



Students' views about social presence in online courses at UNED

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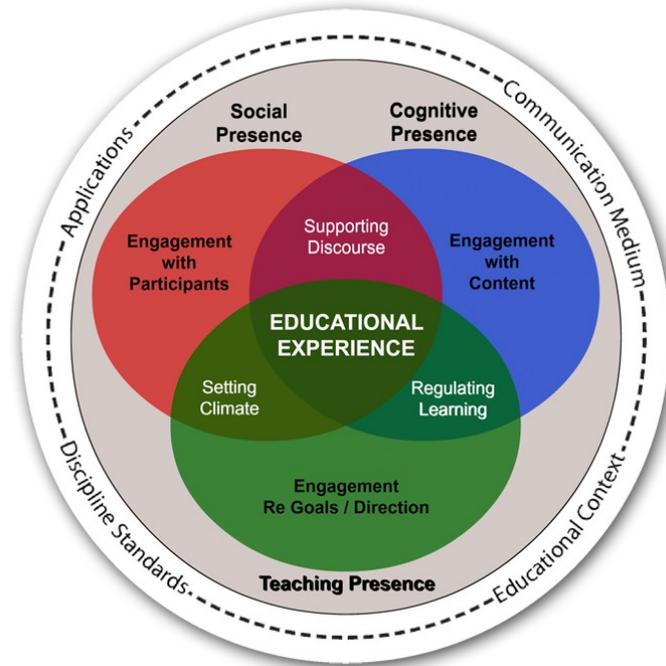
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The Community of Inquiry (CoI) model

— The CoI conceptual framework represents a process of creating a deep and meaningful (collaborative–constructivist) learning experience through the development of 3 interrelated presences:

- Social presence.
- Cognitive presence.
- Teaching presence.

— The CoI model has been widely used in online education → **Thus, an online higher education course, a MOOC, etc. can be considered a COMMUNITY OF INQUIRY.**



The Community of Inquiry model
<http://www.thecommunityofinquiry.org/content/images/diagram.coi.jpg>

Col survey-based study at UNED

— **Aim:** To reflect to what extent the three dimensions or interdependent presences (teaching, social and cognitive) were perceived by students in their learning experiences on digital platforms.

— **Conceptual framework:** Based on constructivist & collaborative approaches.

— **Items:** 34-items questionnaire / Likert-type scale (1 to 5 points).

— **Structure:** 3 dimensions, in order to analyse:

- Teaching presence: 13 items.
- Social presence: 9 items.
- Cognitive presence: 12 items.

Validation process:

— Sample:

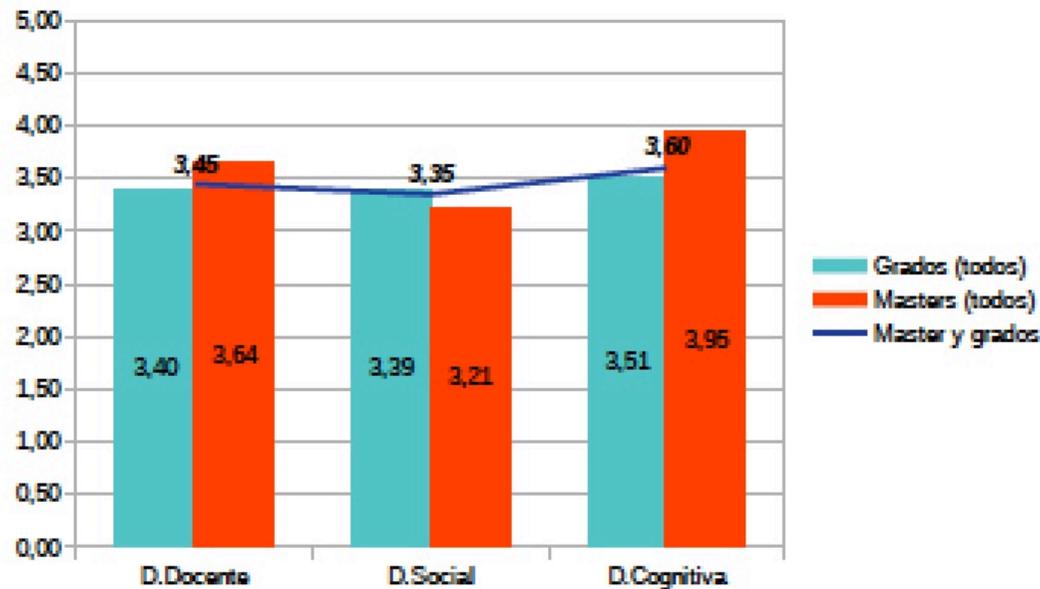
- Replies: 162 students. 25 online courses (Undergraduate and Master level) at UNED
- Age: 37 years average.
- Gender: 75% female students (in accordance with the profile of the students in the Faculty of Education).
- Background: 76,5% were studying a Bachelor programme.

