



Form for submitting extended proposals  
for consideration for the  
**2020 ROBERT J. MENGES AWARD FOR  
OUTSTANDING RESEARCH  
IN EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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SESSION TITLE:	<b>Faculty Community of Inquiry Transforms Online Teaching Perceptions and Practices</b>
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Does the research described herein involve human subjects (highlight one): **yes** no

*IRB approval documentation was submitted separately.*

1. RESEARCH QUESTION(S) & WHY THEY ARE IMPORTANT TO THE FIELD:		
<p>In the two decades following its introduction, the Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework has had broad empirical support in the literature on online and blended teaching and has informed practitioners’ approaches to designing and facilitating learning experiences (Garrison, 2017). Despite the widespread use of CoI as a theoretical framework, its application in the literature on faculty development has been limited. Further research into implementation of the CoI framework in professional development could support faculty developers with evidence-based strategies for teaching transformation.</p> <p>The focus of this research case study is an exploration of the impact of a large blended faculty learning community on instructors’ perceptions of and practices for online education. The research questions are: Which methods utilized in a blended faculty learning community, categorized by the presences of the Community of Inquiry framework, had the most impact on participants’ perceptions and practices of online course design and teaching? Why were these methods impactful?</p> <p>Practical techniques can establish teaching, social, and cognitive presence in a holistic educational experience. These experiences result in an enduring transformation of teaching that is critical to student success in online education. Further research into applications of the CoI framework in professional development provides faculty developers with evidence-based strategies to successfully guide instructors through this transformation.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="115 1314 354 1388"> <tr> <td><b>WORD COUNT</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>209</b></td> </tr> </table>	<b>WORD COUNT</b>	<b>209</b>
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2. DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH DESIGN:
<p>A mixed-method, descriptive case study (Merriam, 1998) was conducted in order to answer the research questions. Case studies are particularly useful for studying a process, program or individual in an in-depth, holistic way that allows for deep understanding (Merriam, 1998). In addition, case studies “are the preferred strategy when ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are being posed” (Yin, 2003, p.1).</p> <p>Data sources included program evaluations and interviews with learning community participants. Program evaluation included surveys asking participants to evaluate the impact of the learning community after they had taught online, an analysis of the program’s asynchronous components, and a content analysis examining online discussions in which participants shared challenges, concerns, lessons learned, and strategies they planned to implement in their own courses.</p> <p>Eleven instructors (six men, five women) participated in the in-depth interviews. These instructors were selected because they had completed the learning community program and taught an online course within</p>

one year of the interview date. They came from diverse disciplines and held tenure track and non-tenure track positions.

A blended faculty learning community at a large midwestern public research university served as the site of the case study. The learning community was developed by a cross-campus committee of instructional designers in 2015. The primary objective of the faculty learning community is to advance high-quality online education by preparing instructors for the course development and teaching process.

The learning community is divided into two blended courses. In the first course, instructors make applied progress on planning their own online course. In the second, instructors explore techniques to connect with students, manage course activities, and facilitate discussion. To date, 357 unique participants completed one or both courses; 65% of participants completed both courses for a total of 593 enrollments.

Online modules modeled effective online course design and facilitation practices. These modules were followed by in-person lunch sessions or synchronous webinars that engaged participants in further exploration of the online content, providing a blended learning experience (Laster et al., 2005). According to Cox (2004), a faculty learning community is “an active, collaborative, yearlong program with a curriculum about enhancing teaching and learning” (p. 8). While Cox (2004) recommends a cross-disciplinary group of 6 to 15 members, the learning community discussed in this case study had cohorts of 20 to 80 members due to institutional demand. Participants were divided into smaller groups during online discussions, webinars, and in-person meetings.

**Data Analysis:** The constant comparative method was used to analyze the case study data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). An inductive category coding approach was combined with simultaneous comparison of all units of meaning and then subsequently grouped. The units of meaning used for this analysis were the teaching presence, social presence, and cognitive presence elements of the Col framework (Garrison, 2017). The coding scheme, derived from the Col framework, was used to categorize qualitative data by instructors' perspectives and practices before participating in the learning community, at the end of the learning community, and after having taught their own online courses. The authors assured credibility through triangulation and peer debriefing (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). See Appendix C for the coding scheme of select Col indicators.

