Pedagogical tools in an online teacher education programme: A sense of belonging and social presence

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Sara Archard

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Abstract

This thesis presents the findings from a study that explores in what ways the pedagogical tools in an online teacher education programme can facilitate a sense of belonging and social presence. In particular it explores the individual contribution of pedagogical online tools in relation to this.

The research data was gathered using a mixed methodology. Qualitative data was gathered from questionnaires sent to six participants of the online teacher education programme that were then analysed to identify common themes, patterns and difference in participants perspectives. Quantitative data was collected by analysing the contributions of each of the six participants in specific computer mediated communication forums using Garrison and Anderson's (2004) social presence and indicators framework across two papers of this online programme.

There are two key findings evident in the data of this study. The first is that pedagogical online tools can facilitate a sense of belonging and afford social presence in an online community of learners. However, each tool has different affordances. The effectiveness of their use depends on the way they are supported and used by the lecturer. Secondly, each participant had a different perspective on the affordances of each individual tool in their usefulness for fostering a sense of belonging and social presence. This was of particular interest as it indicates that one tool can afford a diversity of factors that may have a particular resonance with individual participants. The findings highlight the importance of lecturers needing to take into account the different affordances of online tools and the different ways that students might use them.

Therefore, this study is in a position to inform the development of this and other online teacher education programmes

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Purpose of Study

As a student teacher and then an online tertiary teacher, I have always had a keen interest and passion for eLearning. My pedagogy has developed to focus strongly on relationships, responsiveness, sense of community and engaging students in the learning process through the use of online tools. My experiences have made me aware of the possible challenges of learning in a computer mediated environment that can be potentially cold, impersonal and isolating, while also recognising that learning is not an individual action but a socially and culturally mediated process that is reliant on social interaction (Vygotsky, 1978) I have come to appreciate that learners need to engage and communicate with each other in a community of learners to build knowledge together (Berk, 2008; Lynch, 2004). I have also become aware from teaching online that simply bringing together a group of students and the online tools designed to facilitate a community of learners does not mean that relationships will necessarily develop (Palloff & Pratt, 2001). It requires the online tertiary teacher to employ deliberate teaching strategies combined with a pedagogical understanding of the affordances of online tools to encourage students to develop relationships, and consequently to foster a sense of belonging to an online community. Relationships and a sense of belonging contribute in important ways to the engagement and motivation of students in the learning process (Salmon, 2000), and this became a key aspect of eLearning that I wanted to study in greater depth. I wanted to explore how to bridge the potential gap between a learning environment and learning process, and in doing so, hopefully to gain a deeper understanding of how online tools can contribute to this.

As a coordinator of an online teacher education programme, it was of immense interest when I noticed students forming relationships and expressing a sense of belonging to their learning community during their participation in the programme. These observations, and the reality of a very low attrition rate in this programme meant that I started to wonder if this could be attributed to a number online tools we had used in the programme to foster and develop community and if so, how they had done so. In particular, I wanted to focus on how aspects of

social presence (Garrison & Anderson, 2004) might have been supported by these online tools, and the subsequent role that social presence might have played in contributing to developing an effective online community of learners. My professional curiosity has prompted this study. I decided to investigate participants' perceptions of a sense of belonging in a specific online community, and the role that online tools, and their affordance of social presence might have in this.

1.2 The context of the study

Pathways into early childhood teaching

In 2002 The New Zealand Government commissioned Pathways to the Future: Nga Huarahi Arataki, a 10 year strategic plan aimed at enhancing early childhood services in New Zealand. The document identified three goals and supporting strategies for the continuing development of early childhood education (ECE) in New Zealand. The goals identified were: increased participation in quality ECE services, improved quality of ECE services, and promoting collaborative relationships (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2002). The aspiration and design of the plan was to enable stakeholders and partners in the early childhood sector to contribute towards achieving these goals using identified supporting strategies. Partners included in the plan were teacher education providers. This supports the goal of improved quality of ECE services by ensuring that by 2012 " all regulated staff in every teacher-led service are required to be registered teachers" (MoE, 2002, p.7). The intention to increase the number of registered teachers was a challenge in a sector that already had a recognised qualified teacher shortage, and was regulated to employ both qualified and unqualified staff. However, the New Zealand government sought to negate these factors by offering a range of scholarships for people to qualify as early childhood teachers (Te One, 2008), and by promoting the profession of early childhood teaching as a career (MoE, 2002). The New Zealand Government also worked with the Tertiary Education Commission and New Zealand Teachers Council to ensure a diverse choice of qualifications, and qualification routes for people wanting to pursue the career of early childhood teaching. Two of these routes were the provision of distance programmes, and Graduate Diploma qualifications (MoE, 2002).

Graduate Diploma of Teaching –Early Childhood at the University of Waikato

It was within this context that The Graduate Diploma of Teaching in Early Childhood (Grad Dip T- ECE) began at the University of Waikato in 2008. The Grad Dip T- ECE is offered through the Faculty of Education at the University of Waikato in Hamilton, New Zealand. At the time of the inception of the Grad Dip T- ECE, eLearning was well established in the Faculty of Education. This was due to the initiation and development in 1997 of the first New Zealand tertiary level online Bachelor of Teaching degree at the University of Waikato. The online Bachelor of Teaching is referred to as a mixed media programme (MMP) as it combines both face-to-face teaching blocks and online components, initially supported by a learning management system called 'Classforum'. The development of 'Classforum' enabled students to access information and participate in synchronous and asynchronous discussions (Campbell & Yates, 2005). The innovation of Classforum as a study model that supported interactive online learning was recognised in 2002 when the development team of Nola Campbell, Merilyn Taylor, Bill Ussher, and Russell Yates received an Excellence in Innovation award from Ako Aotearoa (Ako Aotearoa, 2012). It was from this eLearning foundation and innovation that the Grad Dip T- ECE was conceptualised and developed. Conversely, in comparison to the online Bachelor of Teaching, The University of Waikato was the last University in New Zealand to provide a Graduate Diploma in Early Childhood. At the time of its inception it had two key points of difference from other providers. Firstly, although applicants required an undergraduate degree for entrance into the programme, the degree did not have to be from the field of education. This differed from other graduate studies providers at the time. However, other providers have since changed entry requirements and the University of Auckland, the University of Canterbury, and the University of Victoria also now accept students with an undergraduate degree from any discipline. Others, such as the University of Otago, stipulate that the student's undergraduate degree has to include one human development paper. In the case of Massey University, if the undergraduate degree is not a primary teaching qualification it has to include 30 credits from papers in education. Secondly, apart from a three-day orientation and practicum blocks, the programme is fully online. These two features mean that there are no geographical limitations to accessing the programme, and people enrolling come from a diverse

range of backgrounds and life experiences. For example, past and present students' prior degrees include Bachelor of Education (primary), Bachelor of Pharmacy, Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Arts, and Bachelor of Social Sciences.

The Grad Dip T- ECE is a one-year programme that commences in mid January and finishes in late December. It can be undertaken as a part time option, but approximately 90% of students choose to complete the programme in one year. In the first year of the programme there were 38 students, but in subsequent years the programme intake has grown to a capped number of 100 students. During their period of study students undertake three days of face-to-face orientation, nine online papers, and 14 weeks of practical experience (practicum) in early childhood centres. The study expectation of fulltime students is approximately 35 hours per week, divided between activities such as online discussions, research, and assessment tasks. Table 1.1 details the programme design, content, and structure.

Table 1.1 Graduate Diploma of Teaching - Early childhood

Compulsory Papers
Summer School <u>TEPS751</u> Professional and Ethical Inquiry 1: The Treaty of Waitangi in Early Childhood Education
Practicum – February <u>TEDE751</u> Professional Practice 1: Practicum (EG1)
Semester A   <u>TEPS752</u> Professional and Ethical Inquiry 2: Inclusive Education   <u>TEPS754</u> Listening to Culture   <u>TEPS755</u> Learning and Development in the Early Years   <u>TEPS756</u> Play and Creativity in the Curriculum
Practicum – June to July <u>TEDE752</u> Professional Practice 2: Practicum (EG1)
Semester B   <u>TEPS753</u> Professional and Ethical Inquiry 3: Transition to School   <u>TEPS757</u> Communities of Learners   <u>TEPS758</u> Multiple Literacies   <u>TEPS759</u> Te Whāriki in Action
Practicum – mid October to mid December <u>TEDE753</u> Professional Practice 3: Practicum (EG1)
Three kaupapa Māori papers may be taken as an alternative to three mainstream papers if numbers allow <u>TEPS746</u> Mana Aotūroa <u>TEPS747</u> Whānau Tāngata <u>TEPS749</u> Ngā Mahi Ako Kōhungahunga

The facilitation of the Grad Dip T- ECE is interactive and reliant on an eLearning environment that supports interaction, communication, and innovation. Currently, Moodle, an open source learning management system, is employed as the learning

platform. Moodle superseded Classforum as the learning management system at the University of Waikato in 2008. Moodle and online tools relevant to this study are explained later in the thesis in chapter two.

1.3 Research question and organisation of the thesis

The main research question for this study is: 'In what ways do the pedagogical tools in an online teacher education programme facilitate a sense of belonging and social presence?' The thesis is organised in the following format. This first chapter details the researcher's interest, background, and context of the study. Chapter two contains the literature review that explores literature on eLearning, communities of learners, social presence, and online tools. Chapter three presents the methodology of the research study. The fourth chapter presents the findings of qualitative data analysed during the research, and introduces the pedagogical online tools. Chapter five presents further findings of qualitative and quantitative data analysed during the study. The analysis explores affordances of online tools and connects data to social presence. Finally, chapter six discusses the findings that have emerged from the research, and highlights possible implications for future practice. Chapter six ends by identifying limitations in this study and possible areas for future study.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Overview of chapter

This literature review sets out four themes for this topic. The first theme, *distance education*, includes an overview of distance education with a particular focus on changes in learning technologies and pedagogies as distance learning has evolved. The second theme explores the notion of *virtual communities* with a major interest in online communities of learners. The third theme for this literature review examines the concept of *social presence* and its role in supporting an online community of learners. The final theme examines *online learning tools* that support the fostering and development of social presence and community.

