

2023

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Recommended Citation

Li, Y., Sun, J., Chen, H., & Liu, X. (2023). Enhancing Online Presence during the Sudden Transition to Online Teaching: Case Studies of Macau Award-Winning University Teachers' Practices and Phronesis. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 48(5). <https://doi.org/10.14221/1835-517X.6204>

This Journal Article is posted at Research Online.
<https://ro.ecu.edu.au/ajte/vol48/iss5/5>

Enhancing Online Presence during the Sudden Transition to Online Teaching: Case Studies of Macau Award-Winning University Teachers' Practices and Phronesis

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Abstract: Research about the sudden transition from offline to online in Macau during the pandemic is limited. Using the Community of Inquiry (COI) framework as the deductive thematic analysis template, we interviewed six award-winning teachers at a teaching-oriented local tertiary institute about their online teaching practices concerning social, cognitive, and teaching kinds of presence. As the result of the collective case study, we found that the teachers, to some extent, echoed the good practices recommended in the COI in improving online presence. Meanwhile, the six teachers' seemingly practical skills reflected their accumulated phronesis or wisdom of practice. It is because the teachers' overarching aim was to guarantee their students' learning with care during the pandemic. By emphasising practices and phronesis, we innovate and expand on the COI as suggestions for teachers facing uncertainties and complexities of classroom teaching.

Introduction

At the beginning of 2020, universities worldwide faced an emergency; most were on lockdown, and face-to-face teaching was shifted online. In such a rapid transition, many students encountered various challenges. These challenges included insufficient Internet and hardware resources at home, inadequate IT skills (Cranfield et al., 2021), insufficient self-regulation (Yeung & Yau, 2022), feelings of isolation and anxiety (Howcroft & Mercer, 2022), fatigue and demotivation due to prolonged computer use (Zizka & Probst, 2022), and the lack of prompt feedback from peers and teachers (Conrad et al., 2021; Siah et al., 2022; Warfvinge et al., 2022). However, numerous studies have reported the positive experiences of online teaching during the pandemic, including those conducted by Almahasees et al. (2021) in Jordan, Van Wig et al. (2022) in the United States, and Poláková and Klímová (2021) in Slovakia. Generally speaking, the quality of students' online experience is influenced by multiple relationships, including learner-to-resource, learner-to-content, learner-to-learner, learner-to-faculty, and learner-to-technology (Zizka & Probst, 2022).

In Macau, a former Portuguese colony in the Far East and a special administrative region (SAR) of China since 1999, the pandemic also hit suddenly in 2020. Consequently, most university teachers in Macau started searching for online platforms to continue

teaching using collaborative tools such as Microsoft Word Teams, Zoom, or Tencent Meeting. Thanks to the fast response of the Macau SAR government to emerging infectious cases and timely border control measures, face-to-face teaching resumed in September 2020. However, whenever the pandemic attacked the local community, teachers had to fine-tune their teaching from offline to online or change their offline teaching into a hybrid mode. In the past three years, university teachers in Macau have been juggling between online, offline, and hybrid teaching. Despite challenging and temperamental circumstances, studies concerning online teaching in Macau during the pandemic are few, except for Gong et al. (2021), Hsiang et al. (2022), and Guan et al. (2022). However, these studies all report smooth online teaching cases in specific majors of comprehensive universities. However, these studies should have pointed out the potential challenges faced by Macau students and teachers.

Macau Metropolitan Institute (pseudonym) is a teaching-focused liberal arts institute with over eight thousand students. Shao (2021) and Sun et al. (2021) researched online teaching during the pandemic at Metropolitan Institute. Sun et al. (2021) surveyed over 70 full-time teachers, counting one-third of full-time teachers at the Metropolitan Institute, and reported that most did not have satisfactory feelings of presence, a sense of bond and interaction with peers and teachers in a physical learning environment when asked to transit to online learning at the beginning of the pandemic. Shao (2021) used a qualitative approach and discovered that some local students of the Department of Social Work at the Metropolitan Institute shared concerns about feeling an absence of presence when studying online. She said the students failed to build a corporeal relationship with their instructors, peers, or even the school campus. The reported lack of presence among teachers and students thus became a rationale for discussing and grasping the challenges of online presence. Shao (2021) mainly studied a handful of students in the social work department, leaving another rationale for us to see how stakeholders from other majors at the Metropolitan Institute responded to online learning despite the dwindling impact of COVID-19.

With such motivation in mind, we decided to interview six teachers from Metropolitan Institute, who were selected by the university registry and awarded for their exemplary practices in the ceremony of 'Online-merge-offline teaching and learning' since the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020. These teachers were commended for transcending online teaching and making their online classrooms a robust ecosystem, symbolising a real online learning context (Hodges et al., 2020). Hence, we aimed to explore these award-winning teachers' practices, particularly in enhancing their online students' experience of presence. We expect our study to provide suggestions to international readers and peer practitioners.

The following section will be a literature review of online presence, discussing the concept of phronesis and praxis, the theoretical debates of online presence in education, and the concept of community of inquiry, which formulates the research question and theoretical framework of later deductive data analysis. Then, following the literature review, a research design section states the research design, sampling, and data analysis. The findings present a case study for each teacher and then streamline the interviews according to the themes and sub-subthemes deriving from the theoretical framework. The discussion compares the results with previous research and negotiates the teachers' practices and phronesis. In conclusion, a developed mode of community of inquiry is generated to give implications for future practitioners as *in loco parentis* (replacing parents) for students .

