Virtual Teaching Portfolio
Instructional Strategies for the Virtual Teacher

Name

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Creating Community

Below are examples and explanations of two or three specific actions I might take to build a collaborative and cohesive group of online learners, which is one essential online instructional strategy, that of creating a virtual learning community.

As an online instructor with a class of students who are just beginning the course, I would create a virtual learning community with the goal of establishing a trusting and connected learning environment by encouraging relationship building. Specific steps to build synergy for this group of learners would be:
  (1) the adherence to a group discussion contract or list of social netiquette principles because, according to Kowch and Schwier (1997), a community is a group with shared interests and a set of values or principles followed by all members in the group (p.1) ' and according to Cavanaugh (2004), synergetic collaboration involves group norms (p.195);
  (2) the emphasis of facilitation and participant observer roles for the instructor because, according to Eades (2001), a collaborative climate requires equal participation of the students with minimal input from the instructor (p.3) in which to allow for discovery learning where students construct their own conclusions about the content (p.5, Houghton Mifflin, n.d.); and
  (3) the emphasis of process over product, because, according to Purkey (1999, p.4) and Smith (n.d., p.5), a democratic and inclusive process encourages participation and ownership in the learning.
In order to implement these steps, the intent of community building would be communicated to the students via posted expectations for student roles and instructor roles, welcome e-mails, and scaffolded discussions in which instructor involvement is gradually replaced with background monitoring as the course progresses. In these ways, a collaborative and cohesive group of online learners would be built with an understanding and respect for the course philosophy and for the teaching and learning goals.

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Educational Statement of Philosophy/Mission Statement

Below is a statement of my core beliefs related to teaching and learning.

Art Education Mission Statement. My aim is to provide an art education that bridges the disciplines of art by introducing a continuity of visual art thinking that holds true despite the medium or specialization in art, and which can also encompass today's digital innovations. In short, I am inspired to educate P-12 students in the visual language of a multimedia world beyond the surface-level of craft-making.

Virtual Art Education Vision. A specific distance learning leadership challenge to address in the education of students through multimedia is that of encouraging visual literacy and information production towards global diversity (Wilhelm, 2002). The modern digital age has produced technologically-savvy students who are comfortable socializing and searching for information on the Internet. The next step is to create distance learning environments that cultivate visual analysis and electronic contributions to society.

Role of the Instructor. In general, a Christian education serves P-12 students for the purpose of preparing them for their future roles as active participants contributing to a democratic society. Instructors represent and work alongside parents in their responsibility to "train a child in the way he/she should go" and it is the duty of a child to submit to this authority by cooperating in the learning process. As a virtual art educator to Christian homeschoolers, my role is to present art instruction that accommodates diverse learning styles and learning needs, in accordance with Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive domain levels and Gardner's multiple intelligences, while maintaining content engagement in accordance with Gagne's nine events of instruction and other instructional design strategies considered to be best practice. Additionally, instruction is framed according to Understanding by Design principles to meet

state content standards, as well as, accessibility and usability standards for technology access.

      Education Goals. The goals of my virtual Christian visual arts curriculum is to prepare students to be responsible producers and consumers of media, to foster media literacy in this global age of technological information and multimedia, and to educate students in creating in relation to the Creator. An integrated study of the disciplines of the visual arts and the principles of creation derived from the Christian Bible allows students to become equipped to responsibly make and evaluate the many forms of media they will encounter in their lifetimes. Further, a Discipline Based Art Education (DBAE) approach to the study of the visual arts disciplines provides students with content in aesthetics, art criticism, art history and art production so that students may gain the knowledge and understanding of many cultures, including the relationship of visual artifacts to these varied contexts, both historically and in contemporary society. Study in these disciplines assists in the growth of Christian students in their individual professions of faith as a way of life.

      Student Goals. There are three goals regarding students in virtual Christian art education.

      Belief 1: To train students to become responsible Christian producers and consumers of media, the Christian art curriculum should be based on essential questions such as the following.

- When making art, do you have to follow the rules exactly?
- What are some rules in art?
- When is it acceptable to break the rules?
- Should an artist break rules?
- In solving art problems, is there a single correct solution?
- What determines the approach to solving the art problems?
- Is there more than one way to interpret art works?
- What is the relationship between an artist, the medium, and the viewers?
- Does (and can) art have a purpose beyond what the artist originally intended?
- What about art making is unique?
- What is the relationship between the artist, art making, and his or her faith?
- How and what does art express?
- What does art have in common with language systems?
- Can art be a language?
- What is the relationship between art making, medium, and spontaneity?

      Essential questions are critical to any curriculum plan as they provide students the opportunity to "generate inquiry around central ideas" so that connections can be made by the students between subjects of study (McTighe & Wiggins, 2004, p.24). A DBAE art curricular approach centered on these big ideas allows for the provision of multiple areas for learner success in the disciplines of art and for academic success in the arts beyond the mere production of expert-level art products. In this way, students enter the dialogue of art, examining and questioning for themselves in reflective art making processes. This is critical to educating students to become media literate. According to Williams (1995), "to be educated is to be visually literate" (p.66), part of which includes an introduction to this country's " 'core' Western heritage" to allow learners participation in "a common culture which all Americans share and enjoy" (Zimmerman, 1997, p.20). This focus on media literacy allows students "multiple capabilities for understanding and deciphering in an image- and symbol-laden world"

(Koroscik, 1997, p.2). Further, Young and Adams (1991) state that the instruction of art through the DBAE strand of art history allows the students to not only gain an understanding of the specific history of an art work but also of the art world at large, through exploring "how cultures have communicated through art and how the past relates to the present" (p.99). According to Jolls and Grande (2005), "the very processes engaged in media literacy (accessing, analyzing, evaluating, and creating) are directly paralleled in the study of the arts" (p. 29). This is a set of skills which "directly services the conviction that a media-literate person is equipped to make more informed choices and is able to live consciously in a media-oriented society" (Jolls & Grande, 2005, p. 29). Therefore, in becoming proficient in the study of the arts, one simultaneously becomes media literate.

