



Barbara Getter

**Barbara Getter, Assistant Professor, Organizational Leadership, School of Management**  
Each week in the project management courses, the students respond to a discussion question that asks them, in a very specific way, to examine how they, or their organization, perform topics such as risk management, scheduling, reporting project status, and conflict resolution. This gives me the ability to integrate information and additional self-directed resources, such as web sites, templates, and journal articles.



John Lay

**John Lay, Online Lead Faculty, Core Studies, School of Humanities and Social Sciences**  
I begin each week by reviewing the assignments. By the middle of the next week, I post a "forum summary" of the previous week where I attempt to both affirm and challenge. After I post the "forum summary," I send each student an email with my reflections on their participation in the forum. My comments help me "conduct the score" that brings forth the student's voices and, at times, changes the tempo. I also actively direct the forum: I praise some well written posts and, at times, redirect the focus when the group becomes "too chatty." I affirm personal interpretation as well as critical application of the "music we play."



Mary Loftus

**Mary Loftus, Affiliate Faculty, Master of Science in Software Information Systems with the National University of Ireland, Galway, School for Computer and Information Sciences**  
Computer and information science students have a reputation for being uninterested in the social or interactive aspects of learning. But, if the space is made for social presence and interaction is modeled and encouraged, I think these students are just as interactive as any others! Throw some collaborative problem-solving into the mix and you will almost certainly experience some very potent learning interaction.

Feedback is another keystone of my approach to teaching presence. I offer regular feedback on process and on content where required. I will post something most days so that students know I'm there and at the end of the week, I email individual feedback to each student.



Patrick Lowenthal

**Patrick Lowenthal, Assistant Professor, School of Education and Counseling**  
Both as a student and as a teacher, I have always struggled with finding my voice online. When I teach online, I want people—especially my students—to see me not only as a "real person" but also as others see me face-to-face. However, I know, from student's feedback, that one of my strengths teaching face-to-face is my energy and passion for my content area. I have struggled finding a way to replicate this online. So I began focusing on the use of storytelling online. I even developed a digital story about when I first began teaching to help introduce myself to my students online.

Visit [www.regisfacultyonline.org](http://www.regisfacultyonline.org) to read all more about best practices for enhancing teaching presence and for a link to Patrick Lowenthal's digital story.

## Teaching Presence Online Facilitates Meaningful Learning

By Patrick Lowenthal, Assistant Professor, CPS School of Education and Counseling and Tina Parscal, Associate Professor, CPS Distance Learning

### Introduction

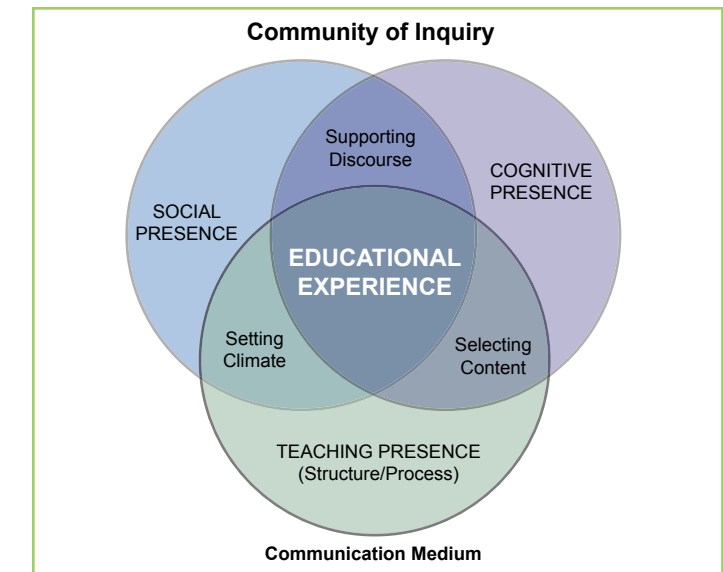
A teacher plays a central role in any formal learning environment. As those of you with online teaching experience know, teaching online involves a different skill set (Palloff & Pratt, 1999). Effective online teachers take on the role as a facilitator of learning rather than an instructor who conveys information through directed instruction. That is, they become more of a "guide-on-the-side" rather than the "sage-on-the-stage." However, this cliché can be taken to extremes; there is a fine line between being a guide on the side and being absent (Anderson, 2004).