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### 3. LITERATURE REVIEW & THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE LITERATURE TO YOUR RESEARCH QUESTION(S):

Overall enrollment growth in online postsecondary education in the United States remains positive year-over-year. Online education is now “common enough and significant enough” to be considered part of mainstream academic programming at many institutions (Garrett, Legon, & Fredericksen, 2020, p. 36). Therefore, it is important to ensure that instructors are prepared. The skills needed to effectively teach and ensure student success in online courses can be difficult for instructors to learn on their own (Skibba, 2012). This research study identifies the features of a blended faculty learning community that contribute to change in participants' perceptions of and practices for online course design and teaching.

Garrison (2017) articulates the challenges that instructors and faculty developers face when applying active learning strategies shown to be effective in online and blended education. Instructors who are new to teaching online have misconceptions of what it takes to successfully design and teach effective online courses

(Skibba, 2012). Some of these misconceptions include that online learning is not as effective as face-to-face, instructors and students do not need to collaborate as much, posting recorded lectures is the main way to teach online, and exams are the best way to assess online learning.

Garrison presents the Community of Inquiry (CoI) theoretical framework as being “enormously useful in structuring workshops and guiding faculty through the complexities of designing online and blended learning courses” (p. 150). The CoI framework represents a process for creating collaborative-constructivist learning experiences through the development of three interdependent elements: teaching, social, and cognitive presence (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2001). This framework has provided a model of instructional design for online and blended learning, including teacher professional development (Vaughan, 2016; Garrison, 2017).

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#### 4. FINDINGS, INCLUDING THEIR SIGNIFICANCE & LIMITATIONS:

This study adds to the faculty development and CoI literature through a rich qualitative analysis of instructors' reflections on the impact of a large blended faculty learning community. The following summary of key findings answers the two research questions:

*Which methods utilized in a blended faculty learning community, categorized by the presences of the Community of Inquiry framework, had the most impact on participants' perceptions and practices of online course design and teaching? Why were these methods impactful?*

##### **Student Experience: Modeling of Community of Inquiry Presences**

This case study analysis supports the finding that all three CoI presences—social presence, teaching presence, and cognitive presence—contributed to a learning experience through which instructors reconsidered their perceptions and practices of online education. Vaughan and Garrison's (2016) analysis of the face-to-face and online sessions of a comparable faculty learning community also concluded that “the key to creating a cohesive, purposeful and worthwhile community of inquiry is the integration of social, teaching and cognitive presence” (p. 150). See Appendix D for an analysis of the case study data.

The interaction of all three presences contributed to the holistic student learning experience. The meta-experience of being a student most impacted participants' perceptions of and practices for online education. Most participants indicated that this was the first time they had experienced being an online student and it was “humbling and eye-opening.” One participant summarized, “Being an online student was essential to our collective learning and our absorption of the relevance of this new material.” The student experience encouraged instructors, as one said, “to want to make it a more positive and engaging experience with different ways to learn (webinars, video lectures, group work).” In post-course surveys, 97% of respondents (N=274) said that the experience of being an online student was important to what they learned about online teaching and student learning.

Being situated as online students allowed participants to learn the challenges of and strategies for designing, teaching, and improving student learning in an online course. This direct experience included the “trauma” and “frustrations” of keeping up with activities and missing deadlines. As one participant noted, “I kept

finding myself getting behind—I guess I was being a 'true' student :-).” Participants also experienced the feeling of receiving no replies to their contributions in discussion forums. One noted, “When I fell to the depths of despair” when no one was contributing to the group discussion, “[the main facilitator] sent me emails of encouragement.”

Turning in assignments late and contacting the instructor for extensions, participants found their own behaviors aligned with those of their students. This led participants to gain more “empathy” and “compassion” through a better understanding of online students' personal situations, concerns, and fears—particularly salient during the COVID-19 pandemic. They learned firsthand what it meant to design and teach a humane and learner-centered online course.

