Social Presence in online courses: Some practical tips and some meta-reflection

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York College Symposium on Teaching and Learning with Technology
October 31, 2014
Background

• Social Psychologist
  – Research Methods
  – Industrial/Organizational Psychology courses
• Faculty Bb Orientation Workshop – 2009
  – Hybrid Organizational Behavior
  – Web I/O Psych
  – Web Research Methods
• Faculty Bb Orientation mentor – 2011 and onward
• Independent study w/ students
  – Editing Psych articles on Wikipedia
Social presence in online class discussions

Hughes, Ventura, & Dando (2007).
Outline

• Community of Inquiry Model
• Tips
  – 1 - Being There - NOW
  – 2 – Share!
    • Welcome video
    • Introductory assignment
    • Creepy playhouse
  – 3 – Discuss!
    • Model!
    • Back off!
    • Pop in!
    • Grade fast!
• Reflection
Real Outline

- Community of Inquiry Model
- Tips
  - 1 - Being There - NOW
  - 2 - Share!
    - Welcome video
    - Introductory assignment
- Question about tangential issue
- More questions about tangential issues
- Time’s up
  - Creepy playhouse
  - 3 - Discuss!
  - Model!
  - Back-off!
  - Pop-in!
  - Grade fast!
- Reflection

I DON'T USUALLY MAKE AN OUTLINE FOR THE BB WORKSHOP
BUT WHEN I DO, WE DON'T FOLLOW IT
Community of Inquiry Model

Table 1. Community of Inquiry Coding Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Indicators (examples only)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Presence</td>
<td>Triggering Event</td>
<td>Sense of puzzlement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exploration</td>
<td>Information exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>Connecting ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resolution</td>
<td>Apply new ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learner</td>
<td></td>
<td>Emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Presence</td>
<td>Emotional Expression</td>
<td>Risk-free expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learner</td>
<td>Open Communication</td>
<td>Encouraging collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Presence</td>
<td>Instructional Management</td>
<td>Defining and initiating discussion topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Building Understanding</td>
<td>Sharing personal meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Direct Instruction</td>
<td>Focusing discussion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Community of Inquiry Model

• Cognitive presence
  – “The element in this model that is most basic to success in higher education is cognitive presence. (p. 89)”

• Social presence
  – “The primary importance of this element is its function as a support for cognitive presence. (p. 89)”

• Teaching presence
  – Design Teacher only
  – Facilitation (p.90) Learner may share
Community of Inquiry

• The creation of a learning community or community of inquiry ultimately rests on the teacher.

• My talk
  – Some practical tips generated from teaching online while aware of Garrison et al.’s ideas
Tip #1 – Being There - NOW

- Respond to post quickly
- Answer emails quickly
Tip #1 – Being There - NOW

• Respond to post quickly
  – Logging in all the time
• Answer emails quickly
  – Hundreds of emails per week
Tip #1 – Being There - NOW

- Answer emails quickly
  - Online office hours

**Online Office Hours**

Before you email me ...  

If you have a question about Bb, the class, an assignment or the textbook, look here first. If someone else hasn’t asked your question, create a new thread and post your question here.

However, if you have a question about you especially -- about a grade on an assignment, an absence, or your grade in the class -- don’t post it here. Email me.
Tip #1 – Being There - NOW

• Answer emails quickly
  – Online office hours
Tip #1 – Being There - NOW

- Answer emails quickly
  - Online office hours
  - Socialize

Thread: textbook

A student writes:

Hello good afternoon the book in the library on reserve is the 15th edition can we use this text for some of the readings? I'm currently having a hard time affording the text right now

----

I've received a couple emails about this. Here's the deal with the textbook:

1. I ordered for the bookstore a custom edition of the textbook with only the chapters we use in class. this custom edition is about $80. This is 1/2 the price of the full textbook.
Tip #1 – Being There - NOW

- Grade Threads
- Do not allow subscriptions
- Allow members to subscribe to threads
- Allow members to subscribe to forum
  - Include body of post in the email
  - Include link to post

Organize Forum Threads on this page and apply settings to several or a title or the caret at the top of each column. More Help

Create Thread      Subscribe

Message Actions  Collect  Delete

- Thread
Tip #2 – Share!

• Welcome Video
Tip #2 – Share!

• Introductory Assignment
  – Head shot
  – Info
    • Hobby
    • Commute to campus
  – Practice Technology
    • Embed/resize head shot
    • External links
    • Formatting
    • Forum or Wiki page
      – Reply or comment
Tip #2 – Share!

- Introductory Assignment

Hi! I'm your professor.

An interesting thing about me is that I've done dog agility. Here's a video (tho it's not of us). I and I trained for agility and did a few competitions. Here is a bad photo of us doing agility:
Tip #2 -- Share

- Warning
- Avoid the creepy playhouse
Tip #3 – Discuss!

