

Create an Online Community of Inquiry (CoI)

YOUR GUIDE TO CREATING AN EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY OF INQUIRY?

A Community of Inquiry, often referred to as a CoI, is "a group of individuals who collaboratively engage in critical discourse and reflection to construct personal meaning and confirm mutual understanding" (Athabasca University, 2020).

Deep and meaningful educational experiences can be created by a CoI, provided that three presences are well-developed: social presence, cognitive presence, and teaching presence.



SOCIAL PRESENCE

- Focused on engagement with participants.
- Social presence is developed when participants identify with the community, communicate purposefully, and develop inter-personal relationships (Garrison, 2009).



COGNITIVE PRESENCE

- Focused on engagement with content.
- Cognitive presence is developed when participants are able to construct and confirm meaning through reflection and discourse (Garrison, Anderson, and Archer, 2001).



TEACHING PRESENCE

- Focused on engagement with goals / direction.
- Teaching presence is developed when participants are able to realize personally meaningful and worthwhile goals (Garrison, Rourke, Anderson, and Archer, 2000).

Learning design should continually encourage the formation and strengthening of these three presences.

GET TO ACTION: LEARNING DESIGN FOR ONLINE COI

Try out some or many of these ideas for developing the three presences in your online courses.



SOCIAL PRESENCE

- Ask participants to create 'About me' videos. Lead the way by posting one yourself.
- Hold synchronous sessions using conferencing technology like Collaborate or Zoom
- Include group work in the course requirements, ideally mixing up group members each time.
- Encourage conversations in discussion forums.
- Encourage interpersonal communication through group-chosen technology, such as WhatsApp or Slack



COGNITIVE PRESENCE

- Include group work, debates, and other interactive activities in the course work.
- Encourage questioning.
- Introduce the concept of constructive controversy (i.e. healthy conflict) and encourage its use.
- Include academic reflections and other reflective activities.
- Include peer feedback components.



TEACHING PRESENCE

- Facilitate discussions
- Summarize discussions, linking participants to course content while reinforcing members' social presences
- Model effective CoI behaviours, such as constructive controversy and questioning/inquiry
- Provide constructive feedback regularly
- Identify and remove any barriers to social or cognitive presence for students, such as conflict

SEEK AVENUES FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Want more information on CoI and how to support the three presences in your learning design?

Check out www.thecommunityofinquiry.org

REFERENCES

- Anderson, T. (2018). *How Communities of Inquiry Drive Teaching and Learning in the Digital Age*. Contact North.
- Athabasca University (2020). *The Community of Inquiry*. <https://coi.athabascau.ca>
- Bull, B. (2013). *Eight Roles of An Effective Online Teacher*.
- Garrison, D. R., Anderson, T., & Archer, W. (1999). Critical inquiry in a text-based environment: computer conferencing in higher education. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 2(2), 87-105. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1096-7516\(00\)00016-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1096-7516(00)00016-6)
- Garrison, D. R., Anderson, T., & Archer, W. (2010). The first decade of the community of inquiry framework: a retrospective. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 13(1), 5-9. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2009.10.003>
- Garrison, D. R., & Cleveland-Innes, M. (2005). Facilitating cognitive presence in online learning: interaction is not enough. *American Journal of Distance Education*, 19(3), 133-148.
- Vaughan, N. D., Cleveland-Innes, M., & Garrison, D. R. (2013). *Teaching in blended learning environments: Creating and sustaining communities of inquiry*. Athabasca University Press. Chapter 3: Facilitation (pp. 45-61).