USING FILM AND ONLINE GROUP BLOGS TO CULTIVATE A COMMUNITY OF INQUIRY: A CASE STUDIED AT A UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Zayd Waghid
Cape Peninsula University of Technology
waghidz@cput.ac.za

ABSTRACT

Despite the integration of technology in higher education, there is currently a paucity of research in the field of social entrepreneurship education in South Africa regarding the use of asynchronous communication supported by teaching resources in cultivating critical learning capacities through autonomous learning. Informed by the community of inquiry framework of Garrison, Anderson, and Archer (2007), this study examined the cognitive, social and teaching presences among pre-service educators in online group blogs in relation to the film *Who cares?* which was used as a primary teaching resource in a social entrepreneurship module. In this study, the participants' posts and comments were collected, coded and analysed using ATLAS. ti. The results revealed that, after viewing the film, the participating pre-service educators established high cognitive, social and teaching presences, respectively. The results of the study further illustrated that online group blogs in combination with film could provide pedagogical spaces for students to establish a community of inquiry in which pre-service educators' critical learning capacities were enhanced through autonomous learning.

Keywords: blended learning; community of inquiry; film; online group blogs; social entrepreneurship

![UNISA university of south africa]

INTRODUCTION

In South Africa, there is a growing academic interest in the concept "social entrepreneurship" as a vehicle for driving social change. More specifically, the aim of this emerging concept is concerned with disrupting the many socio-economic problems permeating a fragmented and unequal South African society. Much of the current academic discourse around social entrepreneurship occurs outside developing nations such as South Africa, and draws largely upon the interpretations and experiences of their developed counterparts (Littlewood and Holt 2015, 2). Hence, the need to include the diverse voices and knowledge understandings from the communities of developing nations through their interpretations and experiences in this emerging field warrants further research.

Social entrepreneurship has often been perceived as an independent topic best taught in a separate programme (Tracey and Phillips 2007, 268). Contrary to this belief, Tracey and Phillips (2007, 268) argue that social entrepreneurship should in turn be integrated within traditional courses and included in discussions and lectures. This is because social entrepreneurship can be considered a useful introduction into discourses regarding the social implications of entrepreneurship in society (Tracey and Phillips 2007, 268). This calls for a best practice approach of integrating social entrepreneurship within the higher education curriculum, and one means of enhancing effective social entrepreneurship education is through pedagogy (Alberti, Sciascia and Poli 2004). One of the most recent developments of teaching and learning in higher education is the use of blended learning as a best-practice pedagogical approach (Balfour, van der Walt, Spamer and Tshivhase 2015, 3). More specifically, blended learning, which integrates a blend of formal, informal and virtual collaborations, aims to optimise the achievement of the learning objectives of a course (Frederick 2007, 4).

Despite the integration of technology in higher education, there is currently a dearth of research in the field of social entrepreneurship education in South Africa regarding the use of online group blogs supported by teaching resources in cultivating a community of inquiry of pre-service educators. This warrants research into how such an educational technology supported by a teaching resource such as the use of film can be effective in higher education in enhancing autonomous learning and critical thinking among pre-service educators in this emerging field. Informed by using Garrison et al.'s (2007) community of inquiry (CoI) framework, this article reports on a study which examined the levels of cognitive, social and teaching presences among third-year entrepreneurship education students in online group blogs on Blackboard after viewing *Who cares?* – a film on social entrepreneurship.

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- Can pre-service educators' interaction in online group blogs after viewing the film *Who cares?* be characterised in terms of cognitive, social and teaching presences of the CoI framework?
- Which characteristics do cognitive, social and teaching presences have in online group blogs after the pre-service educators had viewed the film?

The introductory section of the article provides an explanation of the nature of online group blogs in higher education as well as the use of film in teaching and learning, and then proceeds with the theoretical framework of the study. A description of the methods utilised and an analysis of the data follows. The article concludes with the discussion section including the key findings, limitations and implications of the study for higher education.

LITERATURE

Online group blogs in higher education

The use of online group blogs within a blended learning environment seems to be a favourable choice for many educators in higher education (Angelaina and Jimoyiannis 2012, 180). According to O'Donnell (2005, 1), blogs "should not be seen merely as a technological tool for teaching and learning but rather as a situated practice that must be brought into appropriate alignment with particular pedagogical and disciplinary practices". As a situated practice, blogs in education offer students opportunities to enhance their knowledge, skills, values and attitudes through social engagements and constructivist learning as members of a community of practice. Moreover, as a community in which mutual spaces are established, students might be more open to the ideas and solutions of others (Deng and Yuen 2011). Hence, blogs offer students diverse possibilities of knowledge co-construction through autonomous learning and collaborative learning. This notion resonates with the seminal works of Williams and Jacobs (2004), who claim that the discursive nature of knowledge construction is developed most effectively when using interactive online group blogs. Therefore, effective blog use in education may advance critical learning in online environments, particularly when its users are empowered to such an extent that they are able to reflect critically on their views and on the works of others (Deng and Yuen 2009).