Literature Review

Phronesis and Praxis in Education

Phronesis is an Aristotelian phrase meaning wisdom of practice (Kemmis & Smith, 2008). Aristotle distinguished several kinds of wisdom, i.e. *theoria*-episteme (the knowledge based on truth rather than opinion), *nous*-sophia (the wisdom deriving from contemplation, *techne*-poiesis (wisdom that devotes to the production of things), and finally phronesis (Kristjansson, 2005). Phronesis, as the practical wisdom, is the practical reasoning of people when making good decisions in a particular context (Eisner, 2002). In order to make good decisions, one has to be deliberative as they have to take into account the 'local circumstances 'to weigh tradeoffs and to consider uncertainties they might face (Eisner, 2002, p. 375); meanwhile, one has to aim at ensuring his decision is good to others and themselves in an ethical manner, just like Eisner (2002) summarised that phronesis is morally pervaded. Aristotle believed that with such practical wisdom, one could take wise action in their endeavours, doing their practice into praxis, which involves 'practical reasoning about what is wise, right and proper to do in a given situation '(Kemmis & Smith, 2008, p. 23).

In the last 40 years, academia has observed a revival of using Aristotelian phronesis and praxis perspective in education (Kristjansson, 2005) due to people's gradual recognition of the limitations of theory and universal pedagogical instructions in guiding teachers to cope with their respective classroom particularities and complexities (Eisner, 2002; Pollard et al., 2008; Shulman & Wilson, 2004). Phronesis as a practical wisdom relies on the practitioner's contextual judgement and decision, calling for their embodied knowledge and local experience rather than expert knowledge (Eisner, 2002). Aristotle does not think phronesis is teachable the way episteme or theoretical knowledge is learned. However, it is something gradually gained and nurtured through the formation of habituation since one's youth (Kristjansson, 2005). Another saying is that Aristotle believes phronesis can only be obtained through experience accumulation (Kemmis & Smith, 2008). Following either explanation, the attainment of phronesis requires the subject's internal growth, which is age-dependent. As with teacher's phronesis, Kemmis and Smith (2008) pointed out that novice teachers are less experienced than their senior colleagues in dealing with dilemmas in class. Reflective practice (Schon & Bintley, 1993; Pollard et al., 2008) and reflective teacher community (Eisner, 2002) thus became essential teacher development techniques in developing their phronesis.

The Debate of Online Presence

Online presence was initially known only as technical social presence, which was later called by some scholars as online presence. Definitions of technical social presence were many. An earlier version comes from Short, Williams, and Christie (1976, p. 65), who defined it as the 'degree of salience of the other person in the interaction and the consequent salience of the interpersonal relationships '. However, Short and colleagues' definition came from the pre-internet era, which is less likely to represent the online situation. A more recent and reliable version comes from Gunawardena and Zittle (1997, p. 9), saying online presence is 'the degree to which a person is perceived as 'real' in mediated communication '. However, presence was less of a concern before the information and communications technology era because the latter provided an alternative space for humans to dwell in (Coonfield & Rose, 2012).

Although online education has been welcomed for its ubiquitous connectivity and convenience, COVID-19 has made everyone transition to online learning whether they want to or not. However, there seems to be a pessimistic discourse among educational theorists on online education, which seemed natural as 'scepticism about the limits of online learning is as old as online learning itself' (Ward, 2018, p. 428). One of the scepticism is the lack of bodily presence in online classrooms, about which most criticisms are from phenomenology. For example, Ucok-Sayrak and Brazelton (2022), in examining the Heideggerian *gelassenheit* (releasement toward things), criticised most online teaching methods as being too manipulative and performative, demanding that students complete too many non-spontaneous tasks to act out their presence while covering up students' real beings, needs and circumstances. *Gelassenheit* is meditative thinking recommended by Heidegger (1966) as a resolution and retaliation to the increasingly technical world and prevailing calculative thinking. Heidegger (1977) found that in such a technicalised world, all things and human beings are challenged and exploited into commercial orders and production. In this sense, the meaningfulness of things and even human beings are concealed by technology in stockpiles, refusing all the other alternative meanings of things and man we should have carried (Heidegger, 1966). Heideggerian *gelassenheit* suggests that people replace calculative thinking with meditative thinking, being open towards the overlooked spontaneous meaning of things, which were, on the contrary, often overshadowed by their productive and technical characteristics (Heidegger, 1966). With the eyesight of *gelassenheit*, Ucok-Sayrak and Brazelton (2022) observed that the student's online learning experiences were unspontaneous and artificial because, in most situations, students must tick boxes, thumb up, and report attendance at so many predesigned tasks in order to prove their participation. So Ucok-Sayrak and Brazelton (2022) believed that only when online teaching pedagogy embraces a similar meditative attitude of *gelassenheit* to reveal students' real contexts and emotions could the teaching stop being technicalised.

As another example, Berenpas (2021) used the Levinasian phenomenology of the face to critique online teaching's plasticity and the enlarged ethical distance between teachers and students. The phenomenology of Levinas (1985) emphasises the face, which, as he said, is the most exposed, fragile, and self-explanatory organ of the human body. So through face, we can directly recognise different people; facing another person's face, we cannot refuse the temptation to greet them, not to mention refusing or harming him (Levinas, 1985). Face, thus, formulates the foundation of interpersonal relationships and the basic ethics between people - not to harm (Levinas, 1985). However, in online teaching platforms, teachers cannot see students' faces clearly, and even through computer screens, students' faces become both far and plastic, causing challenges for teachers to attune to students' needs and emotions (Berenpas, 2021). To Levinas, education is not just pouring knowledge into students; teachers' ethical attuning to students is even more critical (Berenpas, 2021).