2.2 Distance education

Distance education is a method of delivering education where teachers and students are separated by distance and, in some cases, time (Moore & Kearsley, 1996). Simonson, Smaldino, Albright & Zvacek further define distance education as:

> "institution-based, formal education where the learning group is separated and where interactive telecommunications systems are used to connect learners, resources and, instructors". (2003, p.28)

This broad definition of telecommunications systems refers to a range of tools from the use of the postal service, to the World Wide Web. Distance education is not a new concept and is evident in the early 1900s, with students learning by undertaking correspondence programmes, which still exist today in many formats (Jeffries, 2003; Heirdsfield, Davis, Lennox, Walker & Zhang, 2007; Bates, 2005).

The journey and development of distance education has been categorised into three generations where each generation is defined by the technology and pedagogy that underpins it (Bates, 2005). The first generation is characterised by "the use of a single technology, and lack of direct student interaction with the institution providing the teaching or awarding of accreditation" (Bates, 2005, p. 6). Another characteristic of the first generation is that it enabled flexible learning for students as it liberated them from the time and geographical constraints of traditional educational institutions (Garrison & Anderson, 2004). First generation

distance education relies heavily on text-based (in particular print-based) technology for communication and interaction. In its early days it was usually sent via the post (Garrison & Anderson, 2004). Interactions are between lecturer and student, and the students' work is designed for them to individually complete course requirements so they do not need to interact with each other.

The second generation of distance education is defined as "a deliberately integrated multiple-media 'print + broadcasting ' approach, with learning materials specifically designed for study at a distance, but with communication with students mediated by a third person (a tutor rather than the originator of the teaching material)" (Bates, 2005, p. 7). This generation of distance education is also characterised by its use of newer and diverse technology, whilst retaining the integrity and freedom of independent study (Garrison & Anderson, 2004).

Finally, the third generation of distance education is characterised as:

> being based on two way communications media such as the internet or video conferencing that enable interaction between the teacher who originates the instruction and the remote student. Perhaps even more importantly, communication is facilitated among students, either individually or as groups, but at a distance. (Bates, 2005, p.7)

A salient point in this latter definition is the facilitation of interaction among students. It highlights the ability of learners to interact with each other, as well as with the lecturer and programme content. This is a significant difference from other generations and enables learners to co-construct knowledge with other students. In order for this form of interaction and communication to occur the third generation of distance education is dependent on computer mediated communication to make connections between learners, content, and lecturer.

In this study the focus is on the third generation of distance education and the use of the internet, in particular the World Wide Web, to support computer mediated communication in online learning environments.

The World Wide Web and Computer Mediated Communication

A brief history of the World-Wide Web, was provided by Frauenfelder (2004). He describes how in 1980 Sir Tim Berners-Lee, whilst working as a scientist at CERN in Switzerland, created "software that allows electronic documents to link to each other" (p.42). This initial project, called Enquire, led Berners-Lee in 1990 to develop the technological breakthrough that he termed "The World-Wide Web" (WWW). Berners-Lee describes the WWW as:

> a vision encompassing the decentralised, organic growth of ideas, technology, and society. The vision I have for the Web is about anything being potentially connected with anything. It is a vision that provides us with new freedom, and allows us to grow faster than we could when we were fettered by the hierarchical classification systems into which we bound ourselves. It leaves the entirety of our previous ways of working as one tool among many. And it brings the workings of society closer to the workings of our minds. (Berners-Lee & Fishetti, 1999, p.2)

Berners-Lee's (1999) philanthropic vision was that the World Wide Web should be a collaborative tool accessible to all for sharing information, communication, and learning, and not be restricted to certain privileged sections of society such as academia and commerce. Indeed, Berners-Lee's underlying philosophy was not one of how the WWW could benefit him and a select band of elite groups, but one of "How can I make the Web yours?" (Dertouzos, 1999, p. x). This vision is being realised, and is evident in the growth of websites from one in 1990, to 25,675,581 in 2000, and the ubiquitous use of the WWW in everyday lives. Reed (2011) reflects that as the WWW celebrated its 21st birthday in 2011, it was so commonplace in society that it is easy to forget how innovative the invention of the WWW really was. The WWW is a living technology that is constantly evolving. However, Berners-Lee, now the Director of the World Wide Web Consortium and World Wide Web foundation, states that "The only way the web will remain a viable force into the future will be if it maintains that spirit of collaboration and openness that helped it become so successful more than two decades ago" (Reed, 2011, p.44).

Web 2 Technologies

The WWW has been defined as a 'global information space' (Anderson, 2007). Anderson argues that, as the Web develops, a new phase is beginning which is

more social in nature. This is being called Web 2. He identifies common Web 2 tools as being "blogs, video sharing, social networking and podcasting" (Anderson, 2007, p.7), and explains that these tools can develop environments that enable social connections between people, and also provide opportunities for people to contribute to the web. Anderson (2007) suggests that Web 2 tools "Are ideas about building something more than a global information space; something with much more of a social angle to it. Collaboration, contribution and community are the order of the day" (p.4). A key point of difference with Web 2.0 technologies is that they enable people to contribute content, rather than only accessing what is already there (Mika, 2007). To illustrate his point Mika (2007) provides the examples of Wikipedia and Flickr, both of which have content contributed by users. Anderson (2007) points out, however, that this was always Berners-Lee's intention of the WWW. Indeed, Berners-Lee states that "The Web becomes a much more powerful means for collaboration between people. I have always imagined the information space as something to which everyone has immediate and intuitive access, and not just to browse, but to create" (1999, p.157). Clear themes in the literature indicate that web 2 technologies such as Blogs, Podcasts, Skype, Wikipedia and Flickr are designed to be interactive, collaborative tools that enable people to contribute content as well as to access information.

Computer mediated communication

The development and expansion of the WWW, combined with increased availability of access in homes has meant that new opportunities have been developed for learning and teaching too. Salmon (2006) refers to this as 'net worked learning'. One form of 'net worked learning' is computer mediated communication (CMC). Romiszowski and and Mason define CMC as "the process by which people create, exchange, and perceive information using networked telecommunications systems that facilitate encoding, transmitting, and decoding messages" (2004, p. 398). Interaction and communication in the most recent distance education programmes is reliant on CMC for support and facilitation. The internet, in conjunction with eLearning software, for instance, supports discussion forums, collaborative online assignments, and peer feedback. The use of CMC has redefined the notion of distance education (Palloff & Pratt, 1999). In the first instance it is enabling tertiary providers to offer cost effective

programmes where the learner can dictate when and where they access the information, providing flexibility and choice for the learner (Moore & Kearsley, 1996). However, in the second instance, Palloff and Pratt (1999) are emphatic in their identification of CMC as being fundamental to the facilitation of online collaboration. Harisim too asserts that:

> On-line collaboration theory provides a model of learning in which students are encouraged and supported to work together to create knowledge: to invent, to explore ways to innovate and, by doing so, to seek the conceptual knowledge needed to solve problems rather than to recite what they think is the right answer (Harisim, 2012, p. 90).

This marks a paradigm shift from traditional views of the transmission of knowledge from lecturer to learner to incorporate contemporary socio-constructivist theories of learning. Palloff and Pratt further explain this by acknowledging that "Key to the learning process in on-line collaboration are the interactions among students themselves, the interactions between faculty and students, and the collaboration in learning that results from these actions" (1999, p. 5,). Moore (2004) expands on the types of interaction and identifies them in educational settings as being the interaction between the learner and the content of the programme, the interaction between the learner and the instructor, and the interaction between the learner and other learners in the programme.

Moore (1989) elaborates on the interaction between *learner and content* by asserting that as students interact with content they gain understanding. He points out that this process is fundamental in education, as without it, learning cannot exist. He asserts that this form of interaction "Is the process of intellectually interacting with content that results in changes in the learner's understanding, the learner's perspective, or the cognitive structures of the learner's mind" (1989, p.2). The traditional opportunities to 'interact' with content changed in online programmes. Text based content could be perceived as being one dimensional, but in contemporary online environments text can be augmented with a range of resources, such as podcasts and video clips, to make the interaction a more interactive experience for the learner (Garrison & Anderson, 2004).
In on-line teaching the lecturer can engage and motivate a learner whilst disseminating programme content, values, and expectations of the learning

community. Learners are able to access information as well as support and encouragement as they can in face-to-face encounters (Moore, 2004). This form of interaction aligns with the notion of scaffolding (Harisim, 2012) in socio-cultural theory and consequently enables the learner to develop their existing knowledge.

Moore describes *interaction between learners* as "… inter-learner interaction, between one learner and other learners, alone or in group settings, with or without the real-time presence of an instructor" (p. 35, 2004). This form of interaction is pivotal to a social constructivist learning theory which argues it is through dialogue that learners can gain the perspectives of others and co-construct knowledge (Harisim, 2012). In earlier distance programmes this form of interaction was not possible as it is only through the use of tools, such as the World Wide Web and discussion forums, that it can be facilitated (Garrison & and Anderson, 2004). Palloff and Pratt (1999) assert that online interactions and collaboration can build a learning community. In this community, knowledge and meaning can be co-constructed between members.

2.3 Virtual communities

Communication and interaction are considered to be the foundation of democratic education (Dewey, 1938). Learning, where students are expected to articulate their ideas, and discuss viewpoints and theories that are different from their own, is a social activity. Participants in this kind of learning need ways to communicate, foster relationships and form communities to enable the learning process to occur (Bibeau, 2001). For the purposes of this study, which is investigating an online teacher education programme, the notions of community, virtual community, and online communities of learners are relevant.

Understanding Virtual Community

The literature points out that the concept of community includes many understandings and associations. Selznick (1992) comments that there is no one understanding of community or even a general ideology, as within different contexts the very notion of community has different meanings (Cohen, 1985). The whole notion of community is so diverse that it seems difficult

(MacNaughton & Williams argue unimportant), to give community a definitive meaning or definition (2009). However, one point on which the literature mostly agrees is that a community is perceived as being a good thing, facilitating positive attributes such as a group culture, relationships, and connections with others (Selznick, 1992).