### **Blended Experience: Multi-Modal Interaction and Reflection**

The blended or meta-experience, in which participants engaged first in online modules followed by face-to-face or webinar sessions, also proved impactful. Synchronous meetings brought together facilitators and participants for deeper discussions and collaboration on the topics addressed in the online materials. The learning community created an open, trusting environment in which instructors could share questions, challenges, ideas, and aspirations. One participant summarized that the facilitators in both the online courses and synchronous meetings “did a lot of work to ensure that we felt like members of a community.”

The findings in this case study align with Vaughan and Garrison’s (2016) conclusion that a blended faculty learning community approach creates “a flexible and accessible environment for faculty to engage in sustained critical reflection and discourse” (p. 150). Research participants said that offering a choice of in-person or webinar meetings provided needed flexibility for their schedules. Live sessions allowed participants to experience webinars from the student perspective and created variety in engaging with course information. The face-to-face and webinar sessions were often described as being “more fun.” As one participant shared, the webinars provided “a real sense of how I can utilize webinars in my own online and blended courses.”

Direct experience in online courses allowed instructors to be “immersed and spend some time ruminating on the content.” At the live meetings, with facilitator guidance, participants would reflect more deeply about the student experience, the online instructional content, and their plans to apply strategies in their own courses. The meetings also created a structure of accountability that motivated participants to review the online content in order to be prepared to discuss with their peers: “With everybody else coming prepared, I felt that level of responsibility to do the same.”

This blend of immersion in an online course and meta-reflection during webinars and face-to-face meetings impacted participants’ ideas of and practices for teaching online. One participant summarized: “Without this constant multimodal interaction with colleagues, I'm not sure that I would have learned as much or paid as close attention to the lessons/strategies of [the learning community].”

Survey results revealed the last broad impact of the program: 97% (N=258) reported gaining practical knowledge to apply to their own courses and 98% (N=211) of those who taught online said participating in the program improved the quality of their online course.

**Summary:** The holistic learning experience that emerges from the interaction of teaching, social, and cognitive presence supports instructors in transforming their perceptions and practices. This impact was most immediately salient in March 2020 when instruction was quickly moved to a remote format due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants reported that their experience in the learning community allowed for a more rapid and effective transition to remote teaching.

**Limitations:** The primary limitation of this study is the small sample (N=11) of instructor participants who were interviewed for the case study. Another limitation is that the two researchers are facilitators in the learning community. While controlled through triangulation and peer debriefing, bias may have shaped the interpretation. Finally, outcomes may differ with participants situated in institutions other than a large, research-intensive university.

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**TOTAL WORD COUNT FOR ALL 4 SECTIONS (2000 WORDS):**

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## Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview Guide

*Note: One of the original authors of the Community of Inquiry framework, Norm Vaughan, reviewed our interview guide.*

Participant ID:

Date:

Thank you for volunteering to share some of your insights about the Learning Community. The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact that a blended faculty learning community has on online course planning and teaching. Your views are very important so please share as much information as you can for each question. I have scheduled an hour for the interview, but you may take as much time as you need to answer each question. I will not put your name on anything that would identify you. Do you have any questions?

As an analytical lens and to guide the questions we will ask, we are using the Community of Inquiry framework (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2011). Therefore, these questions will ask about your experiences as they relate to our theoretical framework. We will also ask you what you remember from your experience during the program and also after teaching your first online courses after completing the program that consisted of two courses.

The questions focus on three areas of our theoretical framework: cognitive presence, teaching presence, and social presence. For each section, I will provide a definition of each form of presence before proceeding with the questions. Do you have any questions?

### Cognitive Presence Questions

The first set of questions will focus on cognitive presence. Cognitive presence represents the extent to which you and other participants were able to construct and confirm meaning through sustained reflection and discourse.

#### *Triggering event*

1. What were your general thoughts and attitudes about online teaching **before** enrolling in [the learning community]?
2. Prior to taking [the courses], what were the key questions or concerns you had about online design and teaching?
3. What motivated you most in the online courses to participate? During the meetings?

