

UNLV Best Teaching Practices Expo

Thursday,

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Student Union Ballroom A

12:00 - 1:30 pm

Lori Candela, Associate Professor School of Nursing University of Nevada, Las Vegas

The teaching practice and the need it addresses:

Online education in higher education has experienced consistent growth for more than a decade. Last year, 5.8 million (28%) of college students were taking at least one online course. Every year, more and more courses at UNLV are offered online, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels. But engaging students in online environments is challenging. Students have reported higher levels of social isolation and stress in online courses. One important key to overcoming this is finding ways to decrease the sense of distance that exists in online courses. The Community of Inquiry (CoI) Model is an evidence-based approach that focuses on engaging students to the course content, to each other and to the teacher. Engaged students are more motivated to learn and achieve the learning objectives. I have seen dramatic differences in my online courses since using the CoI. It has reshaped the way I develop learning modules to engage students with the content, how I design learning activities to engage students with each other and how and what I do to foster engagement between students and me. The ppt slide presentation will describe the CoI model as well as strategies for teachers to use to assure a connected learning community. I have taught online courses for over 10 years. Early on, I could see that my students did not appear as engaged they were in my face-to-face courses. The quality of student work was not as high. I learned about the Community of Inquiry Model several years ago. I have used it since and seen, firsthand, how it can assist teachers in creating and delivering online courses that foster a true community of learners.

Evidence this practice benefits UNLV students:

The CoI is rooted in the notion that all learning is social and occurs best in cooperative, collaborative learning environments. In that sense, the CoI is every bit as applicable for face-to-face courses as it is to online courses. At the heart of CoI is a teacher who asks central questions before, during and after a course has occurred about where and how students engage with content, with each other and with the teacher. There is a much longer history and a much larger evidence base as to how this can occur in face-to-face courses. But there is a transactional distance to consider in online courses. The use of well-designed online discussions, group projects, blogs, Wikis, selected synchronous meetings are but a few examples of methods that can be used in any academic discipline to increase the sense of a community of learners.

CoI Resources for Faculty:

Use a table such as the one below for pre-course planning

Content	Learning Experience	Interactive Strategies	Instructor Role	Technologies to Promote Presence
End of life care	Readings Self-check quizzes Literature review	Group project: case study Online discussion	Designer, facilitator	LMS, discussion board, Google docs, Wikis

Lehman, R. M. & Conceicao, S. C. O. (2010). *Creating a sense of presence in online teaching: How to "be there" for distance learners*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
jolt.merlot.org/vol10no1/denoyelles_0314.pdf

Good review article focusing on use of CoI in online asynchronous discussions

<https://www.ideals.illinois.edu/bitstream/handle/2142/18714/INTHIG%20369%20INTRO.pdf?sequence=2>. Provides a brief review of articles published that relate to CoI

<https://coi.athabascau.ca/>

A home base to learn about CoI-access to articles, books-also has a free member section

www.ncolr.org/jiol/issues/pdf/12.1.1.pdf

Mixed methods study using the CoI model to frame an online course development and assess effectiveness using the 34 item CoI Framework Survey
Garrison, D. R. & Akyol, Z. (2013). *The community of inquiry theoretical framework*. In M. G. Moore (ed)., *Handbook of Distance Education* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.