Whither Online?

HOW ONLINE EDUCATION CAN BE MADE TO SERVE OUR INSTITUTIONAL PURPOSES

By Anne Kugler

Online courses and degrees have been present on the higher education scene since the mid-1980s. Whether synchronous (participants are online simultaneously) or now more commonly asynchronous (students access materials at their convenience to complete scheduled assignments), online education is a significant and growing sector of higher education. Popular for their flexibility, so students with other commitments can fit courses into their schedules, online courses are particularly suitable for adult learners who have full-time jobs (and thus schedule constraints) but are seeking additional professional training.

There is, of course, variability in how much a discipline lends itself to online formats, and perhaps more fundamentally the question of whether interaction in a bricks-and-mortar classroom is essential for the highest quality education. Although online education can offer highly interactive experiences, it is a fundamentally different model of teaching than face-to-face instruction.

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HONORS AND AWARDS

Mike Bowen, Department of History, had his book Roots of Modern Conservatism: Dewey, Taft, and the Battle for the Soul of the Republican Party quoted by a number of major media outlets—first in Jonah Goldberg’s article "GOP: Grand Old Potshots," Los Angeles Times October 22; then in John Dickerson’s article “Chris Christie: The Establishment’s Man” in Slate November 5 (also posted on the CBS News website) and in the Chicago Tribune November 6, 2013.

Ralph Saporito, Department of Biology, had his work featured in Karl Gruber’s article “Poison Frogs Make Their Babies Toxic, Too” in the National Geographic blog “Weird and Wild,” November 21, 2013. Professor Saporito collaborated with researchers from the Organization for Tropical Studies and Universidad de Costa Rica, as well as with JCU graduate Yaritbel Torres-Mendoza ’13.

Donald Cozzens’ latest book, Notes from the Underground: The Spiritual Journal of a Secular Priest, was reviewed favorably in two academic journals: Theological Studies, the journal of the Catholic Theological Society of America, December 2013, and American Catholic Studies, the journal of the American Catholic Historical Society, Fall 2013.

Finalists for the first John C. Soper Award in Social Entrepreneurship presented their projects on November 4, 2013. This award was created to honor Jack Soper and his role in developing entrepreneurship at John Carroll. The award is funded by the Master Members of the JCU Entrepreneur Association. Jack Soper (EC) passed away in August. Students were challenged to create an entrepreneurial project that addresses a community issue or need. The winner of the award received $500 in cash and an opportunity to join the JCU hatchery to work with a mentor on developing their proposal. Nine teams—34 students from throughout the university—participated in workshops and the program. The winner of the contest was the Carroll Ballersteam composed of Ned Barnes and Michael Gong. Other finalists were: Ear Armor (Kyle Cassidy, Alexandria Flynn, Gloria Kaucic, Lisa Perry, and Rebecca Sigler); Louder than Hunger (Anthony Pero, Drew Schawanitz, Jordan Lippe, Alessio Difranco, Sara Knezevich, Steven Mayer); and Leftovers (Lauren Dehloa, Matt Feeney, Kimberly Hoag, Jimmy King, Chris Libertin, Liam O’Brien).

Accountancy students advised by Jerry Weinstein, Ann Lee, and George Goodrich, competed in the 2013 Deloitte PanTAXtic Regional Competition. Team B earned second place and a regional honorable mention award. Team A students were: Evan Courey, Stephanie Popencik, Cynley Hesler, Erich Foling, and Dominick Bottiggi. Team B students were: Jaclyn Roznik, Anna Winberg, Erik Petrecc, Allison Pugliese, and Brad Hopkins.

