Refereed Articles

The Community of Inquiry and Emotional Presence

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Abstract: The community of inquiry (COI) model identifies elements which are fundamental to a successful online learning experience, namely, teaching presence, cognitive presence, and social presence. The model has received empirical support as a useful framework for understanding the online learning experience. A limitation of the model is its understanding of emotional presence which, according to the COI model, is seen solely in terms of emotional expression, which, in turn, is a part of social presence. Emotional intelligence would support a much broader role for emotional presence in learning and embrace to a larger extent how emotions play out in the learning process, than singularly "emotional expression" in the original COI framework. Thus, the article first presents a conceptualization of emotional presence in terms of emotional intelligence. Second, it discusses the relationship of emotional presence to teaching presence and how teaching presence may foster emotional presence in learners. Finally, how emotional presence in teaching presence may foster social presence and cognitive presence in learners and lead to successful learning is presented.

Keywords: adult learning, adult education, online learning, emotional intelligence, community of inquiry

> " ROLE OF EMOTIONAL PRESENCE IN LEARNING APPEARS TO GO BEYOND EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION AND INCLUDES MOTIVATIONAL AND AFFECTIVE EXPERIENTIAL ELEMENTS SUCH AS SELF-EFFICACY AND OPENNESS."

Introduction

The community of inquiry (COI) model is based on the perspective that complex, deeper level learning occurs through a community of learners who participate in reflective thinking and discussion, especially in the online classroom (Garrison, Cleveland-Innes, & Fung, 2010). The importance of the COI model lies in its identification of three overlapping elements which are critical to a successful online learning experience: teaching presence, cognitive presence, and social presence (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2010; Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007). The model has received considerable empirical support as a framework for understanding critical components of the online learning experience (Arbaugh et al., 2008; Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007).

In the COI model, emotional presence is understood in terms of emotional expression which is part of social presence (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2010; Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007). However, the role of emotional presence in learning appears to go beyond emotional expression and includes motivational and affective experiential elements such as self-efficacy, openness, expanded self-awareness, heightened receptivity to others, and an enhanced ability to manage high arousal emotional states which are prevalent in learning (Conway, Tugade, Catalino, & Frederickson, 2013; Dirkx, 2008; Gunnlaugson, 2011; Kang, Liew, Kim, & Park, 2014; Kestly, 2016; Lawrence, 2012; Pekrun & Stephens, 2010; Shea & Bidjerano, 2010; Zembylas, Theodorou, & Pavlakis, 2008).

A construct that may help to further an understanding of the role of emotional presence in learning is emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence has been found to have a positive relationship with academic success in university students, constructive conflict management which is important to more complex learning, and desired project outcomes (Ahmed & Rana, 2012; Lanciano & Curci, 2014; Morrison, 2008; Pope, Roper, & Qualter, 2012; Trejo, 2016). Thus, this suggests its important role in learning design and facilitation. Also, emotional intelligence can be trained (Nafuhko, Muyia, Farnia, Kacirek, & Lynham, 2016). Emotional intelligence would support a much broader role for emotional presence in learning and embrace to a larger extent how emotions play out in the learning process, than singularly "emotional expression" in the original COI framework. Thus, the aim of this article is to introduce a model of COI that conceptualizes emotional presence as emotional intelligence and to present pedagogical applications of this. Specifically, the article will first discuss the concept of emotional intelligence as emotional presence in learning. Second, it will address the relationship of emotional presence to teaching presence. Third, the article will address how different aspects of teaching presence may foster emotional presence in learners. Last, it will address how emotional presence in the instructor and learners may foster social presence and cognitive presence in learners.

Community of Inquiry Model

The COI model describes three interacting components that are the foundation of a successful, meaningful online learning experience: cognitive presence, social presence, and teaching presence (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000; Garrison et al., 2010).

Teaching presence aims to establish a COI through the creation, implementation, facilitation, and monitoring of cognitive and social processes to achieve learning goals (Anderson, Rourke, Garrison, & Archer, 2001). It includes the elements of instructional design, facilitation of learning, and direct teaching (Garrison, 2007). The *primary* responsibility of teaching presence is to establish the course content, schedule, and assignments; the second is monitoring and managing interaction and reflection; and the third is determining learner needs and providing appropriate guidance and information (Garrison et al., 2010). Thus, creating and organizing the different components of the course, establishing teaching methods, sharing perspectives and information, and facilitating discussion are important aspects of teaching presence (Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007). Empirical evidence supports the idea that teaching presence may influence student perceptions of social and cognitive presence (Garrison et al., 2010).

