

The Role of a Successful Online/Blended Instructor

Overview

1. The Role of a Successful Online/Blended Instructor
2. Community of Inquiry Framework
3. Teaching Presence
4. Principles, Guidelines & Strategies
5. Related Resources

1. ONLINE/BLENDED INSTRUCTOR ROLES

What are they? (Please take a moment to create your own list):

2. COMMUNITY OF INQUIRY FRAMEWORK

Social Presence

The ability of participants in a community of inquiry to project themselves socially and emotionally as 'real' people (i.e., their full personality), through the medium of communication being



Cognitive Presence

The extent to which learners are able to construct and confirm meaning through sustained reflection and discourse in a critical community of inquiry.

Teaching Presence

The design, facilitation and direction of cognitive and social processes for the purpose of realizing personally meaningful and educationally worthwhile learning

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3. TEACHING PRESENCE

Models of Teaching Roles in a Computer Conferencing Environment

<i>Berge, 1995</i>	<i>Paulsen, 1995</i>	<i>Mason, 1991</i>	<i>Anderson, Rourke, Garrison & Archer, 2001</i>
Managerial	Organizational	Organizational	Instructional design and organization
Social	Social	Social	Facilitating Discourse
Pedagogical	Intellectual	Intellectual	Direct Instruction
Technical			

Categories of Teaching Presence

Categories	<i>Design & Organization:</i> Setting curriculum & methods	<i>Facilitating Discourse:</i> Shaping constructive exchange	<i>Direct Instruction:</i> Focusing and resolving issues
Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting the curriculum • Designing methods • Establishing time parameters • Utilizing medium effectively • Establishing netiquette 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting climate for learning • Drawing in participants, prompting discussion • Encouraging, acknowledging, or reinforcing student contributions • Identifying areas of agreement/disagreement • Seeking to reach consensus/understanding • Assess the efficacy of the process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present content/questions • Focus the discussion on certain issues • Confirm understanding through assessment and explanatory feedback • Diagnose misconceptions • Inject knowledge from diverse sources e.g., textbook, articles, internet, personal experiences (includes pointers to resources)

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4. PRINCIPLES, GUIDELINES & STRATEGIES ([http://shex.org/wiki/Sloan blended learning workshop](http://shex.org/wiki/Sloan_blended_learning_workshop))

Principle	Guidelines	Strategies
A: Design & Organization		
<p><i>Social Presence Principle:</i> Establish a climate that will create a community of inquiry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social presence supports purposeful collaboration and a questioning predisposition 	<p>Guidelines associated with this principle would be to establish trust and opportunities to get to know other participants. A major part of this is a comfort and willingness to collaboratively engage with the community. An example of an activity to establish a climate for collaboration would be to have each participant to introduce themselves and share something about their personal and professional interests and activities. A special forum should be created for these postings. Furthermore, students could be assigned to small groups to discuss formal expectations of the course and identify concerns. Group spokespersons could then share this in the main discussion forum. An opportunity to clarify and negotiate formal expectations of the course would be provided. It is also important to create a “chat” room for informal communication and allow students an opportunity to become familiar with each other. Being open to online office hours will also contribute to community formation.</p>	
<p><i>Cognitive Presence Principle:</i> Establish opportunities for critical reflection and discourse that will support systematic inquiry.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The design of academic activities have a significant impact on how students approach learning • Think in terms of inquiry and actively engaging students in the process. • Share with students the inquiry model – metacognitive awareness. 	<p>Guidelines associated with this principle would be to limit curriculum content such that a significant proportion of time would be devoted to discourse and reflection. It is also crucial to create opportunities for small group discussion. It is important in the very early stages of the course that an opportunity for substantive, curriculum focused, discourse be provided. A brainstorming exercise may be appropriate in the early stage of the course. In order to set the stage for team-based collaborative projects down the road, it is suggested that a small group discussion format be provided early to allow students to engage more actively and with less anxiety. As groups report back, it is important that the teacher respond and model respectful discourse, establish a friendly environment, and reinforce the posted guidelines for discourse (e.g., length of message).</p>	