The term 'virtual community' is attributed to academic and self-described online investigator Howard Rheingold. In 1985, Rheingold joined an influential early online virtual community called the Well, and subsequently shared his online experiences in a book titled "The Virtual Community". These experiences led Rheingold to define a virtual community in general as "Social aggregations that emerge from the Net when enough people carry on those public discussions long enough, with sufficient human feeling, to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace" (Rheingold, 2000, p.5). Rheingold (2000) further argues that having witnessed online activity for over a period of ten years, he believes that if CMC is accessible to people they will develop virtual communities. He uses a biological analogy to describe the growth of virtual communities by likening cyberspace to a petrie dish with the agar jelly in each dish representing the internet. The agar jelly supports the growth of micro-organisms, which he uses to depict each virtual community. However, he stresses that the technology alone does not create a community and argues that it is the human need to build community, combined with the availability of new technology that enables virtual communities to flourish (Rheingold, 2000). Haythornthwaite (2002) also argues that the traditional view of community as a place where people live locally, share resources, and support each other has changed through the development and use of Information Communication Technologies (ICT). However, Haythornthwaite (2002) asserts that people are still connected and bound by the same values and characteristics of traditional communities, but it is the way community members interact and communicate that has altered. She elaborates on this point by stating that through the use of ICT, community is no longer limited by geography, distance, or time as people use a variety of technological mediums such as phone and CMC to communicate with each other and develop social networks. Wenger, White and Smith (2009), agree with Haythornthwaite (2002) and state that "…there is no question that digital habitats give rise to new communities – by

connecting people across time and space, by creating new spaces for engagement, by revealing affinities for shared domains, and by providing information about people…" (Wenger, White & Smith, 2009, p.191). However, as a result of her observations, Haythornthwaite (2002) argues that a virtual community as being "based on what we do with others, rather than where we live with others in terms of the social networks we maintain" (p.159). Indeed, it is argued that it is the 'activities' that virtual community members engage in, rather than where they undertake the enterprise, that is a key focus of a virtual community (Graff, 2006). Literature agrees that the development of ICT's has changed the way people can, and do interact to form community. It also affirms that technology alone does not make a community, but provides the tool for interaction between community members. An area of ambiguity lies in the diverse and non-comparable nature of virtual communities. Rennington and Shumar identify this as an issue and comment that the "word community is being used to denote so many concepts that it no longer holds any meaning" (2002, p.3). This study seeks to understand virtual communities from an educational perspective and will focus on virtual communities of learners in educational contexts.

Understanding an Online Community of Learners in an educational context
As with any virtual community, an on-line community of learners (OCL) is not bound by geography or time, and as Palloff and Pratt highlight, uses the technology of CMC as a tool to support communication, interaction, and collaboration within the community (2005). Literature defines an OCL as a group of people who share a common purpose, motivation, and who work collaboratively to make meaning (Haythornthwaite, 2002; Jonassen et al, 2003; Lai, 1999). Hunter elaborates that an OCL can be defined as a group of on-line participants "who interact with each other, learn from each others' work, and provide knowledge and information resources to the group related to certain agreed-upon topics of shared interests" (2002, p.96). Palloff and Pratt, influential researchers in the field of eLearning and the development of OCLs, further identify essential aspects of an OCL as being:

> People – the students, faculty, and staff involved in an online course
> Shared purpose – coming together to take an online course, including the sharing of information, interests, and resources

Guidelines – create the structure for the online course by providing the
ground rules for interaction and participation

Technology – serves as a vehicle for the delivery of the course on-line and
a place where everyone involved can meet

Collaborative learning – promotes student-to-student interaction as the
primary mode of learning and also supports socially constructed meaning
and knowledge creation

Reflective practice – promotes transformative learning. (Palloff & Pratt,
2005, p.3).

These definitions include the key aspirations and characteristics of any
community of learners. However, a community of learners in a tertiary teacher
education programme has particular characteristics. These are that the
programme is usually directed by a teacher, and tends to be connected to
curriculum (Harisim, 2012). Also, that the "the topic, tasks and timeline are set
by the instructor. Membership is mandated by the instructor, whether the
instructor selects the team members or students self-select which group to join. A
community of learning is neither voluntary nor ongoing" (Harisim, 2012, p.146).
However, embedded within the any community of learners needs to be a form of
community structure which enables members to become active participants in
both the process of learning and the actual community (McGrath, 2003).

 Purpose of a Community of learners

At the heart of a community of learners in an educational setting is the intention to
learn together (Wenger, 1998). This learning intention exists in both covert and
overt forms. It may include the participants wanting to gain understanding and
achieve skills that will result in credentialisation through gaining a qualification.
However, it may also include the intrinsic intention of empowering learners as
they obtain an understanding of how they learn, what they want to learn, and how
to achieve it. Students are learning how to learn (McGrath, 2003) and are
apprentices in the learning process itself. This understanding of the process of
learning is far reaching as it underpins the notion and motivation for lifelong
learning.

However, it is the socio-constructivist theoretical framework that underpins a
community of learners (Harada, Lum & Sou, 2002/3) and guides how learning is

facilitated, participated in, and ultimately occurs. Harisim (2012) asserts that socio-constructivist learning theory is how:

> knowledge is constructed by the individual through his or her interactions with the community and the environment. Knowledge is thus viewed as dynamic and changing, constructed and negotiated socially, rather than something absolute and finite.(p. 60)

 Rogoff states that " The idea of a community of learners is based on the premise that learning occurs as people participate in shared endeavours with others, with all playing active but often asymmetrical roles in socio-cultural activity" (1994, p, 209). This is clearly evident within Te Whāriki, the New Zealand, early childhood curriculum (1996) and the New Zealand Curriculum (2007) which both place learning within social and cultural contexts. Te Whāriki, "….emphasises the critical role of socially and culturally mediated learning and of reciprocal and responsive relationships for children with people, places and things" (MoE, 1996,p. 9). Equally, the New Zealand Curriculum places the development of key competencies within social contexts continuing to grow "… over time shaped by interactions with people, places, ideas and things" (2007, p.12). Therefore, learning in this context is a socially and culturally mediated activity that is dependent on interaction between participants as they engage jointly with others, and with objects in meaningful activity to co-construct shared meaning in an environment that supports collaborative learning (Vygotsky, 1978). This learning theory is a departure from some traditional notions of education where knowledge is transmitted between teacher and student, situating the student as a passive recipient receiving information.

Thus, members in a community of learners who engage and interact to co-construct and to make meaning of problems and questions (Lynch, 2004) do more than learn content. Rogoff (1994) terms this "transformation of participation" and asserts "how people develop is a function of their transforming roles and understandings in the activities in which they participate" (Rogoff, 1994, p. 209). These changing roles of community members can include being teachers, observers, and active participants as they collaborate and communicate through various mediums in the learning environment. For example, in an on-line community of learners, participants communicate and collaborate in online

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forums to negotiate meaning and understanding of a topic. During this process they may change roles between learner and teacher as they share ideas and experiences. The particular benefits of CMC to support socio-cultural learning in an OCL is demonstrated by a participant in a study undertaken by Wegerif in 1998, who asserted that:

> The benefits of collaborative learning were derived from taking part in a developing conversation where many of the replies were much more considered than might have been the case had the same people met and talked together over several hours. Questions were raised, answered, developed, returned to and reconsidered in a much more polite and considerate manner than would have been the case in the face-to-face situation. (p. 48)

Literature has emphasised that interactions between participants are vital to the purpose of an OCL. Unlike a face-to-face community of learners where participants can be part of the community by their physical presence, in an OCL if a member doesn't actively interact both academically and socially they to all extent and purposes do not exist (Misanchuk, & Anderson, 2001). Accessing the learning environment with out making a contribution is termed 'Lurking' (Palloff & Pratt, 2007). Lurking has negative connotations and as Preece states "Many think of a lurker as someone who hangs around, often with sinister or, at best, annoying (to us) motives, or as a freeloader" (2000, p. 88). Preece goes on to explain this perspective by arguing that OCL's are dependent on participants interacting. However, Wenger, White and Smith (2009) assert that lurking can be interpreted as legitimate peripheral participation. Although talking about a community of practice, Wenger et al comment that participants can be legitimate peripheral participants in an online community of practice as they are "people on the periphery who are taking the time to familiarise themselves with the functioning and point of view of the community before jumping in" (Wenger, White & Smith, 2009, p.9). Therefore the position of a 'lurker' would tend to be viewed by literature from differing perspectives, positive and negative.

Key attributes and qualities of a community of learners
It has been identified that there are five key factors that can foster a rich productive COL. These factors are (i) recognition and implementation of the zone of proximal development, (ii) acceptance of difference, (iii) right for discourse

and (iv) a sense of community, (v) a sense of belonging (Brown, 1994; Brown, 1997; McGrath, 2003).

(i) One concept that can describe the learning and contribute to a rich learning environment is the zone of proximal development (ZPD). The ZPD is the space between the knowledge and skills a learner individually brings to an activity, and the knowledge and understandings they can achieve through the scaffolding and collaboration of a more expert peer or teacher (Vygotsky, 1978; Brown, 1994). In an effective community of learners, ZPDs are intentionally created and distributed throughout the learning environment. This can be achieved through the use of various resources such as people, tools, and artefacts (Brown, 1994). One way this can be achieved in an on-line community of learners is by using software to facilitate discussion forums that enable peer-to-peer interaction, as well as the opportunity to invite experts into the discussion (Cuthbart, Clarke & Linn, 2002). Critically, the opportunities for ZPD's are not only created by teachers, but also other learners in the community.

(ii) An acceptance of difference celebrates and invites the sharing of each member's skills, knowledge, and experiences with the whole community. This culture enables all members to take on a leadership and teaching role rather than relying on the teacher (McGrath, 2003).

(iii) The notion and culture in a community of acceptance of difference can also be the foundation for the right to discourse. The right for discourse provides a community culture in which "newcomers adopt the discourse of the community. For example, the values, systems, goals, and belief systems of the community" (Brown, 1994). This culture also includes how to interact by communicating with each other to constructively criticise and pose questions, which is essential to the functioning of a community as it can provide a rich environment for students to negotiate and make meaning, whilst respecting and considering many perspectives.