### Teaching Presence

The concept of teaching presence evolved out of the research on social presence and teacher immediacy. Short, Williams, and Christie (1976) initially described social presence as a quality of a communication medium that can affect the way people communicate. They claimed that some communication media had a higher degree of social presence (e.g., video) than others (e.g., audio). Mehrabian (1966, 1969, 1972) developed the concept of immediacy as non-verbal behaviors that can reduce the distance between two or more people. His work was later used to explain teacher behavior in the classroom (Andersen, 1979); Andersen illustrated that teacher immediacy is a predictor of teaching effectiveness.

Researchers now claim that online communication can be just as personal, if not more, than non-computer mediated communication. The literature on social presence suggests that students create and maintain a sense of social presence through the following strategies:

1. Expression of emotions
2. Self-disclosure
3. Continuing a thread
4. Quoting from other messages
5. Referring explicitly to other messages

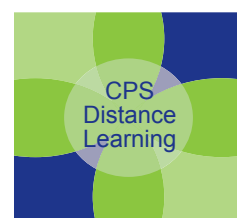


6. Asking questions
  7. Complimenting, expressing appreciation
  8. Expressing agreement
  9. Vocatives (i.e., referring to participants by name)
  10. Addresses or refers to the group using inclusive pronouns
  11. Phatics / Salutations (i.e., communication that is purely social)
- (Rourke et al., 2001)

Further, research has shown that social presence is a predictor of student satisfaction in online environments (Gunawardena, 1995; Gunawardena & Zittle, 1997; Richardson & Swan, 2003), that it is directly related to learner to learner interaction (Tu, 2000), that it plays a key role in collaborative learning (So, 2005), and finally that "there is a definite, consistent and strong relationship among student perceptions of interaction, social presence, and learning" (p. 30).

Garrison, Anderson, and Archer (2000) were the first to differentiate social presence from teaching presence as part of the Communities of Inquiry model (Figure 1). While they understood social presence to

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#### Distance Learning Mission Statement:

Distance Learning supports the CPS learning community by creating leading-edge educational experiences through comprehensive course development services, reliable learning systems management, advanced faculty development and continuous innovation.

We welcome your feedback! Please email us at [tlsa@regis.edu](mailto:tlsa@regis.edu)

Teaching Presence continued from front page

be the ability of people to project oneself online as a “real person,” they conceptualized teaching presence as “the design, facilitation, and direction of cogni-

***The central focus of teaching presence is to increase social presence and student learning.***

tive and social processes for the purpose of realizing personally meaningful and educationally worthwhile outcomes.” Teaching presence begins before the course commences through the instructional design process in which the course development team plans and prepares the course of studies and designs learning activities for active engagement and interaction. “It continues during the course, as the instructor facilitates the discourse and provides direct instruction when required. (Anderson, Rourke, Garrison, & Archer, 2001, p. 5).

At Regis University, we take pride in the focus we place on the intentional and collaborative design and development of our online courses. Therefore, we feel confident that the first component of teaching presence (i.e., the design and development of courses) is regularly achieved. It is within the second component of teaching presence, the facilitation of the course, where Regis facilitators get their chance to focus on their own teaching presence and the social presence in the course.

#### **Strategies for Creating Teaching/Social Presence**

There are many strategies for creating teaching presence within an online course. The following table highlights strategies related to instructional design, teaching, and student learning for creating teaching and social presence.