Dreyfus also criticised online teaching's shortcomings in teaching competent learners and above (Ward, 2018). Following Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception, Dreyfus believes that one's skills and abilities that he relies on for living are learned or acquired through his bodily and affective relationship with the world (Ward, 2018). Such bodily and affective relationship with the world is significant for human skill acquisition at the competence and proficient level because, for novice learners, learning is context-independent. At the same time, a lot more affection contribution and embodied experience is needed for beginning-level learners to advance to higher levels (Ward, 2018). The online learning environment, therefore, cannot support learning in this regard.

The Community of Inquiry

Against the pessimistic sentiments of theoretical discussion of online teaching, scholars like Garrison and his colleagues suggested the Community of Inquiry (COI) framework to reconceptualise and improve online presence. COI has become the most widely used and frequently cited strategy in the past two decades in this area (Garrison, 2003; Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007). Ward (2018, p. 446) believed the COI framework could even help to solve the lack of emotion that Dreyfus pointed out in online teaching. It can promote the interactions among many stakeholders in online classrooms: the COI 'contains many important suggestions about how interactions and commitment can be fostered among communities of online learners and has demonstrated tight links between online engagements with course material, instructor and peers' (Kozan & Richardson, 2014, cited in Ward, 2018, p. 446).

The formulation of COI was out of the historical background of a paradigm shift in online teaching, i.e. from prioritising and idealising learning independence to interaction (Cleveland-Innes et al., 2013). Such a paradigm shift was due to the advancement of the Internet and computer-mediated communication software like those realised computer conferencing in the 1990s (Gunawardena, 1995). The community conferencing opportunities thus laid soil for online communities, and just by then, attention was paid to the social presence of online communities (Gunawardena, 1995). Then, Garrison and some other academics began to consider how to appropriate the idea of social presence to facilitate better high-order learning, so psychological and educational elements, like cognitive and teaching presence, were included in the framework (Cleveland-Innes et al., 2013).

The COI comprises three interconnected and overlapping kinds of presence: social, cognitive, and teaching; an ideal application of the three types of presence guarantees students' virtual learning experience (Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007). Social presence occurs when teachers help to establish a cohesive, supportive, and affectionate learning relationship among students. Cognitive presence arises when lessons enable students to participate in exploratory, self-initiated, and reflective learning activities to become autonomous and critical learners. The teaching presence emerges when the scientific curricular and methodological design ensures the delivery of the previous two kinds of presence and COI in general (Garrison, 2003).

Garrison and Arbaugh (2007) listed some subcategories and indicators for each kind of presence (see Table 1). Many recent studies have adopted the COI in guiding their research and pedagogy (e.g. Delmas, 2017; Hajbayova, 2016; Lau et al., 2021; Lowenthal & Dunlap, 2020; Parrish et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021) and have based their framework on innovating or extending the COI to fit their specific contexts (e.g. Ma et al., 2017; Shea et al., 2014). The COI is successful not only because it depicts multiple potential aspects of online presence; it also offers clues for teachers to present their teaching bodies in ways that students like (Chew, 2022) and for students to reveal their thinking and voices, which Uçok-Sayrak and Brazelton (2022) deemed important as an element of *gelassenheit*.

Elements in COI	Subcategories	Indicators
Social Presence	Open Communication	Risk-free expression
	Group Cohesion	Encouraging collaboration
	Affective Expression	Emotions
Cognitive Presence	Triggering Event	Sense of puzzlement
	Exploration	Information Exchange
	Integration	Connecting ideas
	Resolution	Apply new ideas
Teaching Presence	Design & Organization	Setting curriculum and methods
	Facilitating Discourse	Sharing personal meaning
	Direct Instruction	Focusing discussion

Table 1: Subcategories and indicators of the COI framework (Adapted from Garrison and Arbaugh, 2007, p. 159)

Facing the achievement of the six award-winning teachers in the Metropolitan Institute in online teaching, we kept wondering to what extent these teachers' practice echoed the critical elements of COI, which formulated our research questions:

1. To what extent do the award-winning teachers' teaching practices reflect the key features of the social presence of the COI?
2. To what extent do the award-winning teachers' teaching practices reflect the key features of the cognitive presence of the COI?
3. To what extent do the award-winning teachers' teaching practices reflect the key features of the teaching presence of the COI?

Research Design

The present study follows Creswell's definition (2007) of a case study as a methodology. To be specific, the present study is a collective case study. The collective case study can be understood by its literal meaning: researching more than one individual case (Stake, 2005).

Research Participants

In our study, we asked six award-winning teachers at the Metropolitan Institute in Macau about online teaching; each can be seen as a case because each is unique. We used purposive sampling to recruit the teachers. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) maintain that purposive sampling is effective when the researcher needs an in-depth understanding of a specific topic from knowledgeable individuals. Thus, purposive sampling was suitable for our study. Table 2 presents the demographic traits of each participant.

Teachers' pseudonyms	Gender	Academic Ranking	Discipline area they teach
Blair	Male	Associate Professor	Computer
Regan	Female	Assistant Professor	Tourism
Grace	Female	Associate Professor	Marketing
Yvonne	Female	Associate Professor	Exhibition
Fiona	Female	Lecturer	English
Oskar	Female	Assistant Professor	General Education

Table 2: Details of the interviewees

Data Collection

For our collective case study, we used semi-structured interviews, allowing the interviewer(s) to prepare a list of flexible interview items, including main topics, follow-up, and additional questions (Newby, 2010). They also permit interviewees a chance to clarify their meaning. This approach not only brings consistency to the probing process by having a set of questions (Coleman, 2012) but also creates the potential to gather rich, in-depth data (Newby, 2010). The interview items were designed based on the COI theory of Garrison and Arbaugh (2007). As such, Garrison and Arbaugh's (2007, p. 159) subcategories (open communication, group cohesion, affective expression, design and organisation, facilitating discourse, direct instruction, triggering events, exploration, integration, and resolution) for cognitive, social, and teaching presence comprised the structure when designing the interview questions. The lead author discussed the prepared questions with the fieldwork author to eradicate vagueness and linguistic errors, and they reached an agreement before sending them out to the interviewees.

