OLC ONLINE LEARNING™ CONSORTIUM

USING VIDEO ANNOUNCEMENTS, INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEOS, AND VIDEO FEEDBACK TO IMPROVE SOCIAL PRESENCE, STUDENT ENGAGEMENT, AND A GROWING RELATIONSHIP TO ONE'S UNIVERSITY

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Effective Practice Abstract/Summary

Abstract/Summary of Effective Practice:
Video is often praised as a tool for improving social presence in the online classroom. However, the theory, research, and practice of online learning suggests that video alone does not make the difference but rather how it is used. Three effective ways to use video to improve social presence and student engagement is through the use of video announcements, instructional videos, and video feedback. Students specifically highlight the importance of developing a stronger connection to their university and their instructor as a result of video announcements recorded across the university campus.

Description of the Effective Practice

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Short, Williams, and Christie (1976) developed the theory of social presence to explain the effect telecommunications media have on communication. They defined social presence as the degree of salience (i.e., quality or state of being there) between two communicators using a communication medium. They posited that communication media differ in their degree of social presence and that these differences play an important role in how people interact. They conceptualized social presence primarily as a quality of a communication medium that can determine the way that people interact and communicate. From their perspective, people perceive some media as having a higher degree of

social presence (e.g., video) and other media as having a lower degree of social presence (e.g., audio) and still other media as having even a lower degree of social presence (e.g., text). More importantly, they believed that a medium with a high degree of social presence is seen as sociable, warm, and personal, whereas a medium with a low degree of social presence is seen as less personal. Formal education is a very social activity that involves high interpersonal involvement. Past research, for example, has specifically stressed the importance of contact and cooperation between faculty and students (Chickering & Gamson, 1987). Thus, early on social presence theory had direct implications for online environments.

In the late eighties, researchers began concluding that computermediated communication (CMC)the primary means of communicating in online courseswas inherently impersonal because the nonverbal and relational cues are filtered out of CMC (Walther & Parks, 2002). Later, researchers began to notice, even though CMC lacks nonverbal and relational cues, it can still be very social and interpersonal (Gunawardena, 1995; Gunawardena & Zittle, 1997) and at times even hyperpersonal (Walther, 1996). This led them to conclude that how one uses a communication medium matters more than any so called innate characteristics of a medium and that online learning has the potential to be a rich, personal, and social experience.

Further theory and research began to conceptualize social presence as being central to a meaningful learning experience (see Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000, 2001).
Researchers have since shown a relationship between social presence and student satisfaction (Gunawardena, 1995; Gunawardena & Zittle, 1997; Hostetter & Busch, 2006; Richardson & Swan, 2003; So & Brush, 2008), social presence and the development of a community of learners (Rourke, Anderson, Garrison, & Archer, 2001; Rovai, 2002), and social presence and perceived learning (Caspi & Blau, 2008; Richardson & Swan, 2003).

As online learning has grown alongside technological innovations, practitioners continue to explore ways to incorporate "rich" media (e.g., video) into online courses to establish social presence. Given this, I began using video in my fully online courses to improve social presence. More specifically I began using video in three main ways during the past few years—first at the University of Colorado Denver and then more recently in the spring at Boise State University in a fully online masters of educational technology program. I have found that video alone doesn't make the difference but rather how you use it is what matters.

Video Announcements: I post regular video announcements in my courses. This takes the place of traditional text-based announcements – though I usually provide a transcript with these announcements. I recently even began filming part of the Boise State campus at the beginning of each video. Here is an example of these videos: **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O9lEgP7UwrA**

Students have expressed how much like getting to know me as the instructor as well as getting to know the campus.

• "Campus looks awesome. Hope to get out there soon …

• "Thank you for taking the time to make this. It helps me connect to the campus and to you of course. It is really appreciated"

• "Awesome! Thanks for the video. Makes me miss my college days. Before this video all I really know about Boise State was… Blue Field!"

Instructional Videos: I teach highly technical courses. I have found that using a text-book or job aids alone isn't enough. Therefore, I create instructional videos – that is, screencasts – to help teach students specific concepts. I even create just in time screencasts as needed like the following one where I show students how to hand code a responsive design website because students were having problems with the differences between the versions of Dreamweaver they were all using:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4Q0AeJ043E
This past semester I also gave students extra credit to create instructional videos for other students.

Video Feedback: Last but not least I give each student video feedback on at least one project each semester. I then post that video feedback in the gradebook and enable them the opportunity to pickup any points lost. I am not able to provide any examples of this because of FERPA.

Supporting Information for this Effective Practice

Evidence of Effectiveness:
Students have said that

• "I could not have been successful in this course without the instructional videos and video feedback."

• "This was an amazingly helpful way of giving feedback that not only showed the instructor's commitment to the student/course but also helped in my perception of being "real" in the

instructor's eyes. Two giant thumbs up for doing this!"

• "The corrective feedback provided me with the ability to review my work and make the necessary changes to develop a better understanding of the concept being taught."

In conclusion this quote captures my students response to my use of video:

"The courses where there was some element of video communication, helped me to feel more connected to the instructor. This semester, I do not feel connected to my instructors who have not used any form of video communication. "

How does this practice relate to pillars?:
Student satisfaction is one of the five pillars of the OLC Quality Framework. Research has shown that social presence is related to student satisfaction and that students prefer courses that use video than courses that do not. Research collected on this three pronged approach of integrating video into the online classroom has illustrated that it improves student satisfaction in the online classroom.

Equipment necessary to implement Effective Practice:
Ultimately all one needs is a smart phone and screencasting software (e.g., Jing or Camtasia) to effectively integrate this three pronged approach into their online courses.

Estimate the probable costs associated with this practice:
$200

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