• Timed Waves
• Rubrics

This is a homework assignment.

Your original post is due Thursday by noon. The follow up posts are due by Sunday night.

Grading rubrics

Original post.

• Credit - post clearly describes technique so someone who has not read the other pages could understand it; and your description of your insight contains a concrete example of how the technique can be used.
• No credit - post relies heavily on audience having read the sources; explanations are cryptic and telegraphic.

Follow-up/reply.

• Credit - The reply responds to the post by asking a question which questions the assumptions of the original post or the reply adds new ideas or information to the original post.
• No credit - A simple question is asked (e.g. "do you think this is a good idea?", "what could you do with this?") or a statement is made which just agrees with the original post or adds a non sequitur.
Tip #3A – Discuss!

- **Model!**
- Model first posts & answer format

Example:

1. I’m working on blaming the victim, the just world hypothesis and out group members. The JWH predicts that out group members will be blamed more when victims more because they can be seen as bad.


3. In their discussion Aguiar et al (2008) say that their study is similar to studies on de-humanization of outgroup members. I’d like to replicate Aguiar et al (2008)’s study 2 and extend it by replacing the for ingroup/outgroup IV manipulation of Portuguese and Gypsies with direct de-humanization: the IV would be something like: the stimulus material referring to the target group as nice people or dirty animals.


5. Interference will be lower in the dirty animal condition than in the nice people condition.
Tip #3A – Discuss!

- **Model!**
- Be aware of what Garrison and Hughes says is social presence
  - Affective
    - Expressions of emotion
  - Interactive
    - Responding to another post, asking a question or complimenting
  - Cohesive
    - Referring to members by name, referring to the group, speech with a social function
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>Expression of emotions</td>
<td>Conventional expressions of emotion, or unconventional expressions of emotion, includes repetitious punctuation, conspicuous capitalisation, emoticons</td>
<td>‘I just can’t stand it when…!!!!’ ‘ANYBODY OUT THERE!’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use of humour</td>
<td>Teasing, cajoling, irony, understatements, sarcasm</td>
<td>The banana crop in Edmonton is looking good this year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-disclosure</td>
<td>Presents details of life outside of class, or expresses vulnerability</td>
<td>‘Where I work, this is what we do…’ ‘I just don’t understand this question’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive</td>
<td>Continuing a thread</td>
<td>Using reply feature of software, rather than starting a new thread</td>
<td>Software dependent, e.g. ‘Subject: Re’ or ‘Branch from’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quoting from others’ messages</td>
<td>Using software features to quote others entire message or cutting and pasting selections of others’ messages</td>
<td>Software dependent, e.g. ‘Martha writes:’ or text prefaced by less-than symbol&lt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referring explicitly to others’ messages</td>
<td>Direct references to contents of others’ posts</td>
<td>‘In your message, you talked about Moore’s distinction between…’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking questions</td>
<td>Students ask questions of other students or the moderator</td>
<td>‘Anyone else had experience with WEBCT?’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complimenting, expressing appreciation, expressing agreement</td>
<td>Complimenting others on contents of others’ messages</td>
<td>‘I really like your interpretation of the reading’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expressing agreement with others on content of others’ messages</td>
<td>‘I was thinking the same thing. You really hit the nail on the head’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohesive</td>
<td>Vocatives</td>
<td>Addressing or referring to participants by name</td>
<td>‘I think John made a good point’ ‘John, what do you think?’</td>
</tr>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Addresses or refers to the group using inclusive pronouns</td>
<td>Addresses the group as <em>we, us, our, group</em></td>
<td>‘Our textbook refers to…’ ‘I think we veered off track’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phatics, salutations</td>
<td>Communication that serves a purely social function; greetings, closures</td>
<td>‘Hi all’ ‘That’s it for now’ ‘We’re having the most beautiful weather here’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Always**
  - Dear X
  - Best wishes, Bill

Tip #3B – Discuss!

- **Back off!**
- Students rarely voluntarily respond to other students
- Instructor posting is negatively related to student-to-student posting
  – Students responded to instructor not to other students
Tip #3C – Discuss!

• **Pop in**!

1. Buy a special kitchen timer -- here's mine --

and set if for 15 minutes. When you want to get going on something you are yourself, I’ll do it for 15 mins. Start the timer and work until it goes off. What didn’t I peak in yourself, you got it (let’s all) and that’s the session.
Tip #3D – Discuss!

• **Grade fast!**
• Students feel that grading time is an indication of presence
  – More important with low- & mid-stakes assignments
Reflection

• Are my tips social presence?
  – Yes
    • Design and facilitation are the responsibilities of the teacher
    • Social presence rests on Teaching presence
    • How I design
      – Tips 2 and 3 (prime)
    • How I facilitate
      – Tips 1 and 3 a-d
    • Will influence social presence
References


Contact

• washton@york.cuny.edu
• 718-262-2699
• Happy Halloween!