Next, the interview questions were emailed to each interviewee, with the consent form to be signed before the interview. Before each interview, the fieldwork author reminded the participants to email their signed informed consent forms. The fieldwork author used the prepared items to ask questions during the interviews. However, she was also flexible and reflexive in communicating with the participants to let them clarify and explain their meanings, which demonstrates the advantage of semi-structured interviews. The fieldwork author chose to use the Tencent Meeting room (a secure and commonly used online teaching apparatus among teachers and students in the fieldwork institution during COVID-19) to conduct the interviews, given the possible infectious danger of COVID-19.

Moreover, interviewing the teachers online was also done out of concern that each would have a busy schedule. Thus, Video and audio-conferencing offer flexibility without losing the communication quality one would expect in a face-to-face interview (Nehls et al., 2015). Upon receiving the interviewees' permission, the fieldwork author recorded their voices. The interviews were held in Mandarin Chinese, a working language in the fieldwork institution, and each interview time ranged from 20 to 40 minutes.

Data Analysis

The fieldwork author transcribed the interviews before sending them to all authors for a case analysis for each participant teacher. Then, the first author implemented deductive thematic analysis when doing the cross-case analysis (Proudfoot, 2023). The lead author first used deductive thematic analysis to answer the three research questions. He, thus, adopted Garrison and Arbaugh's (2007) subcategories of the three presence of the COI as the structured themes to analyse the interview transcriptions. Finally, the teachers' practice of COI was identified based on the collocated themes and sub-themes (see Table 3). Then, all the authors, professionally fluent in Chinese and English, contributed to translating the themes and coding interview transcripts into English.

Elements in COI	Sub-themes of COI
Social Presence	Open Communication Group Cohesion Affective Expression
Teaching Presence	Design & Organization Facilitating Discourse Direct Instruction
Cognitive Presence	Triggering Event Exploration Integration Resolution

Table 3: Themes and sub-themes of the deductive analysis

Results

Within Cases Analysis

Teacher Grace is an associate professor of marketing at the business school of the Metropolitan Institute. She believes that online courses should keep pace with the time. In addition to giving lectures, online classes provide multiple methods to motivate students to interact and make learning rich and exciting. She asked students as groups to draw lots in deciding on course projects before the presentation. Before students' group discussions, she, as the instructor, clearly explained the grading rubrics, which she thought would help students have a clear target and make the grading fair. In addition, she also invited entrepreneurs outside the school to communicate with students online, sharing sales methods and knowledge. Teacher Grace's teaching was varied. However, a few students still needed to engage in online classes actively. Grace thought such students were beyond teachers' reach, but what teachers should keep is that they should have means to get students involved, such as giving extra marks to those students who contribute in class than those who will not.

Furthermore, she thought instructors should also actively adjust the online class communication atmosphere to keep students excited. She said: 'I should tell students there is no right or wrong. Everyone learns and promotes each other through sharing and engagements'. In short, teacher Grace believes that the subject of marketing itself is about communication, and online teaching is not a good reason for instructors to stop promoting communication in teaching the course of business marketing.

Teacher Fiona is an English lecturer at the University. She said: 'How can students learn English without communication?' Hence, in terms of online teaching, Fiona's goal is to make connections as much as possible with her students, making the lessons the same as face-to-face classes. In her classes, students can leave messages, type, or even speak directly on the microphone at any time, no matter whether they have questions, confusion, or give any feedback. She often interacted with her students via question-and-answer sessions and asked them to report how they felt about the lesson. She attached great importance to communication in online courses and extended her communications with the students anytime and everywhere. In addition to these methods, Fiona believed that English classes should be connected with real life and designed to increase students' desire to speak English. She introduced topics like makeup, fashion, movies, and TV series. She also covered topics like football, computers, and sports games. Fiona used online course platforms or other electronic tools to increase his online teaching presence. She asked her students to turn on the camera at classes so that instructors could know students were listening, which she

thought was just like face-to-face teaching. In addition, Fiona preferred to use her teaching platform's 'break out rooms' function to lead students' group discussions, which she thought helped divide students into different 'rooms' for discussion. She studied various software, such as Tencent and MS Teams. She tended to use a couple of teaching platforms in one class to meet her different requirements with appropriate software. For students who are not paying attention, she ensures their participation in class by asking questions. She believed she was a genuine, simple, and transparent teacher who opened her heart to communicate with students. She believed students would like to speak English with her, and she would also become friends with students, and these can be done regardless of whether they are offline or online courses.

