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Chapter 7

Creating a Culture of Community in the Online Classroom Using Artistic Pedagogical Technologies

This chapter was very helpful in describing some of the educational shifts that have begun with the introduction of technology in the classroom. Because students are beginning to learn in extremely different ways than their parents before them, we must also educate them in a way that fits their learning style. This chapter helped identify some of the reasons why it is important.

According to the text, there has been a “plethora of literature that supports the importance of interaction, social presence, and community in online education,” (Veletsianos 131). Because of this, we need to find new and creative ways to get students to interact at these levels.

There was also an important of “interaction” in this chapter. Interaction means more than just having the students work with different programs. It should include meeting with one another in an online classroom, sharing ideas, collaborating, critiquing, and, of course, working with different programs.

It is very important to create an atmosphere of social presence in an online classroom because the students can easily lose focus while not attending a real class. In doing this, you help create a sense of reality in that it feels like everyone is sitting right next to one another in a classroom.

There are seven factors for pedagogy that could increase the learning in an online environment. Perfecting each of these will truly help the students get the most out of each lesson: transactional distance, social presence, social equality, small group activities, group facilitation, teaching style and learning stage, and community size (Veletsianos 134). These are all factors that a regular classroom teacher must take into consideration prior to each unit, so there is no reason why a teacher in this environment shouldn't expect to have to utilize the same strategies.

As discussed earlier, teachers must continually evaluate and research new information so that they can find the best practices for their classroom. Working with the arts (photography, art, literature, poetry, music, drama, and dance) have shown positive results in getting students to reflect and communicate with one another (Veletsianos 135). Utilizing the idea behind dramas, teachers can effectively engage multiple students into one activity that creates a very real atmosphere. As discussed in the chapter, a particular teacher assigned a group of students to be patients and another group to be their nurses. Their guided questions online helped them communicate with one another in a very real way. Activities like this help create social presence and remove the wall that is often put up when working in an online classroom.

Incorporating Arts-based activities into online classroom environments truly help students because they offer more and enhanced ways to interact with one another. Since a real classroom's strength is its ability to effectively utilize the students in the classroom,

so too can an online environment utilize that strength by assigning activities that are usually left to that of the Arts.