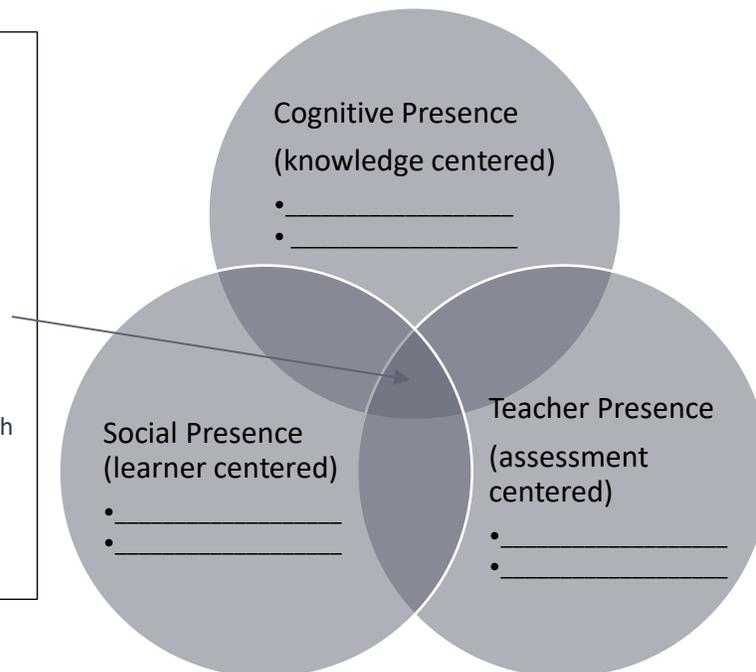# HUMANIZING THE ONLINE ENVIRONMENT

In this workshop, participants explore the utilization of technology to create human-centered learning experiences, including research-based strategies for increasing student learning, satisfaction and engagement through the development of online learning communities. Social learning theories that support integration of social media are examined with strategies for successful implementation in instruction.

ONLINE LEARNING COMMUNITY

7 principles of good practice encourage:

- contact between students and faculty
- reciprocity and cooperation
- prompt feedback
- time on task
- active learning techniques
- communication of high expectations
- respect for diverse talents and ways of learning

Cognitive Presence
(knowledge centered)
- _____
- _____

Social Presence
(learner centered)
- _____
- _____

Teacher Presence
(assessment centered)
- _____
- _____

Technology tools with a high humanizing impact:

SOCIAL MEDIA

Learning is not an individual activity but an interactive social discourse. In order for social learning to occur, learners must participate in an interactive social environment and social media has the potential to serve as a platform to promote this social learning.

Social learning theories that support integration of social media:

- Bandura's and Vygotsky's research laid the foundation to support the use of social media as an instructional tool. Individuals are drawn to social media tools because they want to be informed and they want to have an avenue for expressing their ideas, opinions, and perspectives with others. They also want to learn from others. According to Bandura's work, students need to feel that their ideas and beliefs can have an impact upon the world; thus, self efficacy plays a vital roll in the social learning theory.

How can social media be used in online education?

- **Engagement** efforts involving social media seek to involve the learner at both a physical and a psychological level with the learning community. Engaged learners experience a sense of connectedness, membership and motivation related to learning activities. Effective engagement efforts utilizing social media often support improved communication (such as timely or 'sticky' reminders), increase learner feedback and build community.
- **Instruction** efforts involving social media seek to improve teaching effectiveness and increase the learner growth toward learning objectives. Effective instruction in social media should mean more students meet or exceed learning objectives. Instructional integrations of social media in education can support learner diversity, improve relevance of learning materials and experiences, and provide alternate pathways for learners to demonstrate their progress.
- **Support** efforts involving social media seek to provide learners increased or ubiquitous access to support services. Effective support facilitated through social media is integrated closely with institutional or program specific resources or individuals; it may address specific learner needs (such as content specific guidance or tutoring) or address broader learner needs in context (such as a virtual IT help desk).

Strategies for successful implementation:

- Instructors partipate (teacher presence)
- Participation is required (not optional). Include this information in your syallbus at the beginning of the course.
- Align tool usage with instructional objectives.
- Do not reveal information about student grades, course enrollment, or class schedule outside of your institutional communication channels and learning management system.
- Know your institutional FERPA policies and work within them.
- Be up front with your students about their options for privacy when using social media, including using a pseudonym.
- Don't initiate one on one communication.
- If you comment on students social media publishing, be careful not to review student information or grades. Keep this information in your learning management system.