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A research proposal from the education scholars program: the impact of voicethread on social presence in asynchronous online discussions

Heather Hawk, DNP

School of Nursing, Oregon Health & Science University, Portland, OR., United States

Keywords

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Abstract

The purpose of this poster is to share a research proposal developed by the presenter through the mentoring and training provided by OHSU's Education Scholar Program. The proposed research aims to answer the question: Does an asynchronous discussion using audiovisual software promote engagement and social presence among nursing students, when compared with a traditional text-based discussion? Objectives of the study are:

1. Characterize the level of engagement of students in traditional discussions and VoiceThread discussions by examining the number and frequency of postings.
2. Quantify social presence among students, using a coding scheme to analyze the text of traditional discussions and VoiceThread discussions.

Background: Educators in online environments aim to facilitate engaging learning experiences and to foster collaborative inquiry among students. There is consensus that student interaction is critical to learning, particularly in the asynchronous online environment, and discussion boards are ubiquitously employed to facilitate interactive learning. However, the collaborative learning impact of online discussion boards is debatable. Is there a more effective way to facilitate the collaborative educational milieu that serves as the foundation of pedagogy in the online environment? With rapidly evolving technology, we need to better understand the potential influence of these tools on the social environment of our online classrooms.

Theoretical framework: The Community of Inquiry (CoI) model is a guiding framework in online education. CoI consists of three elements of an educational experience: Cognitive Presence, Teaching Presence, and Social Presence (Garrison, 2017). Based social constructivism, CoI assumes that learning is best facilitated in the context of collaborative critical discourse. Within CoI, the educator's role is to create an environment in which students become active and interactive participants in the learning process. Social presence is associated with knowledge construction, collaboration, and participation in active learning (Garrison, 2017; Molinillo et al., 2018).

VoiceThread is a cloud-based presentation and discussion tool that supports remote collaboration by allowing educators and students to create audio or video comments in discussions. Use of VoiceThread in discussions is associated with feelings of community among graduate education students (Delmas, 2017) and higher perceptions of Community of Inquiry among online RN-to-BS nursing students

(Merriam & Hobba-Glose, 2021). However, the mechanism for these findings are unknown, as there has been no comparison of the contents of text-based versus VoiceThread discussions for indicators of social presence.

Methods: Using a cross-over study design within an online nursing course, text-based discussions will be compared with content of VoiceThread discussions, using quantitative content analysis of discussion transcripts, using Rourke's Social Presence Density Instrument (1999). Engagement in the discussion will be measured by student participation in the discussions. In addition, a survey with open-ended questions will collect qualitative data regarding perceived social presence among students.

Results: Anticipated outcomes include an increase in both social presence among students and student engagement in VoiceThread discussions, as compared to text-based discussions.

Learning Objectives

1. Summarize the process of creating an education research proposal.
2. Discuss the utility of the research proposal within OHSU.
3. Critique the research proposal in order for the presenter to finalize the proposal for IRB approval and funding.

References:

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