Belief 2: Online art education requires authentic assessments of performance. These methods of evaluation include portfolios, product criticisms, both constructive (formative) and summative (based on project rubric criteria). Work that is not an art product (essays, journal logs or blogs, sketchbooks, practice work, discussions and collaborative wikis) are assessed for content, mechanics and alignment to criteria, which affect presentation of both art products and the related academic content. The overarching goal of assessments in the academic content of art is to encourage critical thinking and reflection. McLaughlin, Thomas and Peterson (1984) describe the typical DBAE lesson in a traditional district public school classroom as consisting of the following format.

> "During a lesson, teachers typically first introduce the concepts, often through the use of artistic exemplars, and then have students experience these concepts by making their own "works of art." They ground the studio and criticism portions in the elements and principles of design. Activities related to criticism usually are embedded within other activities. Art history instruction enters the program through individual lessons or entire units devoted to the study of art and artists and incidentally through the use of works of art as a part of the introduction to studio projects" (McLaughlin, Thomas & Peterson, 1984, p.12).

From this description, it is easy to see the need for portfolio assessment. This requirement does not change in the online environment. E-portfolios, or electronic portfolios, are picture collections viewed electronically. The collections can be sorted into various galleries for presentation of masterpiece works, instructor samples, and student collections. The portfolio is also useful for student assessment over the length of the course, as current educational assessment research indicates for the face-to-face environment. According to Waters (2007), e-portfolios are "not merely an account of one's own history, like an electronic scrapbook, or a personal space for expression, like a blog," but are designed, instead "to highlight skills, represent work, and organize information" (para. 37). Furthermore, these e-portfolios, which comprise three types, developmental [process over time], reflective [personal meaning with the process works], and representational [best works only], can "collect audio, video, graphics, and textual 'artifacts,' such as work samples, assessments, resume's, lesson plans, and personal reflections" (Waters, 2007, para.37-38). The option of e-portfolios allows for the constant availability and review of student progress by parents, students and instructors, samples and other references which are usually filed away once presentation of the instruction is completed in a traditional classroom, and more authentic and reflective assessment by students, peers and instructors. This is the kind of educational practice that forms the foundation for lifelong learning. In addition, e-portfolios allow for digital storage of art artifacts, with the provision of "multiple views of each piece, multiple examples of each

student's work – all by photographing, scanning, or typing and attaching files. And they can be viewed anywhere in the world, literally" (Waters, 2007, para. 15).

Belief 3: Christian online art curricular plans should engage students with learner-centered activities based on real life scenarios and issues, including those of the virtual, media-literate world. It is current practice to include problem-based scenarios and art career exploration in classroom based art curriculum. However, an online Christian art curriculum should also include learner interests and current technologies. Students are not bound to the limits of their own location when viewing art masterpieces, especially when considering the option of virtual museum tours. Both Pascopella (2005, p.57) and Mattson (n.d., para. 1) cite the many possibilities of virtual museum exhibits. Moreover, due to the reflective nature of e-portfolios as assessment instruments, students may socialize online, sharing work and providing feedback with each other. Physically homebound students gain increased accessibility, self-paced success, and a greater degree of personalized education, both in differentiation and in accommodation. The use of multimedia "not only motivates students, it also taps into their different strengths" (Aho, 2005, para. 7). The variety of multimedia allows for fuller digital experiences of distance art instruction. Not only would there be many layers of visuals, but there would also be the ability to incorporate text, audio, and video elements comprising both instructional presentations and learner activities. "Students are motivated and engaged when they can express themselves through a variety of media" (Aho, 2005, para. 15). In this respect, online art education facilitates the construction of knowledge in the core subjects, for a more interdisciplinary approach to a holistic distance educational program that includes the study of art. Of further consideration is the ability of digital art to simulate tangible art materials. "[T]echnology can be used to investigate visual arts that are not easily accessible within most primary [school] settings" (Hudson and Hudson, 2001, p. 29). According to Hudson and Hudson (2001), "computers can assist visual arts by providing faster methods for achieving high quality results [as c]omputers are tools that can be used by visual arts students to create a finished professional product" (p. 28). The digital art software and input accessories allow for the simulation of drawing and painting media, darkroom photography, and other print production techniques, such as typesetting and font design, not to mention advanced 3-D modeling. Email, asynchronous and synchronous chats, and various conferencing and presentation media, such as interactive streaming audio and video allow for social interaction and collaboration. According to Loveless (2003) "[c]ollaboration with artists, writers and fictional characters in 'non-residence' through e-mail or videoconferences offers children opportunities to work with others to generate ideas, pursue purpose and evaluate ongoing, original work" (p. 15). Because certain art studio tools cannot be used successfully with certain physical limitations, an online art program that simulates them allows for the same requirements as any other virtual subject: reading, typing, and, optionally, mouse manipulation. Additionally, many software programs are enabled with keyboard shortcuts and other accessibility features.

Implementation in the Virtual Setting

Implications. The implications of producing information consumers rather than producers would lead to a digital world in which all information is considered credible at face value. Society would suffer in the lack of critical thinking ability. Also, if all became consumers, without making significant contributions to the digital society, the World Wide Web would become static, with the persistence of social cliques in the virtual world (Wilhelm, 2002). The

global world would compartmentalize due to the lack of active, purposeful diversity. As a distance education provider, I can lead in my accountability to raise up responsible citizens of the digital world.

Implementation Strategies. In order to foster this socially-responsible student in the digital age, it is necessary to develop curriculum and policies requiring:

1. Critical thinking of visual content
2. Production of original digital content, with the understanding that technology is a tool
3. The development of social awareness of the effects of publicly sharing original digital content in a globally-diverse virtual environment

Potential Barriers and Limitations. Potential barriers that might prevent the realization of this goal would be the lack of Christian homeschool education support. Without buy-in and interest, a virtual art education program could be developed but not implemented. What may limit my intentions are the factors of hardware and software costs, developmental time of the virtual art programs, and methods for accommodating special needs for virtual art creation.