Teacher Blair believed that the goal of online teaching is to pursue the same effect as offline courses. He believed that the effect of online courses is challenging to be consistent with offline because offline courses are face-to-face, and instructors can see students. Timely feedback regarding teaching effects can be obtained through students' expression questions but not online courses. While in online classes, he found that to ensure the standard transmission of audio signals, students' cameras were often turned off during class, and the teacher could not see students. Therefore, Blair segmented lectures into separate video clips to compensate for this difficulty. He would also stop speaking after half an hour or twenty minutes in a lecture, and then he would communicate with students by turning on the microphone or typing, asking what questions students have so far. Sometimes, when the microphone is suddenly turned on, students are not used to this abrupt change because they are facing a cold screen, so Blair tends to write down questions and communicate with students through screen sharing or asking their feelings. If students did not answer questions, Blair tended to give extra points, encouraging students to answer and communicate. Blair believes that the way of online teaching is different from that of offline: offline teaching could be more interactive. It could be extended to incur more explanation, but online teaching should be condensed and focused, with one video clip teaching one bullet point. In addition, he thought the emotional communication in online teaching is significantly reduced compared to offline teaching. 'It is difficult for instructors to determine which students are not listening. In this case, instructors should set a minimum learning target for students; he said: 'Do not criticise them; please only encourage'.

Teacher Yvonne is an associate professor in the area of exhibitions. Like other teachers, she also believes that the goal of online courses is to restore the effect of teaching to the greatest extent. Yvonne attempted to achieve this goal with her methods. She would use relaxing language to create an online environment conducive to learning so students could give feedback regarding their learning status and problems at any time in class. 'Although online interaction is difficult, making good use of some small designs of online platforms will make online interaction very special. Young people like it very much', said Yvonne. She also used a task-based learning method to increase the interaction with each student. For example, she gave the students an exhibition theme in her Exhibition Practice class and asked them to design their plans online. In the class, students were divided into groups to conduct discussions through social media apparatuses, strengthening communication and interaction among students. Yvonne believes that teachers should impart knowledge and care about and understand students. Students also can gain friendships with teachers at online courses through teachers encouraging rather than judging students. When facing some students who did not participate in class communication, Yvonne shared how she would: 'The best way to get them involved in the class discussion is giving them more marks, and this is a practical and effective way to encourage them'.

Teacher Oskar taught general education. She believes that whether it is online teaching or offline, as long as the teaching goals are achieved, it is a successful class. She

also admitted that completing and achieving teaching goals online is more challenging. So, she believes that online teaching requires teachers and students to have more patience. Both teachers and students should get familiar with the online platforms before class. In addition, the online course teacher should give students more time to answer questions, which may reduce anxiety. Teacher Oskar also attached great importance to interaction in online courses. She hoped students could communicate with her anytime by turning on the microphones or texting her. Oskar thought this communication habit must be established in the first class online. Otherwise, it would be more challenging to keep these habits. Oskar used several platforms simultaneously during class to foster better communication when teaching online.

Teacher Regan is from the Tourism department. Compared with the teacher who always talks, teacher Regan prefers to let the students speak more. In the first class, she encouraged students to express their opinions. She believes that the training goals of universities should be critical thinking and the courage to express oneself. To cultivate these qualities in students, teachers must be good at creating a positive learning environment, even in online courses. She believed a teacher's voice tone is fundamental, making students feel friendly and comfortable.

Regarding giving feedback on students' homework, she thought that teachers need to establish an electronic discussion area with students where every student could be kept anonymous so that students can speak freely in the discussion area. Regan also actively participated in discussions with students in this area. Regarding the students who were reluctant to participate in class discussions, Regan used scores to motivate them, as previous teachers did. She carefully recorded the students' answers and recorded how many extra points should be given to the students. Through these methods, she found that most classes would like to participate in online communication.

Cross Case Analysis

The Practices Reflecting the Key Features of the Social Presence

Open communication. All the interviewed teachers stated that they used multiple platforms to teach to open up more student-student and student-teacher communication. For example, teacher Yvonne invited her students to a WeChat (a popular social media app) friend group where they could continue talking about projects and seeking help after class. Teacher Oskar used three platforms simultaneously while teaching, with MS Teams as the primary teaching platform and WeChat and Tronclass as the backup plans. To facilitate teacher-student interaction, she uploaded teaching materials on multiple platforms simultaneously. More importantly, the teachers expanded their ways of communicating with students. When Teacher Blair kept on teaching for 20 to 30 minutes, he would stop to interact with students via microphone and type in the chat box. Teacher Fiona used similar communication to Oskar but also developed surveys to explore, particularly those who choose not to speak openly in class. Blair was the only one who majored in computer science among the interviewed teachers. He thought the curriculum for computer science students emphasises operations; during the teaching process, it is crucial to know if the students have mastered relevant orders and codes for operations. Teacher Blair usually asked the students to share the screen to demonstrate their operation or encountered troubles.

Except for preparing the necessary hardware for possible open communication, teachers expressed that open communication with students depends on the teacher's more profound understanding of the students' characteristics. Teacher Fiona found reasons by asking students to write letters to her, and she knew why some of her students were not

accustomed to directly opening their microphones to present in an online class: 'Maybe it is because of their different backgrounds. They all write to me about some special memories in feedback. They said they never learned English online, so they became slower and needed more time'. Teacher Regan realised that it was Macau students' lack of confidence, the tradition of staying low-key, and the sense of privacy that were the common barriers for her students to turn on their computer cameras to present in class after she invited her students to write feedback to her. She knew that forcing the students to turn on the cameras would lead to their dissatisfaction, which in turn would affect teaching efficiency. As a result, she chose to respect students' characteristics and preferences.

The interviewed teachers agreed that encouragement is essential to psychologically enhance students' open communication. Teachers Yvonne and Regan realised that some students remained silent due to their lack of confidence, particularly their fear of giving wrong answers. So, the teachers believed their students' participation should be highly encouraged in online teaching. On the contrary, correcting students' mistakes in answers seemed insignificant. As another way of encouraging students to lower their self-esteem and to communicate openly, teacher Grace highlighted to her students the special meaning of open thinking as a principle in class: 'Students should not follow so-called authority; they should express themselves boldly. Because in our marketing area, any ideas could be proved correct unless tested by the market'.