Online group blogs in higher education have certainly transcended a number of different roles. More specifically, the functionality of blogs assists by serving as a discussion forum, an e-portfolio, group blogging space and as a learning environment. As an online forum, group blogs offer students and educators opportunities to exchange and discuss information related to course content, lectures, announcements, assignments, topics outside of the curriculum, and other readings (Makri and Kynigos 2007). Considering the asynchronous nature of online

communication through group blogs, they hold the possibility of further increasing higher education students' critical thinking skills and learning outcomes (Swan, Garrison, and Richardson 2009, 21). This is because asynchronous communication offers students the means of engagement and opportunities for considering and evaluating the views of others in an environment in which they have the liberty to do so. In this environment, students are free from any form of coercion from their peers or educators, which in traditional rigid classroom settings prohibit autonomous decision-making and critical inquiry.

The rationale for using online group blogs was premised on the pedagogical affordances it offered the participants in this study. Among other pedagogical uses of online group blogs previously mentioned, Angelaina and Jimoyiannis (2000, 171) advocate for online blog application in a blended learning environment by effectively disrupting the boundaries between school and formal learning as well as between non-formal and informal learning. In other words, blogs both offer and enhance communicative participation by promoting group learning experiences, extending learning beyond the confines of the classroom. Moreover, the use of online group blogs in this research is presented with the aim of assisting pre-service educators in deepening their existing knowledge around social entrepreneurship and the implications of this concept in society. More specifically, the pedagogical design of the curriculum informed by the CoI framework of Garrison et al. (2007) is aimed at scaffolding students' social engagement, collaboration and reflection around this emerging concept in South Africa.

The use of film in education

The use of film in teaching and learning is considered both a compelling and an engaging medium of instruction (Mullen, 2015, 6). As a pedagogical resource, film serves many functions of which include both as a case and experiential exercise (Champoux 1999, 5). As a predictive and integrative case, the use of film in education may further develop the analytical skills of students and provoke and lead to rich meaningful discussions and reinforcements of a concept such as social entrepreneurship (Champoux 1999, 6). As an experiential exercise, the use of film offers educators the possibility of teaching without the use of learning materials, which is a distinct advantage of this pedagogical tool (Champoux 1999, 6). In this regard, using film in education offers students the opportunity to work together in groups when analysing the various discourses generated in relation to a film. At the same time, students are integrating their existing knowledge in solving complex problems through individual and/or group decision-making. In other words, the film assists students since they are situating themselves within the context of the film and making sense of the themes that emanate from the film itself, while coming up

with practical and plausible solutions to the most pressing issues permeating local contexts.

According to Champoux (1999, 7), the use of film may further offer students a visual portrayal of abstract theories and concepts taught in the fields of management and organisational behaviour, which may significantly enhance undergraduate and graduate instruction. Visual images would certainly assist students in making sense of complex concepts, with the educator playing a facilitative role in correcting any misconceptions that students may have after viewing the film. As has been alluded to previously, the potential of film in encouraging students to work collaboratively through group cohesion may further enhance group dynamics and increase the pool of useful resources shared amongst students. This is because film assists students in assessing their values in relation to the discourses that emanate from the film, which may cultivate a strong social presence. Put more aptly, when students are able to reflect on their own experiences in relation to the film, they are able to relay and relate their thoughts and opinions with others in an open and – in some instances – expressive manner.

As a teaching resource, a film may be shown to students before or after discussing concepts or theories related to the film (Champoux 2007, 6). This may invoke within students the potential either to apply their newly found knowledge acquired from their interpretation of the film to solve practical problems or to reflect on the film in relation to the concepts discussed prior to viewing it. This certainly depends on the nature of the course and the objectives that the educator envisages students should achieve. Using film as a transformative pedagogical resource certainly offers educators opportunities to increase student involvement and cognitive development. Indeed, in film-based lessons and assignments, the role of the educator is not made redundant, but is still considered an integral part of effective teaching and learning (Mullen 2015, 6). More importantly, the use of film in educational contexts cannot replace the educator while it certainly offers substantial benefits to pedagogy.

In light of the abovementioned, the use of film remains an unexplored area in education (Swimelar 2013). More importantly, the author has not come across the use of film to support autonomous learning among pre-service educators in online group blogs, which makes this research apposite at this point in time.

COMMUNITY OF INQUIRY (COI) FRAMEWORK

The CoI framework presupposes that critical learning requires the development of a community (Swan et al. 2009, 4), and as an online learning model, the three interdependent elements of the framework, namely the social, cognitive and teaching presences are necessary constituents for the pursuit of inquiry in educational environments (Swan et al. 2009, 5). Furthermore, the CoI framework resonates with the seminal work of John Dewey (1959) who maintained that the development of

individuals occurs through their engagement with the community during the process of inquiry at the cornerstone of individuals' learning experiences.

Cognitive presence

The cognitive presence in the CoI framework is defined as the extent to which students are able to establish and affirm meaning through sustained reflective thinking and discourse (Garrison et al. 2001). When students interact and engage with one another, they do so with the intent of making sense of each other's arguments in a self-reflexive manner through critical inquiry. Hence, cognitive presence in the CoI framework is seen as consisting of four phases of practical inquiry described by Dewey (1933) as follows:

- triggering an event in the form of a problem, issue or dilemma that needs resolution (triggering category)
- exploration in the search for relevant information that could provide insight into the challenge at hand (exploration category)
- integration, in which connections are established and there is a search for a viable explanation (integration category)
- selection and testing of the most viable solution and resolution (resolution category) (Swan et al. 2009, 7)

