Listening to Our Students

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INTRODUCTION

I n the 2019 volume of *Reflective Practice*, an article series was published that investigated various aspects of supervision excellence in theological field education. This series, coordinated by Matthew Floding with contributions from eighteen additional scholars across the discipline, included a literature review, theoretical summary, supervisor-mentor training approaches, student feedback, and supervisor-mentor feedback, all with the expressed purpose of offering a comprehensive update on the whos, whats, whys, and hows of supervision excellence.[1] Those of us who sought feedback on students' experiences of supervision were both delighted and challenged by what we heard and read from individuals participating in our institutions' programs, with some of us sharing that feedback in subsequent

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supervisor-mentor trainings in order to inform and deepen the critical learning and formation between students and supervisor-mentors.

However, none of us knew what was to come in the spring of 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic began to impact every facet of life, including theological education and the experiences of students engaged in contextual education. The global pandemic disrupted not only course engagement modalities (requiring many to move from physical classrooms to online synchronous and asynchronous platforms) but also field engagement modalities (prompting shifts from physical sites to remote methods of working and relating). While some theological schools had adapted previously to online course delivery and synchronous and asynchronous ways of learning, nothing prepared institutions, staff and faculty, programs, sites, supervisor-mentors, and students for such a shift away from physical site-based learning and engagement, which has been the crux of contextual education.

Because of this profound shift, we conducted follow-up research with students in our institutions to learn about their experiences of remote supervision in the COVID-19 landscape. Building upon the areas of inquiry in our initial study, our main goals were to gain insights about

- what constitutes excellence in online supervision as students perceive it;
- what might be underscored in orienting, training, and supporting online supervisor-mentors; and
- what we might take into consideration when we design our plans for evaluation and assessment of placement sites and the online supervision and mentoring they can offer in the midst of the pandemic.[2]

In addition, we compared themes and best practices garnered in the initial research with findings from this follow-up study, offering insights into the ways in which online supervision and mentoring might be similar to, and different than, in-person supervision and mentoring. The aims of such a comparison were not to declare one modality of supervision and mentoring as superior or inferior to the other but, rather, to gain greater understanding of best practices in supporting and training supervisor-mentors across a variety of modalities.

BRIEF REVIEW OF BEST PRACTICES

First and foremost, it is important to note that there are a plethora of terms used by theological educators when discussing this particular form

of engagement, some of which are digital, distance, remote, online, elec-
tronic, virtual, web-based, and internet.[3] Definitions for each of these terms
vary within the existing literature, with uses of some terms being highly
contested depending on the meanings ascribed to them. Each of the authors
of this article has preferences for the words that are most applicable for our
specific contexts and purposes; that being said, we utilize online, virtual,
and remote terminologies interchangeably throughout this piece to signal
supervision and mentoring not engaged in the same physical space and ex-
ecuted largely by videoconference (and teleconference in some instances).

Rather than debating the merits of online engagement for contextu-
al learning and formation or within theological education as a whole, it is
more appropriate for our purposes to highlight a few best practices of vir-
tual supervision and mentoring found in the literature.[4] In this regard, a
greater emphasis on *process* relative to *place* situates online supervision and
mentoring squarely within the larger shifts taking place as a result of online
learning.[5] Historically, theological field education has championed the cen-
trality of both process and place for student formation; the attention to both
remains, but the nature of place is expanded in this article.

One central theme surfaced in our review of best practices in the lit-
erature: presence. Presence is perhaps the most crucial element of any suc-
cessful supervisory or mentoring relationship and has been considered ex-
tensively by scholars of both online and in-person learning and formation.
Engagement in online supervision and mentoring spaces involves both "tele-
presence (the sense of 'being there') and social presence (the sense of 'be-
ing there with others')" interrelated with one another for an overall "sense
of presence."[6] This sense of presence, according to Rosemary Lehman and
Simone Conceição, constitutes a "dynamic interplay of thought, emotion,
and behavior in the online environment, between the private world (that
is, the inner world) and the shared world (that is, the outer world)."[7] Alter-
natively, Mark A. Maddix suggests that there are three presences online: (1)
cognitive presence, "the extent to which [individuals] are able to construct
meaning through sustained communication"; (2) social presence, "the abili-
ty of learners to project their personal characteristics into the community of
inquiry"; and (3) teaching (or supervisory/mentoring) presence, "the design,
facilitation, and direction of cognitive and social processes for the purpose
of realizing meaningful and educationally worthwhile learning outcomes."[8]