#### *Exploration*

1. How were you encouraged to explore or brainstorm answers to your questions or solutions for your concerns

or challenges?

2. How did these approaches influence your thinking about online course design or teaching?

#### *Resolution*

1. As a result of the [learning community] experience, were you able to resolve your questions or concerns?
  - a. If so, how did participating in [the learning community] help you to resolve these issues?
2. What are your general thoughts and attitudes about online teaching **after** participating in [the learning community]?
  - a. What part of the program had the most impact on your perspective of teaching online? Why?
3. Which course had the most impact on your course? Please explain why.
4. How was your course design impacted, if at all, as a result of participating in [the learning community]?
5. How was your teaching [online] impacted, if at all, as a result of participating in [the learning community]?
6. How, if at all, has your involvement in this professional development program affected the students you teach?

#### **Teaching Presence Questions**

The next set of questions will focus on teaching presence. Teaching presence represents the “design, facilitation, and direction” of participants’ experiences.

#### *Design and Organization*

1. How did the design and organization of the courses influence you as an online student?
  - a. Was the course organization intuitive?
  - b. Were instructions for activities clear?
2. What impact did activity deadlines have on your experience as an online student in [the learning community].
  - a. Will/Have your experiences shape the way you manage your own online courses?

#### *Direct Instruction*

1. What actions from the course “teachers or facilitators” had the most impact on you as an online student?
  - a. How did the course facilitator help you stay on track to meet deadlines? How did that impact you as an online student?
  - b. How did feedback from your facilitators help you better understand the course materials? How important was this feedback in helping you understand the content? Make progress on your course?
2. What helped you the most in understanding or relating to the course content?
  - a. How did discussions (online or in-person/via webinar) help you better understand the course content?
  - b. How helpful was it to provide a variety of perspectives (instructional designers, guest speakers, various resources, videos of instructors)?
3. How did the course instruction influence your own online teaching practice?

#### *Facilitating Discourse*

1. How did the way the courses were facilitated/taught (both during the course and in meetings) influence your thoughts of online education in general?
2. How did the way the courses were facilitated/taught (both during the course and in meetings) help support your learning as an online student?



- a. Do you feel that you were engaged and participated in productive dialogue with other participants?
  - i. Did this happen more in the online discussions? Or did this happen more in the in-person or webinar sessions? Please explain.
- b. Do you feel that the participants supported each other's learning?
  - i. If so, how were they encouraged to do so?
- c. How did having the participants share responsibility for providing ideas and solutions to your questions and challenges impact your learning?
- d. How did the facilitation of the courses influence your own online teaching practice?

### Social Presence Questions

The next set of questions will focus on social presence. Social presence is the ability of participants to identify with the community, communicate purposefully in a trusting environment, and develop interpersonal relationships.

#### *Affective expression*

1. Did you openly share your concerns about teaching when you were in [the learning community]?
  - a. Can you tell me more about what made it more or less difficult in sharing your concerns?

#### *Open communication*

1. Did you feel comfortable communicating in the online part of the course (i.e., discussions, Google Docs)?
  - a. Can you tell me more about what made you feel more or less comfortable?
2. Did you participate in any of the webinars?
  - a. NO: Skip
  - b. YES: Did you feel comfortable sharing your thoughts during the webinar?
    - i. Can you tell me more about what made you feel more or less comfortable?
3. Did you participate in any of the in-person sessions?
  - a. NO: Skip
  - b. YES: Did you feel comfortable sharing your thoughts during the in-person meetings?
    - i. Can you tell me more about what made you feel more or less comfortable?

#### *Group cohesion*

1. Did the facilitators develop a sense of community among course participants? If so, how?
  - a. What do you think was the most effective strategy that helped to build a sense of community?
2. How did you incorporate a sense of community in your own course?