Group cohesion. The teachers thought making rules was a guarantee for cohesive group work. For example, teacher Grace focused on the teamwork rule among students, emphasising a fundamental principle for each student to follow in their online group work:

I set the rule that all group members should complete the task together. I will only evaluate group performance based on joint work. If students complain about who did more and who did less, that does not work with me. I will tell them to look for group members according to their goals. They should learn to work together.

Teacher Regan sometimes noticed unfairness in the group assignments and constantly fine-tuned her evaluation criteria to solve problems. The interviewed teachers also mentioned that to facilitate student cohesion, students should be more tolerant of online situations. Teacher Blair described her experience of guiding her students to be more tolerant:

In the early stages of the epidemic, when we started offering classes online, it was the first time for everyone. Various problems arose in class. In another case, students' unfamiliarity with the software could interrupt the average pace of teaching. A poor network signal also led to poor information reception. The teacher's guidance about mutual understanding and tolerance was significant then.

As another method of nurturing students' tolerance, teacher Regan formulated an atmosphere where students appreciated each other's differences. She always persuaded the students that the collision of different viewpoints helps them appreciate each other and understand diversity.

Affective expression. The interviewed teachers agreed that tone and expression are vital in teaching, and they all paid particular attention to them in online teaching. Teachers Regan and Grace held the same idea that students can sense the teacher's tone across the screen:

In the online classroom, students mainly listen to the teacher. When they listen to the teacher, they not only hear the words but can also feel the teacher's tone, be aware of the teacher's attitude, and perceive the teacher's style. If a teacher teaches mechanically, the students cannot feel the teacher's temperature.

Teaching will be smoother only when there is an emotional connection. The teacher should pay attention to tone and attitude.

When asked about affective expression, teachers Yvonne, Grace, and Fiona discussed authenticity. From teacher Yvonne's perspective, caring for students, seeing things from students' perspectives, and encouraging them can improve emotional connections. Teacher Grace even proposed that teachers should teach by being role models and giving respectful verbal instructions.

The Practices Reflecting the Key Features of the Cognitive Presence of the COI

Design and organisation. Teachers Blair and Oskar tended to split a class session into meaningful sections. Teacher Oskar shared that cutting a class session into separate mini-lectures is effective in online classes. Blair compared how offline teaching is different from online and stated that in the past, he often used narratives to stream and connect important knowledge points in class, making things he taught in one class seem as if they comprised a whole story. However, in online teaching, Blair thought otherwise: He recorded his explanations of individual knowledge points and uploaded them as video excerpts, and he sometimes used other online resources as well:

If I tell stories, it might take 40 minutes or even longer. This way, I might distract the students from concentrating. I will use the knowledge points [in online teaching] to separate overall knowledge into individual points... I suggest recording a class or using something else online.

Teachers also stressed the importance of balancing teaching and self-study. In online classes, the interviewed teachers usually had a scientific arrangement of teaching and student self-study time. For example, teacher Regan only lectured on some essential parts of a lesson, and for the rest of the content, she often assigned flipped classroom tasks, letting students search for and share their findings. Similarly, teacher Yvonne dedicated 50% of the time to teaching, 30% for students doing a case study, and the other 20% for giving students feedback in a single class. However, teacher Blair relied on videoed knowledge points or posting online resources for students to watch on their own time rather than reserving a complete 3-hour session for class as in the traditional context; his justification is that he trusted students would take the lead for self-study when they became interested in a topic by using other online resources. Teacher Fiona is the opposite of Teacher Blair; she gives lectures the same way both online and offline, and only gives students the chance to apply an interaction after class.

The teachers highlighted the importance of choosing and learning using online teaching platforms. Just like teacher Fiona, who preferred easy-to-use platforms for students:

I mainly choose something that may be easy for students to operate: 'simple, direct, and effective' are my keywords. It is simple to use without signing in or logging in and being as direct as possible—operate with your fingers. Then, in the end, it was effective. So, these traits benefit my online teaching.

Teacher Oskar believed that only when teachers know the functions of the teaching apps or software they can teach students well.

Facilitating discourse. Some of the interviewed teachers said they reward students whenever they raise their hands, answer a question, or perform group work to encourage active participation in online classes. Teachers Regan and Blair explained their principles of quantifying students' participation:

Those who want to get higher credits and those who want to avoid being caught 'paddling water' [not being studious] must be cautious with how they make contributions. Some students want to get high grades, become very active, and take every opportunity to participate. Then they might ask, 'If I do this work for nothing, why bother doing it?'

Some teachers stressed the vital role they must play in setting and changing the atmosphere in the online classroom, despite teachers and students communicating through a computer screen. Teacher Grace said: 'I think you can feel the atmosphere over the screen that in some classes, students are more enthusiastic, but in others, students are more indifferent. The teacher should take the initiative to adjust students'. Teacher Oskar shared the critical time when she adjusted the class's emotional atmosphere: 'Although you did not know them very well on the first day, the first day is essential in setting the atmosphere. Once a good and welcoming beginning is established, later, there will be no way that they keep silent'. Teachers Oskar and Regan recommended inviting some of the more active or talkative students to speak, which could be tips for ice-breaking.

