DIFFERENCES IN RETENTION, SOCIAL PRESENCE, COGNITIVE PRESENCE, AND TEACHING PRESENCE IN FULLY ONLINE AND BLENDED COURSES

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Dissertation
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Doctor of Education

Regent University
August 2010
ABSTRACT

Colleges and universities that offer distance education continue to increase in number. Blended courses are being offered as one type of distance education. The study investigated online and blended classrooms to determine if there were differences in retention, social presence, cognitive presence, and teaching presence between the two delivery systems using the Community of Inquiry Framework. Social presence, cognitive presence, and teaching presence were measured with the Community of Inquiry Survey Instrument. Student retention was measured by self-report of plans to successfully complete the course. Additional independent variables included gender, age, and course. Statistically significant results were found when the CoI presences were evaluated between male and female students. Female students had higher mean scores on teaching presence and cognitive presence than the male students. With the blended mode of delivery, the researcher hypothesized that the three presences would be more supported between the face-to-face component supplying the richer social environment and the online component supplying the richer verbal environment. However, the findings indicate that the mode of delivery is not the sole determining factor for better educational outcomes as assessed by the Community of Inquiry Framework.