Social presence

The social presence in the CoI framework is described as the ability of participants to connect with and establish personal relationships with other members within the community, premised on the principles of a trusting and resolute environment (Garrison and Akyol, 2009). In establishing bonds with their peers, students do so with the intent of establishing feelings of mutual trust within a collective social environment. The elements of the social presence are categorised as follows:

- effective expression, namely personal expressions, beliefs, feelings and values as indicators
- open communication, in which learners establish and sustain a sense of group responsibility
- group cohesion, where learners interact around typical tasks and activities (Swan et al. 2009, 10)

Teaching presence

The teaching presence in the CoI framework is described by Anderson, Rourke, Garrison, and Archer (2001, 5) as the design, facilitation and direction of cognitive and social processes for the purpose of realising personally meaningful and educationally worthwhile learning outcomes. The first category of teaching presence – termed "design and organisation" – is concerned with selecting worthwhile collaborative learning activities through constructing the curriculum and designing methods to support its implementation. The second category is concerned with "facilitating discourse" through guiding discussions in a meaningful manner, ensuring that students are engaged and focused. The third category, "direct instruction" is concerned with an intervention approach at times when it is necessary to correct students' misconceptions by providing them with relevant information, a summary of discussions and/or providing some metacognitive awareness (Anderson et al. 2001). Certainly, the role of the educator as facilitator is foregrounded in these core elements with the aim of assisting students in reaching the set learning outcomes of the curriculum. This is because the learning outcomes of the entrepreneurship curriculum ought to be designed in such a way that students develop the required knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to be successful participants in their own learning and practice as prospective social entrepreneurial educators.

Table 1:   Coding template adapted from Garrison et al., 2007 CoI framework

Elements	Categories	Indicators
Cognitive presence	Triggering	Sense of puzzlement
	Exploration	Information exchange
	Integration	Connecting ideas
	Resolution	Application
Social presence	Effective expression	Self-projection; expressing emotion
	Open communication	Trust/risk-free climate
	Group cohesion	Collaboration; interactivity
Teaching presence	Design and organisation	Setting curriculum and activities
	Facilitating discourse	Shaping constructive exchange
	Direct instruction	Focusing and resolving issues

METHODOLOGY

Context, participants and procedures

This qualitative study, set within an interpretive paradigm, used the CoI framework of Garrison et al. (2007) to examine pre-service educators' responses to questions posted on online group blogs on the university's learning platform system, viz. Blackboard, pertaining to the film *Who cares?*. The integration of social entrepreneurship as part of the entrepreneurship education curriculum was designed in accordance with the principle of constructivism. More specifically, the purpose of this revised subject was aimed at integrating a blend of face-to-face teaching using the film together with online group blogs to assist third-year BEd. Further Education and Training (FET) students in developing a critical sense of inquiry through deliberative engagement in micro-communities. Doing this, further offers support for the proposition as a best practice approach that using film in combination with online group blogs within a blended learning environment might best be used to orientate students to the concept "social entrepreneurship" in higher education with the objective of developing autonomous learning.

Purposive and deliberate sampling was used to sample the population of third-year BEd (FET) students (n=48) in the field of entrepreneurship education. Eight online group blogs were formed by the sample population who indicated their willingness to participate in this study (n=43) with each group blog comprising between five and eight students. Group 11 was removed from analysis due to the low levels of discussion between the members of the group. Furthermore, students randomly selected their own group blogs from the available 25 online group blogs constructed by the author on Blackboard. Students therefore randomly selected for instance, online group blog 12. The participants who agreed to participate in this research were informed in class that their participation was voluntary, anonymous and confidential, and that ethical clearance had been acquired from the faculty's ethics research committee, adhering to the ethical considerations of the study. Further, students' names on the sample of screen shots (Images 1–11) that were analysed were subsequently replaced with abbreviations to ensure anonymity.

In the first two weeks (weeks 1 and 2) of the social entrepreneurship module, students were shown the film. As the students had not been exposed to the use of online group blogs on Blackboard previously, they were orientated to this online practice, which formed an integral part of their social entrepreneurship project in a single session (week 3). Students were provided with technical guidance and assistance in constructing their respective online group blogs. The students were then required to engage in the online group blogs asynchronously as part of their assessment over a period of five weeks outside normal class sessions (weeks 4–8) to ensure that the author could proceed with normal teaching of the content. Further,

it was envisaged that students would engage in the course both by participating in discussions in face-to-face contexts and through forming an online community of practice through dialogical engagements on Blackboard.

Primary data were collected from the online group blogs analysed and coded using the computer-assisted qualitative data analysis system (CAQDAS), viz. ATLAS.ti to categorise the responses according to the cognitive, social and teaching presences of the CoI framework. Based on the exploratory nature of the research, the author decided that the students' posted messages (word, sentence, paragraph or sequence of paragraphs) should become the unit of analysis. Each post could contain several different indicators as described by the coding template in Table 1, or multiple instances of the same indicators. Using content analysis, all the posts and comments (n=314) were analysed and coded by the author and an anonymous coder. In terms of the establishment of inter-rater reliability prior to coding all the posts and comments, the data were separately coded and verified. In case of a disagreement, discussions were held between the raters until both of them agreed on the codes and their categories. Following negotiation of a transcript, SPSS was used to determine frequency counts of each category.
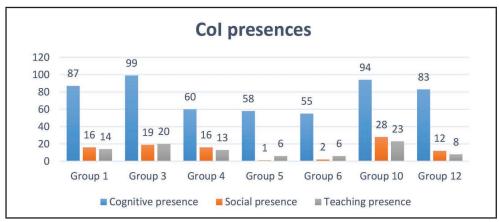
The following discussion questions were used to guide the students' blogging interaction:

- Is social entrepreneurship a familiar term amongst students in higher education?
- Is social entrepreneurship emphasised at schools where you have taught?
- Why is it that social entrepreneurship is not included in the Grade 8 Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)?
- What is your understanding of social entrepreneurship, having viewed the film *Who cares?*
- How has the film made you aware of the socio-economic issues affecting South African society?
- Having viewed the film *Who cares?*, what can you as a citizen do to cultivate social entrepreneurship in society?