(iv) Parr and Ward (2005) assert that the acceptance of the right to question and feedback makes a strong learning community. Creating an environment conducive

for such interaction needs to be initiated and fostered through a sense of community.

(v) A sense of belonging is an integral component of an OCL (Osterman, 2000; Rovai, 2002). Without a sense of belonging, a sense of community cannot be developed. Osterman explains this by commenting that "Communities exist when members experience a sense of belonging or personal relatedness. They feel the group is important to them and they are important to the group" (2000, P.324). Indeed, a sense of community can be initiated and sustained as members feel a sense of belonging and cohesion towards each other. Within an OCL members need to have self-determination, but they also have a responsibility to the group as a whole (Sewell & George, 2008). Holmeberg also asserts that the feeling of belonging and consequent emotional attachment to a community of learners can result in 'learning pleasure' which can be connected to student motivation to learn and engage in the programme (Simonson, Smaldino, Albright & Zvacek, 2003).

Relationships that are deemed to be positive can enhance student enjoyment of learning and can also engender a feeling of trust and sense of belonging between participants. This is a key contributor to the development of an OCL, as community members need to depend on each other, trust, and respect each other for open, productive dialogue (Rovai, 2002). This in turn impacts on student engagement and motivation, and can encourage the culture within an OCL to be "a good place to live, work and play, and where everyone is engaged in lifelong learning" (Jilk, 1999, p .46). Through this engagement, students can gain deeper understandings of both theory and practice as they co-construct meaning with others in the learning community and build knowledge together (Lynch, 2004).

Literature suggests that eLearning environments that use CMC have the potential to be cold and uninviting as the solely text based medium lacks the traditional face to face cues of interaction such as facial expressions, instant feedback, and humour (Weiss, 2002; Kirkland Harvey, 2006; Allan and Lawless, 2003). These authors assert that this impersonal environment can lead to feelings of isolation and a feeling of disconnectedness for students. Interestingly, unlike Kirkland Harvey (2006) and Allan and Lawless (2003), Weiss (2002) asserts that this

feeling of not belonging goes beyond the lack of cues and can also be attributed to the loss of a physical classroom. This point of view is further supported by Campbell and Yates (2005), who comment that an online campus is really important for fostering a sense of belonging in their learning environment as the physical distance between students can give rise to a lack of feeling of community. Campbell and Yates, highlight that this is particularly important for students who are not in the local community of the University and are most likely to feel alone (2005). These feelings can contribute to students' disengagement from learning and to high attrition rates in online programmes (Campbell & Yates, 2005). These feelings can be overcome by the development of relationships and involvement with others in an OCL. CMC is the medium for community building as it can facilitate interaction between community participants enabling relationships and a sense of community to be developed (Cole, 2002). However, the use of CMC alone cannot achieve this, which is identified by Haythornthwaite who asserts that "perhaps the most damning from a community perspective has been the notion that CMC could not convey social presence, the feeling of "being there" (2002, p.161). This is a significant statement, as Palloff and Pratt (2005) in their recent research, have added to their initial findings of key aspects of OCLs and included the aspect of social presence as an integral part of a establishing an OCL.

2.4 Social Presence

Social presence theory has been cited by Lowanthal (2010) as the most widely used, and appropriate ideology to enhance interactions in on-line COLs. The theory of social presence is accredited to Short, Williams and Christie who define it from a social psychological perspective as "the degree of salience of the other person in a mediated interaction and the consequent salience of the interpersonal interaction" (1976, p. 65). Lowanthal defines the degree of salience as the "quality or state of being there" (2010) as people communicate through a medium. Subsequently, researchers have used social presence theory but have adapted the definition to their own context. This has led to multiple definitions in the Literature. Swan and Shih argue that social presence is "the degree to which participants in computer-mediated communication feel affectively connected on to another" (2005, p.115). Piccianno considers social presence as " a student's sense

of being and belonging to a course (2002, p.22). Other literature suggests that it is do with the degree to which a person is thought to be 'real' through the interactions that they have with others (Aragon, 2003; Mackay & Freyberg, 2010; Lowenthal, 2009). This 'realness' includes the person's history, humour, emotion, and personality (Kehrwald, 2008). In educational contexts, this notion is supported by Garrison and Anderson who define social presence "as the ability of participants in a community of inquiry to project themselves socially and emotionally, as 'real' people (i.e., their full personality), through the medium of communication being used" (p.29, 2004).

Literature has identified two key characteristics associated with Social presence. These are intimacy, and immediacy (Gunawardena, 1995; Aragon, 2003; Mackey & Freyberg, 2010). The notion of intimacy is reliant on non-verbal communication such as facial expression, eye contact, and discussion theme (Aragon, 2003; Mackey & Freyberg, 2010). Immediacy relates to the psychological distance between the communicator and communicatee. Immediacy can be transmitted verbally and non verbally, and can be fostered through the use of personal names, humour, and feedback (Gunawardena, 1995). It can also depend on the context and intention of the communicator. Gunawardena (1995) comments how a person chooses to interact can impact on immediacy. For example, choosing formal language to address and converse with a person can contribute to non-immediacy, whereas speaking informally, with warmth and humour can foster immediacy. She explains this further by commenting:

> A person making a telephone call may choose to speak in such a manner
> as to give an impression of aloofness and "distance" (non-immediacy) or
> he or she may choose to adopt an attitude of informality and comradeship
> (immediacy). (1995, p.151)

The adoption of an attitude to convey immediacy can bridge the psychological gap between student and teacher, and contribute to creating a warm, inviting community (Aragon, 2003; Mackey & Freyboerg, 2010). However, contemporary research is now indicating that social presence is more a perception on the part of participants involved in communicating, rather than the medium being used (Kehrwald, 2008). It would seem that if we have an understanding of the core components of social presence we can emulate the cues in any medium, thus

fostering opportunities for community participants in the virtual world to be seen as real human beings.

Social Presence in relation to sense of belonging and relationships

In face-to-face situations cues and protocols are developed according to social and cultural contexts that enable people to have positive social interactions, which foster a sense of belonging and wellbeing (Aragon, 2003). Social presence can engender the sense of belonging and trust which are needed for the development and sustainment of community. For this reason social presence has been identified as a factor that needs to be fostered in the early stages of community building (Aragon, 2003; Tu & McIsaac, 2002; Salmon, 2000).

Social presence is relevant to relationship building in an on-line community as it can contribute to COL members feeling at ease and able to build relationships through shared social behaviours, such as greetings, and sharing of personal life (Aragon, 2003). These feelings can develop relationships in the community and create a culture, which is supportive of, and sustains purposeful, thoughtful dialogue between participants (Tu & McIsaac, 2002).

2.5 Online Tools

An online community of leaners and the social presence that supports and sustains it can be afforded by technological tools (McInnery & Roberts, 2004). Short et al (1976) argue that it is the communication tool itself that affords aspects of social presence, and that different tools support different degrees of social presence. For example, television has a higher degree of social presence than text based communication. Although Short et al (1976) were referring to the affordance of social presence in a telecommunications medium, learners in an OCL can "project their personalities into the online discussion using text alone, creating feelings of social presence that build online discourse communities" (Swan & Shih, 2005 p.116). Indeed, social networks can be achieved through the use of relevant and thoughtful tools and activities. However, Greyling, Mara, Makka and Van Niekerk (2008), Weiss (2002), and Allan and Lawless (2003) caution that the use of ICTs in teaching can potentially generate impersonal and uninviting virtual learning settings. They therefore stress the need for social presence in the

mediums being used. A variety of technological tools such as podcasting, blogs, web 2, discussion forums, feedback, collaborative assessments, problem based scenarios, virtual social cafes, and icebreaking activities can all contribute to establishing and maintaining social interactions (Salmon, 2006; Iverson, 2005). The use of these tools can facilitate social presence as well as providing authentic formats for learning since these tools, as Salmon (2006) comments, are familiar and relevant to a new generation. Joyes (2008) agrees, and strongly asserts the need for such tools and activities, but equally stresses that they need to be authentic and meaningful to the community participants. However, there needs to be a balance as too many collaborative activities can lead to overload for students, and can potentially result in disengagement (Palloff and Pratt, 2001; Iverson, 2005). Also, the same online tools that are used to create and foster a sense of belonging community, can also be barrier for some students if not used appropriately (Barab, Makinster & Scheckler,2004). Consequently, it is vital that the right tools are used to facilitate the chosen community interaction, and that students are able to access the community interaction space with ease (Misanchuk, & Anderson, 2001).

In this chapter I will review the literature of one web-based learning platform, Moodle, and four online collaborative tools it facilitates. These tools are: podcasts, discussion forums, peer-to-peer learning assignments, and social forums. I will also review netiquette guidelines processes that support the use of these tools.

Moodle
The internet is not only a rich source of information but is also a platform for web based applications which are designed to support teaching and learning online (Bias and Serrano-Fernandez, 2008). The trend of using web based applications is becoming more common in the education sector as educators move away from desk top software to using WWW applications to support learning and teaching activity (Blandl, 2005). The use of web-based software creates an online learning environment, which could be considered similar to the physical building experienced by face-to-face learners, where learning takes place (Harisim, 2012). One such web-based platform is Moodle. Moodle is defined as "an Open Source Course Management System (CMS), also known as a Learning Management

System (LMS) or a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)" (Moodle, 2011). Moodle (2011) explains that the word Moodle has dual meanings. It is an acronym for Modular Object-Orientated Dynamic Learning environment but "also a verb that describes the process of lazily meandering through something, doing things as it occurs to you to do them, an enjoyable tinkering that often leads to insight and creativity" (Moodle, 2012, para, 2). This definition aligns well with the social- constructivist pedagogy that underpins the development and framework of Moodle. Dougiamas emphasises this underlying philosophy by commenting that the tools and activities within Moodle support learning by:

> creating social contexts wherein groups construct knowledge for one another, collaboratively creating a small culture of shared artefacts with shared meanings. When one is immersed within a culture like this, one is learning all the time about how to be a part of that culture, on many levels. (Dougiamas, 2012, para 7).