John Carroll received a NetVUE Program Development Grant in the amount of $44,226 from the Council of Independent Colleges funded by a grant from Lilly Endowment. The program titled “Building Capacity for Reflection” will allow John Carroll to deepen the intellectual and theological exploration of vocation among our undergraduates. The project Director is Anne Kugler, and members of the Project Team are: Lauren Bowen, Eddie Carreon, Kathleen Dean, Peggy Viswananth, Ed Hahnenberg, Michelle Millet, Maryclaire Morency, Paul Murphy, Bud Stuppy, and Claudia Wenzel.
ACCOUNTING
Robert Bloom coauthored "Sustainability Reporting to Develop a Competitive Advantage," in The Tennessee CPA Journal 58:6 (March/April 2013) with Mark Myring of Ball State University, who is a JCU accounting alumnus.

Scott Moore and Albert Nagy published an academic case titled "Contact Structuring under the New Lease Accounting Rules: The Case of Custom Design Retail, Inc." in Global Perspectives on Accounting Education 10, pp. 81-90.

CLASSICAL AND MODERN LANGUAGES AND CULTURES
Martha Perszenyi-Pintér gave the opening lecture titled "L'Histoire de la bierre en France" for the Maison Française de Cleveland's 2013-1014 season at Great Lakes Brewery in Cleveland on September 11, 2013.
Professor Perszenyi-Pintér chaired the session titled "Innovations in Science and Technology" and read her paper titled "1 Hungarian Folk Tale + 1 French Fairy Tale = Paul Fajos Fantasy Film: Preserving Images of Hungary Between the Two World Wars in the French Film Marie, Vierge hongroise (1922)" at the American Hungarian Educators Association's 38th Annual Conference at Rutgers University in New Jersey May 2-5, 2013.

Medin Thoratus presented "(Un) migrant Experience and Cultural Citizenship in Bamùs Tianqùs Pèrè's Diario de un masajo" at the 5th Crossing Over Symposium at Cleveland State University on October 11-12, 2013.


EDUCATION AND ALLIED STUDIES
Cecile Brennam presented an educational session titled "Counseling and Values: Determining the Appropriate Role for a Counselor's Personal Values," at the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision Conference in Denver, Colorado, October 17-20, 2013.
Professor Brennam also presented "The Ethics of Counseling Diverse Populations," at the All Ohio Counselors' Conference in Columbus, Ohio, November 5-8, 2013. Professor Brennam and Paula Britton also presented an all-day pre-conference titled "Supervision and Ethics: Let's Get Competent" for the conference.

Amy Hoffman and Mark Storz presented a paper titled "Becoming an IB MYP School: Experiences of Teachers, Students and Administrators" at the American Middle Level Education Annual Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota, November 8, 2013. They were also invited to participate in a roundtable discussion titled "Spotlight on Research" to discuss research papers that had been published by the association the previous year.

Kathleen Baskin, with James Christie, published "Gaining Ground in Understanding the Play-Literacy Relationship" in the American Journal of Play 6:1 (Fall 2013).


Nancy Taylor and Sharon Schwarm, a JCU graduate student, presented "Choice Not Chance: Engaging High School Sophomores in Planning for Their Future" at the All Ohio Counselors' Conference in Columbus, Ohio, November 6-8, 2013.

HISTORY
Matt Berg presented "Demobilization in the Service of Democracy: The Referat zur Liquidierung des Nazismus in Vienna, June 1945 - January 1946" as part of a panel about the theme "New Perspectives on the Afterlife of the NSDAP and Denazification in Postwar Germany and Austria" at the 37th annual German Studies Association Conference in Denver, Colorado, October 2-5, 2013.

James Krukowin moderated a panel discussion at the Cleveland Museum of Art on October 23, 2013, in connection with the Cleveland Orchestra's series "Fate and Freedom," which focuses on the music of Beethoven and Shostakovich. The other participants included John Ewing, director of the Cleveland Cinematheque, and Frank Oteri, a New York-based composer and music journalist. The discussion preceded a screening of the Soviet film The New Babylon (1929), which features an original score by Shostakovich and dealt with the relationships between music, film, and politics.

