

# **Student Perceptions of an Accelerated Online Master's in Education Administration Program Through the Lens of Social Presence**

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## **Abstract**

*The purpose of this study is to analyze student perceptions of the success of an online accelerated Master's in Educational Administration (MAEd) program through the lens of social presence by asking the following question: What are student perceptions of teaching and learning in an accelerated MAEd program? Forty-eight graduate students in an accelerated, one-year MAEd program were surveyed to identify their perceptions. Findings from the study indicated that emotional expression, open communication, and group cohesion were key elements in student perceptions of teaching and learning in their online MAEd program.*

*Keywords:* online learning, graduate program, perceptions, higher education, social presence

## **Need for the Study**

Due to the growth of extended learning and online program offerings in higher education, prospective Master of Educational Administration (MAEd) students have many options when selecting where and how they will earn their degrees. In particular, students who enroll in MAEd programs are often busy, full-time professionals whose responsibilities venture beyond the typical work day (Jaggars, 2016; Kaifi, Mujtaba, & Williams, 2009). As universities struggle to meet the growing need for alternative programs and to compete in a rapidly changing higher education landscape, it is important to consider how these adult learners experience their own education when developing university programmatic choices that better serve graduate students (Fedynich, K. Bradley, & J. Bradley, 2015). One avenue for exploring the intersection of students' perceptions of online teaching and learning and programmatic choices is through the use of the social presence model (Rourke, Anderson, Garrison, & Archer, 1999).

This paper applies a bold organizational model to a traditional program survey as a way to analyze students' perceptions of online teaching and learning experiences. In addition, this analysis couples the focus on technology of today's information age with the notions of diversity and social justice prevalent in our global society. We did so as a means to provide a rich opportunity for improved program and leader development through the examination of future educational leaders' perceptions of their own learning experiences. The research question posed was: *What are student perceptions of teaching and learning in an accelerated MAEd program through the lens of social presence?*

The intent of the original survey was to better understand student perceptions of their MAEd online program. In addition, by using a community of inquiry framework coupled with the social presence model, data were collected to analyze overall social presence in the online MAEd program.

## **Literature Review**

This review of the literature explores student experiences in online classes related to factors of social presence; it also includes course design elements, instructor–student engagement and interaction, and the humanizing elements of voice and video. Drawing from research that

analyzes equity gaps in online education, implications for social justice and leadership also begin to emerge (Kaupp, 2012; Kumi-Yeboah, 2018; Wood, 2015). Due to the achievement gap between successful learning experiences in face-to-face versus online courses, questions have arisen concerning the best ways to engage students, which course design features encourage persistence and lead to success, and the impact of teacher–student and student–student interaction. Taken together, these studies provide clues as to how social presence may be a key factor in students’ experiences of online programs.

Many studies have examined the state of online courses (e.g., Jaggars, 2016; Johnson, Mejia, & Cook, 2015; Xu, 2013). Emerging research focuses on connections between social presence, community building, retention, and overall student success (e.g., Borup, West, & Graham, 2012; Bush, Castelli, & Lowry, 2010; Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 1999; Jaggars, 2014; James, Swan, & Daston, 2016; Whiteside, 2015). Asking students about their perceptions of their own experiences, whether positive or negative, is important to instructors and academic institutions in guiding their online programs (Kaifi et al., 2009). This literature review explores online student perceptions through the lens of social presence.

## **Social Presence**

Garrison (1997) defines social presence as the degree to which participants are able to protect themselves effectively within a given medium. Gunwardena and Zittle (1997) refer to social presence as how one is seen as a real person in mediated communication. Others, such as Tu (2000), define social presence as the degree of person-to-person awareness, whereas Picciano (2002) describes it as a sense of belonging to a community, and Whiteman (2002) as the impression that others are participating in the communication process. Most recently, Whiteside (2015) characterizes social presence as the degree to which online participants feel connected to each other. Numerous additional definitions of social presence continue to evolve as studies of the interaction of communication in online learning environments progress. Drilling down to the core of social presence and how it materializes and impacts online course results is complex. Next, we examine the community of inquiry framework to better understand social presence.