RESULTS

Posts and comments were coded using the CoI coding template of Garrison et al. (2007) reflected in Table 1. The frequencies of each coded presence (cognitive, social and teaching) were counted for the online group blogs (1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10 and 12) on Blackboard as shown in Figure 1. The overall aggregate description of the online group discussions as a whole for the online group blogs (n=7) is shown in Table 2. The online group blogs on Blackboard had a total of 42 posts and 272 comments as shown in Appendix Table 1. After coding the posts and comments in the online

group blogs, it was determined that the posts had a combined total of 537 instances of cognitive presence with a mean of 76.57 and a standard deviation (SD) of 18.447, 160 instances of social presence with a mean of 13.43 and an SD of 9.519, and 92 instances of teaching presence with a mean of 12.86 and an SD of 6.744. A more detailed description of each presence follows.

Figure 1: Frequencies of cognitive, social and teaching presences in the online group blogs

Table 2: Descriptive statistics

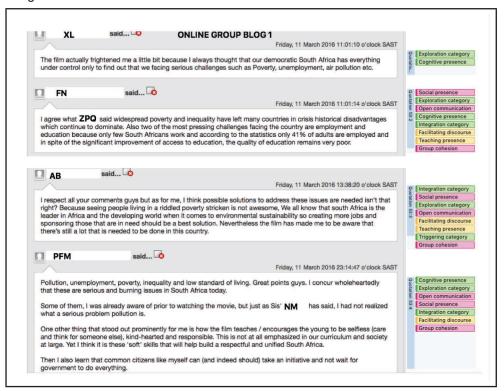|	N	Mean	SD
Cognitive presence	7	76.57	18.447
Social presence	7	13.43	9.519
Teaching presence	7	12.86	6.744

Cognitive presence

The indicators were coded in four main categories: triggering, exploration, integration and resolution. The percentages of each category are provided in Table 3.
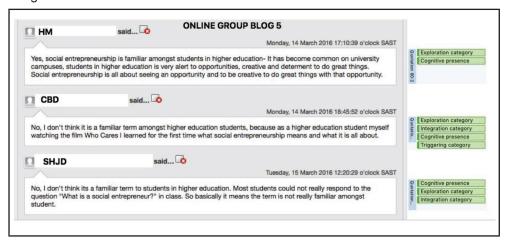
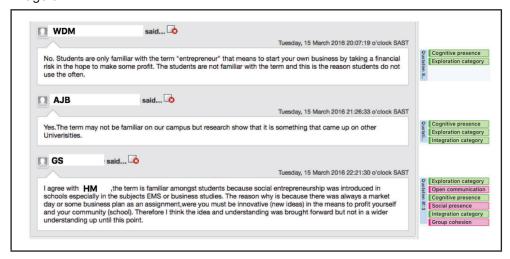**Table 3:** Percentages of each cognitive presence category

	No. of posts	Percentage
Triggering	45	9%
Exploration	254	47%
Integration	198	37%
Resolution	39	7%
Total	537	100%

The aggregate number of comments by the students across the individual group blogs for cognitive presence (n=537) was evidently the highest presence in this CoI study (Table 3). From the number of posts categorised according to cognitive presence, exploration indicators had the largest percentage of coded comments (47%) across the group blogs in relation to integration (37%), triggering (9%) and resolution (7%). In terms of exploration and integration categories from the sample screen shots (1–4) being relatively high respectively, the film played an important role in their learning about social entrepreneurship, considering students had not been provided with learning materials. From the sample screenshots shown, the author inferred that students would offer their explanations in relation to the questions posted on Blackboard from the information that they had acquired from the film around the concept "social entrepreneurship". Considering that the students had three years of practice teaching experience in various schools, they were able to disseminate their thoughts and opinions to their peers in the online group blogs. In this regard, they were able to integrate their thoughts in relation to their social and educational contexts. There was one account where a student indicated conducting his or her own research from the Internet to answer the question posted on the group blog (Student AJB in Image 3). The triggering category had the lowest percentage; this was expected as the questions and problems identified by certain students were used to stimulate deeper discussions and to further discourse through their dialogical engagements (Students AB and CBD). Many of the students were able to provide practical solutions to the identified problems, although this was largely based on the fact that one of the assignment questions posted on Blackboard required them to do so. The film moreover provided insight and awareness in terms of how some of the socio-economic problems identified could be resolved. Hence, the resolution category also had posts. There were instances where certain students briefly mentioned solutions to the problems identified prior to being asked to do so (Student AB in Image 1). In sum, all four categories of cognitive presence existed in various ways in the data generated from the online group blog posts which could be largely attributed to the use of the film, the students' social contexts, and the mutual exchange of information and experiences.
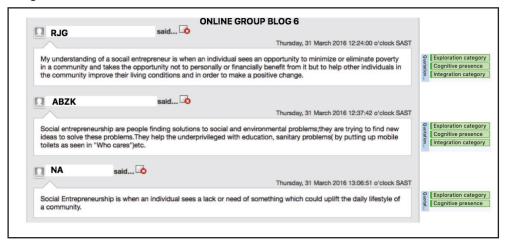
Image 1

