



Reading List

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Reading List

Death Star destroys USS Enterprise

Boing Boing Gadgets' Steven Leckart found video of the Death Star destroying the USS Enterprise. That's what happens when you let Lucasfilm set up shop in San Francisco, also home to the United Federation of Planets. "Death Star annihilates the Enterprise"

Using Audio Feedback to Promote Teaching Presence

What does a faculty member do in order to be present in the classroom? The answers to this question may seem obvious; show up for class, lead class activities and discussion, and assess student learning, to name a few. Such in-person interactions have been a benchmark of quality instruction for years and are usually indicative of smaller, discussion-based classes. But when class sizes are larger or when courses are transformed to blended or fully online formats, how can the same quality of dialogue and connections among students and faculty be maintained? Let's explore the tenets of an engaging learning environment and one possible approach for connecting on a personal and meaningful level with students despite class size or format.

No matter the discipline or subject matter, a primary goal of many faculty is to foster an engaging learning environment that promotes critical thinking and application among students. As students exchange ideas with faculty and are challenged to deepen their understanding, opportunities for authentic knowledge construction and enriched application often result. Garrison, Anderson, and Archer (2001) refer to such a collaborative and constructive educational experience as a Community of Inquiry (COI) whereby three key elements crucial to the success of any learning endeavor are highlighted: *cognitive presence, social presence, and teaching presence*. Figure 1 illustrates the integration of these elements of the learning environment.

Figure 1. Community of inquiry

(Reproduced by permission from Pergamon. From Garrison, D. R., Anderson, T., & Archer, W. (2000). Critical inquiry in a text-based environment: Computer conferencing in higher education. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 2(2-3), 87-105.)

The role of the faculty member is vital to developing a Community of Inquiry (COI) and the overall success of the course. Specific tasks such as selecting course content, setting the climate of the online community, and supporting discourse throughout the course all take place within the interplay of the cognitive, social, and teaching activities. Let's now take a closer look at each of the key components that comprise the COI and then explore the use of audio feedback to promote teaching presence.

Social Presence

Social presence is defined as, "The ability of participants in the community of inquiry to project their personal characteristics into the

community, thereby presenting themselves to the other participants as ‘real people’” (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000, p. 89). In blended or online course environments, developing social presence can be more challenging than in more traditional face-to-face environments and yet is equally important to the overall success of the learning experience. Social presence is the pathway whereby cognitive presence is developed. As faculty and students cultivate social presence in a course through meaningful dialogue, deepened analysis and application of course concepts can take place.

Cognitive Presence

Cognitive presence categorizes the intellectual processes of an educational experience and refers to the degree to which participants in any community of inquiry are able to construct meaning through sustained communication (Garrison et al., 2000). Involving the higher-order thinking processes and knowledge acquisition associated with critical thinking, cognitive presence in the learning community is shaped as learners reflect upon their learning experiences and incorporate insights into their collaborations (Garrison, 2003; Garrison et al., 2001). The experience of actively engaging with the concepts of learning in both a self-reflective fashion internally as well as exploring and refining understanding in community is one benchmark of quality learning experiences.

Teaching Presence

Teaching presence refers to functions within the learning experience often performed by the instructor, including the design and facilitation of the educational experience (Garrison et al., 2000). These roles need not be limited to simply the instructor, as students can also exhibit teaching presence in the course through such activities as leading group discussion assignments of collecting and sharing instructional resources. In fact, Rourke and Anderson (2002) found that students actually preferred peer teams leading online discussion as compared to the course instructor.

Students have indicated that exemplary faculty are those who create a learning climate that includes strong elements of social, cognitive, and teaching presence (Perry & Edwards, 2005). Especially in blended or online learning environments marked by significant reliance on computer-mediated communication, the necessity for teaching presence is amplified. Pawan, Paulus, Yalcin, and Chang (2003) found that without the instructor’s definitive teaching presence and modeling of

collaborative discussion contributions, learner discussions primarily consisted of low-level cognitive interactions. While there certainly is a place for such cognitively insignificant postings in the creation of the social climate, the ultimate goal should be for learners to engage in high-level thinking and communication of new knowledge gained in a way that stimulates the learning experience for all members of the community.

Students expect to be reciprocated for their efforts (Aviv, Erlich, & Ravid, 2005). The faculty member's influence within the educational experience is crucial to ensuring that communication flows freely and that dialogue proceeds in a collegial and responsive fashion. As the faculty member sets the climate for the dialogue to take place, the expectations established help guide the interactions of all members of the learning community. It is through purposeful development of social, cognitive, and teaching presence faculty can connect in meaningful ways with students no matter the class size or format.