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Expectations

A course page should establish one's desire to help isolated individuals merge into a valued community of learners. Below is an example of a general course introduction or course welcome page that serves to set an educational tone, promote high expectations, and will also alleviate student anxiety.

CAPELLA UNIVERSITY

Welcome to P12 Art Education
Course 1, Building a Masterpiece (Elements and Principles), Quarter 1: Elements of Art

Each course in the Building a Masterpiece program achieves the following overarching Virtual Art School mission, vision, and goals.

Our Mission:
To engage in a continuity of visual art thinking that holds true despite the medium or specialization in art, and which can also encompass today's digital innovations. In other words, to become literate in the visual language of a multimedia world beyond the surface-level of craft-making.

Our Vision:
To become visually literate information producers in a globally diverse technological society in which visual analysis and electronic contributions to society are cultivated.

Our Goals:
(1) to become responsible producers and consumers of media,
(2) to become media literate in this global age of technological information and multimedia, and
(3) to create in relation to the Creator by means of an integrated study of the disciplines of the visual arts and the principles of creation derived from the Christian Bible in order to responsibly make and evaluate the many forms of media to be encountered.
Further, a Discipline Based Art Education (DBAE) approach to the study of the visual arts disciplines provides content in aesthetics, art criticism, art history and art production for knowledge and understanding of many cultures, including the relationship of visual artifacts to these varied contexts, both historically and in contemporary society. Study in these disciplines assists in the growth of Christian students in their individual professions of faith as a way of life.

Course Philosophy
Course 1, Building a Masterpiece, Quarter 1 of 4: Elements of Art

The Program
This course is part one of four in the foundational language of visual arts and media literacy. The first part introduces and reviews the elements of art. The second part introduces and reviews the principles of design. Parts three and four are a survey of 2-D and 3-D methods for creating.

The Course
To summarize this quarter, you will learn the seven elements of art, both in the "studio" and in the Bible, with one element lesson per week. Each week or unit should take about one hour to complete. For each element lesson, you will have practice and journal exercises, as well as quizzes and internet explorations. These will prepare you for the weekly assignments which all build towards the final project. The final project will be a combination of all seven assignments and journal essays. The actual format of this project will be your choice. You will have weeks eight and nine to work on the project. During week ten, you will have the option to digitally submit your project for feedback from the course designer/instructor. However, this is

not a requirement. You will also have the final option to complete a survey to give the course designer feedback on your experience with this quarterly course.

This course contains multimedia components. That means there will be short videos, lots of graphics, audio and hyperlinks. Any time there is audio, you may mute it and read the transcript instead. There will also be external web sites that will usually open up in new windows.

The Course Room

Each course in this series will have the same course layout. The main navigation appears on the left hand side of the screen. Just select the weekly unit to begin a lesson. Each week's content expands as you progress. If you need to stop in the middle of a lesson, don't worry. The course will bookmark or save your place so you may continue where you left off when you come back to the class. Additional navigation is above the main menu, at the top right of the screen and beside the "talking head" at the top left. The "Notes" tab above the main menu is where you will find the transcripts or text to most slide audio. If you want to read along, then click on the Notes tab. You also have player controls for each slide at the bottom right.

You may take any element lesson in any order as long as it does not have a pre-requisite. Lessons with pre-requisites will not open until the previous lesson(s) have first been taken. There is a diagram or chart showing the lessons and their pre-requisites provided within the course.

Take some time to explore the course room before you begin the quarter. Tech help is available via the school web site and within the course room. When you are ready to begin, click on your first week's lesson.

Course Competencies

The Elements of Art course conforms to the Virginia Department of Education objectives for the Visual Arts and Core Subjects. The course is also centered on a single Bible principle which is expanded with each unit. All lesson objectives are derived from these overarching objectives.

High Expectations

Quality work – Each week's activities and projects have scoring rubrics, some will have samples to aid the project explanation. Please do not copy the samples. Try to interpret the projects according to your own interests.

Thoughtful responses – When crafting responses through the course room e-mail and/or instant messenger, please use the discussion checklist before you send. This will make sure your communication maintains the school's netiquette guidelines.

Respect for all members of the learning community – As part of the school's netiquette guidelines, all communication must remain respectful to others' differences.

Community of Learners

Classes with an online component will include the provision of a student lounge area for informal discussion between classmates. While the lounge is not necessarily arranged by unit topic, not everything goes. This area is monitored for appropriate discussion methods. Once logged in, please update your student profile page.

Classes without an online component will still have access to e-mail and instant messenger discussions via a private social networking site to be distributed once classes

start. Once you are notified, you may then add your classmates to your buddies list to begin informal discussions. Topics will be arranged by unit topic and will also include a student lounge area. While the lounge is not necessarily arranged by unit topic, not everything goes. This area is monitored for appropriate discussion methods. Once logged in, please update your student profile page.

For all classes, contact information for your instructor will be provided at the time of course welcome activities. This may include a phone call, postal mailing, and/or e-mail.

References

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Senge, P., Cambron-McCabe, N., Lucas, T., Smith, B., Dutton, J., & Kleiner, A. (2000). *Schools that learn: A fifth discipline fieldbook for educators, parents, and everyone who cares about education*. New York: Doubleday/Currency, pp.72-73, 105-110, 167-174, 207-214.

Welcome E-mail

The welcome e-mail is often the first thing any learner sees when they enter the online classroom. It is important that this e-mail set the right tone for the class. Below is an example of an exemplary welcome e-mail.

Welcome to P12 Art Education
Course 1, Building a Masterpiece (Elements and Principles), Quarter 1: Elements of Art and the Virtual Art School.
Once you have received this message, please send a reply so that I know you have received it. The e-mail address you use should be the same one for the entire course.

