Creating a Framework of Social Presence in a Distance Education Environment

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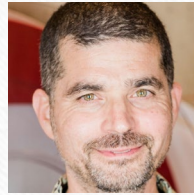
About Us

Marsha Morgenstern

M.A. Adult Education and Training, University of Phoenix

M.A. Business Communication, Jones International University

15 years experience in online higher education

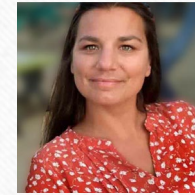Associate Faculty: University of Phoenix, Pittsburgh Technical College

Dr. Jason Margolis

Ph.D., Educational Studies - Teacher Education, University of Michigan

32 years experience in higher education and K-12 schools

Professor: St. Bonaventure University

Michele Napierkowski

Master of Education in Early Intervention, University of Pittsburgh.

7 years in higher education. 10 years in adult education and coaching.

Assistant Professor: Community College of Allegheny County

Creating a Framework of Social Presence in a Distance Education Environment

- Sense of community impacts the extent an individual connects to concepts (Tu, 2000).
- Instructor's role to create social presence (Rhodes & Schmidt, 2021)
  - Instructional Design
  - Implementation
  - Evaluation
- Best Practices/Tools

Creating Sense of Community

- Social Presence
  - Instructional design
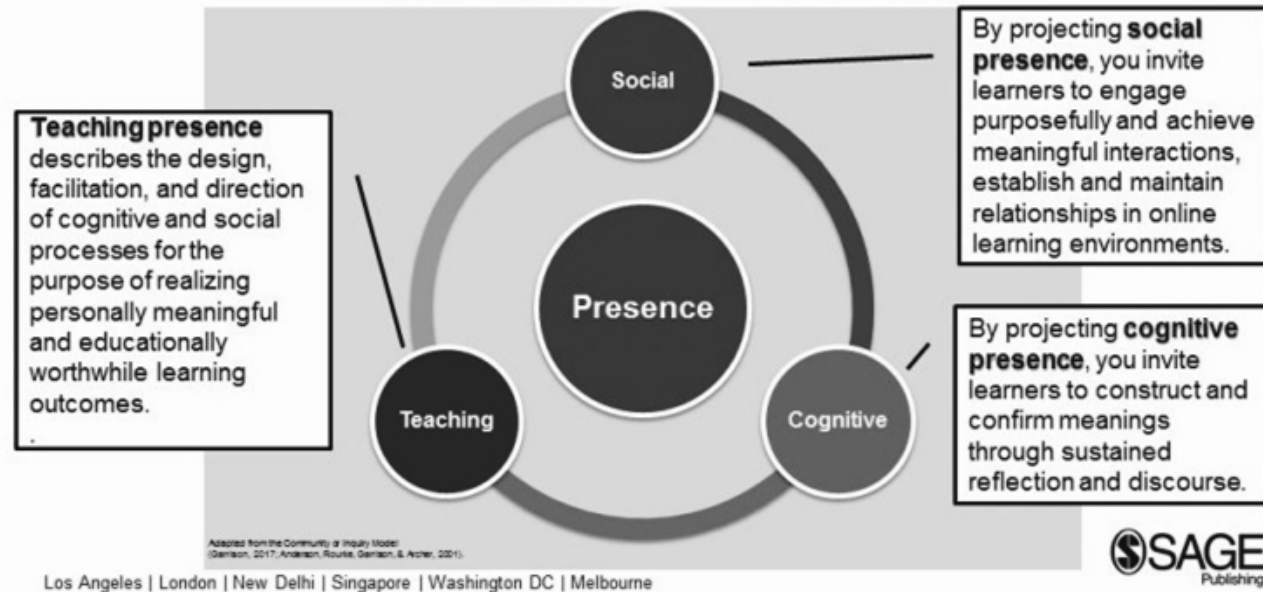 - Implementation
  - Evaluation
- Inclusivity

Image retrieved from LinkedIn (2020.).

Fireside Chats

Purpose: Supplement asynchronous courses with real-time, semi-formal discussions about course content.

Key Features:

- Optional
- Varied times
- Discussions loosely guided by instructor
- Community-building alongside content learning
- Humor/humanizing: Have a candle burning!

Fireside Chats

- As Described in Syllabus:

Format – This class is asynchronous, supplemented by one-on-one phone or in person meetings with the instructor.

Fall 2021 Addition: There will also be 3 synchronous 'fireside chats' for students wishing to discuss topics directly or tangentially related to course themes:

Monday 4:00-5:00pm – November 1st, 15th, and 29th .

(Note: 11/1 changed to 5:30-6:30pm)

Fireside Chats

Noticings/Results:

- Highly attended (even though students had 'busy lives')
- Students made personal connections to course content
- Students offered feedback, ideas, and support to each other
- Discussion board interactions improved and became more authentic (increased social presence)
- Frequently mentioned as one of the best aspects of the class in course evaluations.

Nearpod's Interactive Features

Nearpod is an interactive student engagement platform. Powerpoint on steroids!

Nearpod's interactive features, such as quizzes, polls, and open-ended questions, encourage student engagement and participation.

