Chapter 17
Emotional Presence in Online Learning

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ABSTRACT

This chapter presents a theoretical understanding of emotional presence in online learning. Research findings show that emotions have a crucial influence on successful online learning. The increasing rate of online courses, especially in higher education, makes us reconsider how necessary emotional presence is to participate in the learning process. Learning is not only a teaching or assessment process, but also a social and emotional process. It is therefore crucial to understand how students engage in online learning, and how lecturers and students perceive their emotional presence. This chapter also highlights the importance of emotions expressed by both students and lecturers in online learning.

INTRODUCTION

Emotions play a significant role in how we manage our lives through our needs, motives and concerns. In this process, our actions are guided and motivated by our biological needs and our social cognitions and goals. According to Bowlby (1969, p.104), emotions are either the phases of intuitive appraisals of our organismic states and urges to act or the consequence of environmental situations in which we find ourselves. Since Darwin explained the role of emotions in human and animal survival from an evolutionary perspective, various theories have been put forward that attempt to understand the concept of emotions from physiological, cognitive, social and many other aspects (Fox, 2018). Due to their

paramount importance, emotions experienced in educational settings have been of interest to research-ers in various fields since the 1930s, particularly in the area of personality studies analysing students' test anxiety (Zeidner, 2007), research on achievement motivation (Heckhausen & Heckhausen, 2008) and more recent studies. '' In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the role of emotions in academic settings, especially in how emotions shape student engagement and learning" (Pekrun & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2014, p. 1).

Furthermore, from an educational perspective, the importance of emotions lies in the impact they have on learning and development, which is why they are considered multi-component, coordinated processes of psychological subsystems that include emotional, cognitive and motivational processes (Pekrun, 2014; Phelps, 2006). Apart from influencing personality development and mental and physical health, emotions control students' attention and learning strategies and regulate their motivation to learn and self-regulation skills (Pekrun, 2014). Emotions are part of their identity. Pekrun et al (2002) and Pekrun et al. (2010) point out, academically addressed emotions such as hope, pride, relief, fear, anger, shame, boredom, and hopelessness are significantly associated with variables such as academic achievement, student motivation, learning strategies, and self-regulation skills. Students carry their emotions most often in the classroom through experiencing excitement, anticipation, pride in their success, test anxiety, etc. At the same time, students may also experience social emotions such as admiration, empathy, anger, jealousy in the classroom environment. Moreover, they tend to freely carry their emotions into the class-room in the out-of-school environment (Pekhun, 2014). Pekrun et al. (2002) introduced the concept of "academic emotion" which relates emotions to learning, teaching and achievement. Accordingly, academic emotion means "for emotions that are directly linked to academic learning, classroom instruction, and achievement" (p.12) This concept also relates to the student experience and emphasises that emotions are a crucial component of the learning process (Stenbom, Hrastinski, & Cleveland-Innes, 2016).

Similar to face-to-face learning, emotions are considered important factors in successful online learn-ing (Marchand & Gutierrez, 2012; Swerdloff, 2015). The increased use of online learning environments has driven technology-led growth and increased the need for research on online learning interactions such as social, emotional, cognitive, and hands-on instruction (Lawson, 2019). According to Lipman (2003, p.18), "online learning is a process in which, emotive experience, mental acts, thinking skills, and informal fallacies" interact to improve reasoning There is limited evidence that emotions have a significant impact on learning, engagement and success in online environments although it is difficult to observe the dynamics of emotions that arise in online learning (Artion, 2012).

As awareness of the factors that are critical to online learning has grown, so has the number of theo-retical advances. One of the most widely discussed theories in the design of online learning environments is undoubtedly The Community of Inquiry Model (Bozkurt, 2019; Garrison, 2016; Garrison, Anderson & Archer, 2000). At the heart of the CoI model is the active collaborative work of learning communi-ties that brings together the components believed to be essential for successful knowledge acquisition in online learning environments (Garrison, 2007; Garrison et al., 2001). Based on Dewey's (1933) pragmatic constructivism, the Community of Inquiry (CoI) model represents the process of creating a collaborative teaching and learning process for a deep and meaningful learning experience in an online learning environment through three interrelated entity dimensions: cognitive presence, social presence and teaching presence (Garrison et al., 2000, 2001). Cognitive presence represents the construction of knowledge when participating in CoI, based on the idea that participants construct knowledge and create learning. The concept of social presence emphasises the personal aspect of the model and focuses on the emotions and personal experiences of the participants and how these are influenced by participation

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