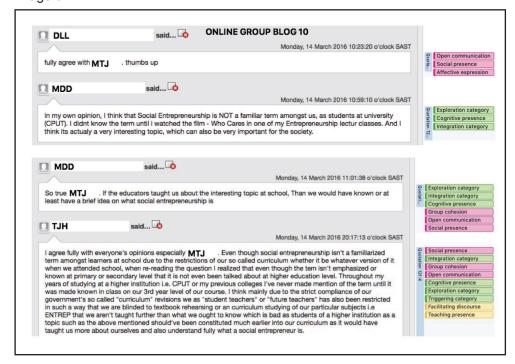Image 2

Image 3

Image 4

Social presence

The indicators were coded in three main categories: effective expression, open communication and group cohesion. The percentages of each category are provided in Table 4 below.

Table 4:   Percentages of each social presence category

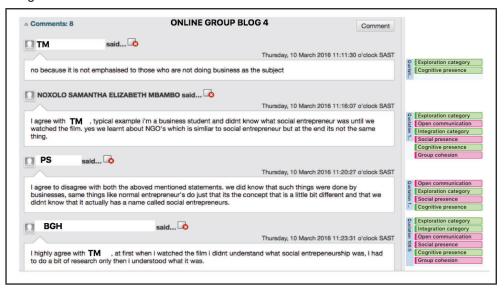|		No. of posts	Percentage
Effective expression		16	10%
Open communication		83	52%
Group cohesion		61	38%
Total		160	100%

The aggregate number of comments by the students across the individual group blogs for social presence (n=160) was the second largest in this CoI study. From the number of posts categorised according to social presence, open communication had the largest percentage of coded comments (52%) across the group blogs in relation to group cohesion (38%) and effective expression (10%).

One reason for the high level of open communication could be attributed to the high level of integration where students related their thoughts and opinions to those of others as a result of their experiences of teaching as well as their interpretation of the film. From the sample screen shots (Images 5–8), it is clear that students could acknowledge the comments made by their peers, which further enhanced interaction and facilitated discourse (Student TJH in Image 5). Where students expressed agreement or disagreement with their peers' comments, these comments were substantiated with students' personal experiences and their interpretation of the film (Images 5–8). This resonates with the integration and exploration categories. In online group blogs 5 and 6, effective expression was not accounted for, while in groups 3 and 10, there was a relatively high level of effective expression categories of five and six posts respectively. In terms of effective expression, one reason for the low percentage could be due to the fact that the online group blogs discussed and answered the questions among themselves either through face-to-face engagement or through other means of communication prior to posting their responses on Blackboard. A second reason could be attributed to the fact that students were being assessed in terms of their comments posted on Blackboard, which may have prohibited them from adding emoticons or other indicators of effective expression as they were more concerned about answering the questions posted on Blackboard than displaying effective expression towards each other. A third reason could be linked to the nature of the learning platform system, which in most instances is used for teaching and learning purposes compared to social networking platforms where students are free to express themselves in a personal manner. However, there were certain students who expressed themselves in agreement with their peers or in relation to the film (Students DLL, CLA and NF in Images 5 and 8). In terms of group cohesion being relatively high compared to effective expression, this is a result of the course outcomes where the students were required to work together to answer the questions from the assignment.
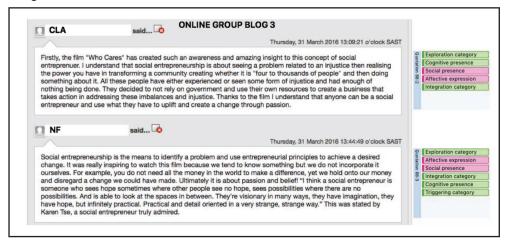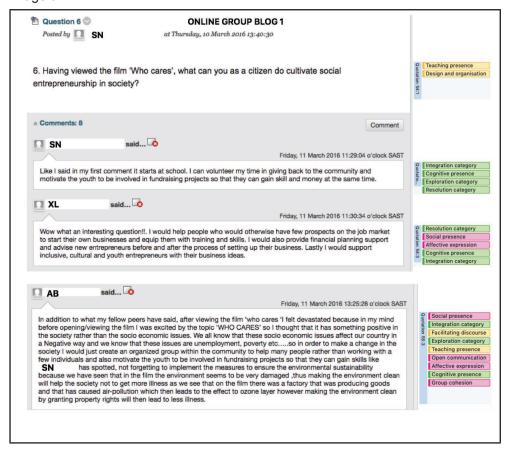
Image 5

Image 6

Image 7
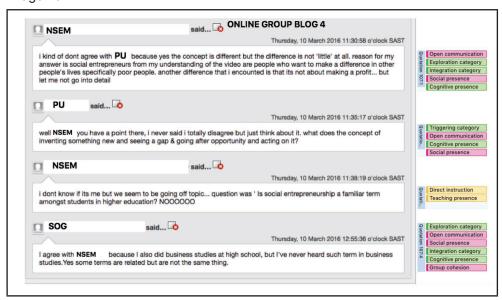

Image 8

TEACHING PRESENCE

The indicators were coded in three main categories: design and organisation, facilitating discourse and direct instruction. The percentages of each are provided in Table 5 below.

