Research Purpose and Participants

• Better understand how to support students and instructors who are enrolled in large online courses by exploring protocols in online discussions
Data Sources

• 394 participants (88% of class)
• Community of Inquiry Survey (35 items, 5-point Likert)
  – Teaching Presence (13 items)
    • “The instructor and/or TAs provided clear instructions on how to participate in the structured discussions.”
  – Social Presence (9 items)
    • “In the structured discussions, I felt that my point of view was acknowledged by other participants.”
  – Cognitive Presence (12 items)
    • “Reflection on course content within the structured discussions helped me understand fundamental concepts in this class.”
  – Open-ended (1 item)
    • Additional comments
• Interviews with instructor and 2 TAs
Survey Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presence Type</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructor Presence</td>
<td>4.03</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Presence</td>
<td>3.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Presence</td>
<td>3.74</td>
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Nature of Protocol

• “The discussions helped me to break larger assignments down into manageable sections.”
• “The discussions are a great way to help make sure my assignments were the best they could be before submitting.”
• “The multiple step process was very different and useful. It left room for errors and to correct and refine mistakes and take other peers feedback.”
• “The parts worked well for discussion, reflection, and improvement of business ideas as well as piqued my interest.”
Peer Feedback

• “I loved the structured discussions because they brought great ideas to my attention and helped me think about aspects I hadn’t thought of.”
• “The feedback from classmates helped to assure that I was going in the right direction.”
• “I felt the feedback I received helped me boost my grade on certain assignments.”
• “I was able to get another person’s perspective of the assignments, and even if their feedback wasn’t good, I could see in their work how I could improve my own.”
Challenges

• Quality of peer feedback
  – “The only thing I did not like about the discussions was not always receiving feedback from group members, which harmed my learning.”
  – “It was clear from the feedback that some students did take it seriously but others were quite useless.”

• Multiple due dates
  – “I found it confusing to keep track of what was due.”

• Clarity of instructions
  – “The instructions posted at the top of the discussions could be more clear and easy to understand. Some don’t tell you exactly what to do or where exactly to post.”