Such tools and activities include discussion forums, social spaces, news forums, and the ability to include Web 2 technologies within the eLearning platform such as wiki's, blogs, and podcasts (Guhlin, 2010). These tools and activates can create an environment that supports collaborative interaction between student and student, and also student and teacher (Brandl, 2005). The interaction within Moodle can be synchronous and asynchronous, but enables opportunities for people to share ideas, challenges, and opinions as a community of learners (Bias & Serrano-Fernandez, 2008). Brandl (2005) also showed in a case study that Moodle tools "support an inquiry and discovery based approach to online Learning" (p.2). However, although research agrees that a rich, collaborative, interactive learning environment can be facilitated through the use of Moodle, it also cautions that the tools on their own cannot achieve this, and that educators need an appropriate teaching pedagogy to guide and design such learning environments.

Podcasts

Podcasts are discussed here as an example of a tool that is valuable for an on-line community of learners. They are a web 2 technology that enables audio/visual files to be downloaded by students via their computer to mobile devises (Beldarrain, 2006). They work by way of Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds, which enable files to be broadcast on the internet and accessed on demand by

students. Podcasts are further defined by Salmon, Mobbs, Edirisingha and Dennett (2008) as a digital media file that:

> Plays audio (sound) or audio and vision (sound and something to view); with vision, the term 'vodcast is sometimes used;
>
> Is made available from a website;
>
> Can be opened and/or downloaded (taken from the website offering it and placed on something of your own) and played on a computer; and/or
>
> Is downloaded from a website to be played on a small portable player designed to play the sound and/or vision. (p. 20)

Podcasts are a technology that essentially 'pushes ' the content to the student rather than the student needing to search for it. This attribute distinguishes it from other Web 2 technologies such as blogs and wikis.

The use of podcasts within tertiary education is multifaceted, and lecturers can employ them in various ways to support learning and teaching in a range of contexts (Salmon et al, 2008). For example, one use is to record lectures so that students can revisit and revise content as and when they need to. However, Salmon et al (2008) argue that the nature of this medium can also support motivation, engagement, and a sense of belonging because students can see and hear their lecturers. Podcasts can therefore contribute to the development of social presence in the eLearning environment, enhancing students' and lecturers' motivation, and engender a greater connectedness with the university context (Archard and Merry, 2010). This is supported by Campbell who comments that "podcasting done well, can reveal to students, faculty, community – even the world – the essential humanity at the heart of higher education" (2005, p. 6).

Discussion forums

Interaction between community members in an OCL is paramount to the learning and teaching process. Computer mediated communication has the potential to enable online interaction through the use of asynchronous communication (Garrison & Cleveland-Innes (2005). Thomas (2006) identifies one form of asynchronous communication in online learning environments as being discussion forums. Discussion forums are on-line collaborative tools that enable learners' to participate in conversations over a period of time. The contributions in a discussion forum can be organised by time of postings, or as a threaded discussion

that organises contributions by time and theme (Iverson, 2005). Iverson (2005) further describes a threaded discussion forum as " an online dialogue or conversation that takes the form of a series of linked messages. This series is created over time as users read and reply to existing messages" (p. 31). Discussion forums are recognised in research as an integral part of online learning environments and are commonly used in programmes and courses (Marra, Moore & Klimczak, 2004; Thomas, 2006; Garrison & Cleveland-Innes, 2005). However, discussion forums in OCL's are much more than an online opportunity for the sharing of information or interacting for social purposes. As Garrison and Cleveland-Innes point out, the purpose of the discussion forum is to "influence thinking in a critical and reflective manner"(2005, p.3). The vital role played by discussion forums in OCL's is also highlighted by Marra et al who state that: "Community of Learner participants rely on the asynchronous forums to engage one another in ways that potentially promote critical thinking, meaningful problem solving, and knowledge construction" (2004, p.5). The word 'potential' in this quote is essential to recognise as Garrison and Cleveland-Innes (2005) caution that this level of engagement in discussion forums does not just happen, and that because students are interacting online it does not mean that they are cognitively engaged. They assert that for students to achieve a high level of critical discourse the discussion forum needs to be initiated and facilitated by a teacher, and the discourse itself structured and cohesive. The structure, design and marking criteria of discussion forums is also important when considering how social presence may be afforded in this medium. Swan and Shih (2005), in a mixed method investigating the development and nature of social presence in on-line discussion forums, assert that "discussion topics and grading rubrics which encourage the sharing of personal experiences are especially supportive of the development of social presence" (p.131).

Peer to Peer interaction (collaborative assignment)

The facilitation of peer-to-peer collaboration and interaction in an on-line programme can provide a valuable forum for fostering supportive relationships between learners. Iverson (2005) asserts that supportive relationships often develop naturally in face-to-face learning environments, where learners may meet in the café or talk after class, but in an on-line environment need to be intentionally developed. Peer-to-peer relationships are vital to an OCL as they

can "create a sense of camaraderie that can overcome the feelings of loneliness and disconnection that can lead to high rates of drop out in virtual learning" (Iverson, 2005, p.89).   One way of facilitating peer-to-peer interaction in an on-line environment is through the inclusion of collaborative assignments in the programme design. A range of tools, which learners engage with to develop and present their work, can facilitate on-line collaborative assignments. These tools can include email, wikis, google docs, skype, second life, and the telephone (Lehman & Conceicao, 2010). Tools can be synchronous and asynchronous which is important as learners who work together need to be aware and empathetic of their peer's individual circumstances. For example, living in different time zones, or needing to study at times convenient to their external commitments (Lehman & Conceicao, 2010). The tools and groupings of the learners can be defined by the teacher, learner, or a combination of the both (Palloff & Pratt, 2007). One objective of peer-to-peer collaboration is that through regular interaction it can provide "learners with a greater sense of connection by placing them in pairs so they can facilitate and support each other's online learning experience" (Iverson, 2005, p.91).

Social spaces

A key aspect of building an OCL is the provision of opportunities that can foster social presence. Social presence is fostered through social interaction and can be beneficial to the development of an OCL in a variety of ways. Learning is a social process, and therefore providing spaces for people to socially interact can support the OCL through participants gaining a strong sense of belonging (Bender, 2003). Also, learners can be concerned at the prospect of working in a community with limited social contact which they may feel can be detrimental to relationships within them (Salmon, 2006). Palloff and Pratt (2007) identify a range of activities such as group work and particular discussion topics (e.g introductions) that can facilitate interaction to develop social presence. However, they also assert that it is important to provide a space designed explicitly for social interaction. They describe these opportunities as:

> A space in the course site where everyone, instructors and students alike, can let their hair down and be comfortable with one another – a community spa\the pedagogical tools in an online teacher education

programme facilitate a sense of belonging and social presence in order to
encourage a community of learners. (p.113)

Netiquette

Netiquette guidelines are an essential element of OCls as they ensure that
communication in the online environment is respectful and professional (Palloff
& Pratt, 2003). Netiquette guidelines will also set out the expectations of how
and when to participate. This can include establishing length of contributions to
aid all peoples' engagement and styles of contribution. For example, extending
on other participants ideas, and acknowledging others (Palloff & Pratt, 2007).

2.7 Summary of chapter

The review of the literature has drawn on four themes for this topic: Distance
education, virtual communities, social presence, and the online tools that can
facilitate a sense of community. It has highlighted the complexities of the
interplay between pedagogy and technology in supporting an effective on-line
community of learners, and details the tools relevant to this study.
In the following chapter the methodology of this study is presented.

Chapter Three: Research Design and Process

The research question is: In what ways do the pedagogical tools in an online teacher education programme facilitate a sense of belonging and social presence?

3.1 Overview of chapter

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the research design and method. I will explore the affordances of pedagogical learning technologies in an online pre-service teacher education programme in two ways. Firstly, by viewing the research question through the lens of participants' perceptions of a sense of belonging and relationships in a specific online community, and the role that social presence might have in this. For this purpose I wanted to gain an understanding of learners' individual perceptions and experiences. Secondly, I measured the indicators of social presence in two of the online programme papers for those six students that I interviewed papers. A mixed methodology was employed within a case study research approach. In this chapter I will discuss the case study approach and the mixed method methodology as they have been applied in this study. This will also include a description of the methods of data collection used. The chapter concludes with a discussion of ethical concerns and the validity of the research, a summary of the research process, and the data analysis strategies used in the study.

3.2 Case studies

Undertaking a case study can be a valuable approach for individual researchers since it can provide an opportunity for in-depth study of a particular issue in a particular instance (Bell, 1999). The case study approach is characterised by an investigation of a setting, single subject, person, or group, or the documenting of an event (Bogden & Bilken, 1992). Through this investigation, a case study seeks to provide a picture of the richness and depth of a situation and a construction of the reality of the participants' lived experiences within a bounded system (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000; Cresswell, 2005). Bounding the case means that " the case is separated out for research in terms of time, place, or some other physical boundaries" (Cresswell, 2005, p.439). Consequently, a case study involves descriptions and perceptions of the relevant events, dynamics of relationships, and

the thoughts and feelings of participants within a chosen boundaried focus. These features become data, which require appropriate analysis and the necessary skills of the researcher to observe, listen, interpret, critically reflect, and interpret the data (Atkinson & Hamilton , 2009). Stake has identified three basic types of case study: intrinsic, instrumental, and collective (Stake, 2000). For the purposes of this study I have engaged in an intrinsic type of case study, undertaken because the researcher has an "intrinsic interest, for example, in this particular child, clinic, conference, or curriculum" (Stake, 2000, p.437). The case in this study was a tertiary teacher education programme and exploring the "interaction of factors and events" (Bell, 1999, p.10) within it, to explore my research question (see Chapter One for details of this and my interest in it). Case studies are usually undertaken using qualitative research approaches, but can include any method of inquiry appropriate for the study (Bell, 1999). For the purposes of this study a mixed method methodology has been used.