Elements of Art is a one-credit course. What I hope you find throughout this course is that there is a definite language to making and understanding art and other visual media. I hope you will enjoy learning the language of art and discovering the tools to unlocking the "code" to understanding and participating in today's multimedia world.

The Student Orientation module is available one week before the official class start and appears as a pre-requisite to beginning the class modules. Once this orientation has been completed, the class will immediately be unlocked. You have until the day of the official course start to complete the orientation module.

This course is a REAL course and any grades become part of your permanent academic record. Your success in this course depends on the proper management of your time. Please set aside one hour each day to work on the course modules, or 5-6 hours per week. Allow extra time to complete the end of week art projects. It will help to have all of your art supplies prepared before each week's lessons. Please look ahead to the course supplies list if you

would like to pre-purchase materials for the entire course. If you are able to, it may help to set aside a specific "studio" space for working on this course's projects.

There are three ways to take this course: (1) online with the interactive, virtual school components, (2) offline with access to alternative discussion methods, and (3) self-paced CD-Rom, e-book, or printed book. Because each course is a ten-week quarter, you will only have two weeks from your first access to the course (AFTER the completion of the orientation) to change your desired course format without disruption to your studies. You must specifically request this change before the second week's assignment deadline. Otherwise, if you decide the format you have selected is not a good fit for you, and you did not request a change by the deadline, you will then need to drop the course and re-register or continue with the current course format and participate accordingly. After the second week, a lack of appropriate performance for your course format will result in your being dropped by the school.

My goal as your instructor is to help you to succeed in mastering the course competencies and completing the course on time.

Please explore the website and course room to become familiar with the available resources and the course structure.

You may contact me at any time with any questions or concerns. Please expect a reply no sooner than 48 hours for e-mail. (I may be in my art studio creating!)

Mrs. Kerrie Vytlacil
Voicemail: (757) 123-4567
E-mail: kavytlacil@gmail.com
Home Phone: (757)- 345-6789
For technical support, please contact: help@virtualartschool.com

I look forward to "seeing" you in class!
=)
Mrs. Vytlacil

<div align="center">References</div>

Cavanaugh, C. (2004). *Development and management of virtual schools: Issues and trends*. Hershey, PA: Information Science Publishing/Idea Group, pp.119-120, 159-171.

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A Priori Instructional Strategies

Below are answers to three key questions about properly setting the stage for learner engagement and success in the online classroom.

1. What structures, practices, or behaviors on my part might help students thrive and succeed?
   Structures, practices and behaviors to help students succeed include communications that highlight course objectives, assignments and scoring rubrics that are aligned to course goals and objectives, and discussions that align to the course objectives and competencies to be mastered. I would also monitor group discussions for authentic learner products, adherence to school policies, and respect for each others' diverse backgrounds.

2. What kinds of information do I, as the teacher, convey directly to students?
   I should convey to students what is expected of them and myself, the time the course requires per week, any pre-requisites and materials needed to begin the course, the method of feedback, contact information, communication and submission guidelines, school policies and deadlines relevant to the course, and specific directions for all activities.

3. What kinds of information do they get from reading (and what do they read to find it)?
   Students read the assignment rubrics for evaluation criteria, course presentation pages for course content, welcome e-mails and course expectation presentations for course summaries, conduct and policies, and contact information, and orientation presentations for course room navigation and course overview.

<div align="center">References</div>

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Icebreaker Activities

An effective icebreaker activity can be just the thing to set the right tone for an engaged online classroom. Below are examples of two possible icebreaker activities designed to increase online learner engagement, along with analysis of their effectiveness.

Synchronous Activity Description

Media Lineup

Instructions
You will be asked to score yourself from 1 to 10 on the following items. A score of 1 indicates minimal knowledge or interest, and the top score of 10 signifies that you are very interested or ready to teach the subject. Enter your scores for each item in the chat room as the question is presented.

1. I am an expert in all things computer and IT.
2. I love to create and upload videos to YouTube.
3. I like to work with audio files, as well as play them on my iPod.
4. I appreciate technology, but I find more satisfaction in creating anything with my hands – drawings, paintings, sculpture, whatever.
5. My technology exposure is limited, but I do work with a digital camera rather well.

Once all scores have been entered, look for the individual with the score closest to yours. Introduce yourself to this individual, and see what other areas you may have in common. It is now your task to introduce this person to the group through a posting on the discussion board entitled "Introductions" by the end of the first week of the course. If no one introduces himself or herself to you by the middle of the first week, contact the instructor for assistance.

Table 5.1. Checklist for an Effective Icebreaker			
	Yes	*No*	*Comments*
1. Is the activity fun and nonthreatening?	✓		Students state identify their media interests.
2. Is it person-focused, not content-focused?	✓		Students rate their media interests.
3. Does it require learners to read one another's entries?	✓		Students identify similar scores.
4. Does it require the learner to find something in common with at least 10 percent of the learning community?	✓		Students introduce themselves to similar scorers.
5. Does it require a person to be imaginative or express genuine emotions or openness?	✓		Students share similar interests in media formats.
6. Are learners required to respond to one another?	✓		Students discuss similar interests in media formats.

Asynchronous Activity Description

Portrait Name Tag

Instructions
You are to create a self-portrait to share with your instructor and classmates. Artistic ability is not essential. You may scan a sketch or magazine photo collage, digitally collage with clip art and font styles in any program, or create an original work with any

graphics program. A basic photograph of you will not be accepted. Once your picture is completed, transmit a digital image of your artistic endeavor as an attachment. Explain why you included the elements that you did and what influenced your decisions in creating your portrait. Find at least two other people's portraits and comment on the similarities and differences in the elements and the explanations.

