What is social presence?

❖ “a student’s sense of being and belonging in a course” (Picciano, 2002)

❖ “…the degree to which a person is perceived as a ‘real person’ in mediated communication” (Gunawardena & Zittle, 1997)
What is transactional distance?

Level of interaction between teacher and learner decreases, learner autonomy must increase (Moore, 1993).
3 Variables of Transactional Distance

Structure
Dialogue
Autonomy
Online classrooms are culturally diverse

Consideration of the diversity of learners begins in the design stage

Instructional design best practices and flexible frameworks can help create a culturally responsive learning environment that benefits all students
Social presence & Cultural Identity

Originating from the Community of Inquiry framework, Social Presence can be thought of as students feeling like a “real person” in an online course, and can describe their feeling of belonging to the course and its learning community.

Cultural diversity can impact how students respond to design and teaching strategies implemented to increase social presence.
Interaction in Online Courses (Wang, 2007)

- Chinese and Korean students preferred asynchronous discussion.
- Chinese and Korean students also felt more unsure of the rules for online participation.
- Chinese and Korean students didn’t reach out to the instructor for assistance.
Chinese students come from a High-Context Communication (HCC) cultural group.

United States Low-Context Communication (LCC) group.
Cultural Influences on Instruction

Educators should promote:

- Universal principles
- Culture’s influence on the learning process and outcomes
Fostering a learning environment that is culturally responsive can yield significant benefits for the learner and the instructor.
Culturally-responsive Design Strategies

➢ Clear directions provided for moving through the learning units, completing activities and assessments, etc.

➢ Include introductions from both instructor and students

➢ Provide personal feedback, with consideration of tone, culture, language, etc.

➢ Email students individually, both to support improvement and to give kudos

➢ Multiple strategies to promote social presence are effective and reinforce one another
How can we be Culturally-responsive?

Characteristics such as those below can make learning encounters more relevant and effective for ethnically diverse students:

1. Validating and Affirming
2. Comprehensive and Inclusive
3. Multi-dimensional and Flexible
4. Empowering and Transformative
5. Emancipatory and Humanistic
In designing online courses for multicultural diversity, designers must both implement instructional design best practices, but also pay special attention to designing course structure, components, and interaction opportunities that attend to the cultural diversity of students by promoting presence and interaction and reducing transactional distance.

(Simunich & Grincewicz, 2018).

Culturally-responsive design is holistic design
Questions to consider

1. Who are our learners? Are they culturally and/or ethnically diverse?
2. How can we reflect and respect that diversity in the instructional design?
3. What cultural responsiveness characteristics would it be most beneficial to focus on?
4. What instructional design frameworks might you employ?
Key Texts


References


Additional Questions? Contact us!

Amy Grincewicz
agrincew@kent.edu

Bethany Simunich
bsimunic@kent.edu