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Principle	Guidelines	Strategies
B: Facilitation		
<p><i>Social Presence Principle:</i> Sustain community by shifting from affective expression to purposeful cohesive responses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The challenge here is to maintain and enhance group cohesion (i.e., collaboration and support). • Shift from overt socio-emotional messages to academic engagement. • Cohesion is an important enabler for collaborative activities. 	<p>Collaborative activities provide the best means to build and maintain group cohesion. Group cohesion goes beyond polite dialogue. For this reason, the group or team should be the focus of the discourse. The teacher should be present but not the centre of the discourse. Activities must be provided where participants must engage and rely on each other to accomplish a relevant and important task or goal. Small group discussions moderated by students may provide opportunities for students to connect with each other and collaboratively negotiate process issues.</p>	
<p><i>Cognitive Presence Principle:</i> Encourage and support the progression of inquiry through to resolution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitation is essential to keep the discourse on track and ensure that inquiry evolves. • Students do not move to resolution without a clear goal and help in moving toward specific outcomes in an expeditious manner. 	<p>Guidelines associated with this principle are to provide stimulating questions, keep discussion focused, identify issues needing clarification, and be prepared to move discussion in a timely manner. A good activity here is the use of a case study, debate or critiquing an article. Because case studies are based upon a real-life situation, students can readily relate to the situation and are effective in involving all members of the group. In a collaborative learning environment it is important that students respond to other student contributions and build upon ideas offered by members of the community. It is important that the teacher facilitate a threaded discourse as a member of the community. It is also important that the facilitator model the inquiry process and emphasize the importance of moving toward some form of resolution.</p>	

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Principle	Guidelines	Strategies
C: Direct Instruction		
<p><i>Social Presence Principle:</i> Manage collaborative relationships to support students to assume increasing responsibility for their learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct instruction can increase confidence and respect by managing potential conflict and ensuring that students are collaborating constructively. • Need strong leadership to achieve goals. • Direct intervention is sometimes necessary to maintain functional communities (manage conflict and storming phase). 	<p>Guidelines associated with this principle are to be supportive but expect students to be self-directed and work collaboratively to complete tasks. From a teaching presence perspective, there will be a stage in terms of group dynamics where tensions and conflicts will arise. It is crucial that the teacher directly address these situations and resolve conflicts. It may be a willingness to negotiate expectations or correct a student who is out of line (e.g., excessive or flaming messages). Students should also feel that they can question the teacher and they will be treated respectfully. Team building activities will give students the opportunity to develop the connection and support of the community to accomplish the assigned tasks.</p>	
<p><i>Cognitive Presence Principle:</i> Ensure that discourse moves to resolution and metacognitive awareness results.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The primary role for direct instruction is to ensure that discourse and collaboration achieve larger educational goals. • At times direct intervention is required to provide important information and ensure successful outcomes. • Raising metacognitive awareness is also an important responsibility requiring more than facilitation. 	<p>Guidelines associated with this principle are to be prepared to contribute ideas and perspectives that will constructively shape the discourse. It is important to diagnose misconceptions so students do not get side-tracked and frustrated. It may be necessary to make connections among ideas, integrate of ideas and summarize the discussion before moving on. At this point, appropriate activities are team projects. If expectations and guidelines are clear, team projects can provide opportunities to develop collaboration skills as well as engage in a substantial realistic and applied problem. Through collaboration, students must recognize the need for leadership, set goals, plan and manage tasks, assess progress, and adjust strategies where necessary. These activities ensure that students become self-directed and increase awareness of metacognitive processes.</p>	

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5. RELATED RESOURCES

- Anderson, T., Rourke, L., Garrison, D. R., & Archer, W. (2001). Assessing teaching presence in a computer conferencing environment. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, 5 (2). Available online at: <http://communitiesofinquiry.com/files/Teaching%20Presence.pdf>
- Berge, Z. (1995). The role of the online instructor/facilitator. *Educational Technology*, 35 (1), 22–30.
- Garrison, D. R., & Vaughan, N. (2008). *Blended Learning in Higher Education*. San Francisco : Jossey-Bass.
- Garrison D.R., Anderson, T. & Archer, W. (2000). Critical thinking in a text-based environment: Computer conferencing in higher education. *Internet and Higher Education*, 11(2), 1-14
- Mason, R. (1991). Moderating educational computer conferencing. *DEOSNEWS*, 1 (19).
- Paulsen, M.F. (1995.) Moderating Educational Computer Conferences. In Z.L. Berge and M.P. Collins (Eds). *Computer-Mediated Communication and the Online Classroom*. Cresskill NJ: Hampton Press.
- University of Calgary Teaching & Learning Centre. (2007). *Community of Inquiry Web Site*. Available online at: <http://communitiesofinquiry.com/>