#### *Other*

1. Were there any particular social practices in [the learning community] that influenced your perceptions of teaching online?
  - a. How did that/those practices shape your perceptions?
2. Which social practices in [the learning community] influenced your own approach to online teaching?
3. Did you know about or know any instructional designers before this course?
  - a. What did you think of getting help from an outside expert to help you with your course **before** [participating in the learning community]?
  - b. **After** [participating in the learning community]?

### End Questions

1. Our learning community consisted of face-to-face or webinar sessions and online components (discussion forum and activities).



- a. How did the online (asynchronous) experience contribute to your experience in the learning community?
    - i. How did the online student experience impact your learning?
  - b. How did the synchronous experiences contribute to your experience in the learning community?
  - c. Did the blend of the asynchronous and synchronous sessions contribute to your experience in the learning community? If so, how?
2. To date, what has been your key “take away” from [the learning community] (e.g. learning moment, epiphany, new idea or method) for online course design or teaching?
    - a. Has this also impacted your teaching in other courses?
    - b. How did your involvement in [the learning community] impact you when you needed to move all courses to remote instruction due to COVID?
  2. Please share any recommendations or suggestions you have for improving future courses or sessions?
  3. Is there anything that you would like to add or do you have any questions for me?

**Appendix B: Faculty Background Questionnaire**

Participant ID:  
 School/College/Division:  
 Department:

**Questions about you:**

Title:    Professor                      Associate Professor                      Assistant Professor  
             Faculty Associate              Senior Lecturer                      Lecturer  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you been teaching in higher education?  
 How long have you been an instructor at [institution]?  
 Have you taught online before taking [the faculty development program]? Approximately how many online courses?  
 What personal pronoun do you prefer to use?

**Questions about the online courses you have taught since taking [the faculty development program]:**

Course Title:  
 Subject of Course:  
 Degree Level:              Undergraduate                      Master's                      Doctoral  
 What semester did you most recently teach this course?  
 Number of students in this course?  
 How many weeks is this course?  
 What is the format and structure of the course (lecture, lab, other)?

**OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS**

What interested you most about [the learning community] course content?  
 What do you remember being the most useful course activities?  
 How did the discussions help you to better understand the content?



What activities or experiences helped you connect [the learning community] content to what you would do with your own course?

How did the course planning worksheet impact your course design?

How did the online journal impact your course teaching?

How did the final project help you make progress on your course?

*Thank you for your responses! We will ask more questions during your personal interview.*

**Appendix C: Community of Inquiry Coding Scheme**

Elements and Categories	Select Indicators
<b>Teaching Presence</b>	
Design & Organization	Setting curriculum and methods
Facilitating Discourse	Shaping constructive exchange, prompting discussion
Direct Instruction	Resolving issues, presenting content, sharing knowledge, confirming understanding, providing feedback
<b>Social Presence</b>	
Personal/Affective	Expressing emotions, projecting personality
Open Communication	Communicating with risk-free expression
Group Cohesion	Encouraging collaboration
<b>Cognitive Presence</b>	
Triggering Event	Recognizing problems, sense of puzzlement
Exploration	Exchanging information, brainstorming
Integration	Connecting ideas, creating solutions
Resolution	Applying new ideas

**Appendix D: Analysis of Case Study Data and Community of Inquiry Framework**

The analytic approach categorized features of the learning community with the Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework to identify the methods that most impacted participants' perceptions of and practices for online education. The following analysis comprises the key CoI strategies used in the faculty learning community that were cited most often as having impacted participants' ideas and practices of online course design and teaching.

**Teaching Presence** is the “design, facilitation, and direction of cognitive and social processes for the purpose of realizing personally meaningful and educationally worthwhile learning outcomes” (Anderson et al., 2001, p. 5). Teaching presence is manifested in everything the instructor does to guide, support, and shape a learner’s experience. Results are organized by the three roles of an educator explained in Col coding scheme: 1) Design and Organization, 2) Direct Instruction, and 3) Facilitating Discourse.