The concept of cognitive presence is based on the four phases of practical inquiry that describe how learners negotiate meaning (Garrison, 2007; Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2001, cited in Garrison et al., 2010). These include defining a problem, identifying and exploring pertinent information, understanding and connecting information, and testing possible solutions (Garrison, 2007; Garrison et al., 2001).

Social presence is the "ability to project one's self and establish personal and purposeful relationships" (Garrison, 2007, p. 63). The three main aspects of social presence are effective communication, group cohesion, and emotional expression (Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007). Social presence is especially important to online learning as there is little if any face-to-face communication in the online environment (Garrison et al., 2010). These three aspects of social presence provide the conditions for the development of cognitive presence as it is through interaction with others that learners

negotiate ideas with each other and learn to use higher level thinking skills (Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007). Social presence mediates the relationship between teaching presence and cognitive presence (Garrison et al., 2010).

As Garrison et al. (2010) state,

Establishing causal relationships among the presences supports the hypothesized mechanism that teaching presence is essential in establishing a sense of social presence by engendering an atmosphere of trust, open communication, and group cohesion. This sets the stage for purposeful and collaborative learning processes and activities indicated by the perceived relationship between social and cognitive presence. In this sense, social presence is a mediating factor that provides context for the educational process. (p. 25; see Figure 1)

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence consists of emotional perception, emotional facilitation, emotional understanding, and emotional management which are described below (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 1999; Mayer & Salovey, 1997). *Emotional perception* is the ability to recognize one's own and others' feelings. Emotional perception leads to the second component, *emotional understanding*, which is the ability to grasp why we feel the way we do and how our different feelings relate to each other. The third component, *emotional facilitation*, refers to the ability to use emotion to fulfill nonemotional goals by enhancing thinking. The fourth component, *emotional management*, refers to the ability to regulate emotions experienced within oneself and expressed in relationships with others.

These elements of emotional intelligence are linked with elements of the COI model and can be seen as integral to successful learning, especially in the online environment. When conceptualized as emotional intelligence, emotional presence can be seen as interpenetrating teaching, social, and cognitive presence. As teaching presence has been found to play a most important role in learners' experience of online learning (Mahmood, Mahmood, & Malik, 2012), the next section will focus on the importance of emotional presence to teaching presence, how teaching presence
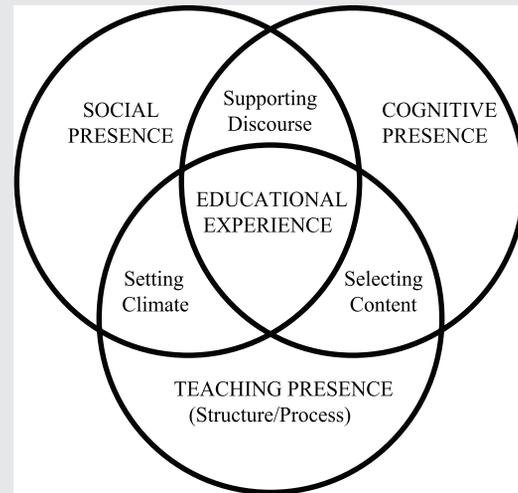

Figure 1. Community of inquiry model.
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can demonstrate emotional presence, and how this, in turn, may foster learner emotional presence, learner cognitive presence, and learner social presence to optimize the learner experience (outcome).

Incorporating Emotional Presence Into the COI Model

Emotional Perception and Emotional Understanding, and Teaching, Cognitive, and Social Presences

Cleveland-Innes and Campbell (2012) note the following: "The central organizing element is teaching presence: the design, facilitation, and, most importantly, the direction of cognitive and social processes for the realization of personally meaningful and educationally worthwhile learning outcomes" (p. 284). Their conclusions underscore the significance of including emotional presence as a component of teaching presence.