Table 5:   Percentages of each teaching presence category

	No. of posts	Percentage
Design and organisation	42	46%
Facilitating discourse	42	46%
Direct instruction	8	8.7%
Total	92	100%

The aggregate number of comments by the students across the individual group blogs (n=92) clearly indicates that teaching presence was found in this CoI. From the number of posts categorised as teaching presence, design and organisation and facilitating discourse had an equally large percentage of coded comments (42%) across the group blogs in relation to direct instruction (8.7%), which was the lowest. Considering that the students were required to post the assignment questions on their respective online group blogs, it was expected that design and organisation would have a strong presence. In terms of facilitating discourse, groups 1, 3 and 10 scored the highest for facilitating discourse while group blogs 5 and 6 had no presence in this category (Appendix Table 1). One reason for the high level of facilitating discourse across online group blogs 1, 3 and 10 could be due to the high social presences across these group blogs where open communication and group cohesion were relatively high (Images 9, 10 and 11). From these sample screen shots, it can be inferred that the interactions among the students through their interests and motivation to answer the questions maintained and sustained the discourse. This was a result of students acknowledging each other, through words of encouragement and identifying areas of agreements and disagreements, as was shown also in the previous images (i.e. 1, 3, 5, 6, 7 and 8). Where social and teaching presences were low, cognitive presence was also relatively low but this could also be due to the lower number of posts amongst these group blogs (group blogs 5 and 6). Direct instruction had the lowest percentage for teaching presence, and this could be linked to the fact that many of the students were guided in answering the questions by the high level of design and organisation. In instances where students did not answer the questions, their peers would motivate them (Student NSEM in Image 10). Furthermore, certain students would correct misconceptions and summarise discussions; however, such behavior was relatively low among the groups (Students AB and MAS in Images 9 and 11). In sum, all three categories of teaching presence existed in various ways in the data generated from the posts and comments in the online group blogs.

Image 9

Image 10

Image 11

DISCUSSION

The aim of this CoI study was to explore the use of online group blogs on Blackboard in combination with a film in higher education. More specifically, this study was informed by the CoI framework of Garrison et al. (2007), and investigated the role of asynchronous communication through online group blogs, culminating in an online CoI, and whether the blogs could be characterised in terms of cognitive, social and teaching presences after students had viewed the film *Who cares?*. The results indicated that the film assisted the pre-service educators in enhancing their cognitive presence and establishing social and teaching presences with the instructor playing a minimal role in the online group blogs. Furthermore, this study highlighted that the characteristics of each category were prevalent in online group blogs albeit higher in certain group blogs than in others, and this could be attributed to group dynamics, familiarity of group members using the learning management system (LMS), and the nature of the assessment. Through the establishment of cognitive, social and teaching presences in the online group blogs, this study contributes to the existing literature by showing how asynchronous communication practices in combination with film have the potential to cultivate a CoI among pre-service educators. Moreover, the author infers that using online group blogs together with an enriching film on social entrepreneurship could be considered best practice, particularly when its aim is to enhance critical learning.

In the present study, the visual and verbal representations of the film assisted the students in triggering their mental thoughts to reflect critically on the various themes as they situated themselves in these social contexts as was evidenced in the sample screen shots. Through critical self-reflection, the students were able to share with their peers by means of the online group blogs, and through a synthesis of their personal learning experiences, social events of value to them. By creating an awareness, the themes from the film added to the students' existing knowledge and experiences of teaching in poor and affluent schools. This further contributed to the discourse which aided the students in developing practical solutions to the problems identified. Hence, film can be used to trigger students' thoughts, which led participating students to explore the many themes from the film itself, integrating the ideas from the film in relation to their own contexts with the aim of responding to these problems with practical solutions. Moreover, this resonates with Dewey's (1922) thoughts when he describes learning as a strong social experience in which individuals construct knowledge as a result of their social contexts premised on their experiences, connections and interactions. Certainly, for educators in higher education, selecting an enriching film in a blended learning environment may serve as an impetus for students to develop their higher-order learning skills. However, this is also largely dependent on the nature and structure of the curriculum and assessment.

Considering that the pre-service educators were not provided with learning materials, their learning was both autonomous and interactive, which confirmed the seminal thoughts of Champoux (1999) regarding film as a primary teaching resource. However, in this setting, teaching presence became something of social presence due to the online interaction. More specifically, adopting the term "teaching" instead of "teacher" emphasises the presence of this category in distributing the roles and responsibilities of an educator among students (Pifarré, Guijosa, and Argelagós, 2014, 74). Put more aptly, the online group blogs afforded the pre-service educators opportunities to learn from one another and to exchange their ideas and thoughts, which further confirmed the work of Armellini and De Stefani (2016). In addition, the emerging forms of social interaction from the online group blogs evidently indicated that pre-service educators engaged in meaningful discussions, which was largely dependent on the provision of appropriate stimuli. In other words, many of the students were involved in social discourse around the concept "social entrepreneurship" after viewing the film through critical questioning and/or through support from their peers. This further served to scaffold the social entrepreneurial learning process which may have enhanced the cognitive presence of the CoI group blogs. Many of the meaningful engagements indicated that the information acquired from the film contributed to the students' existing knowledge and that they shared their experiences with their peers. The latter notion is commensurate with Dewey's (1959) belief that through meaningful and respectful collaboration in which students acknowledged their peers through a strong social presence, students would effectively undertake responsibility in constructing and confirming meaning.

