**Within and Across:**

**Cultivating a Culture of Presence in an Asynchronous Online**

****

**Kris Mickelson, Ph.D. Kim Christopherson, Ph.D.**

[**mickelsonk@morningside.edu**](mailto:mickelsonk@morningside.edu)[**christopherson@morningside.edu**](mailto:christopherson@morningside.edu)

**Poster Learning Objectives**

1. Learn new online **presence structures and strategies** to build a consistent culture of presence across an entire program area

2. Develop **consistent expectations and practices** for teacher, social, and cognitive presence by exchanging ideas across institutional settings

3. Identify and **problem-solve unique institutional challenges** to building a program culture of presence

**The Context: Our Program**

We teach and serve as academic coordinators for a 5-course research core of an asynchronous online master’s program for educators. Our program has a lot of students (some 1200), a lot of section of courses (3-5+ sections of each course, each term), and numerous adjuncts (10-15 different instructors each term). The sequence culminates with an action research study.

**The Concept: Presence**

**TEACHING** PRESENCE is defined as the design, facilitation, and direction of cognitive and social processes for the purpose of realizing personally meaningful and educational worthwhile learning outcomes. (Garrison et al., 2001)

**SOCIAL** PRESENCE is the ability of learners to project their personal characteristics into the community of inquiry, thereby presenting themselves as real people. (Rourke et al., 2001)

**COGNITIVE** PRESENCE is the extent to which the participants in any particular configuration of a community of inquiry are able to construct meaning through sustained communication. (Garrison et al., 2001)

**The Challenge: How to Cultivate Programmatic Presence**

1. **Collaborative Design and Continuous Improvement**

**Example One: Collaborative Design Process**

The Padlet on the poster shows an example of the backwards design process we used across all five courses in the research sequence starting with the culminating project. As full-time faculty members we led this process consulting with others along the way. We built a process based upon the QM rubric, track instructor and student feedback each term, and make adjustments each term.

**Example Two: Community of Inquiry Survey**

With the launch of the revised curricular sequence, a research project launched to gather student survey feedback on how they experience the three presences that comprise the Community of Inquiry framework. Data gathering is still in progress, but there will be 6 semesters of data from students across all five courses. Arbaugh, J.B., Cleveland-Innes, M., Diaz, S., Garrison, D.R., Ice, P., Richardson, J., Shea, P., & Swan, K. (2008) are the authors of the Community of Inquiry instrument being utilized.

1. **Threaded Learning Tools**

**Example One: Research Journal**

The research journal template on the poster was created as a Google doc. Students carry this research journal with them across all five courses. Instructor feedback is provided in the margins and becomes a place for students and instructors to dialogue with each other. It also creates a record of (a) student learning outcome growth over time (b) the development of student research ideas over time and (c) instructor feedback across courses.

**Example Two: Culminating Performance Assessment (the Action Research Conference)**

At the conclusion of the research sequence each student publicly presents their research and attends the presentations of other students, across all sections, via a synchronous Zoom conference facilitated by course instructors. Modeled after professional conferences, sessions contain four 10-minute presentations with a discussion period at the end of each hour-long session. The conference provides a venue for authentic accountability for students and faculty alike.

1. **Faculty Mentoring and Development**

**Example One: Instructor Notes**

Module-by-module instructor notes in every class provide expectations and advice for all faculty teaching different sections of the same course. Ways for individual instructors to develop and emphasize teaching, social, and cognitive presence bring consistency to the student experience and support adjunct faculty members.

**Example Two: Student Work Sample Review**

We have experimented with a meeting each semester in which instructors meet over Zoom for an hour to do a student work sample review together. Each instructor reads and responds to the same work sample utilizing both the rubric or grading guide and commenting on perceptions of overall strengths and areas for growth in the assignment. The exercise generates rich discussions about student learning as well as helps develop common expectations and feedback strategies.

**Conversation Starters**

* The type of presence that is best developed across a program, sequence, major in my context is . . .
* The greatest challenge we experience trying to ensure consistency in presence across a program, sequence, major is . . .
* An effective strategy my institution has used to collaborate across a program, sequence, major is . . .