## Community of Inquiry Framework

The community of inquiry framework explores the interconnectivity of social, teaching, and cognitive presences in order to better understand online teaching and learning (Figure 1). For the purposes of this paper, we refer to the community of inquiry framework simply as the “Framework.” A large portion of the existing research addresses social presence through the Framework. Akyol and Garrison (2008) studied the Framework in online learning experiences of graduate students, concluding that all three presences—social, teaching, and cognitive—exhibited a significant relationship with students’ satisfaction, but with social presence having the most significant correlation coefficient (.539). The Framework also led to the development of the Framework Survey, which has been used in numerous research studies to learn about online learning and teaching environments (Swan & Richardson, 2017). Studies using the Framework Survey have focused on the role of social presence (Annand, 2011), the interrelationship of presences (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 1999), students’ perceptions and satisfaction (Maddrell, Morrison, & Watson, 2017), and perceived learning (Richardson & Swan, 2003).

In this study, we used the Framework to explore the issue of students’ perceptions of online education. The figure below guided us in answering our research question regarding students’ perceptions of teaching and learning. This figure shows the connection between social presence, cognitive presence, and teaching presence. We next examine the social presence model within this Framework.

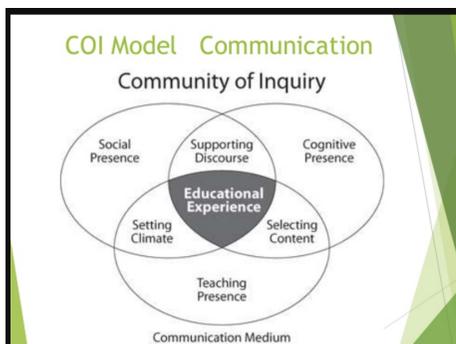
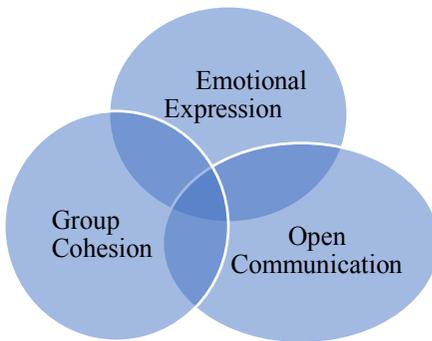


Figure 1. Community of Inquiry Framework (Garrison et al., 1999)

## Social Presence Model

Wei, Chen, and Kinshuk (2012) analyzed over 500 questionnaire-based surveys collected from learners with previous experiences in online classes at three schools. Their analysis revealed that social presence has a substantial effect on learning interaction, which in turn affects learning performance. In one study of 16 online courses, Whiteside (2015) analyzed online discussions, as well as collecting and coding instructor and student interviews, concluding that social presence is the overarching principle that drives learners, instructors, academic content, norms, behaviors, instructional strategies, activities, and outcomes.



*Figure 2.* Social Presence Model (adapted)

### Open Communication

One expansive study of 23 online courses at two community colleges by Xu and Jaggars (2013) concluded that after reviewing and comparing online course organization and presentation, learning objectives and assessments, interpersonal interaction, and use of technology, only the quality of interpersonal interaction within a course relates positively and significantly to student grades.

Other research has focused on the types of activities that instructors engage in online and how students respond to them. Rucks-Ahidiana, Barragan, and Edgecombe (2012) conducted a thorough analysis of the varying technology tools and digital course features available in online courses by examining the categories of archival presentations, communication forums, external web-based sources, and

instructional software. The categories were examined for purpose and satisfaction, and the authors claim that though students value being engaged in a variety of ways in online courses, instructors do not integrate a wide variety of tools, whether due to lack of knowledge or training.

Instructors play an important role in engagement and in student program satisfaction. Bolliger and Halupa (2012) studied 84 online health education doctoral students, finding a negative correlation between anxiety and satisfaction in the program. Students preferred an online program because it gave them flexibility in their busy lives, which often included long commutes and heavy work schedules. These students identified instructors' timely feedback and interaction as important to their course satisfaction. In addition, the researchers posited that instructors could reduce student anxiety and increase satisfaction through student orientations, student-centered approaches, and planned interventions (Bolliger & Halupa, 2012). Furthermore, when there is a high level of trust between the instructors and students, the learning space fulfills a certain purpose in students' lives and increases the likelihood of learning; this trust, coupled with the online learner requiring a mature and disciplined disposition, assists the student in forming a good relationship with their instructor and supports overall success in the online experience (Kaifi et al., 2009).