The notion for introducing the pre-service educators to the use of online group blogs as part of the social entrepreneurial assignment was specifically aimed at creating an inclusive social environment in which students had a voice to express themselves freely. According to Tu (2000) in (Swan et al., 2009, p. 11), the development of social presence is strongly linked to course design as the author has also previously alluded to, which comprises three dimensions: the social context, online communication and interactivity. The author infers that teaching resources are also a vital supplement to these dimensions. The film as both a visual and verbal stimulus can be said to have further enhanced the dimensions identified by Tu (2000). With the minimal role that the author played in the CoI group blogs, positive feedback from the students to their peers served as a means of cultivating a climate of positive reinforcement in working as a cohesive group in achieving the set learning outcomes from the course. In other words, instead of having the instructor intervening and correcting misconceptions, the students themselves assumed their roles and responsibilities as the 'teacher'; however, this could be associated with the fact that the students had three years of practice teaching and would have been familiar with managing debates and discussions albeit with school learners. Hence, it became a social learning experience for them to manage the discussions among adult

students. Moreover, the social engagements between and among students in a group further influenced the cognitive level of activities in the group. Considering that the students were responsible for posting the questions from the assignment on their individual group blogs on Blackboard, in some instances where there was a large social presence, the discussions could have been further facilitated and in certain instances summarised.

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Three limitations to this study stand out clearly. First, considering the small population size, the results cannot be generalised. Second, it was evident from the results that effective expression was the lowest social presence. This could have been linked to the blended nature of the class, more specifically the use of the learning platform system Blackboard pertaining to the assignment which may have prohibited the students from showing greater effective expression than what the results indicated towards their peers. It is recommended that more research be undertaken to examine using the assignments of various subjects, the social presence of online group blogs through learning platform systems such as Blackboard or Moodle in relation to social networking platforms such as Facebook to determine whether such platforms have a strong influence on social presence. Last, many of the students failed to substantiate their arguments or views with evidence using hyperlinks to information-rich websites, which could have been used to stimulate deeper debates and discussions. Hence, it is important for higher education educators to teach pre-service educators the importance of justifying their arguments with substantiating evidence.

CONCLUSION

Using the CoI framework of Garrison et al. (2007) in this asynchronous environment, the goal of this study was to examine the levels of cognitive, social and teaching presences among pre-service educators in online group blogs on Blackboard after viewing the film *Who cares?* – a film on social entrepreneurship. Considering the students were not exposed to this concept at both secondary and tertiary levels, accompanied by the fact that it was their first attempt at using online group blogs on the learning platform system Blackboard, the results nonetheless revealed that their participation indicated that cognitive, social and teaching presences were to a large extent prevalent in certain online group blogs, albeit lower in some than in others. This finding reveals that using film as part of a blended learning environment supported by asynchronous online spaces had the potential to provide pre-service educators a platform where they were able to share experiences of value to them. A comparative study in which the three elements of the CoI framework of Garrison et al. (2007) are examined using learning platform systems in relation to social networking platforms

warrants further research. A second comparative study may investigate the use of other teaching resources such as cartoons and their influence on the cognitive, social and teaching presences among students in online group blogs. Further, this study has certain implications for online group blogs in South African higher education contexts, mainly in terms of the integration of using film as a teaching resource supported by asynchronous online group blogs in a blended learning environment as part of an autonomous learning approach in higher education. The integration of online group blogs and insightful films may further establish a vibrant community in which educators and school learners are able to deliberate in an inclusive environment in which learners' voices are more prevalent than in conservative classrooms. Hence, this study postulated that a face-to-face and distance education environment could derive significant benefits from using asynchronous online group blogs as a situated practice in the field of social entrepreneurship education. Further, introducing pre-service educators to online group blogs may hopefully initiate them into integrating blended learning in the school context with the notion that micro-communities could be established among school learners both inside and outside the classroom. This may further enhance pre-service educators' and secondary school learners' critical learning and creative problem-solving capacities. Certainly, initiating pre-service educators into the discourse of social entrepreneurship through online group blogs may establish micro-communities with the purpose of sharing resources and of developing solutions to the most pertinent problems facing historically disadvantaged schools in South Africa.

REFERENCES

Alberti, F., S. Sciascia, and A. Poli. 2004. Entrepreneurship Education: Notes on an Ongoing Debate. In *Proceedings of the 14th Annual IntEnt Conference*, University of Napoli Federico II, Napoli.

Anderson, T., L. Rourke, D. Garrison, and W. Archer. 2001. Assessing Teaching Presence in a Computer Conferencing Context. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks* 5(2): 1-17. Retrieved from http://auspace.athabascau.ca/bitstream/2149/725/1/assessing_teaching_presence.pdf

Angelaina, S., and A. Jimoyiannis. 2012. Educational Blogging: Developing and Investigating a Students' Community of Inquiry. In A. Jimoyiannis ed. *Research on E-learning and ICT in Education* 169–182. New York, NY: Springer.