These features can be used to create opportunities for students to share their thoughts and opinions.

Example: Brainstorming

The Collaborate Board allows for student to brainstorm

OR

just give input on topics.

Example: Polls

What do you think?

A. I rarely do.

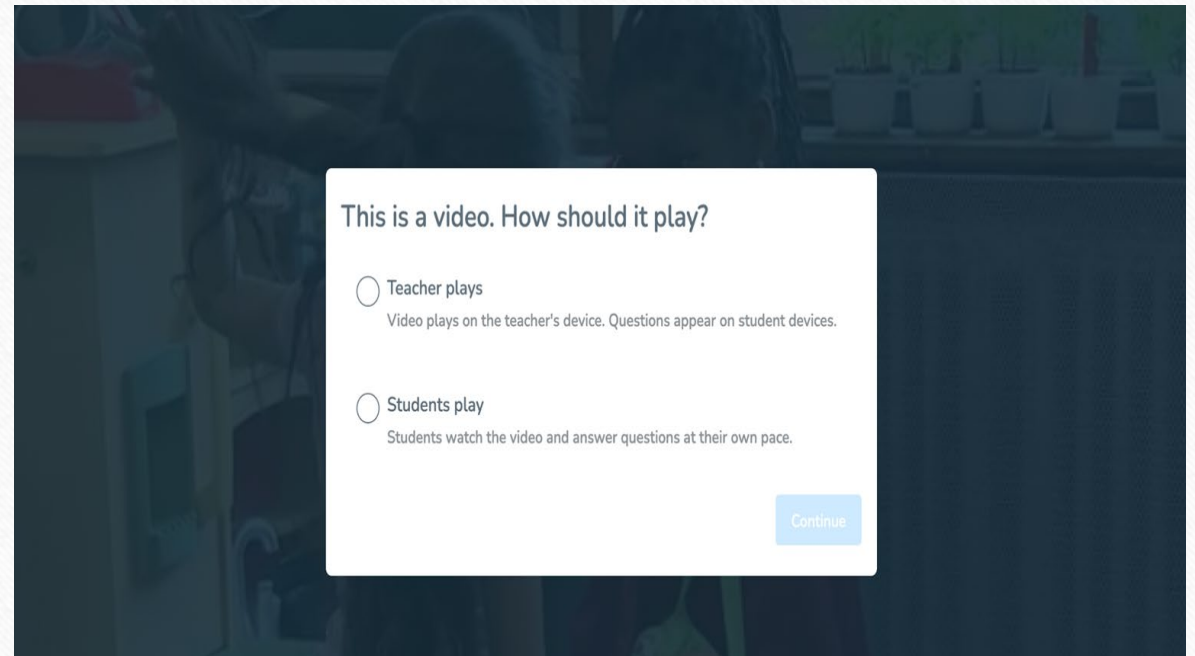B. Only when I feel engaged

C. Of course!

Polls are not new to distance learning. They are equally useful in Nearpod. I like to use them to pre/post-assess what students know, or think they know before and after introducing content.

Students also like to offer their opinions. I often use them in place of the chatty smalltalk that builds rapport during in person classes.
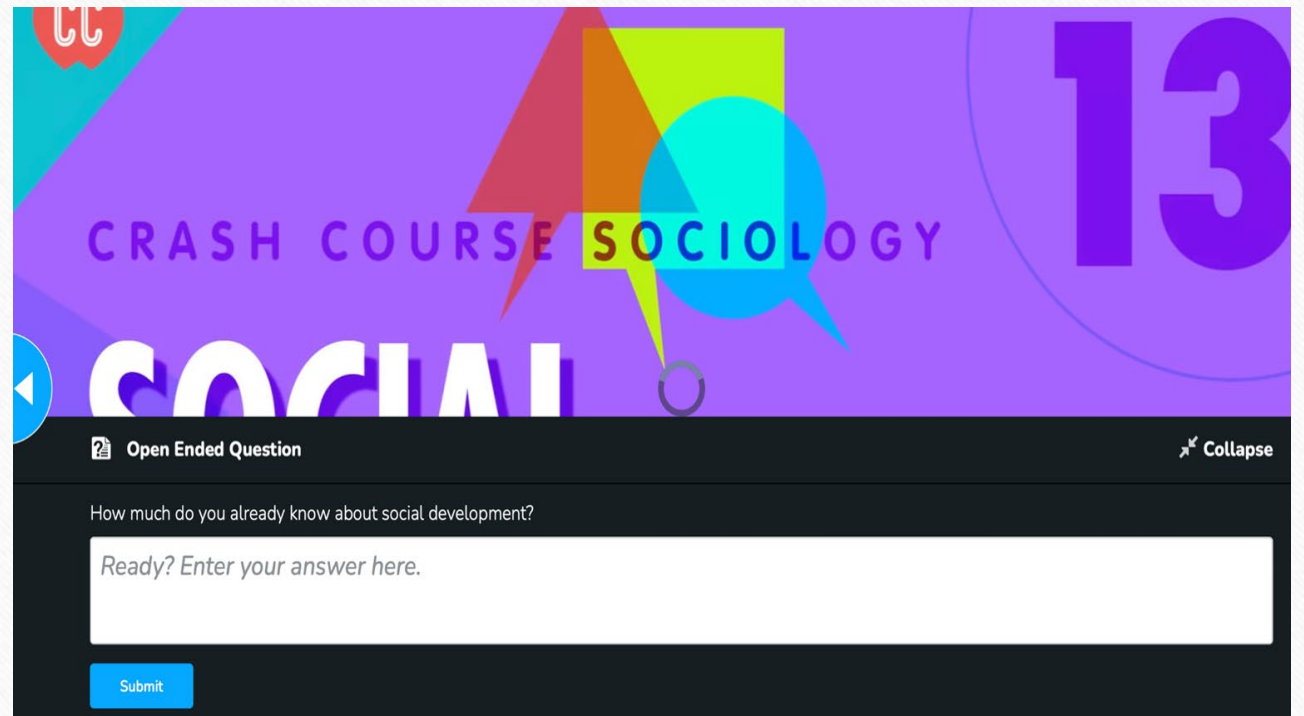
Video