Table 5.1. Checklist for an Effective Icebreaker			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Is the activity fun and nonthreatening?	✔		Students create ungraded expressions of themselves.
2. Is it person-focused, not content-focused?	✔		Students share personal elements in their creations.
3. Does it require learners to read one another's entries?	✔		Students identify two other people to comment on their portraits.
4. Does it require the learner to find something in common with at least 10 percent of the learning community?	✔		Students identify similarities and differences in the elements and explanations.
5. Does it require a person to be imaginative or express genuine emotions or openness?	✔		Students create open-ended portraits, sharing as little or as much as they like.
6. Are learners required to respond to one another?	✔		Students identify similarities and differences in the elements and explanations.

Reference

Conrad, R., & Donaldson, J. (2004). *Engaging the online learner: Activities and resources for creative instruction*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, pp.3-15, 46-59.

Online Forums

Below are answers to three key questions about positive and supportive online interaction.

1. What is the overall role of an online discussion facilitator?

   The overall role of an online discussion facilitator according to Smith (2001) is to cultivate conversation. This means creating a climate or context that allows for dialogue regarding the content for the purpose of "collaborative knowledge building" (Li, 2004, p.24). This type of educational context allows for the application of new learning in a shared environment. Additionally, Berge (2006) suggests role modeling the appropriate behavior while also confronting inappropriate student behavior.

2. Name and elaborate upon five (5) specific actions an online facilitator might take to foster positive interactions.

   Li (2004) discusses many strategies for creating a collaborative learning community. Table 1 on page 26 divides these strategies into seven categories: context, content, role of facilitator, format, organization, design and development, and assessment. Five strategies for discussion threads that I find most critical are 1) the emphasis on constructive criticism and feedback, 2) the provision of discussion prompts directly related to the course topics, 3) the provision of discussion guidelines, 4) the provision of examples of required

activities, and 5) the consistent use of grading rubrics. Constructive feedback allows for the development of a friendly, community atmosphere (p.25). Topic alignment allows for structured knowledge construction (p.26). Guidelines allow for the group to focus on discussion flow rather than on technology and mechanics (p.27). Examples allow for students to reach for similar goals in their posts. Finally, grading rubrics allow for student responsibility and increased participation (p.28). These five strategies eliminate the fear of the unknown for the most critical aspects of educational learning communities.

3. Select any two (2) of the following emotions and explain how you, as an online instructor, might foster the human element of online discussion: concern, trust respect, appreciation, affection, hope.

Smith (2001) citing Burbules (1993) lists six emotions that engage participants in educational interaction. Two that I find are critical in discussion forums are 1) concern and 2) respect. Concern, according to Smith (2001) requires a mutual commitment between students. To foster this trait, I would introduce group discussions in which each shares in a group grade. I could also facilitate this through an ice-breaker activity in the beginning of the course so that students begin to perceive each other as people behind the written responses. Respect, according to Smith (2001) is more about the perception of each other's equality. To foster this trait, I could also rely on the ice breaker activity in the beginning of the course. Primarily, I could show equality by consistently applying the guidelines and rubrics to all students in the same way. My comments to all students should model both concern and respect by addressing students by name and by choosing words that encourage each student's progress.

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Strategies for Difficult Conversations

We all encounter difficult situations with learners. It is important to address these situations quickly and effectively. Below are examples of difficult situations. Beneath each situation is an example of a possible response designed to address that situation.

1. A student makes a strong assertion but the point is unclear.
   You have provided many details, but what is your main idea?

2. A student offers an opinion without supporting examples or reasons.
   That is an interesting statement. Would you please elaborate and state why?

3. A student reacts negatively toward another's response/idea.
   These are the two sides that have been presented. Yours is one side. Would you please explain how you arrived at your answer?

4. A student doubts the relevance of his/her own ideas.
   Well, let's see how else we can perceive to your answer. How does it relate to the topic or to another person's answer?

5. The discussion leaves the topic and goes off on a tangent.
   I appreciate the level of social bonding going on here. However we also need to stay on topic. If you would like to continue this, you may move it to the Student Lounge which is a more appropriate place for discussions not related to the topic. Do you have anything more to add about the topic?

6. A student copies and pastes the answers of other students and presents them as his or her own work.
   (In a private email). It has been brought to my attention that your answer is very similar to two other answers that were posted in the thread before yours. I cannot give you credit for answers that are not 100% original work. Please refer to the Academic Integrity policy and the Netiquette handout for guidance. I am going to delete your answer so that you may submit a proper response before the end of the week.
   (General announcement). This is a reminder to the whole class about the school's Academic Integrity policy. This guideline applies to ALL student work submitted for grading. Also, please review the Netiquette guide for further discussion thread expectations. Thanks.

7. A student whose answers were plagiarized expresses lack of interest in further participation since feedback was also redirected to the plagiarist's post.
   (In a private conversation). Please tell me what happened…I understand how you feel. Thanks for bringing this situation to my attention. I will handle the situation personally. In the mean time, let's brainstorm ways to prevent this from happening again and how to give you credit for your work as well.

Strategies for Dysfunctional Types of Talk

Dysfunctional communication, if not addressed immediately, can easily disrupt the online class and hamper the learning experience. Below are examples of dysfunctional types of communication and strategies for the virtual teacher to address each.

- Observing → Withdrawing.
     How would you say your statement relates to this other statement?

- Asking → Interrogating.
  Have you considered this perspective? The reason I ask is because of this concern.

- Generating → Politicking.
  How did you arrive at this answer?

- Telling → Dictating.
  Here's how I see it and why. What do you think?

Ensuring a Supportive Environment

Creating a supportive environment that is conducive to strong social and academic interaction is critical for the virtual classroom. I have identified the five issues below as crucial to ensuring such an environment. The issue and rationale for each is described.

Teacher Presence
According to Berge (2006), the amount of contributions of instructors to a synchronous discussion should be between 25% to 50% of the total thread. For an asynchronous discussion, this proportion would be a bit less. The important thing to consider is that at no time should student be left on their own to struggle through the content or with each other. Instructors should be monitoring, guiding and correcting all throughout the discussions. This also means that instructors will have to actually read rather than skim the threads and assignments for accuracy. If not, then why bother with grading the participation of the subsequent learning activities?