Col Categories & Indicators	Faculty Learning Community Case Study Indicators	Summary of Findings and Selected Supporting Quotes
<p><b>1) Design and organization</b> involve developing and implementing curriculum, assessments, content, course design, deadlines, and expectations (Garrison, 2017). Design and organization represent both the course curriculum and the synchronous activities in the learning community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The online courses in the learning community showcased Quality Matters standards, a variety of technologies, and research-based content, assessments, and activities.</li> <li>• Instructional content included activity templates and techniques to chunk, align, and present course elements.</li> <li>• In the first course, participants completed a detailed module plan to align learning objectives with assessments, activities, and content.</li> <li>• In the second course, participants used an online journal to reflect on the strategies they would use to address common online teaching challenges.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The content and tools provided were very practical and easy to use, they enabled me to organize my course very thoughtfully, intentionally, and cohesively.”</li> <li>• Participants described the technologies showcased and resources as a “pandora box of amazing tools to explore” and “a trove of additional resources to enhance my online experiences with teaching and learning.”</li> <li>• “Every unit provided a take home message that I could use/incorporate/or avoid in creating my own online course.”</li> <li>• Participants said the module plan and the journal acted as a “blueprint for my course.” These documents helped to “wrap everything up from that course module, to write down any concerns, share some thoughts about those concerns, describe how I was going to handle whatever it was we were working on, and then get facilitator feedback.”</li> </ul>
<p><b>2) Direct instruction</b> methods include diagnosing misconceptions, sharing knowledge from diverse sources, confirming understanding through assessments and feedback, presenting content and questions, and focusing discussion on specific issues (Garrison, 2017).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both courses in the blended learning community provided a variety of perspectives from experienced online instructors, many who were past participants, through live presentations and video testimonials.</li> <li>• Multiple program facilitators and guest speakers offered reflections on their personal experiences of online course design and instruction.</li> <li>• Program facilitators provided feedback and answered questions on participants’ module plans, journals, and assignments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants said a strength of the learning community was exposure to a variety of perspectives: “The knowledgeable instructional team for this course and the associated instructional designers are a valuable source of advice, support, and inspiration.”</li> <li>• “Meaningful and authentic feedback, ideas, and questions helped push my thinking on the activities.”</li> <li>• “The thoughtful feedback on the assignments was extremely helpful, not just from a relevance point of view, but also from an accountability point of view.”</li> <li>• “The facilitators encouraged us to come up with more ideas and offered different perspectives, suggestions, and approaches to consider.”</li> <li>• “They were willing to push us on our assumptions.”</li> </ul>

