

## Background: Problem to Innovation, Online Learner to Online Instructor

Innovation often arises from a problem, and my problem was an observed lack of interactivity in online learning, both in teacher-student and student-student interactions. I first encountered this problem where the stakes are much higher – “on the other side of the screen” – as an online learner. In a learning context calling for a “community of practice,” online learning was coming up short for me as a learner; a description of those shortcomings, with research-informed solutions, led to a published research article in the high-impact *Distance Education* (Tweedie et al, 2013)<sup>1</sup>, still one of my most cited publications. Since 2016, I have taught 7 online learning courses in the Werklund School of Education, giving me the opportunity to refine my teaching practice in this area.

### Teaching Philosophy

The deficit in my experience as an online *learner* would shape the research-informed innovations that were to come as I moved to online *instructor*. The Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework (Garrison, Anderson and Archer, 2000) identifies three “presences” of online learning experiences: social, cognitive, and teaching. My philosophy of teaching and learning in online environments can be summarized by attempting to be “present” in these three ways, exploiting the affordances of asynchronous video communication, or what my colleagues and I have come to call ATMC: Asynchronous Technology-Mediated Communication.<sup>2</sup> Described in full below, **I would summarize my teaching philosophy for online environments as: I strive to be a *present* online instructor, fully maximizing the research-informed affordances of asynchronous video communication to enhance social, cognitive and teaching presence.**

#### 1 Enhancing social presence through ATMC

Garrison (2009) understands social presence in online learning to encompass students’ ability to identify with the course of study, communicating in a meaningful manner in a way that facilitates “inter-personal relationships by the way of projecting their individual personalities” (p. 352). The desire to foster social presence in this way, has led me over time to develop effective means of exploiting the video recording features of D2L, including weekly check-in videos, video blogs and video assessment; student feedback has testified to the effectiveness of these in reducing social distance in an online environment.

#### 2 Enhancing cognitive presence through ATMC

If cognitive presence is facilitated in an online environment, learners construct and confirm meaning as they engage in discourse and reflection (Garrison, 2009). Student vlogs (video blogs) have become an essential feature of my online courses, used to good effect in aiding meaningful identification with the learning community’s purpose (Garrison, 2015), through a sense of heightened interactive immediacy.

#### 3 Enhancing teaching presence through ATMC

Teaching presence in online environments is brought about through course design, discourse facilitation and direct instruction (Bowers & Kumar, 2015). I utilize ATMC in all three of these elements: through weekly “check-in” and “how to” instructor-produced videos (course design); through student and instructor vlogs (discourse facilitation); and through course

<sup>1</sup> 2018 Journal [impact factor](#) 1.729; [Scimago ranking](#) 11 of 83 in e-learning. Tweedie, M. G., Clark, S., Johnson, R. C., & Kay, W. D. (2013). The “dissertation marathon” in doctoral distance education. *Distance Education*, 34(3), 379–390. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01587919.2013.835778>

<sup>2</sup> Sabbaghan, S., Peglar, M. & Tweedie, M.G. (in press). The multimodal effects of voice-based asynchronous technology-mediated communication on academic communication skills. *TESL Canada Journal*. (Accepted for publication, December, 2019.)

content mini-lecture videos, as well as video feedback - “veedback” - on student work (direct instruction).

The ongoing improvement and enhancement of these three “presences” are the foundation of my teaching practices in online environments; evidence of their utilization and impact upon learning are documented and further elaborated on in subsequent sections of this teaching dossier.