3.3 Mixed method methodology

Research methods in social research can be quantitative and/or qualitative (Bell, 1999; Cresswell, 2005; Tolich & Davidson, 2011). Each of these methods has different approaches, values, and epistemological foundations. Indeed, Tolich and Davidson assert that "quantitative and qualitative research each make different assumptions about how the world works and how we can know about the world" (2011, p.31). Quantitative research has a positivist epistemological orientation and "is a type of educational research in which the researcher decides what to study, asks specific, narrow questions, collects numeric (numbered) data from participants, analyses these numbers using statistics, and conducts the inquiry in an unbiased, objective manner" (Cresswell, 2005, p.39). Thus, quantitative research is characterised by a scientific approach of the researcher to measure and provide statistical analysis of the issue being researched (Tolich & Davidson, 2011). Due to the nature of this type of research method, instruments used to collect data need to reflect the intent of the research and be designed to collect objective, statistical data: checklists and standardised tests for example (Cresswell, 2005; Cohen & Manion, 1994). This approach is useful "for describing trends and explaining the relationship between variables found in literature…the final report, presented in a standard format, displays researcher objectivity and lack of

bias" (Cresswell, 2005, p.597). It can also be useful for illustrating comparative patterns and trends over time, and can serve an interpretive purpose as well. A qualitative research approach has an interpretivist epistemological orientation and focuses on "the understanding of the social world through an examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants" (Bryman, 2004, p.266). In other words, a qualitative approach seeks to explore the experiences and perceptions of participants. It acknowledges and emphasises the importance of participants' voices, perspectives, and experiences in cultural and social contexts. If interview or questionnaire instruments are used they need to include general, emerging questions which allow participants to express their views in words or pictures, which are then analysed by theme or description (Cresswell, 2005). The researcher "interprets the meaning of the information, drawing on personal reflections and past research. The final structure of the report is flexible, and it displays the researcher's biases and thoughts" (Cresswell, 2005, p. 596).

Researchers have realised the value and importance of listening to participants' voices in cultural and social contexts, and consequently there has been a significant move towards qualitative methods of inquiry (Cresswell, 2005). There has been much debate about whether qualitative approaches are as valid as quantitative as they are subjective and, by their nature, interpretive (Cresswell, 2005). Indeed, such is the antithesis between the research methods that they have been referred to as the 'paradigm wars' (Tolich & Davidson, 2011). Tolich and Davidson (2011) introduce what they describe as a 'unifying paradigm' that has a pragmatic approach. "A pragmatic approach enables researchers to mix and match methods, as and when the research situations demands" (Tolich & Davidson, 2011, p.166). In other words it should not be a case of either/or, but a selection of the best possible tools to suit the research focus and the data collection. A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods of inquiry can give a deeper and clearer understanding of the issue being researched, and an opportunity to check one set of data (qualitative) against another (quantitative). Consequently, the differences of each approach and the tools related to them become a uniting strength (Cresswell, 2005; Tolich & Davidson, 2011). For the purposes of this study a mixed method approach was chosen. In this way the best aspects of each method enabled the research question to be more extensively

explored. For example, in this study, providing statistical measures and classification of social presence evident in the online computer conference forums, and complementing this with learners' perceptions of social presence, provide a deeper of analysis than one of these sets of data collection on its own. Lowenthal expands on this whilst reflecting on previous methods of researching social presence which have been dependent on quantitative approaches and comments that "researchers will employ multiple and mixed methods approaches… that focus on, among other things, the socially situated and contextual nature of social presence" (2010, p.20).

By employing a qualitative methodology I was able to examine the concepts of belonging and social presence in relation to the tools that learners perceived contributed to these aspects of relationships. As qualitative research is essentially interpretative, as the researcher I had to interpret the data collected, but recognise the potential bias of such interpretation. As an emerging researcher I was very conscious that my interpretation of the data could easily be influenced by my own values and beliefs (Bell, 1999).

3.4 Methods of data collection

In this study two types of instruments were used to collect data. They were questionnaires and computer mediated communication (CMC) situated in the online learning environment. Each will now be discussed.

Questionnaires

Although there are many formats of surveys in social research, two significant forms are questionnaires and interviews. Each method has its own characteristics and purpose (Cresswell, 2005). In this study a questionnaire format was conducted via email. The questionnaire itself can elicit both qualitative and quantitative data depending on the types of questions asked, and the analysis techniques used (Cohen & Manion, 1994; Cresswell, 2005). For the purposes of this study, a questionnaire was designed with exclusively open-ended questions, to enable participants to respond freely with their own experiences and perceptions (Cresswell, 2005). It was hoped that the style of an open-ended question questionnaire would enable a greater depth and quality of response, thus

providing rich qualitative data for analysis (Tolich and Davidson, 2011). There may be limitations in the use of questionnaires, such as a potentially limited response rate and also restricted answers that are governed by the standardisation of questions that shape the questionnaire. However, for this study it was deemed appropriate to use emailed questionnaires for two reasons. The first was that students studying online in the Grad Dip - ECE, were familiar and comfortable communicating via computer mediated communication. Secondly, because of the nature of this online Graduate Diploma of Teaching, students were located in many parts of the country, therefore an emailed questionnaire was appropriate for the participants of this study (see Appendix 8).

Computer mediated communication

The second type of data collected in this study came from computer conference content data embedded within the Graduate Diploma of Teaching – ECE online learning platform. These discussion forums provide naturally occurring data as learners participated in the process of learning. A key strength of this type of data collection is that it provides an authentic account of participants' interactions within the online learning environment. In this study, I employed a quantitative coding system to draw out statistical data. The coding system is explained later in this chapter.

3.5 Ethical concerns and Validity

Research that involves human participants can be full of tensions (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). To research in such a manner poses questions about whom the study benefits, and how participants are positioned within the study (Silverman, 2006). Consequently, researchers have a professional responsibility not only to investigate their area of interest and contribute to the research community, but also to consider the wellbeing and dignity of participants in their study (Cohen & Manion, 1994). Ethical standards in research recognise that participants have rights, and subsequently guide practice by stating that "individuals need to know the purpose and aims of the study, the use of the results, and the likely social consequences the study will have on their lives" (Cresswell, 2005, p.12). This is deemed ethical practice. As a researcher, I also had a responsibility to maintain an ethical consciousness throughout the research project so that I could be responsive to any ethical issues that might arise during the study (Cohen, et al,

2000). This 'ethical consciousness' also included the participants' right to withdraw from the study, their right to decline to answer questions, and their right to view and authorise the use of their data in the study. In addition, reflecting on the process and the discussions with my supervisor to check and balance was another component in the validity of data collection and analysis. An example of this lies in my position within the case study community. As the co-coordinator of the diploma I strongly contribute to the design and content, and therefore might hold a constructed loyalty and defensiveness associated with the course and its workings. Receiving or perceiving possible criticism might pose a challenge and influence interpretation as a result. I had worked with the participants for one year and had developed strong relationships with them. This also could create a bias for me to see the positives of the programme and to interpret data based on my own beliefs of the programme and prior knowledge of participants. Therefore it was important that I recognised this potential for bias and sought strategies to negate it. I did this by discussing the findings with my supervisor, who as a critical friend challenged my assumptions and provided additional insight into the data analysis. An ethics application was submitted to the Faculty of Education Ethics committee and was approved in February 2009.

Informed consent

One way of respecting the rights of participants is through the process of informed consent. As a researcher, I was responsible for ensuring that information regarding the research process was accessible to potential participants and explained in a manner that was understandable (Silverman, 2006; Cohen et al., 2000). In this study, written informed consent was gained before any data was collected from the participants. This process was undertaken by sending all 38 full-time students in the 2008 Grad Dip – ECE programme an information sheet outlining the purpose and intent of the research and clearly indicating the role of participants. This included explicitly explaining that data would be collected retrospectively from the computer conferenced forums which had been created by participants for the purpose of learning and contributing to a programme, rather than research purposes (See Appendix, 1 for letter of invitation, Appendix 2 for information sheet, and Appendix 3 for consent form).

Confidentiality and privacy

Participant privacy and confidentiality are other key factors in respecting and safeguarding the rights of participants. As my data collection was through questionnaires and analysis of computer mediated communication, it was my responsibility as a researcher, to maintain confidentiality in both sources. In the case of the questionnaires this was achieved by minimising any risk of identifying participants by ensuring that names and personal details were never disclosed. Also, the manner in which the findings were reported further safeguarded the confidentiality of the participants, for example, the use of pseudonyms chosen by the participants. Participants were also informed of the need for confidentiality in case they inadvertently disclosed information in the questionnaire that may identify other participants; any such comments would be removed from the data. In the case of CMC any names or personal identification of participants or non-participants were removed to ensure anonymity (Garrison & Anderson, 2004).

Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of a piece of research is integral to the legitimacy and credibility of its findings. Bryman defines four aspects of trustworthiness: "credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability" (2004, p.273). These four aspects are now discussed in relation to the trustworthiness of the findings of this study. To ensure the credibility of the findings it was important that the research was undertaken "according to the canons of good practice" (Bryman, 2004, p.275). In this study this was achieved by following the University of Waikato's ethical procedures and guideline policies, and by being guided and mentored by an experienced senior researcher. As an emergent researcher these factors ensured that well-established research methods were employed and undertaken in a manner that reflects good practice (Shenton, 2004). In this study electronic questionnaires were chosen to collect data, as they are fast and simple to execute, whilst also being an established method of research inquiry (Cresswell, 2005). As an emerging researcher, I co-constructed the questionnaire with my supervisor to ensure that the design and questions were robust. Depending on the focus of the research the researcher needs to decide whether to use open-ended or closed or questions or a combination of the both. In this study open-ended questions were thought to be the best option for the questionnaires as they provided opportunities for participants to voice their individual perspectives

in their own words contributing to the validity of the findings. Also, as the researcher, I wanted to ask questions in an unconstrained manner to provoke a range of answers (Cresswell, 2005). Consequently, for this reason it was also important to avoid leading questions that narrow answers by suggesting that there is only one way to reply to the question (Cohen & Manion, 1996). The analysis of the computer conference transcripts were undertaken using a classification system that identifies indicators of social presence developed by Garrison and Anderson (2004) which is explained later in this chapter. Another factor in establishing the credibility of research is to verify the findings with participants in the study, to ensure that the researcher had correctly interpreted their perspectives (Bryman, 2004). In this study this was achieved by emailing the collected data to participants and asking permission for it's use. Participants, if unhappy with the context, perspective, or content of the data, had the right to withdraw it from use in the study. No participants did so. To ensure transferability was maintained in this research, a comprehensive and detailed account of the research context has been included. This background information can provide " a database for making judgements about the possible transferability of findings to other milieu" (Bryman, 2004, p. 275), and enable other researchers to consider whether this research is of relevance for use in their own context. Accurately reporting and keeping records of all stages of the research process has ensured the dependability of the research findings (Bryman, 2004; Shenton, 2004). This enables other researchers to gain an in-depth insight into the research method and the opportunity to replicate the study. Finally, the process of triangulation has ensured the confirmability of the research study. Triangulation is "a navigational term which means to fix one's position from two known bearings" (Bartlett & Burton, 2005, p.28). The term has been adopted in educational research and adapted to mean the verification of data by using two or more methods of data collection, and is often used in case study approaches (Cresswell, 2005). The use of two methods of data collection in this study supported confirmability by helping me to fix my position from two perspectives or data sets.