Thus, as J. David Stark argues, "Technology's chief value is in how it can augment presence, not in how it can augment physicality."[9]

Presence in virtual space takes the form of synchronous or asynchronous engagement. Synchronous (real-time) presence in contextual education often includes regularly scheduled videoconference or teleconference meetings. Asynchronous engagement includes all interactions that do not occur in real time, such as emails or forum discussions.[10] Texts, chats, or the use of interactive working platforms occupy the space in between synchronous and asynchronous presences as response times might vary but could also occur in the same time frame when technologies are used simultaneously. Obviously, different senses of presence are experienced through each of these delivery modes, several of which are often used throughout the supervisory experience.

Both synchronous and asynchronous presence with students involves the element of time. In the feedback from supervisor-mentors in the supervision excellence project, theological educators noted that "the supervisory relationship requires a significant amount of time for trust to develop and feedback and reflection to be meaningful."[11] With time, relationships can flourish and result in critical personal and professional formation for the student. Thomas W. Currie highlights four central theological-pastoral themes related to mentoring—following, learning, unlearning, and friendship—and says that to find a mentor "who will exemplify the discipline of making time and having the patience . . . is to be given an extraordinary gift."[12]

More concretely, in a study of online mentoring relationships with new faculty, mentees shared several salient strategies that their mentors employed, signaling the importance of presence and time through

- validating practice;
- meeting theory and practice in discussion (i.e., making connections between theory and practice);
- enacting theory in actual practice (i.e., generating theory-informed practices);
- supporting adaptation to local contexts (e.g., sharing information about the site, suggesting ways of engaging within the specific context); and
- transitioning to the professional role.[13]

This resulted in the mentees experiencing their faculty mentors as

- nonjudgmental evaluators of professional progress,
- experts who proposed solutions to problems,
- providers of psychosocial support,
- creators of opportunities for structured reflection on practice, and
- authentic colleagues.[14]

In addition to articulating the practices and roles of mentors who offer presence through time, this study demonstrates that excellent online supervision and mentoring involves purposeful engagement, or an active interaction, with the student. That is to say, the quality of presence is mediated by both length and substance. Stephen Kemp, though focusing on online teaching of courses, shares some specific practices for online relationships that include the supervisor-mentor:

- sharing appropriately personal information about themselves in order to connect with their student,
- providing specific outline or direction as to the nature and scope of their time with the student, and
- reflecting together on shared materials for discussion (whether that material be an article, a case study, or a reflection upon an experience or challenge within the site).[15]

While these few technical suggestions constitute only a fraction of the best practices that theological field educators and supervisor-mentors have acquired and implemented over the years, they may serve as a good starting place for those who are new to the field.

Perhaps what is most apparent in the literature regarding online supervision and mentoring is that, at its essence, the qualifiers for online excellence do not differ much from those for in-person supervision excellence. The theories and theologies undergirding supervision (highlighted in the 2019 Supervision Excellence Project[16]), as well as the characteristics and best practices offered in various literatures, apply as much to virtual supervision as to any other modality through which supervision is engaged. What remains critical to all supervision and mentoring in theological field education is the attention to process through a sense of presence. The research that we conducted in this follow-up study explores further the nuances of online supervision excellence as embodied through presence and contributes to the existing literature, particularly as it relates to remote supervision and mentoring.

METHODOLOGY

We patterned this study after the initial project, which involved gathering quantitative and qualitative data for a mixed-methods research approach. Participants for this iteration included students who had participated in field education during either spring or summer 2020 at the following seminaries: Duke Divinity School, Iliff School of Theology, Oblate School of Theology, and Yale Divinity School.