It is not enough to take face-to-face course content and transfer it to an online setting. Online course design requires in-depth training and knowledge, as well as an understanding of how adult learners process digital information. Oh and Jonassen (2007) posit that without special consideration, the typical asynchronous discussion format of many online courses aligns poorly with constructivist theory and the nature of learning complex course material, such as that which is found in most MAEd courses. As faculty develop courses and programs in an online format, they must pay careful attention to course design.

Carr (2014) examines graduate students in an online educational leadership course, illuminating three distinct elements that contribute to student engagement: course design, instructor role, and student role. Course design encompasses course organization, planning, and teacher visibility as pertinent contexts for student engagement. The instructor's role allows for the creation of a comfortable online environment. Carr finds that instructor visibility and student interactions with the instructor allow for better engagement through interactive sessions. The roles of both instructors and students change in an online environment and both share

equal control of the learning process. In fact, the majority of the instructor's time is spent designing the learning experiences and in front-loading the course design and content (Fedynich et al., 2015), rather than in direct instruction. In summary, open communication is one of the three components of the social presence model. Next, we examine group cohesion.

## **Group Cohesion**

The importance of connection is mentioned by other researchers such as Al Ghamdi, Samarji, and Watt (2016), who remind us that online instructors must attend to immediacy behaviors in order to reduce the psychological distance that sometimes forms in a virtual environment. They use the term e-immediacy and explain that online instructors can create it by using humor, addressing students by name, or using emoticons in correspondence. This helps foster a more personal relationship with students and ultimately allows students to feel connected to the instructor and to the classroom community.

Establishing rapport is an important element in creating a stronger classroom community. One component of social presence is classroom rapport, first defined by Bernieri (1988) as harmonious interactions between faculty and students. A study by Glazier (2016) of 465 students over six years compared one course that used built-in rapport-building strategies, such as humanized instruction features like video, extensive personalized feedback on assignments, and personalized emails, to an online course with none of the above rapport-building strategies. The study examined rapport through course grades and an anonymous student survey. Both qualitative and quantitative data show that rapport building by the instructor can improve student success as measured by course grades and retention rates (Glazier, 2016). Despite the negative difference in these measures often seen in online courses, rapport offsets this effect, and students in the online rapport class had lower attrition and higher grades. This is significant because this strategy has been shown to be particularly effective for students requiring additional support.

Social presence is increased when the class moves away from being purely text based and incorporates voice and video (Jaggars, 2016). In other words, when students see and hear each other and the instructor online, social presence is increased. Students have a sense of belonging to a community, and the shift from teaching themselves or solely ingesting

content to being part of a learning community increases their success in online settings. Borup (2012) interviewed 18 students in three different online courses that incorporated a variety of video-based teaching and learning strategies. The inclusion of video interaction had a substantial effect on students' perception that the online class felt more like a face-to-face classroom and that the instructor had a social presence. In another study of online design features, video chats were one of the factors students reported to increase the teacher-student relationship (Jaggars, 2016). This idea of social presence is also examined by Sung and Mayer (2012), who determine the five most important elements of social presence to be social respect, social sharing, open mind, social identity, and intimacy. All these facets are areas in which video and voice can enrich online students' learning experience.

These five facets of social presence also contribute to academic achievement. Student engagement and instructor online interaction assist students in achieving their academic outcomes (Parenti, 2013). Moreover, students' perceived sense of learning and progressing toward their academic goals is connected to a sense of a greater learning community (Trepalacios & Perkins, 2016). Thus, students' perceptions are tied to not only their opinions of instructors' connection to students but also their sense of learning.

One way in which students report experiencing the social presence of an instructor is the immediacy of response and type of feedback received (Picciano, 2002; Richardson & Swan, 2003; Wei, Chen, & Kinshuk, 2012). Gordon (2016) stresses that online instructors need to apply immediacy behaviors typically used in face-to-face classes, both verbal and nonverbal, to the online environment in order to increase overall learning and course satisfaction. Students look for responses to instructor emails and questions, interaction on discussion board forums, and feedback on assignments and papers. Richardson and Swan (2003) surveyed 97 students in online learning courses and found that teacher immediacy behaviors increased students' feelings of social presence, which in turn impacted perceived satisfaction and learning in the course. That said, students' feelings of social presence as it relates to satisfaction and learning venture beyond the type of feedback received into addressing social justice issues within online courses.