The importance of emotional perception and emotional understanding relates to elements of teaching presence, namely, determining learner needs, providing appropriate guidance and information, and managing interaction (Garrison et al., 2010). As emotional perception and emotional
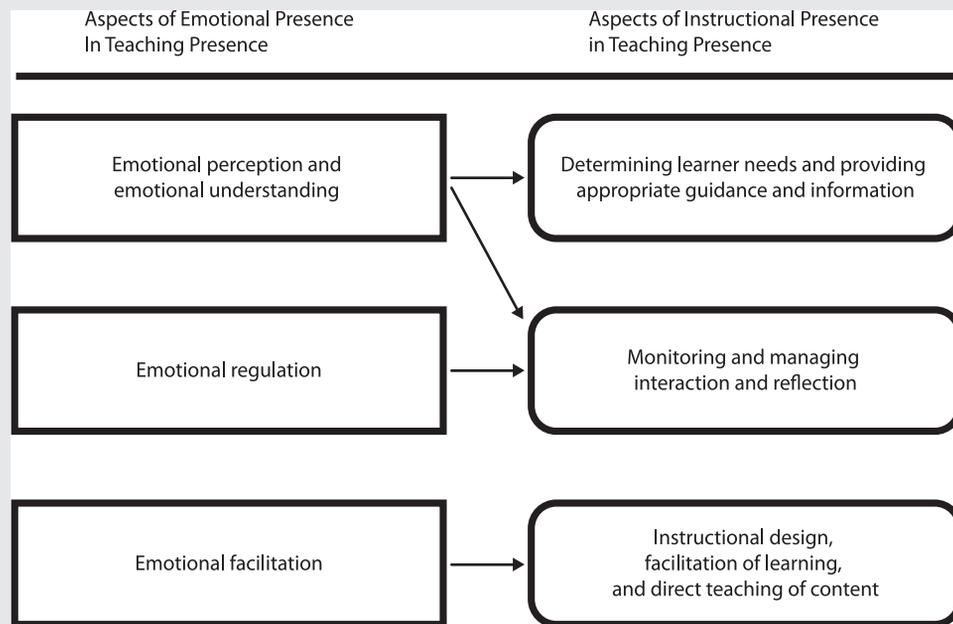
Aspects of Emotional Presence In Teaching Presence	Aspects of Instructional Presence in Teaching Presence
Emotional perception and emotional understanding	Determining learner needs and providing appropriate guidance and information
Emotional regulation	Monitoring and managing interaction and reflection
Emotional facilitation	Instructional design, facilitation of learning, and direct teaching of content

Figure 2. Aspects of instructional presence and their relationship to aspects of emotional presence in teaching presence.

understanding relate to the technical and cognitive aspects of teaching, they will be referred to as *instructional presence*. Figure 2 shows the relationship of emotional intelligence elements to emotional presence and instructor presence in teaching presence.

According to Mortiboys (2012), as emotions are inextricably intertwined with teaching and learning, the instructor's skill with discerning, understanding, and responding to learners' needs and emotions is a key element of the instructor's utilization of emotional intelligence in the classroom. The instructor's emotional perception and emotional understanding of learners' emotional and cognitive learning needs can help learners experience a sense of safety and comfort in the online classroom and set the foundation for learner success. For example, the instructor can provide a welcoming environment, course organization and clarity, and communication and support that help learners feel safe because these are important factors in learner success (Futch, deNoyelles, Thompson, & Howard, 2016). The instructor can use active, reflective listening skills to demonstrate and encourage the cultivation of emotional presence in learners and help them feel safe. These include the following (Mortiboys, 2012):

- Actively attending to the learner's words.
- Reflecting the learner's emotions and thoughts.
- Asking the learner open-ended questions to help the learner explore and clarify their thoughts and feelings.
- Checking an understanding of what the learner has said, drawing attention to particular inconsistencies in what the learner may have communicated, and effectively using silence to be mindful of the learner.

The instructor can demonstrate emotional perception and emotional understanding by using reflective listening with learners when they express their feelings toward assignments, course material, the instructor, and other learners. The instructor can empathically convey that both positive and negative feelings are a normal part of working with others and completing challenging assignments. The instructor can help learners to understand challenging emotions such as frustration, anger, and anxiety that may arise with working on difficult assignments and with other learners with different perspectives from one's own by discussing these feelings with learners. Specifically, the instructor can use the following strategies which demonstrate emotional presence when responding to learners (Mortiboys, 2012):

- Acceptant responses (convey a nonjudgmental acceptance of the learners' emotions and ideas)
- Encouraging the learner to further describe and explain what he or she is saying so the instructor can better understand his or her points
- Prefacing responses (immediately prior to providing a response to the learner's thoughts and emotions, preface this with a positive, affirming comment)
- Taking control of transactions (knowing how personal interaction styles of controlling parent, nurturing parent, adult, natural child, and adapted child influence how the instructor interacts with learners)
- Responding to provocative comments by asking questions which attempt to understand and accept where the learner is coming from
- Using positive language which demonstrates a clear desire to help the learner learn and grow
- Paying attention to the emotional tone of one's written feedback to learners by making positive comments first, then address limitations of the learner's performance on an assignment, and help the learner envision ways of addressing these limitations to enhance their academic performance on an assignment

