Advancing Student Engagement in Online Courses with Instructor-Generated Multimedia

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• Online courses are here to stay and growing so we need to do them well.

• One of the primary components of effective online teaching is student engagement.

• Therefore, it is imperative that we learn what engages students in order to offer effective online learning environments.
Community of Inquiry

Social Presence
The ability of participants in a community of inquiry to project themselves socially and emotionally as 'real' people (i.e., their full personality), through the medium of communication being used.

Cognitive Presence
The extent to which learners are able to construct and confirm meaning through sustained reflection and discourse in a critical community of inquiry.

Teaching Presence
The design, facilitation and direction of cognitive and social processes for the purpose of realizing personally meaningful and educationally worthwhile learning outcomes.

Garrison, Anderson and Archer (2000)
The Community of Inquiry

- **Social Presence**
  - The degree to which participants feel affectively connected to one another.
    - Open Communication
    - Emotional Expression
    - Group Cohesion

- **Cognitive Presence**
  - Constructing meaning through sustained communication

- **Teaching/Instructor Presence**
  - Selection, organization, and presentation of course content.
  - Motivation, encouragement, and assessment of student performance

- **Student Engagement**
  - The degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion students show when they are learning
• Adding interactive elements to online discussions actively engage students with course content and facilitate peer conversations to promote active learning.

• Building engaging and reusable course content to make the learning experience more interesting and stimulating.
The Effect of Instructor-generated Multimedia on Student Engagement

- Instructor-generated Multimedia
  - More than one simultaneous medium of communication generated by the instructor

- Asynchronous Multimedia
  - VoiceThread

- Synchronous Multimedia
  - Collaborate Ultra
Research Questions

• What is the impact of the use of instructor-generated multimedia on student engagement in online graduate courses at Wilmington University’s College of Business?

• Is there a difference in student engagement between the uses of asynchronous or synchronous instructor-generated multimedia?
The Study

- Fall 2018
  - Course (MGT 6501) is a core class in the M.S. Management.
  - The program has 8 concentrations.
- Block 1 (Seven weeks)
- Block 2 (Seven weeks)

- Full Study each block
  - One section with Collaborate Ultra
  - One section with VoiceThread
  - One section with both Collaborate Ultra and VoiceThread
- Six Total sections
- Six different instructors
Data Collection

- **Quantitative**
  - Student survey on student engagement and multimedia tool use.

- **Qualitative**
  - Instructor interview about their observations on student engagement and multimedia tool use.

**Student engagement** measured on three levels of presence: 1) Cognitive 2) Social and 3) Instructor/Teaching
Block One Results – Collaborate Ultra Only (Synchronous)

- **Student Surveys** (n=7)
  - 86% reported that the use of Collaborate Ultra increased engagement in online courses with their **classmates**.
  - 71% reported that the use of Collaborate Ultra increased engagement in online courses with their **instructor**.

- **Instructor Interview**
  - Used three or more times in the seven week course.
  - Reported that most of the students (approximately two-thirds) built a sense of community and engaged in the subject matter more because of the interaction.
  - Observed that the students were able to build relationships beyond course content.
  - “Verbal discussion is beneficial to the learning environment.”
  - “The synchronous nature of this tool can be inconvenient given the flexibility of online courses.”
Block One Results – *VoiceThread Only* (Asynchronous)

**Student Surveys (n=11)**

- **82%** reported that the use of *VoiceThread* increased engagement in online courses with their **classmates**.
- **64%** reported that the use of *VoiceThread* increased engagement in online courses with their **instructor**.

- “I personally enjoyed this much more than writing a weekly discussion board, it was more personal and I felt much more connected to my classmates and Professor.”

- “I enjoyed viewing my classmates videos and felt that I got to know them a little better by putting a name to a face to an employer. I actually didn’t mind doing weekly discussion boards in VoiceThread. I am not comfortable speaking in public, even through VT. This helped me get more comfortable speaking.”

- “I like it much better than discussion board. The comments were real and personal. Some people described their jobs or special events that happened to them that they would have never written in discussion board. I feel much closer to my classmates now that I can see them and hear their stories. Discussion board is boring and repetitive. This was real and engaging.”

- “VoiceThread is a wonderful tool that allows you to engage with your instructor and classmates while taking courses online. It helps you make connections and learn the coursework. You learn different perspectives and feel like you are in a class when you are watching your classmates discussions on the material for the week.”
Block One Results – *Collaborate Ultra* and *VoiceThread*

- **Student Surveys** (n=10)
  - 80% reported that the use of *Collaborate Ultra* increased engagement in online courses with their *classmates*.
  - 90% reported that the use of *Collaborate Ultra* increased engagement in online courses with their *instructor*.
  - 90% reported that the use of *VoiceThread* increased engagement in online courses with their *classmates*.
  - 70% reported that the use of *VoiceThread* increased engagement in online courses with their *instructor*.

- **Instructor Interview**
  - **Collaborate Ultra**
    - Used three or more times in the seven week course.
    - “Group work became more engaging.”
    - “Students who were more introverted participated heavily in discussion.”
    - “Increased the ability to learn from one another.”
  - **VoiceThread**
    - “Allowed for organic discussion”
    - “The asynchronous aspect of this tool is beneficial.”