Why Audio Feedback?

For many years faculty have relied solely on textual comments for providing feedback to students. These comments often take the form of handwritten notes in hard copy form on written assignments of all kinds as well as written feedback on project rubrics or evaluation forms. Convenient and accessible to the vast majority of students, such comments often highlight strengths and weaknesses in student performance and provide specific suggestions for improvement. With the development of electronic assignment submission tools within learning management systems like Blackboard, students can now submit written assignments and projects electronically, allowing faculty more options for reviewing student work and providing feedback. No longer must feedback be provided in hard copy form as such written comments can be embedded electronically within submitted student files.

Yet, textual feedback, particularly in the context of a blended or online course, can lack rich detail and tone. Whereas face-to-face learning environments provide ample opportunity for students to hear the "voice" of the instructor and ask questions seeking further clarification, such interactive experiences are more difficult to foster in the online learning environment. Faculty often attempt the time-consuming task of providing detailed written comments to student work submitted electronically while longing for a more efficient and personable way to provide meaningful and personal feedback to students. As textual forms

of communication dominate current electronic communications, opportunities to engage auditory and kinesthetic learners ought to be cultivated.

Easy-to-use audio and video technologies are available to faculty who seek to provide alternative forms of feedback beyond simple text. While text feedback is still by far the most accessible to learners, audio and video capabilities are becoming commonplace among learners today and many are growing to expect and appreciate when such media are incorporated to enrich feedback. Ice, Swan, Kupczynski, and Richardson (2008) studied the impact of asynchronous audio feedback in an online course and noted the following:

1. Students perceived audio feedback to be more effective than text-based feedback for conveying nuance.
2. Audio feedback was associated with feelings of increased involvement and enhanced learning community interactions.
3. Audio feedback was associated with increased retention of content.
4. Audio feedback was associated with the perception that the instructor cared more about the student.

In addition, Ice (2008) reported that students were far more likely to apply content for which they received audio feedback than content for which text-based feedback was received and at significantly higher cognitive levels. This supports the rationale the audio feedback can enhance textual feedback and serve as a viable alternative.

Approaches to Using Audio Feedback

Faculty have numerous options when considering incorporating audio feedback to enrich the quality of the feedback provided to students. With an affordable microphone connected to a computer, faculty can take a number of different simple approaches to adding audio feedback to student assignments, including but not limited to, the following:

Audio Comments in Microsoft Word

Microsoft Word allows for the insertion of voice comments in any Word document. In Word 2002 and 2003, simply click the drop-down arrow of the New Comment button on the Reviewing toolbar and select Voice comment. This opens the Sound Object dialog box for you to record your comment. In Word 2007, add the Voice Comment button to the Quick Access toolbar using the following steps and then insert comments as described above:

1. Click the Office Button.
2. Click the Word Options button.
3. Click Customize.
4. Click the drop-down arrow of the Choose Commands From box and select Commands Not In Ribbon.
5. Scroll to and select Insert Voice.
6. Click the Add button, and then click OK.

Several drawbacks to using the audio commenting features in Microsoft Word exist. Some include the requirement of using Microsoft Word as well as the fact that depending on the number and length of audio comments included, the size of the file can become too large to email or return electronically to the student in Blackboard. This presents obvious challenges and therefore should only be considered for very brief audio commenting.

Audio Comments Using Adobe Acrobat Professional

For more extensive audio commenting in electronic documents, a more feasible option is to use the embedded audio features of Adobe Acrobat Professional. Similar to adding audio comments using Microsoft Word, faculty can record and embed audio comments resulting in considerably smaller file sizes than resulting from the same approach with Microsoft Word. Faculty would need a license of Adobe Acrobat Professional in order to convert submitted files to PDF and record audio comments in the files, while students only need the free Adobe Acrobat Reader software to open the commented files. Details on academic pricing for Adobe Acrobat Professional are available from ITS.

Audio/Video Feedback Using Jing

Perhaps the most versatile and affordable approach is to use a capture program such as the free Jing in order to record audio feedback while viewing electronically submitted work from students. These short video recordings, also often referred to as "screencasts," can include cursor movement, typing, or other on-screen activity as well as narration.