Academic Integrity
Berge (2006) recommends that bad behavior not be ignored. This is critical. Instructors need to be monitoring communications against established policies and guidelines. The morale of the learning community can be decreased by forcing students to tell on each other in order to receive proper credit for their own work. Why then have policies that go without being enforced until it's too late?

Personalized Responses
Berge (2006) suggests personalized responses to students, either individually or grouping several similar ones together. There is no educational value in posting a form letter response to every student nor in identifying the fact that a student has met the scoring rubric requirements in an assignment. For feedback to be of formative value, it must be constructive (meaning that it contains praises for what went well and suggestions for improving what didn't) and individualized (significant for that specific student). Otherwise, you may as well issue a standardized test.

Relevant Tasks
Berge (2006) suggests that content and tasks pertain to students' prior knowledge, experiences, and interests. It is very important for new knowledge to build on prior learning or engage student's motivations. Also related is the requirement for course content to be as up-to-date as possible for each class. Discussion threads are the perfect platform for identifying these interests and motivations and tailoring content

and tasks to them. If we fail to do this as instructors, then what benefit is there of immediately accessible content and interactive course rooms? Our students could very well create their own self-paced curriculum from non-interactive curricula.

Flexibility

Berge (2006) recommends a flexible agenda for synchronous discussions. This would be true for all distance learning courses. Our online students require this flexibility or else they would have chosen other educational formats. Therefore, we've got to make room for life, acts of God and the like when it comes to adhering to deadlines and schedules. If we then model this flexibility, then maybe our students will be just as understanding when we present grades a bit later than they expect.

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Time Management Strategies

There are many tasks and processes needed to effectively manage the online classroom. Below is a system for prioritizing tasks and effectively managing time as an online educator.

The time management method I have selected is based on the Mancini (2003) description of the inventory system. Mancini (2003) states this system is a variation of the ABC system, but without the itemized priorities. Instead, the idea is to focus on pre- and post-assessment of daily activities, with the goal of changing what doesn't work, each day, in order to achieve the desired results (p.35). My design is a more visual approach and incorporates the ideas of a checklist and a reflective assessment, with the addition of the Franklin Covey method of assigning roles to tasks. I have also added in a task category bank, from which individual tasks are assigned to each role. The tasks were derived from Capella University (2010) and Varvel (2001). The benefit of this design is that I have a master checklist to trigger repeat tasks for each role and category. I can also see at a glance those items that are not yet completed in each category. The primary criteria for me was to have a system that was both flexible and which served as a memory jogger. This method should allow me to achieve as much or as little each day without the hassle of a pre-dated planning book. This system also allows for future expansion to roles and task items in the event tasks must be added or refined. Finally, not having to assign priorities means I can accomplish multiple tasks at the same time, either alternating categories or by chunking time for each category of tasks. This

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method should serve to streamline my use of time as an online instructor, allowing me the option of grouping like items together, or choosing items that can be accomplished with the chunks of time available throughout the day. The main idea was to reserve scheduled appointments for conferences, office hours, and other agenda items with definite start and end times.

			Inventory System	Date_____	
TASK LIST	**Role**	**Category**	**Tasks**	**Today's Goal (−)**	**Today's Result (√)**
Clarity Design Links Readings Pacing Models Contracts Hours	Instructional Designer	Course Elements	☐ Clarity – checks for understanding, enrichment/remediation/differentiation, continuous feedback ☐ Design – orientation, syllabus, course requirements, course philosophy, icebreakers, discussion prompts, 3 click rule, rubrics, handouts, support documents, sample posts ☐ Links ☐ Reading Material – chunking, total amount ☐ Selective Release – course pacing ☐ Models – samples of high quality work (student or teacher) ☐ Learning Contracts – as part of syllabus/expectation letter ☐ Virtual Office Hours		
IT Staff IT Contact Software Procedures FAQs	Instructional Designer	Technology	☐ IT Support Staff – maintain relationships ☐ Student contact info for IT help ☐ Student access to software downloads ☐ Procedures for Common Problems - inability to access e-mail or losing access to a quiz or work that is timed ☐ Technophobia – FAQs		
Gradebook Post Grades Back-ups Rationales End-of-term Checklist Calendar	Instructor	Record Keeping	☐ Gradebook ☐ Posting Grades – using numbers for privacy ☐ Back-up – local copy ☐ Accuracy – rationales for grades ☐ End-of-term Maintenance – tasks: clearing out student work, conducting a link check, or revising assignments ☐ Management Checklist - checklist (end-of-unit or whole course) for students ☐ Calendar – deadlines		
Conferences/Emails Feedback	Instructor	Human Elements	☐ Communication System – monthly conference calls with parents and students, regular emails ☐ Work Submissions System – weekly feedback		
Reflection:					

Original Checklist

Course Elements

- Clarity – checks for understanding, enrichment/remediation/differentiation, continuous feedback
- Design – orientation, syllabus, course requirements, course philosophy, icebreakers, discussion prompts, 3 click rule, rubrics, handouts, support documents, sample posts
- Links
- Reading Material – chunking, total amount
- Selective Release – course pacing
- Models – samples of high quality work (student or teacher)
- Learning Contracts – as part of syllabus/expectation letter
- Virtual Office Hours

Record Keeping

- Gradebook
- Posting Grades – using numbers for privacy
- Back-up – local copy
- Accuracy – rationales for grades
- End-of-term Maintenance – tasks: clearing out student work, conducting a link check, or revising assignments
- Management Checklist - checklist (end-of-unit or whole course) for students
- Calendar – deadlines

Technology

- IT Support Staff – maintain relationships
- Student contact info for IT help
- Student access to software downloads
- Procedures for Common Problems - inability to access e-mail or losing access to a quiz or work that is timed
- Technophobia – FAQs

Human Elements

- Communication System – monthly conference calls with parents and students, regular emails
- Work Submissions System – weekly feedback

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Access Challenges and Accommodations

As with any teaching environment, personal challenges can limit access for certain learners. It is important to anticipate and plan for possible access issues so that all learners can participate in the virtual classroom experience. Below is a list of access challenges and strategies to accommodate those learners.