The instructor's emotional perception and emotional understanding may help learners expand their window of tolerance for whatever challenging emotions may arise, and lead to greater resilience and cognitive and emotional flexibility (Siegel, 2010). This flexibility may encourage greater emotional perception, emotional understanding, and emotional management (emotional presence) in learners. Also, it may foster open communication, empathy, group cohesion (social presence), and greater engagement with course materials and assignments (cognitive presence; Cooper, 2011). This, in turn, may help learners effectively manage their emotions, engendering a sense of trust and safety in relationships leading to group cohesion in the learning community (Moore & Mamiseishvili, 2012). This, in turn, may lead to enhanced social presence and cognitive presence.

Another way for the instructor to foster emotional perception and emotional understanding in learners is by recommending mindfulness or other contemplative exercises to go along with assignments to help learners enhance awareness of their emotional reactions to assignments. This can help learners with the regulation of their attention and emotions (Ludvik, Evrard, Goldin, & Van Vleet, 2016; Siegel, 2010). Examples include the use of short guided mindfulness meditations from University of California, Los Angeles's Mindfulness Awareness Center's (2017) website (http://marc.ucla.edu/mindful-meditations) or a mindful walk to be done before completing assignments (Majeski & Stover, 2016). These strategies aim to help learners cultivate greater emotional presence which, in turn, may enhance their presence to others, especially when discussing challenging issues (social presence) and engagement with course concepts and ideas (cognitive presence).

The importance of emotional perception and emotional understanding is seen in the instructor's awareness and handling of complex emotions which are triggered by interactions with learners. When the instructor acts as a role model with perceiving, understanding, and regulating their own emotional reactions, this may invite learners to heighten their understanding and regulation of their own emotional reactions through modeling and observational learning (Bandura, 1977; Hendrickx, Mainhard, Boor-Klip, Cillessen, & Brekelmans, 2016). This can further help to maintain a sense of safety in the online classroom.

Emotional perception, emotional understanding, and emotional regulation are important to constructive communication and conflict resolution (Rahim et al., 2002), which enable group cohesion, and may help learners have a better understanding of, and less discomfort with, conflict, leading to enhanced emotional intelligence and learning (Majeski, Stover, Valais, & Ronch, 2017). This can facilitate emotional expression (social presence) and may foster fuller engagement with course materials (cognitive presence), vital to building vibrant online learning communities.

Emotional Facilitation, Emotional Regulation, and Teaching, Cognitive, and Social Presences

Emotional facilitation and emotional regulation relate to teaching presence, specifically establishing the course content, schedule, and assignments; monitoring and managing interaction and reflection; determining

learner needs, and providing appropriate guidance and information (Garrison et al., 2010). Emotional facilitation using emotion to achieve nonemotional goals (Mayer et al., 1999; Mayer & Salovey, 1997) can be seen in efforts to stimulate learner interest in learning. This can be done by designing interactive, online multimedia course content which engage learners in collaborative learning activities, thus enhancing cognitive and social presence and achieving learning objectives.

Emotional facilitation and emotional regulation can also be seen in the incorporation of mastery-oriented learning goals into course design, which encourage learners to persist with challenging learning activities and lead to effort-oriented attributions for academic success (Dweck, 2007; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Pekrun & Stephens, 2010). A practical application of this is that the instructor could break down complex learning activities into components and provide learners with a clear rubric for the evaluation of and suggestions for enhancing their performance on each component of a particular learning activity. This may help learners to experience success with learning activities that are attributed to learner effort rather than ability (Dweck, 2007). This, in turn, could lead to cognitive appraisals in which the learner sees himself or herself as able to control his or her academic outcomes leading to emotional management and self-regulation with learning (Dweck, 2007; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Pekrun & Stephens, 2010).

If instruction and course design can encourage a positive perception of the value of learning, this can promote persistence with learning (Pekrun & Stephens, 2010). A practical application includes the following. The instructor could provide learning activities that help learners understand how concepts apply to his or her life and the lives of others. Students could be asked to read a news story or view a movie that directly relates to concepts for a particular course topic. Questions posed could require learners to identify these concepts in the news story or movie and then discuss how they might apply the concepts to their own lives.

