Werklund School of Education

Social Presence within Two Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)

A Multiple Case Study

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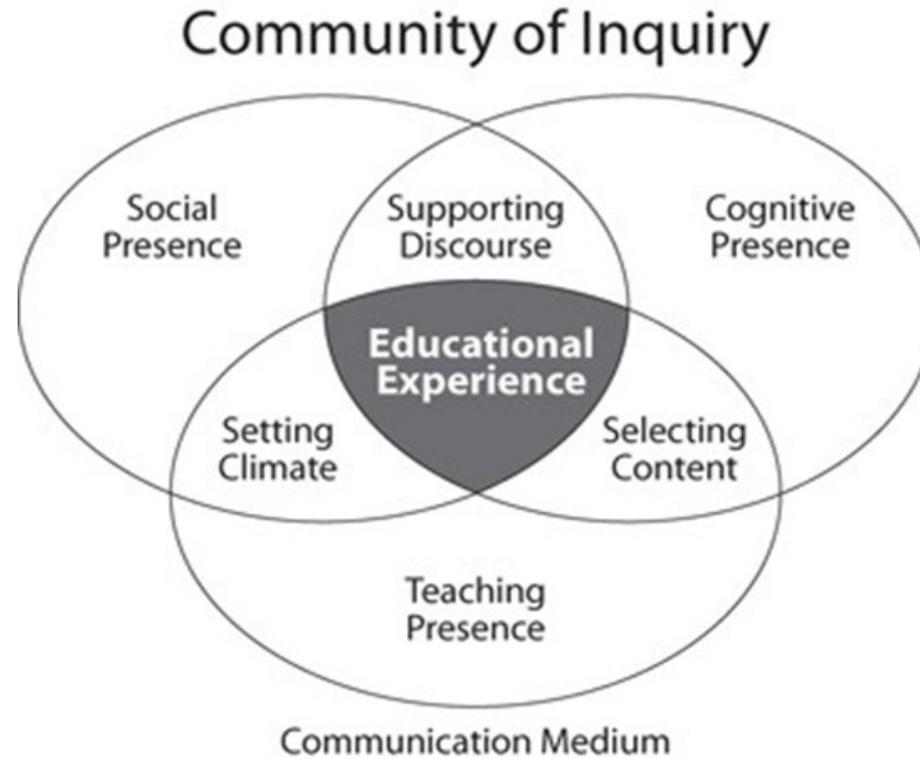
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- Intersection of instructional design, online course development, program development, higher education teaching and learning
- MOOCs are popular, emergent course format
- Strong interest in OERs, improving access to HE
- Strong interest in enhancing quality in HE online courses
- Public-facing PD and/or continuing education courses
- MOOCs can be scaled to suit local projects and applications→ Matt has designed "mini-MOOC" for 2017 Futures Forum; developing another for Oshawa / UOIT "Teaching City" initiative

mooc wordle

- 2008: First MOOC→ University of Manitoba→ 25 paid students + 2000+ free enrollment students
- Since 2008, up to 20 million students from over 200 countries having registered as MOOC participants (Karsenti, 2013)
- As many as 300,000 students have enrolled in a single MOOC (Karsenti, 2013)

- Have you participated in these kinds of courses (MOOCs)? In what capacity?

- What was your experience like?

- What did you enjoy, not enjoy about the experience?

- What aspects of the course were most conducive to your learning? Less conducive?

By looking at both individuals' and groups' experiences of social presence, I have learned about individuals' reasons for participating in MOOCs, and the extent to which social presence affects their learning. This study has also provided the opportunity to learn about how institutions of higher learning can design and facilitate MOOCs to enhance social presence, as well as cognitive and teaching presences.

- How does social presence affect teaching and learning within MOOCs?

- What factors contribute to participants' establishing a social presence in MOOCs?

- How does social presence affect participants' perceptions of a sense of belonging to a learning community?

Community of Inquiry

Social Presence

Supporting Discourse

Cognitive Presence

Setting Climate

Educational Experience

Selecting Content

Teaching Presence

Communication Medium

CoI model. Communities of Inquiry website (2013). Retrieved from https://coi.athabascau.ca/ Used with permission.

- Does anyone have instructional design or educational development within professional or academic responsibility?

- To what extent to theoretical frameworks help or inform your educational / professional work?

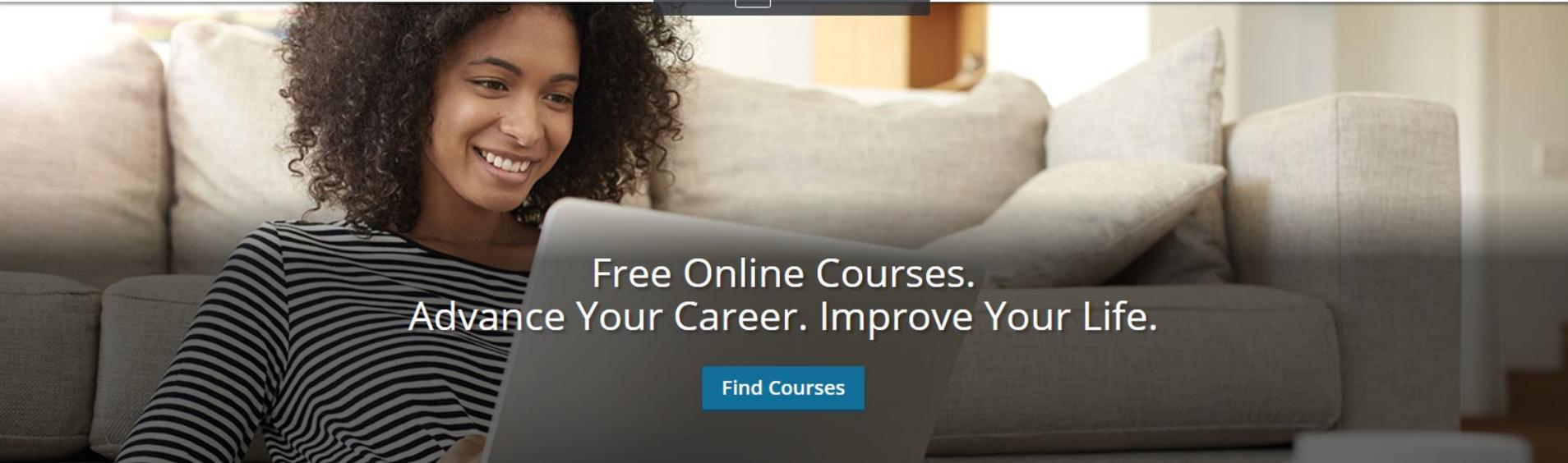- Do you / have you used CoI within your work? Other e-learning frameworks?

