PRESENTER INFORMATION

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The Learning House
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, you should be able to:

• List the benefits of developing a virtual community of inquiry.

• Describe the relationship between presence and community-building.

• Articulate strategies to build community in your online course.
AGENDA

1. Characteristics of Community
2. Presence
3. Strategies to Build Community
1. CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMUNITY

2. PRESENCE

3. STRATEGIES TO BUILD COMMUNITY
WHAT DEFINES COMMUNITY?

1. Sense of shared purpose
2. Boundaries identifying members
3. Rules for community behavior
4. Interaction
5. Trust, respect, and support

Source: Vesely, Bloom, and Sherlock (2007)
# Elements of a Learning Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Implication for Online Learning Communities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Historicity</td>
<td>Celebrate and make public the diverse background, skills, and experiences of your students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>Underscore the goals of your course and create a sense of shared purpose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutuality</td>
<td>Encourage respectful collaboration and interaction.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plurality</td>
<td>Allow students to leverage and share external networks.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>Respect and foster individual identity and expression in addition to group identity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Encourage participation and involvement in the learning process.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>Ensure the coherence of your course and the alignment of its components.</td>
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</tbody>
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**Additions for Virtual Learning Communities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Implication for Virtual Learning Communities</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td>Encourage students to consider your course’s applicability to their future lives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Avoid using tools for tools’ sake. Utilize familiar and easy-to-use interactive media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>Keep discussions on track and offer opportunities for metacognitive reflection.</td>
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Source: Schwier (2002)
BENEFITS OF LEARNING COMMUNITIES

- Enrichment of ideas
- Deep learning
- Improved communication skills
- Increased motivation
- Augmented awareness of individual responsibility

ADULT LEARNERS AND ANDRAGOGY

- Refers to theories/practices related to adult education
- Characteristics of adult learners:
  - Self-directed
  - Possess a reservoir of experience
  - Ready to learn
  - Purpose-oriented / problem-centered
  - Intrinsically motivated
  - Desire relevancy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
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<td>30-34</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
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<td>19.4%</td>
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<td>40-44</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
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<td>55 and older</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
1. CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMUNITY

2. PRESENCE

3. STRATEGIES TO BUILD COMMUNITY
MAPPING ENGAGEMENT AND PRESENCE

Cognitive Presence

Student - Content

Student - Student

Student - Instructor

Social Presence

Teaching Presence
PRESENCE

• **Instructor presence** is generated by perceptions of:
  - Facilitator’s communication style
  - Frequency of facilitator’s communication
  - Facilitator’s expertise

• **Social presence** is generated by students’:
  - Feeling of social/emotional connectedness
  - Identification with course goals
  - Ability to experience immediate/personalized interactions

• **Cognitive presence** is created when students:
  - Construct their own knowledge
  - Engage in metacognitive activities
INSTRUCTION
“SAGE ON THE STAGE”

FACILITATION
“GUIDE ON THE SIDE”
SOCIAL CAPITAL

The stock of social trust, norms, and networks that people can draw upon to solve common problems.

- Requires trust
  - Netiquette, icebreakers
- Enhanced by storytelling
  - Discussion boards
- Accelerated by collaboration
  - Group work

Source: Daniel (2002)
BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH PRESENCE

1. Immediately work to build **social presence** through social activities.

2. Gradually strengthen **social capital** and **cohesion** with discussions and group work.

3. Continually practice **instructor presence** via facilitation (rather than direct instruction).

4. Foster **cognitive presence** by enhancing social and instructor presence.
1. CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMUNITY
2. PRESENCE
3. STRATEGIES TO BUILD COMMUNITY
OFFER AN ICEBREAKER ACTIVITY

• You could ask students to:
  – Submit 5 images that best describe themselves
  – List their top 3 books
  – Post links to video/audio introductions

• Key information:
  – Why they’re taking the course
  – Where they’re located
  – Hobbies/interests
  – Professional affiliations
HIGHLIGHT A NETIQUETTE POLICY

1. Create it
2. Highlight it
3. Enforce it
4. Live it
DISCUSSION FORUMS

Student - Content

Student - Student

Student - Instructor

Discussion Forums

Social Presence
Teaching Presence
Cognitive Presence
LEVERAGE DISCUSSION FORUMS

• Design excellent prompts
  – Ensure alignment
  – Avoid factual/“thoughts & feelings” questions
  – Pose provocative questions
  – Encourage problem-solving
  – Consider forum-based activities

• Facilitate discussions effectively
ASSIGN GROUP WORK

- Collaborative rubric design
- Case-based learning
- Peer reviews/feedback
- Contracts
CREATE MODULE INTRODUCTION VIDEOS

• Enhance instructor presence
• Provide context
  – Review: activate prior knowledge
  – Preview: provide guidance
  – Motivate: connect to the real world

captions are enabled
INCLUDE REFLECTIVE EXERCISES

• Prior knowledge assessment
• Journaling
• Discussion boards after assessments
• ePortfolios
• Midterm evaluation
• Rubric design/feedback
CONCLUSIONS
COMMUNITY OF INTEGRITY

• Social learning theory: “much of human behavior is learned through the influence of example”

• Promote a culture of integrity by
  – Enhancing “boilerplate” academic integrity statements
  – Addressing explicitly what academic integrity means to you
  – Providing clear assessment instructions and/or rubrics
  – Punishing academic dishonesty (deterrence theory)

Source: McCabe, Butterfield, & Trevino (2006)
TAKEAWAYS

• Building a community of inquiry has a positive effect on perceived learning.
• You can create specific types of presence through specific types of interaction.
• You can leverage specific types of presence to build community.
• A strong sense of community can promote academic integrity.
TAKEAWAYS (2)

• Foster social presence by:
  – Offering an icebreaker activity
  – Customizing, highlighting, enforcing, and living a netiquette policy
  – Offering students opportunities to share their experiences

• Build instructor presence by:
  – Establishing context throughout the course
  – Favoring facilitation over direct instruction
  – Creating effective videos
  – Providing effective feedback

• Foster cognitive presence by:
  – Creating opportunities for group work
  – Encouraging metacognitive perspectives
QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

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References
Sheridan, K., & Kelly, M.A. (2010). The indicators of instructor presence that are important to students in online courses. Journal of Online Learning and Teaching, 6(4).