An example of this is activities used in a course, *Aging People, Policy and Management*, which focus on helping students learn about the life process and aging, specifically how earlier historical events may affect aging. Public Broadcasting System (PBS) news stories which interview individuals about their experiences with the Civil Rights movement and how this has affected their earlier and later lives are presented. Also, a discussion board in which students learn about the concept of cohort or generation, by identifying popular music, TV, movies, technology, and historical events of their own cohort, and compare these with those of another cohort is used. This may foster learners' self-regulation with learning (emotional presence) and lead to positive activating emotions such as enjoyment with learning activities (Pekrun & Stephens, 2010), enhanced time on learning activities, and the maintenance of focused attention (Wicks et al., 2015) or cognitive presence.

Positive emotion can encourage the broadening of attention with a more holistic, global focus, leading to increasing flexibility and creativity with further cognitive processing (Conway et al., 2013), qualities important to innovative thinking, effective decision making, and understanding of oneself and others (emotional presence and cognitive presence). Positive emotion regarding learning may foster more positive communication and interaction among learners, leading to group cohesion and thus social presence. This, in turn, may encourage fuller cognitive presence with challenging course material and assignments.

In the Integrated Model of COI and Emotional Presence, emotional intelligence provides a way of conceptualizing emotional presence and connecting it with the elements of teaching presence, cognitive presence, and social presence. Emotional intelligence provides a way of more fully understanding the role of emotional presence in the COI model, specifically how teaching presence may foster it, and how it may be integrated with social presence and cognitive presence in the outcome of the learner experience (see Figure 3).

Conclusion

The COI model provides a holistic approach to teaching and learning, but for its powerful potential to be realized, a fuller understanding of emotional presence is needed. Thus, this article presented a conceptualization of emotional presence as emotional intelligence which is part of teaching presence and
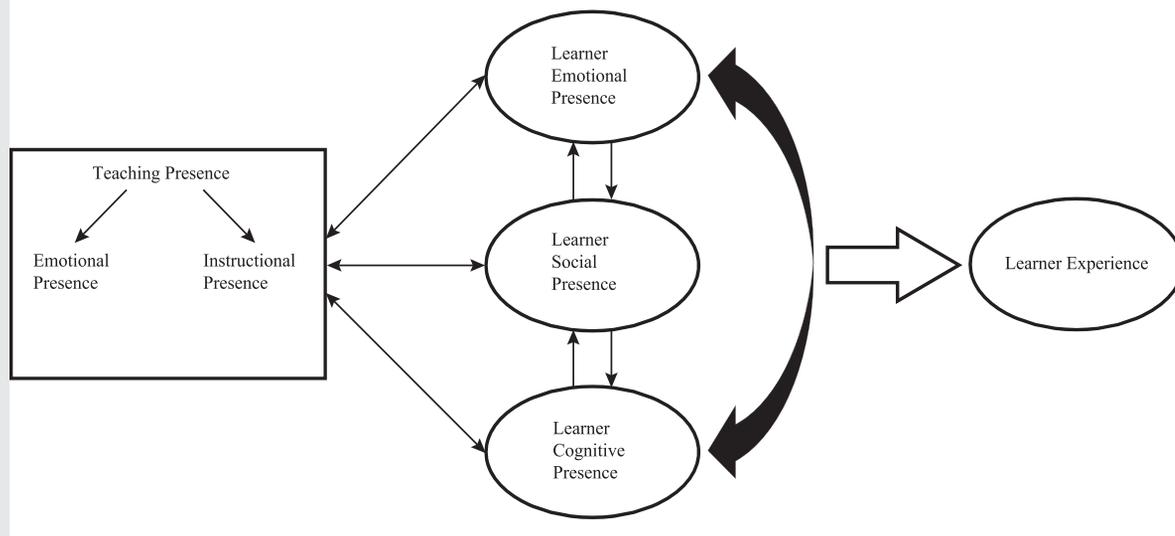
Figure 3. Integrated model of COI and emotional presence.
Note. Adapted with permission from "Critical Inquiry in a Text-Based Environment: Computer Conferencing in Higher Education," by D. R. Garrison, T. Anderson, and W. Archer, 2000, *Internet and Higher Education, 2*(2-3), 87-105. Copyright 2000 by Elsevier. COI = community of inquiry.

may influence learner emotional presence, social presence, and cognitive presence in the COI model. Future research might empirically examine the relationship of different aspects of emotional intelligence to teaching presence, cognitive presence, and social presence. Also, future research might empirically investigate how these three different kinds of presence may influence and be influenced by emotional intelligence in the online learning environment.

Conflict of Interest

Funding

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