



THE WABASH CENTER

# JOURNAL ON TEACHING

EDITOR'S NOTE

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Editor

Welcome to the new open-access, online, *Wabash Center Journal on Teaching*.<sup>1</sup> This is the inaugural issue of a journal that has a long history and rich pedigree. For twenty-two years the *Wabash Center*<sup>2</sup> has been publishing *Teaching Theology & Religion*<sup>3</sup> (*TTR*), owned by Wiley-Blackwell. Now we've moved our whole editorial team from *TTR* to this new publishing venture in order to make our efforts available digitally without subscription. Although the Wabash Center will no longer be involved in the publication of *TTR*, Wiley-Blackwell intends to continue publishing it with a [new editorial team](#)<sup>4</sup> beginning with volume 23 (January 2020).

When we started *TTR* as a new and unknown center for teaching in the 1990s, we needed the prestige of a major publisher in the field of religion and theology to lend gravitas to the emerging field of the scholarship of teaching and learning. But for many years now we have regretted the payroll our articles have lived behind, limiting our ability to promote this scholarship, support authors, and inspire readers.

*The Wabash Center Journal on Teaching* will continue publishing the high-quality, peer reviewed scholarship on teaching in the fields of theological and religious studies that has been the hallmark of *TTR* for over two decades. The new journal carries forward the same scope and focus of scholarship – but now our efforts will be freely available online.

In the new journal you'll find the popular Teaching Tactics. In addition to Forums (with contributions now listed individually) we will also highlight Special Topic sections. And the new journal reintroduces Book Reviews, which were removed from *TTR* in 2015 to allow more space for articles in the print journal.

So while you'll find *The Wabash Center Journal on Teaching* familiar, you will also begin to notice new developments. The open-access online platform allows us to provide convenient links to sources on the internet and links back to previously published articles. But more than that, the new platform provides the opportunity for *The Wabash Center Journal on Teaching* to become more than just a print journal available online. It's easy to insert links to video clips, graphics, or sound files – although these links must be found on the web or created by authors. It takes a leap of imagination to conceive how teaching issues and contexts, arguments and evidence, could be represented graphically, in motion, visually. Until now, the written word would have seemed to be the distinctive home for sustained rigorous, reflection on teaching. But we're moving into a new world in which the "text" that creates and makes legible academic thinking needn't be limited to words on a page.

So we issue this challenge to our readers and authors: [send us](#)<sup>5</sup> sustained critical reflection on your teaching practice and context that explores the boundaries and possibilities of representational forms and genres available on an open-access online platform.

In this inaugural issue we're excited to publish a [Teaching Tactic by Daniel Alvarez](#)<sup>6</sup> that includes video clips and slides that provide how-to instructions and an actual illustration of Zoom breakout rooms for group discussions that combine online and on-campus students. The [Tactic by Amy DeRogatis and Isaac Weiner](#)<sup>7</sup> links through to sound clips on the [Religious](#)

1 <https://www.wabashcenter.wabash.edu/journal/>

2 <https://www.wabashcenter.wabash.edu/>

3 <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/14679647>

4 Graduate Theological Union. 2019. "GTU and Wiley to Partner for Teaching Theology & Religion in 2020." <https://www.gtu.edu/news/gtu-and-wiley-partner-teaching-theology-religion-2020>.

5 [https://serials.atla.com/wabashcenter/Make\\_Submission](https://serials.atla.com/wabashcenter/Make_Submission)

6 <https://doi.org/10.31046/wabashjournal.v1i1.1495>

7 <https://doi.org/10.31046/wabashjournal.v1i1.1521>

[Sounds Project database](#),<sup>8</sup> demonstrating in itself how scholarly work has long since transcended written texts. The link embedded in the [Tactic by Stephanie Powell and Amy Beth Jones](#)<sup>9</sup> portrays the visual a-ha moment they stage for their students. [Christina Kilby's Tactic](#)<sup>10</sup> simply provides a convenient link to the film that is central to the teaching strategy. What new formats might our authors develop that could be embedded into the succinct Teaching Tactic genre?

