

Best Practices in Online Learning
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“The 5 (+1) Big Mistakes in Virtual Education”

SEE POWERPOINT

Think about . . .

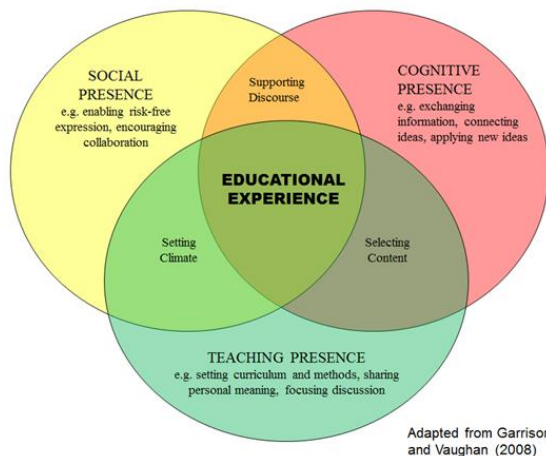
A form or method of online learning you’ve utilized for a course that . . .

- **Worked WELL for you and/or your students:**
- **Worked NOT SO WELL for you and/or your students:**
- **Explain “why”**

Today You’ll Walk Away With . . .

1. ...**components** of online courses that can cross-over to f2f to increase student learning and engagement.
2. ...**techniques** for all class formats (f2f, online, hybrid) to increase student interaction and active participation of students online.
3. ...**examples** of increased social presence to facilitate “community” in an online environment.
4. ...**methods** to establish “community” and collaboration increase student learning with online activities.
5. ...**tools** to increase your productivity and student motivation.

A Model upon Which to Hang Our Hats



Social Presence Defined

When participants in an online course help establish a community of learning by projecting their personal characteristics into the course, they present themselves as “real people.”

There are at least 3 forms of social presence:

- **Affective.** Expression of emotion, feelings & mood
- **Interactive.** Evidence of reading, attending, understanding, thinking about others' responses
- **Cohesive.** Responses that build & sustain a sense of 'belongingness,' group commitment, or common goals & objectives.

Cognitive Presence Defined

The extent to which professor & students are able to construct & confirm meaning through sustained discourse (discussion) in a community of inquiry.

- Cognitive presence can be demonstrated by introducing factual, conceptual & theoretical knowledge into the discussion.
- The value of such a response will depend upon the source, clarity, accuracy & comprehensiveness of the knowledge.

Teaching Presence Defined

Facilitating the Discussion

- Identifying areas of agreement & disagreement
- Seeking to reach consensus / understanding
- Encouraging, acknowledging & reinforcing student contributions
- Setting a climate for learning
- Drawing in participants / prompting discussion
- Assessing the efficacy of the process

Direct Instruction

- Presenting content & questions
- Focusing the discussion
- Summarizing the discussion
- Confirming understanding
- Diagnosing misperceptions
- Injecting knowledge from diverse sources
- Responding to technical concerns

Instructional Design & Organization

- Setting the curriculum
- Designing methods
- Establishing time parameters
- Utilizing the medium effectively
- Establishing netiquette

[2009 "Best Practices in Online Teaching Strategies"--The Hanover Research Council, Academy Administration Practice](#)

Class Community: Two Components

1. Connectedness:

- Building social/group spirit
- Establishing trust

2. Learning:

- Engaging in supportive contact & interaction
- Sharing educational expectations

Class Community: Theory to Practice

- Create & provide ample **opportunities for interaction**
- Create & use **activities that build a sense of class community**

- Build/design activities that create a sense of connectedness between students & instructor
- Create a learning environment that is engaging with supportive contact & interaction

Pickett, A.M. (2007). Improve your online course: Meeting the needs of diverse online learners.

Examples to Increase Social Presence

1. Welcome Letter

- Learners feel welcomed
- Instructor's presence is apparent from the beginning
- **SEE HANDOUT**

2. Personalized Video / Voice Thread

- Adds a human touch
- **VIEW SAMPLE VIDEO**

3. Make Good Use of Email

- Class email for generic blasting info to all
- Group email to provide ideas, guidance, feedback to a portion of the class
- Individual email per student per situation

4. Use Course Announcements

- Minimum of 1-3 each week
 - *News events in your field*
 - *Reminders about upcoming due assignments*
 - *Humor (course-related)*

5. Take Advantage of the Discussion Board (DB)

- **Intro bios** - you & students
 - Predetermined list of questions
 - **SEE HANDOUT**
 - Importance of adding photo

SEE HANDOUT FOR EXAMPLE QUESTIONS.

Add 3 questions to the list to personalize for your own course/students.