To gather quantitative and qualitative data regarding virtual supervision experiences as well as compare several responses to the initial research, we adapted the online Qualtrics survey used in the first project to signify our focus on virtual supervision and also added questions that more appropriately sought feedback in this regard (see appendix A for the full set of survey questions). In total, thirty-five students responded to the survey across the four schools. While we recognize that this number of survey respondents does not guarantee the generalizability of results, the data collected still provides important clues regarding supervision and mentoring practices during the pandemic and offers a helpful comparison to initial research project findings. Every effort was made to increase participation, but we believe that factors related to the COVID-19 pandemic itself made obtaining additional responses difficult.

In the initial study, qualitative data was collected through several focus groups as well. For this follow-up study, researchers attempted to recruit students for online focus groups; however, we found it equally difficult to gain response from students through such groups and pivoted to inviting students to offer written responses to the focus group questions. Similar to the online survey, these questions were adapted to obtain information on students' narrative experiences of online supervision and mentoring, outlined as follows:

- In the context of virtual supervision and mentoring, tell us a brief story about a time when your supervisor-mentor was really helpful for you.

- Tell us about a time when you went to your supervisor-mentor for support virtually. What did your supervisor-mentor do in response?

- How has your supervisor-mentor supported you virtually in engaging your learning goal(s)?

- As you engaged in field education virtually, tell us about a challenging or critical moment in your experience. How did you navigate that experience?

Written responses were gathered from a total of seventeen students across the four schools, and one response was gathered by online interview.

Virtual supervision and mentoring of field education students in a time of pandemic translated into interactions that were more frequent and time intensive overall. Three out of four student respondents (74.3 percent) who were supervised remotely in the spring and summer 2020 terms met with their supervisor-mentors on a weekly basis, compared to only half (50.6 percent) of student respondents in the previous survey. In addition, the length of time that students met with their supervisor-mentors remotely increased substantially from the initial project. Over half (54.3 percent) of students reported meeting for an hour with their supervisor-mentors compared with only 35.0 percent previously. Percentages of students who met thirty minutes or less with supervisor-mentors remained roughly the same (37.1 percent compared to 36.2 percent); however, meetings of ninety minutes or more decreased significantly in the virtual space, with only 8.7 percent of students indicating having these longer meetings compared to 28.4 percent in the first survey. Given the stark increase in online synchronous engagement time in both theological education and ministry in this time, the decrease in one-on-one supervision meetings over sixty minutes may perhaps signal screen fatigue and the limits of virtual engagement for students and supervisor-mentors.

Similar to the initial survey, we asked students the extent to which their supervisor-mentor modeled particular aspects of excellence in ministry. While this question was not related explicitly to online supervision, we wanted to compare student responses in this survey to the initial survey. There were no significant differences found, with the greatest percentage of students strongly agreeing or agreeing that their supervisor-mentor "possesses a passion for what they do" (100.0 percent compared to 90.9 percent previously), followed by their supervisor-mentor "has relevant experience and/or expertise" (94.7 percent compared to 85.7 percent previously). Interestingly, all respondents in this survey indicated that their supervisor-mentor "exhibits joy in their vocational path" (100.0 percent compared to 81.8 percent), a surprising result given the increased anxiety and tension that one might expect in a time of global uncertainty and upheaval, thereby

demonstrating a great deal of resilience and spiritual maturity on the part of supervisor-mentors. A significant majority also strongly agreed or agreed that their supervisor-mentor "engages in effective practices of leadership" (89.4 percent compared to 80.5 percent) and "reflects intentionally on self and relationships" (89.4 percent compared to 79.2 percent). As in the previous survey, students rated lowest the ways their supervisor-mentor "cultivates a healthy lifestyle" (84.2 percent compared to 71.4 percent), though it was heartening to observe that this aspect of excellence had not diminished in the context of a global pandemic, at least not from the student perspective.

In addition to the specific attributes rated within the survey, students were offered the opportunity to share other attributes that they observed in their supervisor-mentor. Overall, students identified the following:

- provides effective pastoral care and support of individuals within their context as well as of the student;
- collaborates with and empowers lay leaders, building supportive relationships with others;
- embodies qualities of character such as humility, integrity, honesty, vulnerability, kindness, wisdom, and courage; and
- demonstrates knowledge and skill in specific areas of leadership within their context, particularly adaptability.