Direct instructions. Teacher Blair considered it necessary to repeat classroom instructions in online lessons because sometimes, when he was writing on the Orange board while the students were listening online, his handwriting could not be seen shot by a computer camera. Hence, he had to repeat his words and make sure students understood. Teacher Blair also intentionally slowed down his voice when he wanted to highlight some key points for students, and he would ask students to take notes when necessary. Similarly, teacher Yvonne would pause and ask her students to clarify their status and grasp of the content.

In order to enhance students' online learning efficacy and ensure students are present, teacher Regan would ask students impromptu questions and correct their homework. Similarly, teacher Fiona thought that sudden questions could be a method to check if students were absent online. Teachers also exemplified how they could discover students' deficiencies in studying through homework. Teacher Regan said:

When you asked him, "understand"? He said that he understood. Nevertheless, when I asked him to write, I found he did not understand. After giving them homework, I read it to determine whether they understood or had problems. Then, if there is still an obstacle, it is time to talk about the problem in the next class.

The Practices Reflecting the Key Features of the Teaching Presence of the COI

Some interviewed teachers mentioned the importance of keeping their teaching content new and exciting for students. Teacher Blair insisted that teachers should not teach all the content in class because students may lose the sense of 'freshness' when learning; in contrast, he encouraged students to use many resources from MOOCs, particularly those from other countries, to self-study the rest of the content. He explained how MOOCs arouse student interest: 'When he [a student] has access [to MOOCs], he will feel that this teacher [in the MOOCs] has an even better teaching style'. Teacher Grace stressed that teaching content and keeping up with the times can attract students. She said:

A better way is to make the course as current as possible, and then students are more willing to watch and listen. I teach marketing related to real-world matters, so I made the course evolve with time. If we still use traditional classrooms and outdated teaching content, it will be more interesting to attract students.

Teacher Grace shared some strategies to keep students interested, like incorporating new commercial cases and inviting entrepreneurs and salespersons to give guest lectures. Teacher Regan mentioned her method to keep the freshness of the course, which is to make the students feel eye-opening.

Some teachers explained how they build on and make good use of their students' past learning experiences. When introducing new topics, Teacher Fiona usually started with her own stories about the issue before inviting students to share theirs, upon which she began teaching. Teacher Grace agreed. Connecting students' experience facilitates their assimilation of new knowledge. Teacher Blair indicated that students' sense of strangeness in the face of new knowledge, complicated knowledge, is a challenge to their research:

This is why we like to do some things we are familiar with, and people will not quickly go beyond their comfort zones. However, we still have to instil in our students a lot of new and different knowledge in every class. The danger is that if this knowledge point is outside their range of interest, they will feel bored.

Teacher Fiona provided another requirement for her students: to take notes in textbooks, regardless of whether they were listening to the teachers online or offline. Her justification for this action is to help students develop their own experience when studying: 'I told them that no book is the best, but you know that the book written down by yourself will be your book, then you can understand them '. The interviews showed that teachers thought highly of having their students learn through exploratory tasks. When teaching the exhibition, teacher Yvonne asked her students in groups to organise a mini-exhibition, during which students discussed and prepared each activity process with Yvonne's advice, supervision, and help. Teacher Grace teaches marketing studies and usually provides ten marketing case projects for her students. She delivered relative marketing theories before each group researched and planned their case. As a computer teacher, Blair recalled how he reversed the teaching activity design by posing a wrong practice, inducing the students to explore the infelicity and trace the engine of mistake, rather than teaching from theories in books.

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings showed that the practices of the award-winning teachers could be mapped to the COI framework (see Table 3) and were almost all covered by the participant teachers. In other words, the framework plays a role in the teachers' outstanding online teaching. Furthermore, some other reasons facilitate the teacher's online teaching efficacy. As shown in the findings, some teachers asked the students to write to report their circumstances, tension, and challenges in the study online so that the teachers became aware of the students' real contexts and situations in addition to how they demonstrated themselves only in front of the computer screen. This writing method resembles the performative writing technique that Uçok-Sayrak and Brazelton (2022) suggested, which could help online students to put their embodied presence and even emotional contexts and encounters onto paper. To Uçok-Sayrak and Brazelton (2022), it is a form of returning the *gelassenheit* to online teaching. From the findings, we also know that some teachers used students' previous learning experiences or schemata as the scaffold to teach new things online. This is useful not only from the perspective of the well-known learning theory of the zone of proximal development but also from how Ward (2018) revealed students' source of having affection to some knowledge in online teaching. As he said:

No learner, online or off, is a blank slate—words, concepts, modes of expression, and delivery will already have particular affective resonances for each of them. The challenge for educators is thus to draw on the palette of existing bodily capacities and affective resonances that each learner brings to the table (p. 442).

Therefore, if teachers can use students' past experiences, they can let students' affection to some extent be concerned to increase their feeling of embodied presence in online learning, which is what Dreyfus believed an excellent teacher's wisdom (Ward, 2018). The findings also mentioned some good practices that the teachers used, which could be references to other online practitioners elsewhere, like teachers paying more attention to their tones and expressions online to calm students down. Chew (2022) also recommended similar practices, emphasising that teachers' facial expressions, dress, and all other elements that contribute to a professional look will increase online students' feeling of presence.

It should be noted that though the interviewed teachers are all recognised as role models of online teaching, they each have their own way of teaching, despite sometimes sharing similar views and practices. Shulman and Wilson (2004) highlighted that teaching is complex as teacher faces so many students with different weaknesses and longings; they, therefore, advocated abolishing prescribing teaching solutions to meet across all classroom contexts with different degrees of complexity. Instead, they commanded teachers' phronesis as the thing that makes teachers attuned to the uniqueness and complexity of their classrooms (Shulman & Wilson, 2004). The interviewed teachers' adoption of unique measures in their respective settings is their use of phronesis.