## **Social Justice Implications and Gaps in the Literature**

Online options improve access to higher education in California (Harris, 2013; Johnson, Mejia, & Cook, 2015). Online courses are also a bonus for workforce development, as they allow adults who might not otherwise be able to complete additional education or training to attend school (Harris, 2013). Even though having the choice and flexibility of online courses is beneficial, underserved students succeed at lower rates in these courses (Johnson, Mejia, & Cook, 2015; Xu, 2013).

First-generation college students, working students, returning students, low-income students, and those with food insecurities face additional obstacles academically that often result in their dropping out and/or taking a longer time to reach their goals (Harris, 2013; Johnson, Mejia, & Cook, 2015; Xu, 2013). Not surprisingly, these same challenges are also a factor in online classes. However, for many college students, online courses offer the flexibility needed to continue working and fulfill other family and personal responsibilities without having to be on campus for all their coursework.

Student outcomes are lower in online courses across the board, and this gap is even more pronounced among racial and ethnic groups that already face an achievement gap in face-to-face classes (Johnson, 2015). An estimated one-third of online students in California community colleges are Latinx, and Kaupp (2012) reports that Latinx students have lower rates of persistence and success in online settings. One of Kaupp's (2012) most significant findings is that Latinx students who were dissatisfied with their online classes reported that they did not feel a strong instructor presence in those particular courses.

Social presence can be increased through video and voice tools that humanize the instructor and build a stronger rapport and connection with students (Cox-Davenport, 2013; Glazier, 2016). Building a strong and supportive teacher–student relationship benefits all students, whether online or face-to-face, and especially students of color (Wood, Harris, & White, 2015). Our study contributes to the literature gap by clarifying how students' perception of their online teaching and learning experience through social presence can reduce student drop-out rates and time to degree.

## **Methods**

### **Conceptual Design**

In this mixed-methods study, we aimed to identify trends in attitudes, opinions, behaviors, and characteristics in the MAEd program among a smaller sample of people (Creswell, 2002). The survey's original design was created to measure the efficacy of various program points in meeting state standards, future implementation of those standards, and overall program satisfaction rather than measuring social presence specifically.

Following the Framework, the social presence model offers a window into another way that social presence may be connected to online course student retention and success. In this model, social presence is examined as the most substantial factor in maximizing learning in online settings. Whiteside (2015) introduces the five integrated elements: affective association, community cohesion, instructor involvement, interaction intensity, and knowledge and experience. Examining the concept of social presence through this lens allows us to understand how these elements relate to satisfactory online experiences.

### **Procedures**

In order to understand students' perceptions, we analyzed Question 12, the open-ended narrative question: "We welcome any additional feedback you have about your program; your feedback will be used to help our efforts to continuously improve our program." Using the Framework and the social presence model, we evaluated the responses through the social presence lens. We then adapted Creswell's (2002) six steps to qualitative data analysis and implemented Garrison et al.'s (1999) Community of Inquiry Coding Template (Appendix A). We read through the narrative responses for the open-ended question, labeled the segments of information with codes, reduced overlap and redundancy of codes, and collapsed the codes into themes in order to analyze the data (Table 1).

Table 1  
*Social Presence Coding Scheme*

Element	Category/ Theme	Indicator	Code	Code	Code
Social Presence	Emotional Expression	Emotions	Positive	Negative	N/A
Social Presence	Open Communication	Risk-free expression	Professors	Program	Curriculum
Social Presence	Group Cohesion	Encouraging Collaboration	Face Time	Administration	Communication

**Unit of analysis.** The unit of analysis for this study was the collective answers and statements from the survey. We did not focus on comparing individual responses to one another or examining students’ perceptions outside the Framework and social presence lens.

**Triangulation of data.** Triangulation is the process of corroborating evidence from different types of data in descriptions and themes in qualitative research (Creswell, 2002). Because we only examined one open-ended narrative question, we decided to triangulate the data from that question with the Likert Scale Question 8: “I was satisfied with the following aspects of the MA program: curriculum, innovative professional practice, online classroom climate, and faculty capacity.” We chose to use the data from Question 8, as it contained social presence themes already embedded; the results appear in Table 2.

