

Section 2

Cognitive Presence—Engaging Students

Cognitive presence is another important interconnected element of the community of inquiry framework. Cognitive presence refers to a student's ability to engage with and make sense of their learning within their learning context. Critical and higher-order thinking are essential components to student inquiry and it is experienced individually and collectively in the learning community (Garrison et al., 2001). Yet, this type of engagement with students, content, and instructors does not happen on its own. Instructors need to understand how to engage students in the learning process, as well as how to design opportunities for them to think critically about the content they are learning. Consequently, an important question that all educators should consider is how to best engage their students in the learning process. Engaging students cultivates their cognitive presence.

The first article in this section defines what engagement means (Milman, 2016) and subsequent articles share how to design active learning experiences (Milman, 2019) and motivate online learners using Keller's ARCS model (Milman & Wessmiller, 2016). After all, to cultivate students' cognitive presence one should know what engagement is and how create learning experiences that nurture it. The last two articles in this section address the design of online discussions. In these articles, I share how online educators can scaffold student facilitation of online discussions (Milman 2008a), as well as how students should participate in them (Milman, 2008b). In online courses, online discussions provide students with the

opportunity to build and demonstrate cognitive presence with their peers and instructor(s).

1. Milman, N. B. (2016). What is engagement? *Distance Learning*, 13(3), 61-64.
2. Milman, N. B. (2019). Designing active learning experiences in online courses. *Distance Learning*, 16(2), 85-87.
3. Milman, N. B., & Wessmiller, J. (2016). Motivating the online learner using Keller's ARCS Model. *Distance Learning*, 13(2), 67-71.
4. Milman, N. B. (2008a). Scaffolding student facilitation of online discussions. *Distance Learning*, 5(4), 25-27.
5. Milman, N. B. (2008b). Strategies for participating in online conferences and discussions. *Distance Learning*, 5(2), 92-95.

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