MANAGEMENT, MARKETING, AND LOGISTICS

Professor Drenten presented "Commodified 'Rights' of Passage: Reconceptualizing Rites of Passage..."
Listed are self-reported faculty accomplishments in research, teaching, and scholarly achievement, along with other professional activities.

MATHEMATICS AND COMPUTER SCIENCE


PHILOSOPHY

Merianna Ortega published "Gift of Being, Gift of Self" in Women and the Gift, Beyond the Queens and All-Giving, ed. Meny Joy (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013).


POLITICAL SCIENCE

Jen Ziemke, with Crisis Mappers Network co-founder Patrick Meier, organized the Fifth Annual International Conference of Crisis Mappers in Nairobi, Kenya, November 18-22, 2013. The conference was hosted by UN-Habitat and Spatial Collective. Official co-organizers are USAID and ESRI.

SOCIOLGY AND CRIMINOLOGY

Susan Long participated in the fall meeting of the Northeast Asia Council of the Association for Asian Studies held at Columbia University November 10, 2013.

Professor Long served as a panelist on two panels at the American Anthropological Association meeting in Chicago, Illinois, on November 20-24. One panel, "The Anthropology of Death, Social Change, Religion and Syncretism," was a four-hour session exploring changes cross-culturally in ideas about death, mortuary ritual, and syncretic practices. The other, sponsored by the Society for East Asian Anthropology and titled, "Acting Publicly and the Caregiving Crisis in East Asia," focused on demographic change, policy, and family relations in regard to caregiving of the elderly in China, Japan, and Korea.

THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Michelo Stopera Freyfurth, instructor and MA'12, was appointed a Member-at-Large for the Student Advisory Board of the Society of Biblical Literature.

Ed Hahnenberg presented "Vatican II and Our Students: Classroom Conversations" at the College Theology Society's annual meeting in Omaha, Nebraska, May 30-June 2, 2013; "A Catholic University in a Postmodern World" at the President's Leadership Retreat at Loyola University Chicago; and "Vocation: Waking Up to a New Understanding" at the Catholics on Call Partner Conference, Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, Illinois, September 18-19, 2013.

In Cleveland, Professor Hahnenberg presented "Vatican II: Igniting the Best of Catholicism" at the National Conference for Catechetical Leadership annual meeting, May 18-23; "Called to Be Leaven in the World: Implications of Vatican II for Catholic Social Ministries" at the Catholic Community Connection Symposium at John Carroll August 23, 2013; and "Ask the Big Questions: An Atheist and a Catholic Discuss..."
The rise of online education has been on John Carroll's radar since the 1990s when a University committee convened to review trends, discuss policies, survey faculty, and report to the academic vice president. In 2006 the University Planning Group cited the potential for online professional program development, and through the years, questions about the quality, transferability, and pedagogy of online courses have been considered repeatedly in the Committee on Academic Policies and the University Core Committee, as well as in discussions with Academic Advising and the Registrar.

The general sentiment about most of these discussions was that John Carroll's identity—committed to personalized attention and individual development, and serving a primarily residential, traditional-age, and undergraduate population—was not conducive to large-scale adoption of online courses and programs.

Nonetheless, on an ad-hoc basis, professors such as Paul Lauritzen and Marc Lynn developed online courses, particularly for summer sessions. By 2013, faculty in Accountancy, Communications, Economics, Education, Psychology, Sociology, Philosophy, Classical and Modern Languages had also taught fully online or hybrid courses during the summer. Aided in planning and technology support by the Center for Digital Media, these faculty were often supported with course development grants from the director of summer sessions.

In 2013, declining summer school enrollment prompted (among other strategies) a systematic effort to offer more courses online to attract students. To encourage faculty to offer new online courses, course development grants were awarded to 14 faculty across 10 disciplines to create online versions of core and upper-level courses. The Center for Digital Media provided training and technological support; the Center for Faculty Development supplied texts about course design; and panel discussions with faculty experienced in teaching online.