For a complete analysis, see:

Ballesteros, Gil-Jaurena, & Morentin (2019),
<http://dx.doi.org/10.6018/red/59/04>



Results (I)



Items

— Highest score:

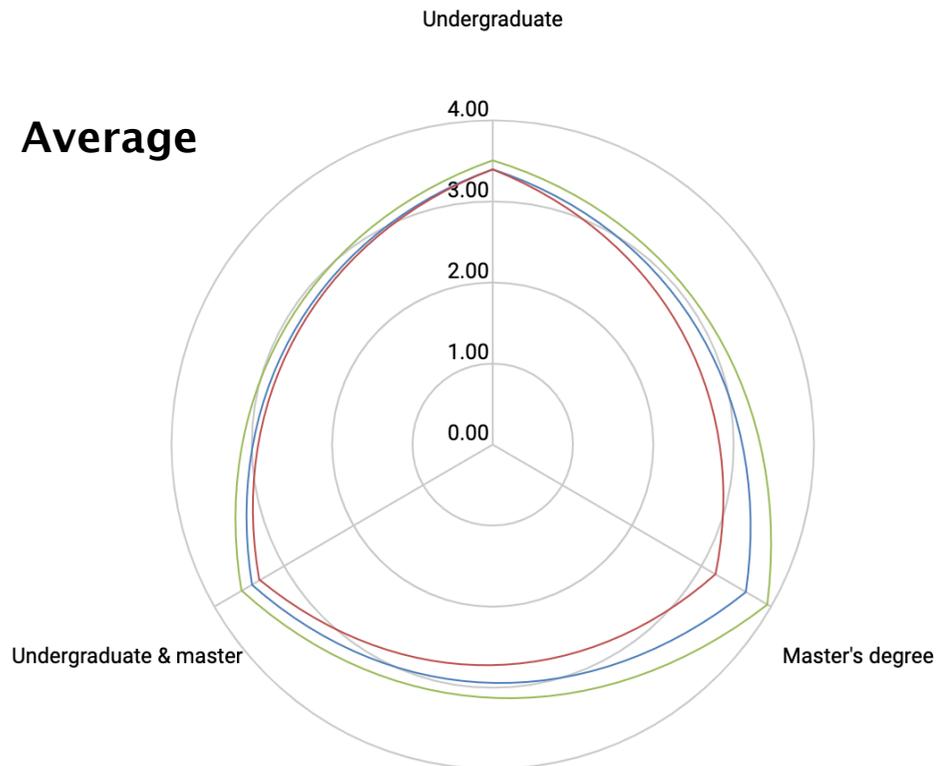
Item 4. The instructor clearly communicated important due dates/ time frames for learning activities (Teaching presence: design and organization): Mean: 4,51. SD: 0,86.

— Lowest score:

Item 15: I was able to form distinct impressions of some course participants (Social presence: affective expression). Mean: 2,95. SD: 1,37

Results (II)

Average



- Teacher presence
- Social presence
- Cognitive presence

— Homogeneous behaviour between the variables.