1. Learning Disabilities
   - accessibility standards-based web page designs (test with http://www.cast.org/bobby/)
   - alternative formats for print material: large print, audio, e-text (plain/HTML) – no java, flash or pdfs, no large amounts of text, no touch screens, no video-only content, no "hot-spots" or mouse-overs
2. Mobility Impairments
   - un-timed responses (changeable or no less than 5-8 seconds)
   - keyboard controls
   - skip repetitive navigational links
3. Visual Impairments
   - alt-tags for all graphics/videos
   - relative values for tables and graphics on web pages
   - alternative formats for print material: large print, audio, e-text (plain/HTML) – no java, flash or pdfs, no large amounts of text, no touch screens, no video-only content, no "hot-spots" or mouse-overs
   - monochrome or grayscale capable
   - menu controls, standard system controls
   - high contrast page designs with uniform layouts
4. Hearing Impairments
   - visual formats, captions and transcripts,
   - show sounds feature
   - volume controls
   - TDD Telecommunication Devices for the Deaf
5. Speech Impairments
   - TDD Telecommunication Devices for the Deaf
   - TRS Telecommunications Relay Service
   - web-based chat rooms – asynchronous text

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   http://www.htctu.net/publications/guidelines/distance_ed/distedguidelines.pdf

Assessments

Effective assessment of outcome mastery is a critical component of learning. Below are two examples of assessments, one authentic and one alternative.

 Authentic assessment

Art Criticism Pyramid

Task: Authentic task to introduce middle and high school art students to the Feldman model of art criticism.
Objective: To provide an innovative way for students to learn the process of critically viewing art work.
Author: Kerrie Vytlacil
Method: Asynchronous
Instructions: View the virtual museum art works by clicking the provided links.
1. Select one of the art works.
2. Complete the four pyramid areas based on your observations of your selected art work.
3. Complete the pyramid's blocks in the following order:
   i. Describe
   ii. Analyze
   iii. Interpret
   iv. Judge
   Describe: What is the main thing you see or notice? Identify what can be seen:
elements and materials - describe the visual and literal qualities. Answer the where, who and when of the art work.
- Title of artwork, name of artist, year of art work, size of art work, media of art work (oil, egg tempera, etc.)
- Name and describe what you see - objects, spaces etc.
- Materials - what is this made out of? how is it made?

- Classify the elements - lines, shapes, textures.

Analyze: Why does it get your attention? How is this put together physically and compositionally. Identify style or subject matter. What are the relationships between the elements (principles)? Answer the how of the art work.

- Find examples of repetition, rhythm, etc.
- Where is the focus and how is it achieved?
- What kind of spatial devices are used to create dimensionality?
- What is the relationship of the figures to each other?

Interpret: What do you think it means and/or what feelings do you get from it? Why do you think it means this and/or feels this way? Why did the artists make the choices he did about materials, composition, subject matter, etc.? What is he/she trying to say? Is there an emotional tone? Answer the what and why of the art work.

- What is going on in the painting?
- Is there a possible theme?
- How do the parts of the painting contribute to this theme? Is there any symbolism?
- When do you think this was painted and why?
- Is the work in an identifiable style?

Judge: How would you rank it compared to -----? How does this compare with similar works? Did the artist make the right decisions? Does the work say what he wanted to say? Is the work of high quality? What do you think the artist could improve on? Does the work communicate significant ideas or arouse emotions? Evaluate the who, what, when, where, how and why of the art work.

- Evaluate the craftsmanship and technique.
- Are parts of the work successfully interrelated?
- Is it aesthetically pleasing? Do you like it?
- Does the work communicate significant ideas, related to human behavior?
- Does it illicit a response?

4. Submit your final completed pyramid by email attachment to your instructor.

```
      /i\
     /ii \
    /iii  \
   / iv    \
  /_____\
```
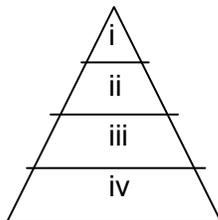
Alternative assessment

Art Exhibit Generic Game

Task: A series of 10 questions which serve as learning tools, using external/physical questions first and builds on previous information to get at the internal meaning. No prior information is needed to play the Generic Game. This game is particularly good with younger children (face to face). Asynchronous may prove more suitable to middle school students and up.

Objective: To provide an innovative way for students to learn the process of critically viewing art work.

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Author: Kerrie Vytlacil, Adapted from Project Muse/Harvard (1994)
Method: Synchronous or asynchronous
Instructions: View the sample of three art works by the same artist, as provided in the links or white board display. (Synchronous questions will be provided per the instructor.)

Pre-game Question
Do you like this work of art? Why or why not?

One
Look carefully at the work of art in front of you. What colors do you see in it? Take turns listing the specific colors that you see (for example: "I see red." "I see purple."). *When you've run out of colors, move on to question two.*

Two
What do you see in the work of art in front of you? Take turns listing the objects that you see (for example: "I see an apple." "I see a triangle."). *When you've run out of objects, go on to question three.*

Three
What is going on in this work of art? Take turns mentioning whatever you see happening, no matter how small. *When you can't find anything more, move on to question four.*

Four
Does anything you have noticed in this work of art so far (for example: colors, objects, events) remind you of something in your own life? Take turns answering. *When you run out of responses, move on to question five.*

Five
Is this work of art true to life? How real has the artist made things look? *Please remember that there are no right or wrong answers in this game.*

Six
What ideas and/or emotions do you think this work of art expresses? *As soon as you are ready, move on to question seven.*

Seven
Do you have a sense of how the artist might have felt when he or she made this work of art? Does it make you feel one way or another? *Whenever you are ready, move on to question eight.*

Eight
Take a look at the other works of art displayed around this one. Do they look alike? What is similar about the way they look (for example: objects, events, feelings, the way they are made)? What is different? *Please move on to question nine.*

Nine
Think back on your previous observations. What have you discovered from looking at this work of art? Have you learned anything about yourself or others? *As soon as you're ready, move on to question ten.*

Ten
What would you have called this work of art if you had made it yourself? *Does the title of the work, if there is one, make sense to you?*

Post-game Question
Do you like this work of art? Why or why not? *You may notice that this is the same question that you were asked before you played the game. Has your reaction to the work changed? Do you like it more or less than you did in the beginning? Why?*

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Reflective activities

Critical reflection is widely considered a valuable component of the learning process. Below are two examples of activities that encourage such reflection of learning.