xMOOCs

- Aligned with cognitive-behaviorist pedagogy (Anderson, 2013)

- Focused primarily on the teacher or instructional designer

- Characterized by low amounts of social presence (Anderson & Dron, 2011)

cMOOCs

- Aligned with connectivism (Daniel, 2012)

- Learners are encouraged to use social media and other Web 2.0 tools to explore a given topic or theme (Rodriguez, 2013)

- Teaching role taken on largely by participants (Kop, 2011)

- To what extent does pedagogical perspective inform your practice as an educator?

- Does your perspective, practice as an educator tend to align with behaviourism, cognitivism, constructivism, connectivism? Other?

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- Case study methodology→ initially single, became multiple

- Speaks to courses "as a whole" as well as individual participant experiences

- Two American HE institutions, two course providers, two differing subject / content areas

- Both aligned with "xMOOC" format— proprietary learning software, behaviorist / cognitivist approaches to teaching and learning (Anderson, 2013)
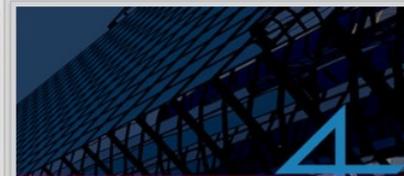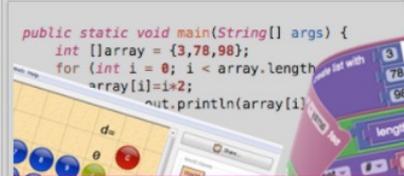
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```
public static void main(String[] args) {
    int []array = {3,78,98};
    for (int i = 0; i < array.length
        array[i]=i*2;
    out.println(array[i]
```

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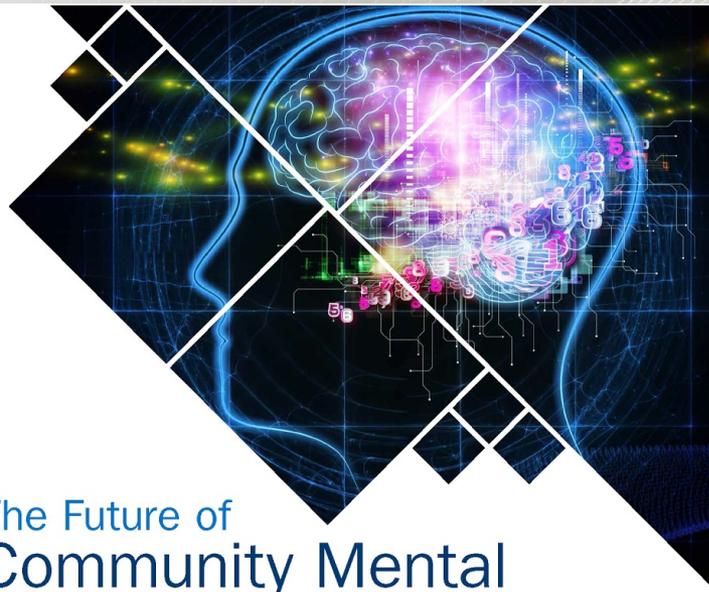
Innovative Cascadia Poetry

(K-12/HE) Canvas Course

(K-12/HE) Implementing UDL

- Social presence appeared in both courses
- Personal interest a strong motivator for MOOC participation
- Similar levels of teaching presence and cognitive presence reported between courses
- Social presence reported as experienced least among three CoI presences in both courses
- Participants, generally, did not view themselves as part of a "learning community"
- Social presence helped participants further individual learning goals

Personal interest

- Leverage personal interest in courses to create further opportunities for CP, SP
- Suggest wider range of learning activities

Support for learning

- Enhanced SP may lead to enhanced CP
- Wider range of teaching strategies, use of digital media may help enhance SP, CP
- Enhance discussions through guidelines, facilitation

Opportunities to collaborate

- Leverage technology for synchronous meetings, collaboration
- Recognize multiple, personalized pathways through courses

- Further MOOC format research (i.e., types of MOOCs)

- Increase number of MOOCs in a case study

- Additional research methodologies: grounded theory, narrative inquiry, action research, others

- Focus on instructor, facilitator, designer perspectives

- Areas of overlap between CoI elements within context of MOOCs

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Gen. Dallaire Keynote

Futures Forum 2017: Wednesday, May 10, 2017: Oshawa, Ontario

- What questions would you like answered regarding MOOCs?

- What questions would you like regarding CoI?

- What further research would be valuable with regards to CoI and MOOCs?