After downloading Jing from <http://www.jingproject.com> and installing on either a Windows or Mac computer, faculty simply can launch Jing and then open an electronically-submitted file, select a window or region, and begin recording. Jing records all on-screen activity and narration, allowing the faculty the freedom to virtually review students' work, showing where in the assignment improvement is necessary. Such an approach can be used for any type of electronically-submitted assignment or project and is not restricted to only written

assignments. Once finished recording, Jing compresses it into a Flash.swf file that faculty can either save and then return to the student via Blackboard or upload to the free Jing server and receive a link to the video file that can then be sent to the student.

As the available technology continues to advance, numerous additional approaches are sure to become available in the future for enhancing the quality of feedback for students. No matter what approach is ultimately selected, an improved educational experience for students will result.

Learn More

The Faculty Development and Instructional Design Center offers a variety of programs regarding the principles and practices of incorporating media in teaching. The current program schedule and online registration information is available at <http://www.niu.edu/facdev/programs/fscurrent.shtml>

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Related Posts

- July 13, 2009 -- [Twitter Experiment](#)
- June 20, 2009 -- [Online Professors Pose as Students to Encourage Real Learning](#)

Make Vibrantly Colored Tea Eggs [Food]

BBC News Front Page

BA crew to strike as talks fail

A strike by British Airways cabin crew will go ahead after talks between the airline and the Unite union collapsed.

Dog attack killer jailed for life

A murderer from south London who used his dog as a weapon on a 16-year-old boy before stabbing him is jailed for life.

Lloyds predicts a profitable 2010

Lloyds Banking Group - which is 41% owned by the taxpayer - expects to make a profit this year after heavy losses in 2009.

Mother not told of rapist's past

Agencies failed to tell a mother that a man living in her house, who later went on to rape her daughter, was a sex offender.

New expenses file passed to CPS

Scotland Yard passes a new file of evidence against a parliamentarian suspected of abusing expenses to prosecutors.

SA students riot over star's bail

Students in South Africa throw stones at police after a musician accused of killing pupils in a car race is freed on bail.

No charges over conductor suicide

The son of conductor Sir Edward Downes will not be charged with assisting his suicide, the director of public prosecutions says.

Quartet urges settlement freeze

The international Quartet of Mid-East peace mediators calls on Israel to freeze settlement activity in occupied territories.

Stem cell windpipe op 'success'

A 10-year-old British boy has become the first child to undergo a windpipe transplant with an organ crafted from his own stem cells.

Papal letter on Irish sex abuse

Pope Benedict writes a letter to the Catholics of Ireland on how to deal with the sexual abuse of children by priests.

Hadron smashes energy record again

The Large Hadron Collider has smashed the record for highest-energy particle collisions again in its quest to uncover new physics.

Prince Harry could join disabled servicemen on North Pole trek

Prince Harry launches the first unaided trek to the North Pole for disabled servicemen, saying he would like to take part in the challenge.

The invisibility cloak that works in 3-D

Scientists create the first cloaking device to render an object invisible in three dimensions.

Imperial Commander lands Gold Cup

Imperial Commander wins the Cheltenham Gold Cup from 2008 winner Denman after defending champion Kauto Star falls four from home.

Arsenal draw favourites Barcelona

Arsenal will face Barcelona in the Champions League quarter-finals while Manchester United draw Bayern Munich.

Moody takes over from Borthwick

Lewis Moody will captain England against France after Steve Borthwick loses his fitness race, with Louis Deacon starting at lock.

Do unions have too much power?

RMT members announce industrial action as BA strikes go ahead after talks collapse. What's your reaction?

Blair's ghost

How realistic is new film about PM facing war crime charges?

All seeing

Here is the weather forecast for Europe in 2040

Retro chaos

Just what can life in 1974 tell us about life in 2010?

Spending pennies

Should the UK pay for toilets in the slums of Mumbai?

Robert Peston

Lloyds Banking Group: Back to black

7 days quiz

What does the 'com' in .com actually stand for?

Fresh dig at hoard treasure site

A fresh dig is to take place at the site in Staffordshire where the Anglo-Saxon hoard was found by a man with a metal detector.

Bravery honours for Black Watch

Awards recognising acts of bravery during operations in Afghanistan are announced for members of the Black Watch.

Apology over deaths of teenagers

Agencies promise to learn lessons from mistakes as they apologise over the unconnected deaths of three 16-year-olds.

52 jobs go at drink firm Britvic

More than 50 jobs are being lost at the Britvic soft drinks company in Northern Ireland, the employment minister confirms.

Nigerian dies in Swiss deportation

Switzerland halts special flights to deport asylum seekers after a Nigerian man on hunger strike died at Zurich airport.