1. Reflective Activity 1

Aha!

Task: Reflective exercise to be done on an ongoing basis during a course or unit.
Objective: To provide an innovative way for students to share their thoughts and experiences.
Author: Kerrie Vytlacil
Method: Asynchronous

Instructions

During your time in this course you may experience what is termed an "Aha" moment – a moment when something you have been reading or contemplating makes sense with an unexpected clarity. You are asked to keep a journal of these moments while a member of the class. This journal should be in the form of blog which is made accessible to the whole class. After setting up your blog, please share the URL with the instructor and classmates. (If the blog is private, you must add the instructor and classmates as members.) Once the class is over you may restrict your blog access. Periodically during the course, you will be asked to share your "Aha's" with the other class participants. Posting comments to each others' blogs is encouraged for constructive feedback. Do not delete entries or restrict accesses to the class until after the final blog compilation has been made available for grading at the end of the course.

Author's Note

For the online art course, students may find connections and make meanings with other subjects and readings external to the course. Keeping a blog of these connections allows students to document their sources of inspiration for later art works. Sharing these moments with the class encourages discussion within the learning community of the online art course.

Table 7.1. Checklist for an Effective Reflective Activity			
	Yes	No	Comments
1. Does the activity ask for a synthesis of the learning experience?	✓		Students create ongoing blog entries about the course readings.
2. Does it require the learner to share his or her experiences?	✓		Students make their blogs accessible by sharing their blog URL with the class and/or adding the class as members to their private blogs.
3. Does it require the learner to provide helpful feedback that will be useful to the instructor in future course development?		✓	Students may do so but are not required.
4. Does it allow for open and honest responses?	✓		Students write freely to their personal blogs and are encouraged to comment on each other's blogs.
5. Does it require a person to be imaginative or express genuine emotions or openness?	✓		Students create open-ended entries, sharing as little or as much as they like.
6. Is the activity insightful and nonthreatening?	✓		Students are encouraged to express themselves with imagination and personalization.
7. Will the activity be completed over several days or weeks in the course?	✓		Students will maintain the blog through the end of the course, posting weekly at a minimum.

2. Reflective Activity 2

I Didn't Know That!

Task: Reflective exercise at the middle of a course or a specific unit.
Objective: To give students an opportunity to think about what they are learning and contribute to the class discussion.
Author: Kerrie Vytlacil
Method: Asynchronous

Instructions
Using the "I Didn't Know That" discussion thread, post something new that you've learned this week, either from another student, from the readings, or from class discussions. Indicate how you will use the new information or skill.

Author's Note
This posting counts toward their minimum number of discussion contributions, and it allows them to indicate what they've learned and how they will use the new information or skill. When used at the end of the course, additional prompts can be included for feedback toward future course development.

Table 7.1. Checklist for an Effective Reflective Activity			
	Yes	No	Comments

1. Does the activity ask for a synthesis of the learning experience?	✔	Students create posts about new information and skills learned weekly.
2. Does it require the learner to share his or her experiences?	✔	Students post personal responses to course discussion threads.
3. Does it require the learner to provide helpful feedback that will be useful to the instructor in future course development?	✔	Students may do so but are not required unless this activity occurs at the end of the course and includes this additional prompt.
4. Does it allow for open and honest responses?	✔	Students write freely to the discussion thread and are encouraged to comment on each other's posts.
5. Does it require a person to be imaginative or express genuine emotions or openness?	✔	Students create open-ended posts, sharing as little or as much as they like.
6. Is the activity insightful and nonthreatening?	✔	Students are encouraged to express themselves with imagination and personalization.
7. Will the activity be completed over several days or weeks in the course?	✔	Students will post weekly to the discussion thread through the end of the course.

Reference

Conrad, R., & Donaldson, J. (2004). *Engaging the online learner: Activities and resources for creative instruction*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, pp.73-83.

Professional contact and collaboration

Developing and maintaining a network of peers and mentors is a critical component of ongoing professional development. Below is a system for designing and maintaining my own professional network.

Professional Development Tracking System						
f2f ✔	Contact name	Addresss / URL / e-mail	Phone / fax	Date of contact	Notes	Follow up Date
Conferences						
• Local (TVAEA)						
• Regional (SE-VAEA)						
• State (VAEA)						
• National (NAEA)						

print/online	✓	Contact name	Addresss / URL / e-mail	Phone / fax	Date of contact	Notes	Follow up Date
Staff development meetings with colleagues Workshops							

Memberships (teaching and learning organizations in a specific field)							
• Local (TVAEA)							
• Regional (SE-VAEA)							
• State (VAEA)							
• National (NAEA)							
• Other (ASCD)							
• Other							
Subscriptions							
• Other (ASCD)							
• Other							
• Other							
• Other							
Publications (books, journals)							
• Other (ASCD)							
• Other (Artists Magazine)							

- Other

 (NAEA/VAEA)

- Other

Online resources for educators
• Other (ASCD)
• Other (NAEA)
• Kathy Schrock S.O.S.
• Goshen-Bartel
• IncredibleArtDept- Rohrer
• Other
• Other
• Other

Professional chat venues and online cafés
• Other (blogs)
• Other (MySpace groups)
• Other
• Other

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