Table 2  
*Question 8 Raw Data*

Question 8: I was satisfied with the following aspects of the MA program:					
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Curriculum	0	3	22	23	48
Innovative professional practice	0	7	22	19	48
Online classroom climate	0	3	18	27	48
Faculty capacity	0	3	18	27	48

Using Table 1: Social Presence Coding Scheme, we assigned each aspect of Question 8 a social presence element. Then, we scored the

Question 8 responses assigning a numeric value to each category response as shown in Table 3 (Creswell, 2002).

Table 3  
*Question 8 Numeric Values*

Question 8: I was satisfied with the following aspects of the MA program:	Question 12 (open-ended, narrative) Social Presence Coding Scheme (Table 2) Element	Numeric value
Curriculum	Open communication	164
Innovative professional practice	Group cohesion	156
Online classroom climate	Emotional expression	168
Faculty capacity	Open communication	168

### **Profile of Population and Sample**

The sample for this study included 48 respondents, made up of students at the end of their MAEd online program and recent online MAEd program graduates from 2016–18 who volunteered to participate.

### **Instrumentation**

An online request via email and an online course link were created and 48 students/recent graduates responded and completed the survey. These surveys, which we analyzed to better understand students’ perceptions of an accelerated online MAEd program, represent one university in Southern California (Appendix B). The survey contained 13 questions: nine designed in a Likert Scale format, one multiple choice question regarding program start date, and one open-ended narrative response. Question topic areas ranged from factors influencing their selection of this program to workload appropriateness.

### **Limitations**

Although this study revealed pertinent data of student perceptions, there were some overarching limitations. These limitations are as follows: the survey was not designed using the social presence model; the study captures program-wide rather than course-specific data; the data retrieved was from an MAEd program in its first two years of existence and implementation of a new program involves some growing pains, which

may have influenced responses; and students may have used the open-ended survey question to identify further complaints rather than identify program strengths.

### **Reliability, Validity, and Generalizability**

**Reliability.** Reliability is established in this study through the use of common procedures, similar protocols, and predictability. In our study, we were committed before we began research to a specific procedure of analyzing the data through the lens of social presence. We examined all open-ended narrative responses as sources of evidence (Yin, 2009).

**Validity.** Internal validity attempts to establish a causal relationship between the treatment and the outcome (Yin, 2009). We aim to establish external validity by demonstrating that the students' responses can provide insight into improving programmatic decisions in order to produce better student online learning.

**Generalizability.** Generalizability refers to the extent to which the study can potentially be transferred to a different context with similar findings (Van den Akker, 1999). Although this study is not a universal one, we hope to be able to transfer the study to a similar context with similar conditions. We provide detailed evidence and descriptions of the narrative content to enable readers to transfer information to other settings and determine whether the findings are also transferrable.

### **Findings**

The data analyzed yielded a number of results presented via the social presence model. Findings are organized into the following social presence model elements recorded as instances, in other words, the number of occurrences: emotional expression, open communication, and group cohesion (Table 4). Findings included positive and negative emotional expression; open communication regarding students' professors, program, and curriculum; and group cohesion as demonstrated through face time, administrative support, and overall communication. In this next section, we review the findings through each of the following themes: emotional expression, open communication, and group cohesion.

Table 4  
*Social Presence Instances Summary Table*

Category/Theme	Code	Instances/Occurrences
Emotional Expression	Positive	3
Emotional Expression	Negative	5
Open Communication	Professors	16
Open Communication	Program	7
Open Communication	Curriculum	9
Group Cohesion	Face Time	3
Group Cohesion	Administration	2
Group Cohesion	Communication	5

### **Emotional Expression**

Asking students about their perceptions of their online program experience is important in guiding online program development (Kaifi et al., 2009). In this study, we observed three separate instances of positive emotional expression and five separate instances of negative emotional expression regarding the overall program. Students either expressed positive or negative emotions within this category rather than having both positive and negative responses within their narrative responses. Students whose perceptions fell into the positive emotional expression category used the following phrases to describe their experience: *I was so incredibly pleased with my experience in this program; was a good experience thank you; and this program was perfect for me... for my busy lifestyle.* Students' perceptions in the negative emotional expression category included the following narratives: *I struggled to keep up; it was difficult to know if I was on the right track; it was difficult to balance work, life, kids and everything else; and simply tracking assignments [was difficult].*