We fashioned a centerpiece for the inaugural issue by drawing on our deep reservoir of experience and connections to commission two broad essays on the status of the fields of teaching theology and religion – [one on theological education](#)<sup>11</sup> by Frank Yamada (Executive Director of the Association of Theological Schools), and [the other on teaching in undergraduate contexts](#)<sup>12</sup> by Eugene V. Gallagher and Joanne Maguire (two longtime Wabash Center colleagues with wide workshop and consultation experience across a range of undergraduate contexts). Both essays identify broad trends in society and higher education, and the ways in which they have shaped and will continue to influence both what and how we teach. To fill in the details and offer our readers greater nuance closer to their teaching practice, we are announcing a [Call for Papers for short \(two thousand word\) essays](#)<sup>13</sup> that take one of the trends or factors identified in these two essays and analyzes a concrete practice in curriculum, course design, or teaching practice that responds to it.

These two essays are written from ten thousand feet. Closer to the classroom is Anthony Baker's essay, [Arguing the Mystery](#),<sup>14</sup> describing several years of revisions to his introductory theology course at Seminary of the Southwest, striving to weave together his goals: teaching theology and teaching critical thinking.

Similarly focused on concrete pedagogical challenges, John Van Maaren's essay ([Transformative Concepts and Troublesome Knowledge](#)<sup>15</sup>) provides an invaluable review of the literature on threshold concepts – conceptual gateways through which students pass to enable further learning in a particular discipline. There has been little work analyzing what these troublesome concepts might be for the fields of religious and theological studies. Therefore Van Maaren's essay concludes with some preliminary suggestions for threshold concepts in biblical studies. We continue the conversation by publishing [three short companion essays](#)<sup>16</sup> (by Richard S. Ascoug, Tat-siong Benny Liew, and Jocelyn McWhirter), each of which describes a particular teaching strategy they use to address a key threshold concept in their biblical studies courses – thus constituting a Special Topic section of the journal on threshold concepts.

In contrast to this focus on the classroom, a [Forum of short tributes](#)<sup>17</sup> to Professor Katie Geneva Cannon by several of her former graduate students (upon her death in 2018) describe the influence she had on them as a pedagogue and mentor.

And so, quite fittingly, this inaugural issue of the journal contains multitudes: from the "status of the field" essays, to heartfelt tributes to vocation, to book reviews, and tightly focused reflections on teaching practices (including provisional experiments pointing toward new ways that scholarship on teaching might transcend written text). We're proud, therefore, that we were able to sit down with Maryellen Weimer to [discuss](#)<sup>18</sup> the legacy of *Teaching Theology & Religion*, the possibilities for the new *Wabash Center Journal on Teaching*, and the context of these journals in the broad history and trends of scholarship on teaching. No one is better positioned to comment on this, since she looks at several dozen disciplinary-based pedagogical journals on a regular basis to gather material for her column for the *Teaching Professor* website. The perspective she provides on the

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8 <http://religioussounds.osu.edu/>

9 <https://doi.org/10.31046/wabashjournal.vii.1590>

10 <https://doi.org/10.31046/wabashjournal.vii.564>

11 <https://doi.org/10.31046/wabashjournal.vii.1580>

12 <https://doi.org/10.31046/wabashjournal.vii.1579>

13 [https://serials.atla.com/wabashcenter/cfp/Changing\\_Contexts](https://serials.atla.com/wabashcenter/cfp/Changing_Contexts)

14 <https://doi.org/10.31046/wabashjournal.vii.136>

15 <https://doi.org/10.31046/wabashjournal.vii.1526>

16 <https://doi.org/10.31046/wabashjournal.vii.1583>

17 <https://doi.org/10.31046/wabashjournal.vii.1546>

18 <https://doi.org/10.31046/wabashjournal.vii.1581>

purposes and value of our endeavor is awe-inspiring.

Our mission to support the scholarship of teaching and learning in theological and religious studies is reborn as we leave the Wiley-Blackwell paywall behind and launch our new journal. The internet sets no limit to the creative possibilities of scholarship on teaching.