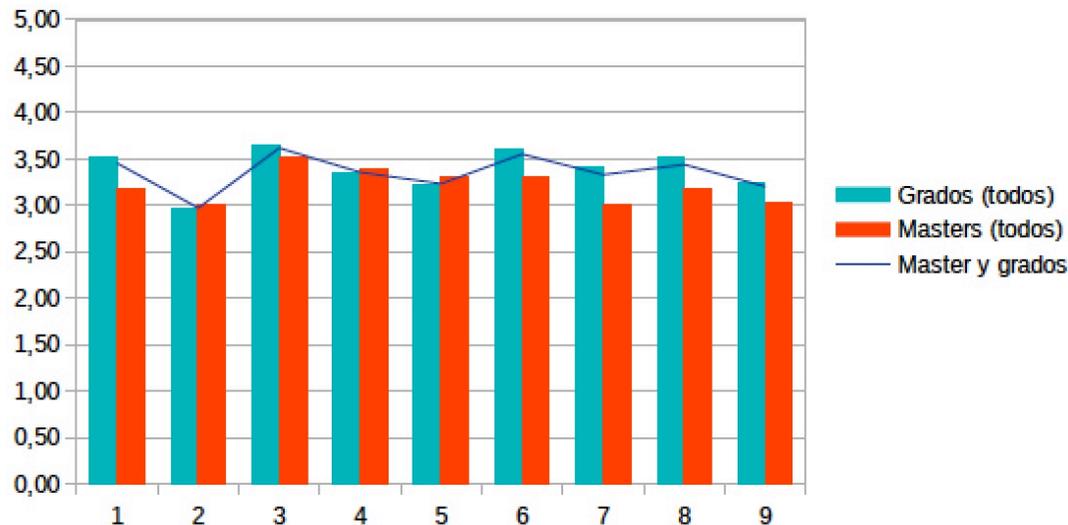
— Higher score for "cognitive presence" → Especially high in master studies.

— Lower score for "social presence" → Especially low in master studies.

UNED studies enhance the cognitive component, and have a lower degree of socialization in distance learning communities.

Social presence

Items D. Social



Affective expression

- 14. Getting to know other course participants gave me a sense of belonging in the course.
- 15. I was able to form distinct impressions of some course participants.
- 16. Online or web-based communication is an excellent medium for social interaction.

Open communication

- 17. I felt comfortable conversing through the online medium.
- 18. I felt comfortable participating in the course discussions.
- 19. I felt comfortable interacting with other course participants.

Group cohesion

- 20. I felt comfortable disagreeing with other course participants while still maintaining a sense of trust.
- 21. I felt that my point of view was acknowledged by other course participants.
- 22. Online discussions help me to develop a sense of collaboration.

Source: Col survey available at <http://www.thecommunityofinquiry.org/coi>



Analysis and conclusions

Correlation

— We highlight the correlation between the 3 factors, which suggests a remarkable correlation between the teaching and cognitive presences, while the social factor shows a low correlation with the other two components.

Discussion:

— This has led us to review the way in which the items are formulated within each factor, particularly the social dimension.

— The way the *social presence* items are stated in the survey poses a self-assessment of the students on feelings arising in the process of learning, without clearly visualising the role of the teacher. That is, these *social presence* items are closer to an emotional perspective, centred on the student, than to the social approach promoted by the teacher.

Next steps

- Our goal is to explore the social dimension, either it happens within or beyond the virtual platform we use in the courses. The aim of the study is to understand the role of social presence in the learning process and, consequently, to improve the design of our courses.

- Analysis of:
 - students' perceptions about open social learning
 - the current social practices our students use during their learning process
 - if those social interactions happen within the online courses or in other digital spaces
 - differentiate between undergraduate and master courses, given that the course design varies in these two educational levels

- Methodology:
 - Pilot survey: open ended questions in a master course (150 students approx.): use of the LMS tools, use of social tools (Facebook, Whatsapp, ...). November 2019
 - Discussion groups with students in regional centres (3). January–February 2020
 - Survey: various undergraduate and master courses. February–April 2020

- Proposals for course design



Thanks for your time



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