### **Open Communication**

**Professors.** Knowing professors play an important role in student learning, we examined the open communication responses in the student survey narrative. Within this theme, 16 instances from 15 individual students regarding professors appeared in the data; 14 responses included positive comments regarding the professors and two responses indicated a need for improvement. The positive responses included the following

narratives: *professors were knowledgeable... and flexible; all the professors were wonderful; instructors were flexible with assignments and due dates; faculty members were exceptional and provided high levels of practical and professional guidance; the professors were amazing; some... professors helpful, thoughtful, and collaborative; professors were well organized; all instructors were more than fair in accommodating assignments; professors were supportive and knowledgeable; I appreciate my instructors time and professionalism; professional faculty, friendly, helpful, and available; faculty so accessible and amenable to our needs; and professors were... professional and helpful.* The negative responses included the following statements: [professor's name] *was not supportive as all the other professors and thesis chair advisors need to provide more guidance.*

**Program.** Trust, timely feedback, and interpersonal interaction within a course all play an integral role in student perceptions and achievement (Bolliger & Halupa, 2012; Xu & Jaggars, 2013). In the survey data from this study, there were seven instances of program-related statements with only one comment calling for improvement: *helpful rubrics, easy to navigate [the platform]; great program design; [good] program pacing; loved the [course assignment] posts, pacing of the program, and poor organization.*

**Curriculum.** Course design and curriculum are equally important to the success of online programs and their instructors (Carr, 2014; Oh & Jonassen, 2007). Statements from this study regarding curriculum appeared as follows in nine instances: *good, good pace, expensive, concerns* (stated twice), *questionable, redundant, curriculum, challenging, and issues.*

## **Group Cohesion**

**Face time.** When students see and hear the instructor online, social presence is increased (Jaggars, 2016). Students reported a positive response to requesting or including face-to-face time within the asynchronous online program model. Three responses included face time as follows: *face time [with the professor] is helpful; the face to face meetings were good; and [I] wanted [a] face to face conference.*

**Administration.** Although not part of the social presence model, people outside of faculty and students appeared in the data. Two instances of working with the university staff and administration appeared as

follows: *I sought guidance from the administration and the staff were great.*

**Communication.** Finally, communication and instructors' connection to students are crucial to a successful online program (Trepalacios & Perkins, 2016). Five statements appeared in the study regarding communication: *Others [professors] have been a struggle to maintain communication with; the only area... [that] did not meet expectations was in communication; I felt there was very little communication; communication of expectations could be clearer; and several professors were MIA.*

## Conclusions

This study points to the positive impact of teachers' social presence and humanizing elements on students' online course experience, especially among those who value a closer teacher–student relationship (Cox-Davenport, 2014; Delmas, 2017; Glazier, 2016; Jaggars & Xu, 2013; Pacanksy-Brock, 2013). Key findings include the three categories of the social presence model, namely emotional expression, open communication, and group cohesion, which appeared throughout the students' responses. Specifically, the following codes surfaced upon multiple instances: positive, negative, professors, program, curriculum, face time, administration, and communication.

Students reported that they were most satisfied with the online classroom climate and faculty capacity out of all four options indicated in Question 8. Equally important in the open-ended narrative question was faculty, with a total of 14 instances of positive remarks. This further solidifies the conclusion that instructors, whether online or in face-to-face classrooms, have a powerful influence on not only student perceptions but also student academic achievement (Glazier, 2016). In addition, this finding strengthens the need for further investigations of student–instructor connections in the online environment.

