Understanding the Perception of Social Presence in Online Learning. Edition No. 1

Description: Many colleges and institutions are moving their programs online to meet the needs and expectations of the adult learner. It is not a matter of what we teach, but also a matter of how we teach it. Although research regarding social presence in distance and online learning is emerging, studies conducted in this area point towards social presence as a significant factor that has a positive impact on the learning process and outcomes. Research indicates a heightened need for examining the relationship between social presence and perceived learning and satisfaction as well as retention in online courses. The aim of this literature review was to gain a detailed knowledge of social presence and its various aspects as well as the educational theories that underlie the value of social interaction with others in the support of constructive learning. A review of the description of the salient constructs pertinent to social presence as it relates to online education is presented along with a pedagogical rationale and the possible implications. This work should help to guide educators in delivering a better educational environment for the online learner.


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