- 1.**
- 2.**
- 3.**

- **S.O.S. Questions Forum** (a.k.a.--Q&A; Ask the Professor)
 - **VIEW EXAMPLES**
- Active participation is critical for engagement & guidance
- DB is another "teaching space"
- Your social presence increases student accountability

6. Synchronous Communication

- **Online Office Hours** (a.k.a. "Coffee with Brian")
 - Clearly posted ahead of time
 - Vary time & duration to maximize availability to broadest cross-section of students
 - **VIEW EXAMPLES**
- "Pop" in, by sending a class email, evenings big projects are due

7. Web 2.0 Tools for Fun/Collaboration

- [Forum, Blog, or Wiki](#)

8. Concluding Remarks or Best-wishes Statement

- It's the "bow" on the package of your social presence
- Leaves students with the feeling you were with them from beginning to end

Based on: [Tips from the Pros, Online Classroom, November 2008](#)

Increase Active Collaboration – Synchronous & Asynchronous

- The below can be used for synchronous as well as asynchronous collaboration.
 - **Google docs**
 - PowerPoint
 - Group projects
 - Sharing documents
 - **Online journal** for practicum/internship
 - [Sign-up sheets](#) for team projects, topic selection, presentation date, etc.
 - [Formative-assessment surveys](#)
 - Anonymous but share results with the class
 - **VIEW EXAMPLES**
 - **Dropbox**
 - Shared documents
 - **Cloud storage** for easy accessibility
 - **Moodle**
 - Group project **scaffolding**

Develop 2 uses for 1+ of the above methods for your own course/students.

1.

2.

- Tools to Increase Collaborative Productivity for Instructors & Students – **SEE "iPadagogy" HANDOUT**



Increasing Learning via Multimedia

- Use of online resources for students to access course content in lieu of expensive textbooks for use in online or f2f courses.
 - [PBS Frontline](#)
 - [TED-Ed](#)
 - [iUniversity](#)
 - [edX](#)
 - [Coursera](#)
 - [Open Culture](#)
 - [Academic Earth](#)
 - [MIT](#)
 - [Carnegie Mellon](#)
 - [Harvard Open Learning Initiative](#)
 - [Yale Free Courses](#)
 - [Stanford Online](#)
 - [UC Berkeley Free Courses](#)
 - [UCLA](#)
 - [Udacity](#)
 - [Khan Academy](#)
 - [Johns Hopkins](#)

Peruse some of the above sites & develop 2 ways that you can use those resources in your own course(s).

1.

2.

Increasing Engagement via Multimedia

- **Discipline-specific online resources**
 - Send students to these sites to boost students' exposure to the potentials that exist
 - Build assignments around increasing skill set around searching for & evaluating "value" of the resource
 - [U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics](#)
 - [NASA Education Resource Database](#)
 - [Resources for Teaching Mathematics](#)
 - [Science.gov](#)
 - [Open Education Resources](#)
 - [Merlot II](#)
 - [The Beautiful Brain](#)
 - [How Stuff Works](#)
 - [The 100 Best Web 2.0 Classroom Tools Chosen by You](#)

Developing Grading Efficiencies

- **Develop a rubric for assignments & DB posts**
 - Specific as possible
 - Provide ahead of time
 - Direct students to rubric after DB grading
 - **SEE HANDOUT**
- **Develop a set of “cut & paste” comments ready for feedback on:**
 - Assignments
 - DB posts
- **Macros - SEE “Using Macros and Wordlists for Grading Online” HANDOUT**
- **Prep, Write, Reflect (PWR) - a.k.a. 3-2-1 exercise**
 - *Describe 3 new things that you have learned (big ideas/take aways) in this reading assignment.*
 - *Describe 2 connections between something in the reading & something you are experiencing or have experienced in _____.*
 - *Jot 1 question that comes to your mind as a result of the reading. Be prepared to ask that question during the class discussion of this material.*
- **“Hire” a helper**

Managing Grading Effectively

- **Change the types of activities for grading**
 - View a video – Answer 4 Questions: *What did you learn, what did you like, what are you left wondering, how does this relate to your life?*
 - DB posts --- Sheer volume with 10 random for quality checks for affirmation of grade

Differentiation

- **Every activity has a menu**
 - Freedom of choice
 - Based on learning styles
 - Could reflect a variety of research requirements
 - Library, interviews, texts/journals, video..
 - *with the caveat that scholarly material is a must*
- **Presentations are varied**
 - Essays, music, art, video support

SUMMARY: What Does All of This Mean?

- Develop a set of **instructor behaviors** that result in diverse online learners feeling engaged in learning & satisfied with the experience!
 1. Create an **engaging online environment**
 2. **Focus on student learning** (not on teaching)
 3. Let the **students do most of the work!**
- Learner-centered, knowledge-centered, assessment-centered, & community-centered

- Promote high levels of “teaching presence”
- Provide & foster a strong & effective sense of online “class community”

Pickett, A.M. (2007). Improve your online course: Meeting the needs of diverse online learners.

Can You Hang Your Hat?

Additional Information

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