Obama hails 'historic' health bid

US President Barack Obama says the weekend's congressional vote on healthcare reform is a "historic" opportunity.

Egypt prayers for Mubarak health

Government-run mosques across Egypt offer prayers for President Hosni Mubarak's recovery on Friday.

Rio Tinto signs China mine deal

Rio Tinto signs a big African venture deal with China, days before four of its officials go on trial in Shanghai.

Bomb hits Greek far-right group

A makeshift bomb damages the fifth floor office of a Greek far-right group in Athens, but causes no injuries.

Taliban arrests halt UN contacts

Ex-UN envoy in Afghanistan says Pakistan's arrest of Taliban leaders halted a channel of secret UN communications.

RMT signal staff vote for strikes

Railway signal workers have voted in favour of strikes in a row over jobs and safety, the RMT union has said.

Tories in energy security pledge

The Tories would force power firms to provide sufficient supplies as part of a plan to guarantee energy security.

Obese maternity care risk warning

Maternity services for obese women are not good enough and may be putting mothers-to-be at risk, experts warn.

Student loan delays 'may reoccur'

The public spending watchdog criticises the Student Loans Company and warns of another year of delays.

Ice mission given lift-off date

Europe's Cryosat spacecraft is set to launch on 8 April on a mission to map the world's ice fields.

Bullock husband 'sorry for grief'

Sandra Bullock's husband Jesse James apologises to his wife and children following accusations he had an affair.

YouTube hits back in Viacom row

YouTube accuses Viacom of secretly uploading content to the video-sharing site whilst publicly complaining about its presence.

BBC Technology

YouTube hits back in Viacom row

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Uncharted leads Bafta nominations

PlayStation 3 game Uncharted 2 leads the nominations for the Bafta video game awards, ahead of the event on Friday night.

Tech addicts offered treatments

Young people who spend excessive amounts of time online can now get treatment if they are diagnosed with addiction.

Palm hit by slow smartphone sales

Handheld computing veteran Palm is losing ground to the iPhone and Blackberry in the battle of the smartphones.

Ice mission given lift-off date

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Invisibility cloak created in 3-D

Scientists create the first cloaking device to render an object invisible in three dimensions.

Choice screen gives browser boost

Web browser Opera says its downloads in Europe have doubled since Microsoft began offering a choice.

China unveils homemade helicopter

China's first domestically developed civilian helicopter takes off on a maiden flight in the eastern province of Jiangxi.

Electric motoring to be assessed

The potential market for the future of electric cars is to be examined by experts from the University of Aberdeen.

dot.Maggie

YouTube v big media: Now it's like a soap opera

Top 100 sites

Explore the biggest websites and what do they do

Switching on

Despite efforts, the digital divide is getting wider

Spaceman

Riding the strangest rocket in the world

Merged worlds

Networks blur the divide between public and private

Disconnected UK

Meeting the people living behind the digital divide

Spammers survive botnet shutdowns

A series of strikes against botnets has not dented cyber criminals' appetite for sending spam, say security experts.

Facebook rules out 'panic button'

Facebook says it will not install a "panic button" on its main pages for users to report suspected paedophiles, but will develop its existing reporting system.

Hacking 'fun' for British teens

Teenagers try to get into each other's online accounts despite knowing it is wrong, according to a new survey.

Web inventor calls for open data

Countries should be judged on their willingness to open up public data, the inventor of the world wide web tells the BBC.

O2 condemns file-sharing letters

The mobile network condemns a law firm for sending letters to alleged illegal downloaders, including its own customers.

Mobile application sales explode

The global economy for mobile applications will explode over the next two years into a \$17.5bn industry, a study suggests.

UK 'can cope with cyber attack'

The UK is "reasonably well placed to cope" with a large scale cyber attack, a report by a group of peers has said.

Net piracy takes 'toll on jobs'

The growth of illegal file-sharing could cost European countries 1.2m jobs and 240bn euros by 2015, an industry report says.

Has copyright gone too far?

Has copyright gone too far? asks Bill Thompson.

Open society and open systems

Openness must be defended, says Bill Thompson.

The past is the future for tech

Bill Thompson keeps an eye on the future

The media and the message

Innovation is the key for papers says Bill Thompson

Mobile boom fuels health work

Phones transform healthcare in the developing world

Sun spotters protect the Earth

Your help is needed to watch the surface of the Sun

Keeping gadgets safe and sound

Hi-tech to stop gadgets being stolen

Making the most of Twitter

Essential guide for getting more out of Twitter

Digital Revolution

Internet Blog



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Food for the mind