## Discussion

This study demonstrates the efficacy of using a social presence lens to analyze student perceptions of an online accelerated MAEd program. It further illuminates the importance of open communication in the social presence model, particularly in the areas of student relationship to their

professors and curriculum. Similar to a traditional face-to-face classroom model, instructors are the most important factor in student academic success and positive learning experience (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

### **Future Research**

Online courses are here to stay and are increasing rapidly. However, without knowing more about, and applying, best practices in course design and interaction, students taking these courses will continue to demonstrate lower persistence and success rates. Further research assessing how teachers can best include humanizing elements that foster strong interaction and examining which aspects students feel more strongly support them in their online classes can provide useful information for everyone from policymakers to instructional designers and teachers. To further address gaps in the existing research, future studies could investigate synchronous versus asynchronous interactions, the value of voice and video feedback versus text feedback for specific types of assignments and activities, teachers' attitudes toward including voice and video, and aspects of training and support needed for teachers to integrate elements of social presence. Online courses support a wide variety of university students, and identifying best practices and applying them to course design and delivery will ensure that students will be as successful in online settings as they are in face-to-face classes. This, in turn, will ensure that equitable and humanized online learning experiences are in place to support student success.

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## Appendix A

### Community of Inquiry Coding Template

Elements	Categories	Indicators (examples only)
Cognitive Presence	Triggering Event	Sense of puzzlement
	Exploration	Information exchange
	Integration	Connecting ideas
	Resolution	Apply new ideas
Social Presence	Emotional Expression	Emoticons
	Open Communication	Risk-free expression
	Group Cohesion	Encouraging collaboration
Teaching Presence	Instructional Management	Defining & initiating discussion topics
	Building Understanding	Sharing personal meaning
	Direct Instruction	Focusing discussion

Source: Garrison, D. R., Anderson, T., & Archer, W. (1999). Critical inquiry in a text-based environment: Computer conferencing in higher education. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 2(2-3), 87–105.

## Appendix B

### MAEd Survey

Q1 Please rate how important the following factors were in your decision to select an accelerated online MA program.

	Not Important (1)	Slightly Important (2)	Important (3)	Very Important (4)
Length (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Convenience of the online format (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cost (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Credential Option (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other - please specify: (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q2 Please indicate when you started the MA in Educational Administration program.

Q3 Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements about your preparation in the MA in Educational Administration program in the following areas. California Administrator Performance Expectations (CAPEs) as a result of the MA in Educational Administration program . . .

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)
I am prepared to facilitate the development and implementation of a shared vision of learning and growth of all students. (CAPE 1) (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am prepared to shape a collaborative culture of teaching and learning informed by professional standards and focused on student and professional growth. (CAPE 2) (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am prepared to manage the organization to cultivate a safe	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

and productive learning and working environment. (CAPE 3) (3)				
I am prepared to collaborate with families and other stakeholders to address diverse student and community interests and mobilize community resources. (CAPE 4) (4)	0	0	0	0
I am prepared to make decisions, model, and behave in ways that demonstrate professionalism, ethics, integrity, justice, and equity and hold staff to the same standard. (CAPE 5) (5)	0	0	0	0
I am prepared to influence political, social, economic, legal and cultural contexts affecting education to improve education policies and practices. (CAPE 6) (6)	0	0	0	0

Q4 Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements about your preparation in the MA in Educational Administration program in the following areas. Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs) as a result of the MA in Educational Administration program . . .

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)
I am prepared to meet the required standard for dispositions in the profession. (1)	0	0	0	0
I am prepared to demonstrate proficiency in the CAPEs. (2)	0	0	0	0
I am prepared to develop and apply research skills to address student improvement within my teaching setting. (3)	0	0	0	0
I am prepared to analyze and integrate research. (4)	0	0	0	0

Q5 Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements about the MA in Educational Administration program.

Q6 The pacing of the courses was appropriate for an accelerated MA program.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Agree (3)
- Strongly Agree (4)

Q7 The workload of the courses was appropriate for an accelerated MA program.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Agree (3)
- Strongly Agree (4)

Q8 I was satisfied with the following aspects of the MA program:

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)
Curriculum (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Innovative professional practice (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Online classroom climate (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faculty capacity (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q9 The field work contributed to understanding the role of an administrator in the following areas:

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)
Decision making (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Data analysis (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parent engagement (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student voice (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Budget development (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professional development (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q10 The program met my expectations.

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)

- o Agree (3)
- o Strongly Agree (4)

Q11 I would recommend this program to other potential candidates.

- o Strongly Disagree (1)
- o Disagree (2)
- o Agree (3)
- o Strongly Agree (4)

Q12 We welcome any additional feedback you have about your experience in the program. Your feedback will be used to help our efforts to continuously improve our program. \_\_\_\_\_