<p>3) <b>Facilitating discourse</b> includes encouraging participants to share ideas, prompting discussion, setting the climate for learning, and building understanding (Garrison, 2017).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The learning community facilitators encouraged participants to share challenges and ideas during online discussions and synchronous sessions.</li> <li>• During large group discussions held in person or via synchronous video conference, participants were encouraged to sum up ideas and key lessons learned.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “You couldn't really just sit in the corner and do nothing.”</li> <li>• “We're all there to learn and to help each other. So, I think that was obvious from the way you guys presented it.”</li> <li>• “The facilitators were really good about helping answer questions in the small groups and just think about how you can make this work.”</li> <li>• “We would kind of sum up some of our ideas and concerns or thoughts, it was then nice to get, you know, again, a little bit more feedback then from the whole class.”</li> </ul>
<p><b>Social Presence</b> represents participants’ ability to develop relationships, engage in open communication, and identify with the community (Garrison, 2017). Social presence strategies build a respectful and purposeful environment in which it is safe to take risks, share ideas, and express concerns. The results are categorized by the three indicators of social presence included in the Col coding scheme: 1) Personal/Affective Communication, 2) Open Communication, and 3) Group Cohesion.</p>		
Col Elements & Categories	Faculty Learning Community Case Study Indicators	Summary of Findings and Selected Supporting Quotes
<p>1) <b>Personal/affective communication</b> represents interpersonal expression that develops a safe, welcoming, trusting, and respectful environment (Garrison, 2017).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The program director sent personalized messages to encourage participation and to remind participants of course deadlines.</li> <li>• The facilitators provided flexibility and understanding about issues that caused participants to miss deadlines.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants indicated that the “energy and enthusiasm” and “encouraging, supportive, and tolerant” approach of the “extremely friendly” facilitators led to a sense of real human presence in the course.</li> <li>• “Knowing there was a real person there made the course more enjoyable and engaging.”</li> <li>• Participants said the encouraging, personalized reminders impacted their motivation and “created a sense of urgency” to complete the course work.</li> <li>• After experiencing the facilitators’ flexibility, participants considered how they could, as one instructor noted, find more “humane ways of dealing with deadlines.”</li> <li>• “It's definitely made me want to be more present in my courses.”</li> </ul>
<p>2) <b>Open communication</b> is the ability to freely express agreement and dissent in a respectful, trusting environment (Garrison, 2017).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The learning community offered opportunities for congregation and free talk among participants in order to support the development of collegial relationships, in particular through in-person sessions and the “Online Café” and “Share Resources” discussion forums.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “It was nice to be able to . . . in the small groups feel a little bit more comfortable sharing ideas, getting some feedback.”</li> <li>• Participants also spoke to their colleagues’ respectful, supportive, and critical engagement with the group conversations: “There wasn’t really any judgement, and there was a lot of</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every face-to-face meeting began with a shared meal and fifteen minutes for informal conversation.</li> <li>• Asynchronous and synchronous discussions made frequent use of small group break-outs.</li> </ul>	<p>support there.”</p>
<p>3) <b>Group cohesion</b> is the learners’ sense of identification with the community of inquiry, group cohesion supports purposeful discourse. Garrison (2017) cites the use of “we” and “our” as verbal markers of participants’ sense of group cohesion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the synchronous face-to-face and webinar sessions, participants were intentionally placed with departmental or disciplinary colleagues in an effort to build on existing local connections.</li> <li>• Lunch sessions in particular, supported the development of community and group affiliation through informal dialogue.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants regularly used the words “community,” “collegial[ity],” and “camaraderie” in speaking about their experience in the group.</li> <li>• Participants noted the “social value of breaking bread together” and that the communal meal “provides a warm and inviting atmosphere for sharing and discussion.”</li> <li>• Participants spoke to the importance of talking with others “on similar journeys,” a common experience that led one respondent to “sense that I am not alone on campus. . .”</li> <li>• “Teaching is a solitary activity that can “at times feel like a lonely enterprise.” Participants viewed their colleagues in the program as a “wider support system” that was newly available to them.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cognitive Presence</b> is “the extent to which learners are able to construct and confirm meaning through sustained reflection and discourse” (Garrison, Anderson, &amp; Archer, 2001, p. 11). The primary focus of cognitive presence is to develop a higher-order thinking process (i.e. critical thinking or practical inquiry) that integrates prior knowledge with new learning through reflection, discussion, and feedback. The following analysis of the learning community is organized by the four processes of cognitive presence: 1) Triggering Event, 2) Exploration, 3) Integration, and 4) Resolution.</p>		
<p><b>Col Elements &amp; Categories</b></p>	<p><b>Faculty Learning Community Case Study Indicators</b></p>	<p><b>Summary of Findings and Selected Supporting Quotes</b></p>
<p><b>The triggering event</b>, the first phase of Cognitive Presence, is the recognition of a problem or issue (Garrison, 2017).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants came to the learning community with a number of concerns about teaching online that they were hoping to resolve.</li> <li>• Most were new to teaching online though some had prior online teaching experience.</li> <li>• Both courses solicited participants’ challenges and concerns about teaching online in introductory and topical discussion forums, during</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those who had some online teaching experience said they were “thrown into it” without any training.</li> <li>• “I was a little sheepish that I had been teaching for so long without really getting any training or resources about how to do it well.”</li> <li>• Concerns of teaching online led participants to register for the learning community: “If I was going to develop this course online, I wanted to get the best information about how to do that. And certainly the [learning community] is</li> </ul>