These characteristics were largely similar to those offered by students in the previous survey, though the specific reference to the supervisor-mentor's adaptability was a new attribute that was not named explicitly in the initial project.

As a follow-up to this open-ended question, we asked students to share the ways in which the qualities they indicated or referenced in the previous questions were evident in a virtual environment. Here, students became explicit about the ways in which their supervisor-mentors demonstrated presence and care remotely:

- "Watching her during Zoom meetings and services was everything I needed to see. How she handled herself on back channels and personal text demonstrated her professionalism and real care for her members."
- "Her pastoral heart came through in our weekly phone calls and in her gracious management of our online projects."
- "All of his exceptional attributes were reflected in many Zoom meetings and also on Facebook Live worship services. He stays very connected with his flock and also the two interns."

- "Talking about our personal experiences in social distancing and living in pandemic beyond ministry, making space for a variety of check-in types (email, phone, video call etc.)."

Additionally, several students detailed the ways their supervisor-mentors displayed varying levels of adaptability, particularly to technology. Some students highlighted the creativity and skills they observed and the ways their supervisor-mentors encouraged creativity and adaptability with others in their contexts. A few students described the ways their supervisor-mentors were unable to pivot or adapt technologically, which led to a decreased sense of support for the student. One individual stated, "My supervisor seemed to struggle with grief at the switch to online gatherings, and that stunted our communication and the tasks that I was allowed to take on in the last few months of my internship."

The survey next asked about specific attributes and practices associated with excellence in mentoring. Six out of ten students (63.8 percent) strongly agreed or agreed that their supervisor-mentor "provides meaningful learning experiences *virtually*," which was a decrease from 71.4 percent in the previous survey in which students strongly agreed or agreed that their supervisor-mentor "provides meaningful learning experiences *on site*." Given the dramatic shift to online-only field education in spring and summer 2020, it is likely (and understandable) that many sites were unprepared to offer meaningful virtual experiences in such a short amount of time. Another notable shift in response between surveys was the attribute of the supervisor-mentor "engag[ing] me as an adult learner by holding me accountable for my own learning and formation" (72.2 percent compared to 81.8 percent previously). Students might have felt that they were held less overtly accountable due to the more independent and/or less structured nature of online field education when compared with site-based education.

Other attributes, identical in wording to the initial assessment, received similar response percentages to the first survey, such as "invites and encourages me to ask questions in order to share observations and concerns" (80.5 percent compared to 83.1 percent previously), "asks important questions and offers encouragement, support and relevant feedback in supervisory sessions" (75.0 percent compared to 71.4 percent), "reflects theologically and/or spiritually with me on the practice of ministry and/or leadership" (77.7 percent compared to 75.3 percent), and "intentionally designs,

and invites me into, opportunities relevant to my formational needs" (58.3 percent compared to 61.0 percent).

When asked to share other ways that their supervisor-mentor exhibited excellence in mentoring, students overwhelmingly provided examples of receiving individual support and encouragement, thus mirroring experiences shared in the initial survey. One student said, "[He] is an awesome listener. As a mentor he does a great job helping me reflect and grow. He asks good questions and offers helpful critique in a very uplifting way." Another respondent wrote, "He is an empathetic individual who valued my contributions, but also challenged me to perform at a higher level." Several students again mentioned the presence and availability of their supervisor-mentor, with one student articulating, "My mentor is always available to answer questions and engage in dialogue. He very rapidly answers emails and is an excellent administrator." Another said their supervisor-mentor "engages outside the established meeting times."

This thread of presence was carried through to the next survey question that asked respondents to share about how the attributes they named in their supervisor-mentor were evident in a virtual environment. Several students continued to highlight their supervisor-mentor's responsiveness in terms of presence, with one student offering a number of examples that summarized others' sentiments:

> She was very responsive on text and email. She forwarded lots of helpful emails and suggested a formative workshop on minister training for trauma disasters. Then we discussed the workshop on Zoom. She went along with my desire to use Google Docs for staff meetings, and kept up the practice throughout the summer and for meetings I couldn't attend.