These efforts generally resulted in significant enrollment gains, especially in online courses. In summer 2012, there were 159 students enrolled in 15 online courses taught by 12 faculty. In summer 2013, there were 487 students enrolled in 57 online courses taught by 32 faculty. Undergraduate enrollment in face-to-face courses declined by 65 seats from summer 2012 to summer 2013 (11 percent), but these losses were more than offset by a gain of 219 seats (160 percent) from online courses in summer 2013.

In September 2013, new online course instructors participated in a debriefing to discuss their experiences teaching online and reflect on the effectiveness of this kind of teaching. Then, at a broader meeting of faculty on September 20, the themes that emerged in the debriefing provided a starting point for a wider conversation about educational effectiveness, the fit with John Carroll’s mission and identity, and pedagogical and institutional issues that deserved attention going forward.

Pedagogically, three issues emerged. First, the particular challenges of teaching online courses in a compressed summer format because online or compressed formats essentially demand students excel at time management and self direction to succeed. While most classes this summer will continue to use the five-week session format, a few courses—English Composition, for example—will move to the seven-week session because of this concern.
Second, faculty emphasized the need for attention to the expectation-setting preliminaries of each course in making sure students can operate within the online system and are aware of the time demands and self-pacing necessary to complete the course. Discussion continues about whether this sort of student orientation can be done across courses, using a generalized module, or not.

Last, some faculty are concerned about the degree to which taking an online course might impede student engagement or detract from the rigor of a course. On one hand, faculty who taught online say assignments such as participation in discussion threads actually enable a lot of interaction, in ways that can enable ordinarily shy or taciturn students to participate more than they might in a face-to-face class. On the other, generating a satisfactory level of engagement requires careful course design and intensive monitoring by faculty. Moreover, the extremely labor-intensive, time-consuming nature of online teaching using such techniques provokes questions about the trade-offs. Faculty affirm that while offering online courses might be a cost savings to an institution at first glance, in reality, delivering the same quality level as a face-to-face class requires class sizes to be smaller not larger. Additional issues that came to light and will need additional consideration at the institutional level include the questions of identity verification and ensuring academic honesty; intellectual property rights; accessibility and support for students with disabilities; and resource needs in terms of infrastructure and staffing for course design and technology support.

These issues have particular resonance because John Carroll’s online offerings are slated to increase more in summer 2014. Eighteen course development grants will be awarded across 11 departments, which, combined with courses offered by experienced instructors, adds as many as 46 online courses taught by 44 faculty from 15 departments. By fall 2014, about 32 full-time faculty at John Carroll will have taught online – a critical mass for evaluating online value and potential from an experienced perspective and for developing policy and future programs. Questions of scale and capacity have particular resonance in graduate education, where plans for a Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and a Master of Science in Las Management involve substantial online components. At the undergraduate level, the challenge is to offer online instruction that enables student to complete their degrees at John Carroll, ensures quality instruction and course content, and perhaps even attracts non-JCU students to summer offerings. At the graduate level, the challenge is to develop and offer sufficiently flexible professional programs to attract working adults while maintaining high standards of quality regardless of delivery method.

How far, and in what circumstances, online education can be made to serve our institutional purposes is still an open question.

SUMMER RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENTS

This fellowship supports faculty research during Summer 2014 on a competitive basis. It provides a stipend for a summer research project with the expectation of a submission to a high-quality, refereed journal or an equivalent standard of intellectual contribution.

Collin Stearns, Department of Political Science, will explore the potential impact of presidential campaign field offices on an Ohio community’s election results by analyzing the distance between a community and the closest field office(s).

Denise Jon-Portz, Department of Psychology, will conduct a study investigating attentional biases to weight-related stimulus pictures among subjects with anorexia nervosa and control subjects, who are defined as undergraduate, college-aged students who do not have an eating disorder.
Jayme Staver, Department of English, will finish writing the fifth chapter of her book manuscript, Becoming T.S. Eliot, in which she tracks the rhetorical development of T.S. Eliot's poetry.