3.6 Research process

In this section, I outline the research process. Firstly, I describe the selection of participants, tools, and processes used for data collection. Following this I explain the data analysis strategies used in this study.

The first stage in the research process was to send letters to the Chair of the Department and coordinator of the Grad Dip – ECE to seek permission to research with students in the Faculty of Education at Waikato University (see Appendices 4 & 5). Once permission had been granted I moved onto the participant selection process.

Selection of participants

Participants were selected using the following criteria: all 38 full-time students in the 2008 Graduate Diploma of teaching – ECE programme were invited to participate in this study. The research process started by sending an informal email to the students before the end of the academic year that signalled my intent to research. However, to avoid any potential conflicts of interest, official letters inviting students to participate in the study were posted after the programme had finished and the final grades submitted to the University. The letter included a participant information sheet and a consent form (see Appendices 2 & 3) that was to be returned to me in the post. Fifteen consent forms were received from students intending to participate in the research, and a questionnaire was then emailed to them (see Appendix 8). The questionnaire took approximately thirty minutes to complete and was returned to me by email. Six students returned the questionnaire and were subsequently selected to be participants in the research.

Selection of papers for study

Data was collected in retrospect from various computer conferenced forums within two specific papers from the B semester of programme that are pertinent to the research. These are TEPS757-08B (NET) - Communities of Learners and TEPS758-08B (NET) - Multiple Literacies (see Appendices 7 & 6 for paper outlines). These papers were chosen because they represent a diversity of content.

Selection of tools for analysis

Tools identified by students in their questionnaires as being useful for creating a sense of belonging and fostering relationships were selected for quantitative data

analysis. The tools analysed were discussion forums, collaborative assignments, podcasts, and social spaces.

Analysis of Questionnaire data
The qualitative data for this research was obtained from six individual emailed questionnaires from participant learners in the Grad Dip of-ECE. Once the researcher received the questionnaires they were read and then analysed to identify any common themes, patterns, and points of difference in perspectives. These categories were then coded and copied and pasted onto word documents under each of the themes.

Analysis of computer mediated communication data
The analysis of the qualitative questionnaire data identified certain tools and processes supported by computer mediated communication forums that participants felt fostered a sense of belonging, and contributed to the development of relationships through the affordance of social presence. These were discussion forums, social spaces, and collaborative assignments. As a result of the these findings, the identified discussion forums, collaborative assignment and social spaces, were analysed using Garrison and Anderson's (2004) classification of social presence framework to investigate the levels and categories of social presence in the forums (See Figure 3.1). The framework was developed as a tool for analysing social presence in computer mediated communication and provides a "calculator" for measuring social presence categories and their respective indicators (Garrison, Rourke, Anderson & Archer, 1999). The categories are: affective responses, open communication, and cohesive responses. Affective response is defined as the "expression of emotion, feelings and mood" (Garrison, Rourke, Anderson & Archer, 2001, p. 6). The sharing of socio-emotional feelings in online interaction is necessary for developing a culture that supports engagement and academic discourse. This is because as people share personal information about themselves trust and relationships develop (Garrison & Anderson, 2004). Open communication, which has also been termed interactive communication, is defined as "…threaded interchanges combined with messages of a socially appreciative nature…" (Garrison et al., 2001, p. 6). It is fostered by reciprocal exchanges between learners that recognise and compliment the contributions of each other. Consequently, open communication " has an affective quality that reflects a climate of trust and acceptance" (Garrison &

Anderson, 2004, p.52). Cohesive responses are characterised by "activities that build and sustain a sense of group commitment" (Garrison et al., 2001, p. 8). Group commitment and cohesion is essential to an online community of learners, as participants need to feel united as they co-construct knowledge together (Garrison & Anderson, 2004, p.53). Each of these categories has specific indicators that identify their presence in computer mediated communication. These indicators are shown in Table 3.1. The category, indicator, and definition in this table are taken from Garrison and Andersons (2004) analytical framework, but the participant examples are drawn from this study's data.

Table 3.1 Social presence classification, categories and indicators based on Garrison et al (2004)

Category		Indicators	Definition	Example from study participants
Affective responses	1	Expression of Emotions	Conventional expressions of Emotion, or unconventional expressions of emotion, includes repetitious punctuation, conspicuous capitalization, emoticons	I for one know that sometimes we can all have an 'off day'! (Participant A)
Affective	2	Use of humour	Teasing, cajoling, irony, understatements, sarcasm	Not sure we should teach dems to children though (Participant B)
Affective	3	Self-disclosure	Presents details of life outside of class, or expresses vulnerability	Even though I live in New Zealand, I enjoy every having my homeland food (Participant E)
Open communication	4	Continuing a thread	Using reply feature of software, rather than starting a new thread	Software dependent. Programme design means that participants have to use reply feature
Open communication	5	Quoting from others' messages	Using software features to quote others' entire message or cutting and pasting of others' messages	Software dependent. "When people stop questioning the validity of theory it becomes normalised" (Participant F)
Open communication	6	Referring explicitly to others' message	Direct references to contents of others' posts	I like what you said Jane (Participant B)
Open communication	7	Asking questions	Students ask questions of other students or the moderator	What do you think about rote counting? (Participant C)
Open communication	8	Complimenting, expressing appreciation	Complimenting others or contents of others' messages	I am also enjoying reading everyone's contributions (Participant D)
Open communication	9	Expressing agreement	Expressing agreement with others or content of others' messages	I do agree with your ideas of theory and social development (Participant E)
Cohesive responses	10	Vocatives	Addressing or referring to participants by name	Jane, I instantly remembered one of my favourite books (Participant A)
Cohesive responses	11	Addresses or refers to the group using inclusive pronouns	Addresses the group as we, us, our, group	Seems we're all on the same wavelength (Participant D)
Cohesive responses	12	Phatics, salutations	Communication that serves a purely social function; greetings, closures	Kia ora katou (Participant B)

A number system was added so that each indicator of social presence could be coded in the forums (see column two of Table 3.1). Coding was undertaken by copying and pasting the identified forums onto a word document and then using

track changes to code each thematic unit containing social presence (see Appendix 13 for example of coding). In this study a thematic unit was defined as "a single thought unit or idea that conveys a single item of information extracted from a segment of content" (Garrison & Anderson, 2004, p.144).

3.8 Summary of chapter

In this chapter I have explained the methodology and research process for this study. I have included the rationale for using a qualitative and quantitative mixed method research approach, and identified the instruments used for data collection. I have also considered the participants' rights and confidentiality in the study, as well as issues of trustworthiness of findings and ethical concerns that might arise from the research. I have explained the research process and discussed the analytical framework Garrison and Anderson (2004) used to measure social presence categories and indicators in computer mediated communication. The next two chapters present the findings of the study. Chapter four outlines the findings from the questionnaire for the six participants, and chapter five analyses the quantitative data for all six participants together by online tools, in the two university papers.

Chapter Four: Findings (I)

4.1 Overview of chapter

Chapters four and five present the findings of the research undertaken. In this chapter the data will be analysed in two sections. Section (A) analyses the qualitative data from participant questionnaires and explores participant perceptions of a sense of belonging and relationships prior to their study in an online pre-service teacher education programme. By the time they were interviewed, the students were familiar with the notion of a sense of belonging because they had studied it as a strand of the early childhood curriculum. Section (B) draws on the data from participant questionnaires to investigate participants' perceptions of feeling a sense of belonging and relationships during their study. This section also identifies tools and processes that participants felt encouraged a sense of belonging and fostered relationships within the online community.

4.2 Section A: Perceptions of relationships prior to study

In the emailed questionnaires participants were asked to comment on their perception of forming online relationships in the programme prior to study. The following section analyses the data from this questionnaire for each participant (see questionnaire Appendix 1) and concludes with a summary.

Participant A

Participant A said, "prior to engaging in the online Graduate Diploma of Teaching, my initial thoughts on forming online relationships were fairly limited". She attributed this viewpoint to two factors, the first was that prior to study she did not own a computer and felt that a lack of experience with computers and ICT in general meant that she did not see how it would be possible to form online relationships. The second factor was that she held the belief that forming relationships could be detrimental to her personal learning goals. She explains this view by commenting:

> *I did not believe it would be desirable to form online relationships during*
> *this period of study, in fact one of the reasons I initially chose to study*
> *online was that I did not want to engage in discussions, conversations or*

> *'make friends'. I was there to complete the assignments and gain a*
> *qualification only* (Participant A- questionnaire data).

Participant B

Participant B appeared also to have not considered forming relationships prior to study. She comments:

> *I initially had no idea or thoughts about how I would form any*
> *relationships, it isn't something I thought about* (Participant B-
> questionnaire data).

It seems that there are no underlying rationale for this viewpoint, but rather the notion of relationships were just not something that she had considered.

Participant C

Participant C stated that she had not considered the notion of social relationships on-line. She had had " no expectations to whether I would or would not form a relationship online". She did not suggest any background reasons for this viewpoint; it was a factor she had not considered.

Participant D

Participant D stated that prior to study her main focus was academic goals rather than forming relationships. This is evident when she commented:

> *I had not considered that the relationships I formed with others online*
> *would be significant as my focus was on the academic aspects of the*
> *course and I felt I had insufficient time to develop relationships in this way*
> (Participant D- questionnaire data).