Some students mentioned their supervisor-mentor making them aware of other meetings happening within the context and encouraging presence at those sessions. Other respondents shared the continued support they felt thanks to their supervisor-mentor having good listening skills, giving space for meaningful interaction and sharing, and engaging in discussions about relevant questions of ministry and leadership. Once again, a few students stated that the inability of their supervisor-mentor to transition to online space created a difficult, and nearly nonexistent, sense of presence and connection for the mentoring relationship.

When asked about specific practices or activities that contributed most to supervisor-mentor effectiveness, student respondents identified the same general items that were articulated in the initial survey:

- making and taking time for intentional supervision (and displaying active listening skills),
- providing a variety of opportunities for learning and growing and reflecting on them, and
- modeling through preaching, teaching, pastoral care, reflection, and spirituality (and good communication).

Students named communication more frequently in this follow-up survey than in the first survey, again highlighting the importance of this practice in online field education.

Moreover, when respondents were asked about the most important activities in their one-on-one virtual meetings with their supervisor-mentor, they largely named the main themes that students articulated in the first survey as well:

- reflection, both theological and on the practice of ministry;
- listening well and responding to observations and questions; and
- engaging in open discussion.

In the virtual space, however, a few students were also careful to note that one-on-one online engagement with their supervisor-mentor was not much different than in-person engagement. One student responded, "Honestly? The ability to use virtual meeting space in much the same way we used in-person meeting space prior to the descent of pandemic quarantine." Another individual said, "It was meeting together as though we were in person. If there was a document to discuss, we used a share[d] screen." A third individual quipped, "We adapted! It's surely different but was never 'less than' the in-person experience."

When asked about overall online supervision and mentoring experiences, several students again articulated the importance of intentionality in communication:

- "Communication never ceases to be the number one importance, whether live or virtual."
- "I feel we were in more consistent and intentional communication virtually—it is easy to take that for granted in person."

- "Being mentored virtually may mean more frequent check-ins that are shorter in length. Feeling connected takes more intention virtually."

A few students discussed some challenges that online supervision presented in terms of relating and communicating, with lack of "spontaneous relationship-building moments" making it "harder to have casual conversations or sit in/be a part of pastor-parishioner meetings," as two students stated. Another student summarized others' sentiments in this way: "The hardest part about being mentored virtually is that there has to be an extremely intentional line of communication with your mentor because you don't have the opportunity to just bump into them often to ask questions and get perspectives on things."

Finally, when asked what ingredients are necessary for excellent supervision and mentoring virtually, students provided a range of responses, summarized as follows:

- skill with technology, and/or the flexibility to adapt and learn new technologies;
- good, consistent communication in a variety of formats;
- commitment from both parties to meet regularly and promptly; and
- stable meeting technology platforms.

One respondent said, "Communication, communication, communication. And flexibility." Another quipped, "Communication, patience, flexibility/willingness to adapt how we are doing things as we go." One individual articulated astutely, "I suspect it's the exact same list for in-person excellent supervision and mentoring . . . plus flexibility and a willingness to learn new technology."

Written/Oral Response Results

Following the distribution of the survey, we attempted to gather students in focus groups to reflect on the questions listed above. When this proved to be too challenging, we invited students to respond to the questions in writing, with one online interview conducted, for a total of seventeen responses.

It is important to bear in mind that nine of the students were invited to reflect on a field education experience that was disrupted by COVID-19. Eight students were reflecting on a summer field education experience in

which some of them never met with their supervisor-mentor in person due to the pandemic. Disruption and novelty characterized the context of both subgroups.

In this extraordinary environment, it was not surprising that students disclosed their emotional vulnerabilities with far greater frequency than those in the previous study. Students' self-reporting included some of the following words and phrases:

- "my anxieties"
- "insecurity"
- "personal struggles"
- "discussed anxiety"
- "opened up about . . . anxiety"
- "talking about our feelings and the distress"
- "need for human connection"
- "I felt scared and insecure"
- "She recognized my stress" [over George Floyd's killing]

In order of highest frequency to lowest, the following themes were drawn from words or phrases shared by students in their responses. Some of these words and phrases are highlighted within each theme, thus illustrating important practices cultivated within supervisor-mentor and student relationships.

