not instruction. Kruse (2000) reminds us that above all else, instructional design is more important than the technology. He outlines six questions that he thinks will go a long way towards screening out the programs that are nothing more than passive forms of information. Does the program immediately capture a learner's attention? Does it answer the learner's question, "What's in it for me?" Are learning objectives presented and are they specific and measurable? Is the presentation of content engaging through both design and media? Does the learner have an opportunity for practice and recall (beyond stale multiple-choice questions)? Does the program include a final post-test or other device to indicate mastery?

## **Conclusion**

I firmly believe that Adventist education, in many programs of graduate and undergraduate study, can be effectively delivered through e-learning. The mission of Adventist education, which is to reach out and integrate faith with knowledge, can be made available to those who desire a Christian education. For many, the flexibility of online learning is their only option for an Adventist educational experience.

I also firmly believe that a caring Christian community which demonstrates love, shares trials and struggles and affirms the worth of each individual, can be successfully established and nurtured online. I have seen it and experienced it first hand. The literature shows, and reassures, that because we "live in and search for community, we can develop it when we communicate with one another, even in an online environment." (Palloff & Pratt, 1999, p. 35)

The issues of the content quality, and facilitating a high level of interaction with, between, and among online class members, must be worked at intentionally. The Adventist online teacher must pay specific attention to the needs and backgrounds of all students with plenty of affirming e-mails. This will involve all class members in the learning process, just as one does in a classroom.

As this article has observed, all online classes will face challenges. These challenges are unique because of the new modality of e-learning. Teachers and online learners alike need to adjust and find that appropriate balance, so that a successful e-learning experience can occur. The profound explosion of information, and information sources, necessitates that online students look to Christian faculty mentors who will help make sense of it all. As well, Adventist online faculty must intentionally and effectively provide spiritual nurture to each of their online students.

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