Owen Compton-Engle, Department of Classical and Modern Languages and Cultures, will make final revisions to a book manuscript about the use of costume in fifth-century BCE Athenian comedy.

Greg DiLisi, Department of Education and Allied Studies, will use the microgravity environment of NASA's 727 parabolic aircraft to test the dynamics of liquid bridges under varying total body acceleration as a function of bridge slenderness, support size, axial versus radial orientation, and the surface tension-to-density ratio of the test fluid.

Jeff Dyck, Department of Physics, will perform the first measurements of thermal conductivity on the semiconductor zinc germanium nitride, a prospective material for future solid-state lighting technology, and develop the techniques needed to conduct the measurements.

Jeff Johansen, Department of Biology, will coauthor two chapters about the cyanobacteria of North America for the second edition of the technical reference text Freshwater Algae of North America: Ecology and Classification.

Linda Roch, Department of Art History, will uncover the remaining layers of meaning of a Renaissance painting of circa 1459 representing the Mystic Lamb in the palace of the Medici family in Florence. The investigation will include nuanced meanings of specific details of the depiction and the thematic relationship of the image to the Procession of the Magi frescoes within the palace's chapel. Delving into the image is likely to yield additional clues about the family's political maneuvering through visual imagery.

Mike Martin, Department of Biology, will update protocols used to determine human ABO blood type via non-invasive means to be less labor intensive and adapted for use with newer technology.

George Eligore, Department of English, will write and revise a collection of poems that will develop into a book.

Bo Lin, Department of Art History, will study the seventh-century Chinese painting "Thirteen Emperors" and how the artist was able to insert commentary messages into the kings’ seemingly formulaic portraits. Many aspects of the painting are insufficiently understood, including the identities of the kings, the meaning behind the selection of the individual kings, and the motivation of the artist.

Jackie Schmidt, Department of Communications and Theatre Arts, will study similarities and differences of the friendships that exist between close and business friends in Russia, Croatia, and the United States. The results will be compared to earlier studies about friendship expectations in these cultures to determine if there is a match between what one expects and what one will do for friends.

Pamela Vanderzalm, Department of Biology, will conduct research to further understand how epithelial cells regulate cell death versus growth and division. This has important implications for cancer biology because about 85% of tumors are epithelial in origin and the genes in this study are conserved between Drosophila and humans.
Debby Roseenthal, Department of English, will contribute an essay to the forthcoming volume *The Transnational Histories of Uncle Tom’s Cabin* under contract with the University of Michigan Press. Her essay will discuss the recent Iranian theatrical production of Uncle Tom’s Cabin, which was written and directed by renowned Iranian playwright and puppeteer Behrooz Gharibpour, as a political and aesthetic response to the disenfranchisement of black Americans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

Jennifer Ullan Cates, Department of Communications and Theatre Arts, will assess the effectiveness of health messages encouraging college students to eat healthy and exercise. Her study will examine whether positive and negative messages influence the emotional associations with diet and exercise and if this leads to engaging in healthy behaviors.

Phil Notres, Department of English, will complete a book project of translated interviews and supplemental poems tentatively titled *Conversations after the Fall.* The book will offer a perspective of the transition of Russian life and poetry from the Soviet era into post-communism, democracy, and capitalism.

John Yosh, Department of Psychology, will use the context of the 2012 presidential election to examine the impact of a world-view threat on the perception of one’s own mortality as measured by the predicted age of one’s own death. This is the inverse of the Terror Management Theory, which asserts humans are conscious of their inevitable death and, therefore, seek self-esteem to buffer themselves from death anxiety through upholding and defending cultural worldviews.

**Faculty Notes**

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Submissions can be sent to facultynotes@jcu.edu. The deadline for the next issue, March 2014, is February 15.

Items of interest about faculty activity—including new publications, conference presentations, collaborations with students, community and professional service activities, teaching innovations, etc.—will be published. Please include relevant details such as date and place of presentation.

Questions and comments should be directed to:

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