CREATING SOCIAL PRESENCE AND COMMUNITY IN ONLINE LEARNING
SOCIAL PRESENCE AND COMMUNITY ONLINE

• Emotions play an important role in student engagement and learning.
• Insecurity, stress and fear hinder learning.
• Positive emotions such as a sense of belonging and connection can promote learning.
• Distance students may feel isolated, so-called, transactional distance - not only physical distance but also social distance acting as a barrier.
• Even more so for today's students who have been 'forced' online.
How can we bridge the distance and support student learning?

• In particular, the importance of social presence in promoting learning within a learning community is highlighted by research in distance education, especially in online learning environments. The creation of connection and a sense of 'community' is vital to promote student engagement and learning.

• Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework (Garrison, Anderson and Archer, 2000) which can be a support in the design of supportive online learning environments.
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- **Social presence** is defined as the degree to which learners feel socially and emotionally connected with others in an online environment (Arbaugh et al. 2008).

- **Cognitive presence** describes the extent to which learners are able to construct and confirm meaning through sustained reflection and discourse.

- The central organizing element is **teaching presence**: the design, facilitation, and, most importantly, the direction of cognitive and social processes for the realisation of personally meaningful and educationally worthwhile learning outcomes (Morueta, López, Gómez & Harris 2016).

- A fourth area currently emerging in research: **emotional presence**
Designing for learning with social presence

• Provide online spaces and structured activities that encourage and support social interaction
• Discuss social presence, its value for learning and establish rules of interaction (netiquette)
• Provide opportunities for individual presentation of ideas, interaction in pairs (critical friends) and group work
• Clarify the value of dialogue and collaborative learning
• Discuss and verify group norms during the course (group contract)
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Designing for learning with teaching presence

• Clear structure with clear instructions how, what and when students need to do tasks etc.
• Communication - create and communicate a plan where and how communication should take place between students and between course tutors and students.
• Clear presentation of course objectives, assignments and themes
• Maintain presence through regular interaction with individuals and groups
• Participate in and encourage learning activities, encourage students to create and lead teaching activities
• Support groups in their work and solve problems with humor and encouragement
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Designing for learning with cognitive presence

• Use varied and unique materials and approaches to engaging students with learning materials. Vary the choice of resources and methods in learning activities
• Use problem-based learning
• Create learning activities that require reflection, application and criticism
• Offer opportunities for students to search and use resources outside of course materials
• Uses student-active methods
• Offer opportunities for peer facilitation of forums
• Provide opportunities for student-led activities
• Discuss / implement the practical application of theoretical knowledge
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- What do you do to create social presence and a sense of community online?
- Do you have any helpful hints?
- Please write in the Padlet:

https://uplumu.padlet.org/claire_englund/x8qvx99egzrhkjs
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References:


• Lim, J & Richardson, J (2016) Exploring the effects of students’ social networking experiences on social presence and perceptions of using SNSs for educational purposes. Internet and higher education, vol:29, s:31-39


• Morueta, R., López, P, Gómez, A & Harris, V (2016) Exploring social and cognitive presences in communities of inquiry to perform higher cognitive tasks. Internet and higher education, vol:31, s:122-131