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Academic Questions

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## A Middle Path

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The online-learning-as-panacea-or-pariah dichotomy has, naturally enough, sparked a debate that is becoming almost as overheated as my ancient desktop. The reigning dichotomy misses the possibilities as well as the limitations of the online learning movement, because the competing camps claim to know more than they probably can at this point.

As one who has taught the humanities and social sciences for several decades—in face-to-face, discussion-intensive seminars limited to no more than twenty students—I was dragged kicking and screaming into giving the case for online learning a fair hearing. It might convey information, to be sure, as does a morning perusal of the news websites, but liberal education is much more than the mere delivery of information. It is the inculcation of a way of life, one that takes its bearings from the Socratic turn to the study of the human things in order to understand not only the cosmos but also man's place in it.

It is no accident that the word “liberal”



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