1. Participation in a community of practice.

Participation and formation in a community of practice "involves the whole person . . . it implies becoming a full participant, a member, a kind of person."[17] Sentiments included:

- "treated me as a coworker and fellow professional"
- "helpful with the process of navigating the ordination process"
- "We really felt we could depend on each other"
- "I opened up about some of the anxiety that I was feeling . . . my supervisor responded in kind . . . revealing some of their own . . . vulnerability helped me feel connected."
- "By talking about our feelings and the distress of the situation, I recognized that this was a mutual experience in ministering to each other."

- "I felt my life had been rattled by the pandemic. I was searching for answers as to how ministry continues when we cannot meet face to face. My supervisor was grappling with the same question."

2. Communication:

- "twice weekly scheduled conversations"
- "took time to spend over 2 hours on the phone with me"
- "texted every other day"
- "talked on the phone every Tuesday"
- "during our phone calls . . . we would often talk 2–3 hours"
- "was timely and thorough in sending . . . "

3. Support/feeling cared for:

- "always ready to support me"
- "He prayed with me."
- "I was cared for."
- "understood my anxieties"
- "When I was about to preach for the first time, I was nervous and sent him an email . . . he emailed back that night with an encouraging and motivating email."
- "His advice he shared . . . gave me understanding, hope and clarity."

4. Mentoring and coaching:

- "A perfect example of [my supervisor's] mastery of mentoring . . . left space for me to lead without stepping on my toes."
- "He called me to discuss the strengths, weaknesses . . . of my sermon. The advice and critiques were helpful."
- "She really put time and energy into her feedback for me."
- "I had a question. . . . My supervisor and I scheduled a time for a quick 10-minute call and she was able to answer my questions."
- "He also included me in meetings with the Church Board . . . to see how they handle finances and goals in monthly meetings."

5. Theological reflection/processing:

- "We use the syllabus . . . to plan our twice-weekly scheduled conversations . . . engaged in continuous reflection."
- "As I reflected with my supervisor-mentor . . . he said, 'Hold up. The next time . . . ' These words were comforting to hear."
- "My struggle with the realities of systemic racism . . . [my supervisor-mentor] advised that . . . he went further . . . "

- "One of my learning goals was to learn how to walk with those who are in pain. We had great conversations about . . . suffering in the life of the people of God."
- "I had to have a crucial conversation with a parishioner . . . [my supervisor-mentor] and I reflected on this experience afterwards."

Other supportive keywords appearing at least three times were "flexibility," "patient," "affirming," "responsive," and "inclusive."

Under the cloud of the pandemic and with the graphic realities of systemic racism challenging everyone to engage as antiracist, it is also not surprising that a powerful centripetal force was at work drawing student and supervisor-mentor alike deeply into the relational sphere of experiential learning. The cluster of experiences related to participation in a community of practice, as well the need for communication and mutual support, loomed larger than in the previous study.

Nevertheless, the remotely supervised and mentored students continued to press into their learning goals as seen in the coaching and mentoring theme. These, at least, seemed to be somewhat similar to those who experienced a non-remote field education experience. However, as learners from the professionals who themselves were learning during the pandemic disruptions, there did seem to be emphasis on communication, sharing of feelings, caregiving the student received, and virtual presence for support, coaching, and mentoring. In many instances, a special bond was forged.

CONCLUSION

The months between March and August 2020 were buffeted by nearly constant global disruptions: illness, death, racial violence, political unrest, and climate change, to name a few. The students in this study understandably evidenced a marked increase in anxiety and vulnerability. Even so, during this unusual time of cultural uncertainty, students thrived when supervisor-mentors were equipped with adaptivity, patience, and effective communication skills in an attentiveness to *process* rather than *place*.

With the challenging transition into virtual supervision, it is clear that the nature of time spent in communication between intern and supervisor-mentor had fundamentally changed. The shift from being physically present to being seen through a screen brought unforeseen challenges to everyone. The consistency of weekly supervision improved, but the length of

those meetings seemed to shorten. The supervisor-mentors who were most adaptable in this shift to virtual communication were the most successful in cultivating a sense of presence and providing the support and encouragement their interns needed.