	<p>meetings, and through collaborative activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The conversations were open, honest, and sometimes emotional. This was possible because, as noted in Social Presence, the facilitators established a “safe environment” to share questions and concerns.</li> </ul>	<p>without a doubt the best resource at [the university], as to how to develop an online course.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many openly shared that they came to the community with skepticism, apprehension, reluctance, and a negative perception of online teaching and learning. “I had no idea how an online class worked or how I could structure it successfully to be a good learning experience for the students. Frankly, I’m not sure why I agreed to develop a class online in the first place.”</li> <li>• Others had heard “horror” stories of online courses that were “hated by students” and others that were “watered down” and “not as rigorous.”</li> <li>• Participants also shared concerns about their ability as online instructors to address academic misconduct, engage students, provide feedback, personalize instruction, build rapport, and manage their time—especially in courses with 100 to 1,000 students.</li> </ul>
<p><b>The exploration phase</b> includes information exchange, suggestions for consideration, and brainstorming in search of relevant resources and ideas (Garrison, 2017).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The learning community activities engaged participants in individual reflection and collaboration.</li> <li>• Participants also collaborated on group discussions to collectively identify solutions to shared challenges such as assessment, academic honesty, managing course workload, and building online learning communities.</li> <li>• In-person and online synchronous meetings provided additional opportunities to reflect on these resources and further explore solutions by sharing with each other and with guest speakers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The facilitators “continuously challenged participants to reevaluate what students want and need.”</li> <li>• “So helpful to hear how other people were implementing the content and troubleshooting issues.”</li> <li>• The reflective activities and discussions were instrumental to transforming participants’ ideas of and practices for teaching online. “Taking the course has given me time to pause and reflect on my current teaching practices and to be inspired to make use of some new ideas.”</li> <li>• “Now I have five or six different solutions versus just maybe the one or two I was thinking about.”</li> </ul>
<p><b>The integration phase</b> involves connecting ideas and creating solutions as a “process of constructing a meaningful solution or</p>	<p>Participants worked towards integration through a series of “application activities.” These activities allowed participants to create important documents and activities for use directly in their own courses. They</p>	<p>Building their course through participation in the program proved impactful: “There is something to be said about immediacy here. I can go from reading about a new idea or activity to try to implement it right away.”</p>

<p>explanation” (Garrison, 2017, p. 66).</p>	<p>also gave an opportunity to experiment with a variety of collaboration technologies from the perspective of an online student.</p>	
<p><b>The resolution phase</b> takes place when learners “critically assesses the viability of the proposed solution through direct or vicarious application” (Garrison, 2017, p. 66).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Participants at the end of the learning community had a choice of a final project designed to support continued progress on their course. Many participants modified and improved their final projects before using them directly in their own courses.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Most completed a course map that provided a “big picture” of the course design and prompted instructors to “think critically about transforming” their courses.</li> <li>○ Others created video content that “forced” instructors to use technology, with the videos ultimately used directly in their courses.</li> <li>○ A final option was to create a template that “plotted out” the full content for one course module.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● At the end of both courses, a final “Lessons Learned” discussion allowed participants to share the ways in which their opinions about online teaching had changed and the strategies they planned to apply in their own courses. This concluding discussion proved an important way for participants to wrap up the course and reflect on what they had learned and experienced.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● One participant reflected on the impact of the final project: “I’ve completely reconceived my course, how I’m going to structure, what my objectives will be. All improvements for the better, which wouldn’t have occurred to me without [the learning community].”</li> <li>● At the end of the learning community, participants shared more positive perspectives about online teaching, noting how they felt “prepared,” “confident,” “better equipped,” “enthusiastic,” “totally ready to move the course forward,” “excited by the endless opportunities,” and “a renewed enthusiasm and enjoyment for teaching.”</li> <li>● Others shared how their perception of teaching online had evolved significantly, “drastically changed,” and “dispelled a lot of the myths.” Many said their “bias against online learning is gone.” One participant noted that prior to enrolling, “I really didn’t feel that an online course could offer a learning experience comparable to a face-to-face class. I now feel like the resources provided and the ideas discussed through the two courses this year have changed my mind.”</li> </ul>