Nearpod gives the option for videos to be played either by the teacher or by students. This flexibility allows for Zoom classes to watch the video either as a group or individually in breakout rooms. For Asynchronous courses, it collects data on how much of the video was actually watched by each student.

This is a video. How should it play?

○ Teacher plays
Video plays on the teacher's device. Questions appear on student devices.

○ Students play
Students watch the video and answer questions at their own pace.

Continue

Video

The instructor can also embed questions and other interactive content during specific places in the video. Students report to me that this give them the feeling of discussing what is being seen in real-time. It's a small way to give distance learners the sense of a classroom discussion.

Making the Most of Web Content

Nearpod works great on its own, but is especially useful in helping learners make the most of other existing platforms like the school's LMS, Padlet, Google Drive, and Flipgrid.

Nearpod automatically inputs websites like, Padlet, Wakelet, Flipgram, or even Google slides where students are prompted to work together on material.

When the student is finished working on their portion, they can simple move on to the next slide.

Not having to rely on students to return to the LMS to follow a link increases engagement and I find that students produce a higher quality of work.

Making the Most of Padlet

Making the Most of the LMS

Nearpod allows for pdfs to similarly be opened without students clicking on anything. I like to have students give an opinion on a subject via a poll or collaborate board, be "handed" a reading, then asked their opinion once more. This allows for self reflection. I often follow up these readings with discussion board posts that prompt students to question themselves and one another.

DESCRIPTION
Properties of various discussions

TOTAL POSTS

UNREAD POSTS

It's important to remember that as our understanding of child development continues to evolve, so too may our opinions and ideas. By reflecting on our own beliefs and engaging in discussions with others, we can continue to learn and grow together. Consider how your opinion on infant sleep habits may or may not have changed after reading the article.

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Making the Most of Google Slides

GROUP TIME

Instead of ME telling YOU about these health and safety topics, I would like you to do the research as a group and report to the class.

1. Do some research online, but be sure to use trusted sources. NAEYC is a great one, as is Zero-3 and others.
2. Look for your names. Fill your slide with information about your topic, as it applies to children age birth to 8. Please do make it attractive, nice to look at, etc. Be mindful of formatting, colors, fonts, photos, etc. You may create another slide if you need to! Be thorough! **Pretend you are the teacher this time.**
3. One the second slide, find an activity for children that can help them advocate for themselves in these situations. How can they learn to keep themselves safe? You may use any lesson or idea you find online, as long as it is appropriate.
4. Cite your sources, put your names on your slides.
5. Now, visit two other classmate's slides and react to their information. What did you think? Did you have questions? Put your comment in red. The slides editor will respond in blue.
6. Return to your slides to see the comments!

Safe Play Spaces - Outdoor Environments: Kaitlynn and Skyler

How to make an outdoor space safe for children
- **Add a fence**
  - A fence keeps the children contained and prevents strangers from being able to approach them.
- **Set boundaries**
  - Children should be allowed to explore their environments, but a set of rules should be established as well.
- **Keep a close eye on the children and watch for any potential hazards**
  - Children seem to naturally get themselves into some type of trouble. Be on the lookout for any plants or animals that could potentially harm the children. Jimson weed, bitter nightshade, and stinging nettle are all poisonous if ingested.

Are childcare center's allowed to have vegetation in playgrounds? I feel like all of the ones I see have woodchips or foam padding - Ricky B

Hi Ricky! They ARE allowed to have plants. They do need to have so many inches of woodchips or foam as the ground coverings - Kait

In short

- Nearpod is a powerful tool that can help create a sense of community in fully asynchronous classes.
- By incorporating interactive features, collaborative activities, and real-time feedback, instructors can help students feel connected to the course material.
- Navigating to websites, pdfs, videos, and the LMS is all done seamlessly - resulting in more engagement, higher quality of work, and more accessibility.

Interactive Activity

Write down one thing you would change or add to one of your classes based on something you learned during this session.

Questions?

Thank you
for attending
our presentation!

Image retrieved from Public Domain Pictures (N.D.).

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