A second component of successful mentoring during this six-month period was technical competence. The presence of steady and reliable on-site technological frameworks contributed to the successful transition to virtual internships. Supervisor-mentors who were not competent with or were hesitant to learn online platforms such as Zoom also were less equipped to help interns make the transition.

The conclusion to the original series of articles notes that supervisor-mentors who made "time for what matters" had a profound impact on their students. During six months of remote interactions, those supervisor-mentors who *made time* for creative, intentional communication and demonstrated technological resilience were best able to successfully transition to remote field educational internships.

NOTES

1   See Matthew Floding, "Excellence in Supervision Revisited," *Reflective Practice: Formation and Supervision in Ministry* 40 (2020): 151–53.

2   Adapted from Matthew Floding, Bonnie Abadie, Kristina Lizardy-Hajbi, and Caroline McCall, "Excellence in Supervision: Listening to Our Students," *Reflective Practice: Formation and Supervision in Ministry* 40 (2020): 195.

3   "Understanding Virtual Education: Online Learning Terms," *Achieve Virtual: Real Indiana Educators*, https://achievevirtual.org/glossary-online-learning-terms.

4   There are many articles that provide cases for or against the use of online technology in theological education. For a helpful overview of the scholarship in this area, see Christian Scharen and Sharon Miller's report "(Not) Being There: Online Distance Education in Theological Schools," Auburn Seminary, August 2017, https://auburn-seminary.org/report/not-being-there.

5   See Linda Cannell, "A Review of Literature on Distance Education," *Theological Education* 36, no. 1 (1999): 19.

6   Timoteo D. Gener, "Re-Viewing Social Presence in Light of Jesus' Friendship: Implications for Online Theological Education," *InSights Journal* 2, no. 1 (2016): 37.

7   Rosemary M. Lehman and Simone C. O. Conceição, *Creating a Sense of Presence in Online Teaching: How To "Be There" for Distance Learners* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2010), 7, as cited in Gener, "Re-Viewing Social Presence," 37.

8   Mark A. Maddix, "Generating and Facilitating Effective Online Discussion," *Best Practices of Online Education: A Guide for Christian Higher Education*, ed. Mark A. Maddix, James R. Estep, and Mary E. Lowe (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2012), 109–10.

9   J. David Stark, "Gaming the System: Online Spiritual Formation in Christian Higher Education, *Theological Education* 52, no. 2 (2019), 47, 49.

10   Stefan Hrastinski, "Asynchronous and Synchronous E-Learning," *EDUCAUSE Quarterly* 31, no. 4 (2008): 51–55.

11   Eileen R. Campbell-Reed, Catrina Ciccone, Marcus Hong, and Susan MacAlpine-Gillis, "Excellence in Supervision: Practical Wisdom from Supervisors/Mentors," *Reflective Practice: Formation and Supervision in Ministry* 40 (2020): 189.

12   Thomas W. Currie, "Theological-Pastoral Perspectives on Mentoring," in *Mentoring: Biblical, Theological, and Practical Perspectives*, ed. Dean K. Thompson and Cameron Murchison (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2018). par. 12, Kindle.

13   Helga Dorner, Gorana Misic, and Margaryta Rymarenko, "Online Mentoring for Academic Practice: Strategies, Implications, and Innovations," in "Mentoring: Theoretical Background, Empirical Findings, and Practical Applications," special issue, *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* (2020): 8.

14   Dorner et al., "Online Mentoring," 10.

15   Stephen Kemp, "Social Presence in Online Learning," *Best Practices of Online Education: A Guide for Christian Higher Education*, ed. Mark A. Maddix, James R. Estep, and Mary E. Lowe (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2012), 48–51.

16 See Chris Arockiaraj, Sung Hee Chang, and Dorothee Tripodi, "Excellence in Supervision: Theories of Supervision," *Reflective Practice: Formation and Supervision in Ministry* 40 (2020): 162–73.

17 Jean Lave and Étienne Wenger, *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 53.

18 These questions were rated on a 7-point Likert scale with response options as follows: strongly agree, agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree, strongly disagree.