



Live Online Learning: Strategies for the Web Conferencing Classroom

Cornelius, Sarah; Gordon, Carole; and Schtma, Jan
Palgrave Macmillan Springer Nature, 2014

Book Review

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For many reasons, universities and seminaries are asking faculty to teach more courses online. As a result, professors are ever vigilant for online strategies and tools that could help them with communication, interaction, and live online collaboration between professor and learners, learner and learner, and learners and course content. For professors in religious studies and theology who want to or are required to teach live online, this book is a good place to start. Based on years of research and experience, Cornelius, Gordon, and Schyma propose best practice guidelines in using web conferencing technology and provide helpful tips for teaching that is learner centered. Each of the ten chapters begins with an outline and concludes with a helpful summary.

The usefulness of this book is its breadth in the coverage of materials for teaching in a web conference classroom. Chapter 1 covers creating the virtual classroom environment by using web conferencing technology to create the learning space that inspires learning and teaching. Chapters 2 to 8 follow, in a logical manner, the actual design of a live online course and cover preparation to teach in a virtual classroom, welcoming students to the virtual classroom, bringing professor and students together to the learning space, engaging learners, gaining feedback, helping learners work together, and assessing for learning. The authors conclude in chapters 9 and 10 with thoughts and tools to help professors assess their skills in the live online teaching environment and creative and inclusive ways of using web conferencing technology to support diverse groups of learners.

Within each chapter there is a wealth of information and practical suggestions. From the beginning to the end the authors cover topics and practices such as: creating learning space,

strategies to inspire students and professor, exploring the technology, planning live online sessions, building trust and rapport, engaging learners through activities, collaboration and group work, effective group activities, and student centered assessment. For instance, chapter 5 provides a good example of the breadth of information as it relates to engaging learners. The authors explain the importance of engaging learners; give examples of activities that can be used in any context, followed by step-by-step practical ways to introduce learning activities and activities that maintain student engagement. What is further helpful in this chapter and each of the chapters in the book is the way the authors cleverly interweave their narrative with actual teaching and learning experiences from teachers and learners that gives genuineness to the teaching and learning situation.

In summary, *Live Online Learning Strategies for the Web Conferencing Classroom* succeeds because of the breadth of information and depth of its application. Because it is written in non-technical language, this book will be especially helpful for new instructors who are beginning to teach online live. Its focus on teaching and learning issues and student-centered learning is a welcomed resource.

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