As phronesis is a 'moral disposition to act wisely and prudently' (Kemmis & Smith, 2008, p. 15), the telos or aim of phronesis is to make the right judgement for doing things ethically (Kemmis & Smith, 2008). In education, facing the complexity of students and social contexts (Shulman & Wilson, 2004; Pollard et al., 2008), particularly during the beginning stage of the pandemic, teachers are not simply teaching; rather, teachers are attuning to students for the student's interests, and it is also for the benefit of society, which is phronesis in education (Kemmis & Smith, 2008). Indeed, some of the seemingly practical teaching practices of the interviewed teachers could be their accumulated wisdom of practice, aiming at protecting the students' learning with care and decency in difficulty. Therefore, it was teachers' phronesis helping them overcome the challenges in teaching during the pandemic. However, as said previously, attaining phronesis goes hand in hand with a person's lived experience. Aristotle explains that young people are not experienced enough to make ethical judgments and deal with ethical dilemmas, though they can learn theoretical and practical knowledge (Kemmis & Smith, 2008). Thus, for novice teachers to obtain phronesis, they can only acquire it through accumulated life experience.

Teachers need to develop their phronesis in case of any emergent situations in the future. Like the start of COVID-19, the urgent transition from offline to online almost paralysed all fixed and prepared teaching and learning theories. Teachers' phronesis had an impact on play again when people suddenly found the limitations of the theories and instructions, as Eisner (2002) said earlier.

Conversely, there must be a way to train somewhat or give suggestions to future teachers in nurturing their phronesis. Furthermore, embracing phronesis demands teachers to be open to any criticisms and modifications in their actions and judgement (Kemmis & Smith, 2008). Indeed, whether an action of a teacher is right is relative because of the unstable, constantly changing, and sometimes internally contradicted classroom contexts (Schon & Bintley, 1993). Therefore, Schon advocated the incorporation of reflection into practice to have the professionals do the right thing against the complexity of the field (Schon & Bintley, 1993). Eisner (2002) advocated both teachers' reflection and teacher

community of reflection. Therefore, referring to the teachers' practices that spurred students' online presence, the figure of COI developed by Garrison and Arbaugh (2007) could be expanded herein as a more suitable framework for any emergent situation online. A developed COI framework incorporates the practices for online presence and necessary reflection leading to phronesis (see Figure 1).

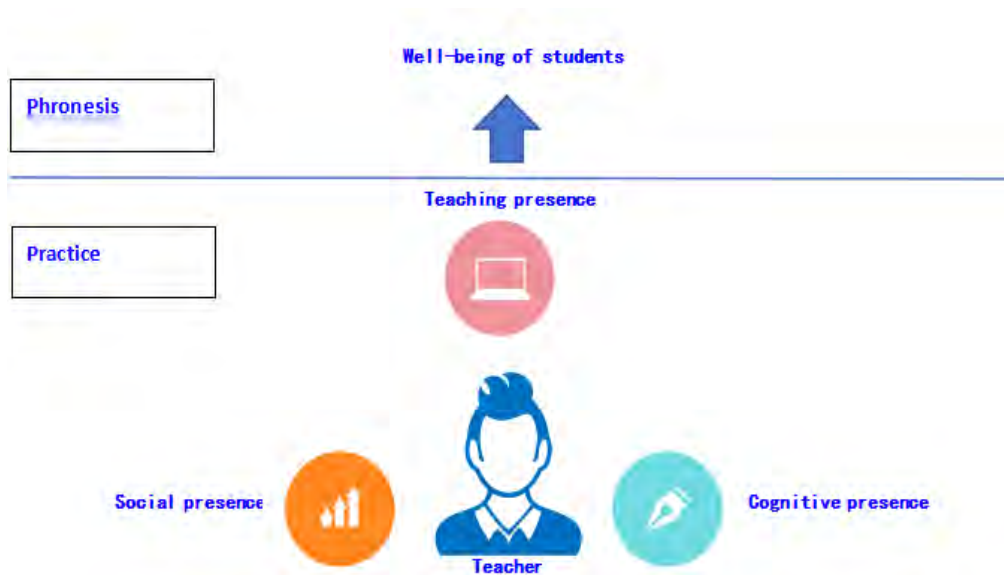


Figure 1 An expanded COI framework

Theoretically, the six award-winning teachers' phronesis-oriented online teaching could be seen as their tributes to the Aristotelian wisdom of practice. Of course the teachers per se were unaware of the antique Greek philosophy of phronesis, nor did they try to use phronesis theory to level up their teaching in contrast to the weaknesses of some universal instructions, because at the start of the COVID-19, there was not an established universal recommendation. The teachers' original intention of taking such action was out of their impromptu and practical attuning to their students' conditions, considering their well-being, dignity, and then the students' learning as a secondary issue. A finding like this may galvanise us to reconceptualise teachers beyond the commonly heard discourse of professionalism in teacher education. On the contrary, it may lead us to a pre-professionalism paradigm to see the role of the teacher as *in loco parentis*, who prepares and protects students for their futures (Van Manen, 1991). Nevertheless, such an antique view of the teacher is overshadowed (Van Manen, 1991) by the discourse of neoliberal professionalism. In this vein, the expanded COI framework could be seen as our summon of de-professionalisation of teacher education, and future researchers could also use it as an alternative to understand and conceptualise teachers' acts online.

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Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank the editors and reviewers of AJTE. The corresponding author of the study is Dr. Jing Sun (cynthiasun@um.edu.mo) from University of Macau.