Armellini, A., and M. De Stefani,. 2015. Social Presence in the 21st Century: An Adjustment to the Community of Inquiry Framework. *British Journal of Educational Technology* 47(6): 1202-1216.

Balfour, R. J., J. L. van der Walt, E. J. Spamer, and A. C. Tshivhase. 2015. Blended Learning, and Open and Distance Learning: Implications for Best Practice in Higher Education. *Progressio* 37(1): 1–18.

Champoux, J. E. 1999. Film as a Teaching Resource. *Journal of Management Inquiry* 8(2): 206–217.

Deng, L., and A. Yuen. (2011). Towards a Framework for Educational Affordances of Blogs. *Computers and Education* 56(2): 441–451. doi:10.1016/j.compedu.2010.09.005.

Deng, L., and A. H. K. Yuen. 2009. Blogs in Higher Education: Implementation and Issues. *TechTrends* 53(3): 95–98.

Dewey, J. 1922. *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*. New York, NY: Macmillan.

Dewey, J. 1933. *How We Think.* Revised edition. Boston, MA: DC Heath.

Dewey, J. 1959. My Pedagogic Creed. In J. Dewey ed. *Dewey on Education* 19–32. New York, NY: Teachers College, Columbia University. (Original work published 1897.)

Frederick, H. 2007. Blended Learning in Entrepreneurship Education in the Asia-Pacific: A Grounded Theory Approach to Entrepreneurship Pedagogy. In R. Chapman ed. *Managing our Intellectual and Social Capital: Proceedings of the 21st ANZAM Conference*, Sydney 1–16. Canning Bridge: Promaco Conventions.

Garrison, D. R., T. Anderson, and W. Archer. 2001. Critical Thinking, Cognitive Presence and Computer Conferencing in Distance Education. *American Journal of Distance Education* 15(1): 7–23.

Garrison, D. R. 2007. Online Community of Inquiry Review: Social, Cognitive, and Teaching Presence Issues. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks,* 11(1): 61-72.

Garrison, D., and Z. Akyol,. 2009. Role of Instructional Technology in the Transformation of Higher Education. *Journal of Computing in Higher Education*, 21(1), 19–30. doi:org/10.1007/s12528-009- 9014-7

Littlewood, D. C., and D. Holt,. 2015. Social Entrepreneurship in South Africa: Exploring the Influence of Environment. *Business and Society*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1177/0007650315613293

Makri, K., and C. Kynigos,. 2007. The Role of Blogs in Studying the Discourse and Social Practices of Mathematics Teachers. *Educational Technology and Society*, 10(1): 73–84.

Mullen, A. 2015. Reflections on Teaching with Films in British Secondary Education. *Journal of Research Initiatives*, 1(3): 1-7.

O'Donnell, M. 2005. *Blogging as Pedagogic Practice: Artefact and Ecology*. Paper presented at the Blog Talk Downunder Conference, Sydney. May, 19–21. Retrieved from http://incsub. org/blogtalk/?page_id=66

Pifarré, M., A. Guijosa., and E. Argelagós, E. 2014. Using a Blog to Create and Support a Community of Inquiry in Secondary Education. *E-Learning and Digital Media*, 11(1): 72–87.

Swan, K., D. R. Garrison., and J.C. Richardson. 2009. A Constructivist Approach to Online Learning: The Community of Inquiry Framework. In C. R. Payne ed., *Information Technology and Constructivism in Higher Education: Progressive Learning Frameworks* 43–57. Hershey, PA: IGI Global.

Swimelar, S. 2013. Visualizing International Relations: Assessing Student Learning Through Film. *International Studies Perspectives*, 14(1): 14-38.

Tracey, P., and N. Phillips,. 2007. The Distinctive Challenge of Educating Social Entrepreneurs: A Postscript and Rejoinder to the Special Issue on Entrepreneurship Education. *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, 6(2): 264–271.

Tu, C. H. 2000. On-line Learning Migration: From Social Learning Theory to Social Presence Theory in CMC Environment. Journal of Network and Computer Applications, 23(1): 27–37.

Williams, J., and J. Jacobs,. 2004. Exploring the Use of Blogs as Learning Spaces in Higher Education Sector. *Australasian Journal of Education Technology*, 20(20): 232–247.

APPENDIX

Table 1: Summary of CoI blog posts

	Group 1	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Group 6	Group 10	Group 12	Total
Posts	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	42
Comments	42	42	37	36	36	44	37	274

	Group 1	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Group 6	Group 10	Group 12	Total
Cognitive presence	87	99	60	58	55	94	83	537
Triggering	6	11	6	4	4	9	5	45
Exploration	40	42	33	33	28	42	36	254
Integration	35	40	19	15	17	36	36	198
Resolution	6	6	2	6	6	7	6	39

	Group 1	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Group 6	Group 10	Group 12	Total
Social presence	31	32	23	2	4	50	18	160
Effective expression	3	6	1	0	0	5	1	16
Open communication	15	15	15	1	2	24	11	83
Group cohesion	13	11	7	1	2	21	6	61
	Group 1	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Group 6	Group 10	Group 12	Total
Teaching presence	14	20	13	6	6	25	8	92
Design and organisation	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	42
Direct instruction	0	0	4	0	0	4	0	8
Facilitating discourse	8	14	3	0	0	15	2	42