#### **Instructional Design:**

- Develop overviews
- Provide opportunities for student and teacher profiles within the learning management system
- Incorporate audio and video within the course content following best practices for teaching and learning and ADA compliance standards
- Limit class size
- Structure collaborative learning activities
- Utilize group work strategies
- Develop open-ended, critical thinking discussion questions
- Incorporate reflective activities
- Utilize continuous and authentic assessment strategies

#### **Teaching:**

- Post introductions and expectations documents before the students are given access to the course.
- Contribute to discussion forum throughout the week
- Provide suggested due dates for initial postings that promote mid-week engagement as opposed to weekend only postings
- Launch discussion threads and summarize each thread at the end of the week
- Promptly answer e-mail
- Provide frequent feedback
- Send progress reports on participation and quality of postings
- Strike up a conversation
- Share personal stories and professional experiences
- Use expressions of emotions, e.g. (smile) or (grin).
- Address students by name
- Allow students options for addressing the instructor

#### **Student Learning:**

- Contribute to discussion forum throughout the week as opposed to waiting for the weekend
- Promptly answer e-mail
- Strike up a conversation
- Share personal stories and experiences
- Ask open-ended questions that promote discussion and require critical thinking
- Use expressions of emotions, e.g. (smile) or (grin).

*For strategies used by CPS faculty, see back page.*

## **Spotlight: An interview with Marcel Dumestre, Academic Dean, College for Professional Studies**

**By Dave Suger, Instructional Designer, CPS Distance Learning**

Dave sat down with Marcel Dumestre, CPS Academic Dean, and asked a range of questions, from growing up in Louisiana, his early business career, what brought him to Regis, and a few facts that might surprise you. Below is part of that interview. To read the full interview visit [www.regisfacultyonline.org](http://www.regisfacultyonline.org).

TLC: Most people know you're from Louisiana. Tell us a little bit about your background.

Marcel: I was born and raised in Louisiana. I lived there with my parents until I was a senior in high school when we moved to Pensacola, Florida. I attended a community college for two years at Pensacola Junior College and then went on to Florida State and did a Bachelor of Science in Economics degree. After college I went to work for Pfizer Pharmaceutical, followed by Schering Plough. After Schering Plough, I moved back to Louisiana and was part of a start-up pump and manufacturing company.

My wife said let's do something more meaningful with our lives. So, I went to Loyola University and earned a Master's Degree in Religious Education with the intent of being one of the early Chaplains in the corporation. As soon as I graduated I was offered a position in the University as Assistant Director of the Institute for Ministry, and they hired me to help create an extension program for the two graduate degrees, the Master of Religious Education and a Master of Pastoral Studies.

During that period of time, which was probably the busiest of my entire life, I went on to Vanderbilt University through a distance education program there which was another cutting edge program. For my doctoral degree, I flew up to Nashville every other weekend for two years, spent two summers in residence and then spent a year writing my dissertation.

TLC: What makes Regis University and the new College for Professional Studies unique?

Marcel: The realignment that we're undergoing right now makes Regis extremely unique in Jesuit higher education. Regis has been unique in its dedication to

adult learning in the past 25 years. Without a doubt we have the most sophisticated, androgogically-oriented system, and certainly the most number of students of any of the Jesuit institutions. What this realignment does is it makes us even more unique in

having four schools within a college that's dedicated to the adult learner. Only about one-third of the Jesuit institutions even have colleges dedicated to the adult learner. This system positions us in a way that, in the eyes of those who are not familiar with quality adult higher education, makes us look more credible than the rest.

TLC: What is your vision for the Distance Learning unit and the future of online learning at CPS?

Marcel: The role of Distance Learning right now is absolutely crucial to the future of the college and the individual programs within the schools. We can view the Distance Learning unit to be more inclusive than online courses. This will include involvement in classroom courses and methods of instruction because our instructional designers and our media experts can be of tremendous assistance to faculty in the classroom. In a very strange sort of way, our online programs are much more advanced in terms of incorporating active learning and outcomes-based approaches than our classroom classes.

TLC: Any final thoughts?

Marcel: The realignment that we are engaged in right now will help us to get back to what has made us successful from the very beginning. That is a thorough dedication to the accelerated format as being an active participatory way of learning in an accelerated mode. This is one in which instructors are engaged in creative teaching methodologies and are grounded in their discipline and the outcomes of those courses are things of which both the student and the faculty member are proud.