Participant E

Participant E commented that prior to study she was unsure of what it would be like to study online and uncertain of how she might form relationships. It seems from her comments that she initially found it hard to relate to online learning and was doubtful of the process. However, it seems that Participant E saw relationships as necessary for studying (help and support from lecturers) but did not see how this would be possible online. This is indicated by her comment:

I wondered how I can interact, submit assignments and get help and support from lecturers throughout the course without facing each other in a classroom (Participant E- questionnaire data).

Participant F

Prior to study Participant F had clear expectations and goals for study that did not include the forming of relationships. She considered that participating in a programme in an online environment would be less time consuming than in a face-to-face class. Time and flexibility of an online programme were important factors for Participant F as she intended to work whilst undertaking her study. However, her perceived attributes of learning online were tempered by a concern of how she might study in this way and she commented that:

I was thinking I didn't need to use too much time on studying and I could still keep working at the same time. However, I was also a little worried if I would be able to cope without attending any class and face-to-face learning (Participant F- questionnaire data).

Summary of perceptions of relationships prior to study: questionnaire data

One can note that prior to study all participants had no particular expectations about developing or forming relationships during the programme. However, there was a different rationale behind each of these viewpoints. Participants A and D were focused on academic goals to gain a qualification. Relationships were not seen as a necessary factor in this goal and were perceived as a hindrance as they might be time consuming, not relevant to learning, and they could detract from the primary focus of achieving a qualification. Participant A also agreed with Participant E in admitting to a feeling of uncertainty about how they could form relationships in an online environment since neither had had experience of learning in this way. However, it seems that Participant E and F were aware of the value of attending classes and face-to-face learning, but did not see that this kind of relational support would be available in an on-line programme. Participant F also hoped that the flexibility of online learning could enable her to work and study. Finally, for Participants B and C relationships during study, was not something that either had considered. Each participant's attitude to

relationships in an online teacher education programme is demonstrated in Table
4.1.

Table 4.1 Attitude to relationships in an online teacher education programme prior to study

Participant	Relationships not necessary for learning	Relationships Necessary for learning	Relationships not possible online	Personal uncertainty About developing relationships	Relationships not considered
A	√		√		
B					√
C					√
D	√				
E		√	√		
F		√	√		

4.3 Section B: Participants perceptions of sense of belonging or relationships during study

The participant questionnaires asked in what ways participants gained a sense of
belonging and felt that they were part of the relationships in a community of
learners. They were also asked to identify tools that they felt strengthened
relationships or a sense of belonging. In this context tools were defined as
particular activities used throughout the programme such as podcasts, discussion
forums, collaborative assignments, and virtual coffee clubs. Finally, they were
also asked to identify tools and process that they felt personalised the elearning.
The expression 'sense of belonging' was familiar to participants from their study
of the Te Whāriki curriculum where one of the stands of outcome is "Belonging.
Te Whāriki defines a sense of belonging as being a place where learners and
family experience an environment where:

> Connecting links with the family and wider world are affirmed and
> extended;
> They know they have a place;
> They feel comfortable with the routines, customs, and regular events;
> They know the limits and boundaries of acceptable behaviour. (MoE,1996,
> p.54)

Participant A

Participant A said she did feel a sense of belonging during the programme. She
identified three tools and processes that, from her perspective fostered a sense of

belonging, and fostered relationships during the programme. These tools were discussion forums, social spaces, and podcasts.

Participant B

Participant B said that she did not gain a sense of belonging in the online community of learners. She felt disconnected from her peers and very concerned about how she might be perceived by others in the online discussions. She explains these feelings by saying:

> *I often felt that many of the students had a personal agenda and [I] was afraid often of writing the wrong thing… I felt very isolated and each time I went online to add something to discussions I was concerned at how I would sound and tended to tone down what I wanted to say* (Participant B-questionnaire data).

She speculates that her lack of a sense of belonging could be attributed to not having met her peers in a face-to-face situation, and wondered whether if she had had such an opportunity she might have felt differently. The value of being able to hear fellow members of her learning community are reflected in the two tools that she identified did help her to feel part of the community and build relationships. These tools were podcasts and collaborative assignments.

Participant C

Participant C stated that she did not really gain a sense of belonging or build relationships within the community of learners. She did not identify tools or processes within the programme design, but indicated that from her perspective social networks outside of the core community were the most helpful in creating a sense of belonging and fostering relationships. These social networks were developed through face-to-face and virtual interaction and are evident in her following statement:

> *Two of the students were in my area so I met them face to face, and that helped form a relationship…meeting another student face to face, and private emails with other students* (Participant C- questionnaire data).

Participant D

Although participant D had not anticipated forming relationships during the online study, she said that she did feel a sense of belonging. She identified two tools that she felt fostered a sense of belonging and contributed to the forming of relationships. These were discussion forums and collaborative assignments.

Participant E

Participant E, after her initial anxiety, indicated that she felt that she had developed a sense of belonging to the online community. She identified four tools and processes that helped her gain a sense of belonging and build relationships. These are timely feedback, virtual coffee clubs, discussion forums, and collaborative assignments. She comments that receiving timely feedback from lecturers created a feeling of support between lecturer and students within the programme. Virtual coffee clubs helped her strengthen relationships with her peers and lecturers. She explains this further by saying that virtual coffee clubs were a space:

> *Where everybody could come and join in the conversation, which helps us to get to know each other and we can talk about anything, ask questions, exchange information and so on* (Participant E questionnaire data).

Participant F

Participant F, following her early expectations and goals that did not include the forming of relationships, identified two tools that she felt were helpful in developing a sense of belonging and fostering relationships. These were discussion forums and podcasts.

Summary of perceptions of feeling a sense of belonging and relationships during their study

Participants A, D, E and F identified discussion forums, social spaces, collaborative assignments, and podcasts as being key tools and processes within the programme that afforded social presence. They felt that, from their perspective these tools and processes fostered a sense of belonging and were useful for developing relationships within the OCL. Participant E also identified timely feedback and virtual coffee clubs as being useful tools. These tools are not analysed in the quantitative data, but will be commented on in the final chapter.

Participants B and C stated that they did not really feel a sense of belonging to the community of learners but identified some tools that they felt encouraged a sense of belonging. Table 4.2 summarises the key tools and processes identified by each participant.

Table 2.2 Key tools that encouraged a sense of belonging

Participant	Discussion Forum	Collaborative assignment	Podcasts	Social Space	Social networks outside the community
A	√		√	√	
B		√	√		
C					√
D	√	√			
E	√	√			
F	√		√		

4.4 Summary of chapter

This chapter has presented the qualitative data of students' perceptions of a sense of belonging and relationships prior to, and during study. It is of key interest to note that Table 4.1 indicates that before the programme none of the students considered relationships as relevant and/or possible in an online teacher education programme. However, in Table 4.2 data indicates that participants have had a shift in their thinking and are developing a sense of belonging and relationships in the online programme. Participants' also identified tools that participants felt were useful in fostering a sense of belonging and relationships in the OCL. These tools will be individually investigated in the following chapter.

Chapter 5 – Findings (II)

5.1 Overview of chapter

This chapter presents further findings of the research undertaken. In this chapter the online tools identified by the participants' as having been useful during the programme for encouraging a sense of belonging, and for the fostering of relationships in the OCL, will be analysed. The context within the programme is briefly introduced for each online tool and the tool is analysed in two ways. Firstly, by qualitative data (i) from participant questionnaires which is connected to social presence indicators and categories (Garrison & Anderson, 2004), and secondly, by quantitative data (ii) using Garrison and Anderson's framework (1999) to identify indicators and categories of social presence evident in computer mediated communication. The social presence indicators and categories were explained in Chapter Three. The online tools are: Discussion forums, collaborative assignments, social spaces, and podcasts.

5.2 Discussion Forums

In this programme the discussion forums are embedded in each paper and are a compulsory component. Each week a focus question is posted by the online coordinator of the paper that is supported by relevant literature and resources such as web-links. There are 12 discussion weeks in each paper and the forums are open for seven days starting on a Monday. Learners are randomly grouped into cohorts of approximately 10 people with the groups changing every four weeks. Learners are expected to participate in a conversation to unpack the focus question and to co-construct knowledge together. In the Multiple literacies paper Learners' contributions in the conversation are required to meet a 'marking criteria' (see Appendices 6 and 7), and also to adhere to the netiquette guidelines (see Appendix 9) of the programme. In the community of learners paper learners' contributions are guided by the netiquette guidelines (see Appendix 7). Four of the six participants in this study identified discussion forums as being a key tool that encouraged a sense of belonging and helped foster relationships. One participant identified discussion forums as being not helpful in encouraging a sense of belonging. The perspectives of the five participants are now analysed.

Discussion Forums (i) questionnaire responses.

Participant A

Although Participant A had anticipated that online relationships would not be desirable, one key tool she identified was the programme's discussion forums. From her comments it seems that it was not only the opportunity for interaction between participants that created feelings of belonging and built relationships, but also the topics, expectations, and the design of the forum. This appeared evident when she reflected that a discussion forum at the beginning of the programme, focussed on providing opportunities for participants to introduce themselves, was:

> *Particularly useful for me in creating an initial sense of belonging, I found that I referred back to this section of Moodle later on in the year when groups changed to better know the other students* (Participant A-questionnaire data).

This point is demonstrated further when she refers to a discussion forum that required participants to upload an image of significant personal meaning. She notes that the:

> *The ability to upload photos was an invaluable tool in the online learning situation, I found this personalised people (in one week we were encouraged to upload a photo of special meaning to each of us, also pics in social spaces)* (Participant A - questionnaire data).

She noted that the design of the discussion forums contributed to the feeling of a sense of belonging and fostering of relationships. In particular, she felt that the small discussion group sizes and the regular four weekly rotation of group membership invited the creation of relationships with her peers. Table 5.1 connects the factors that Participant A identified as being useful in encouraging a sense of belonging and fostering relationships to social presence indicators and categories.

Table 3.1 Categories of social presence afforded by discussion forums: Participant A

Factor identified by Participant A	Social presence indicator	Social presence category
Interaction between learners	Non specific	Open communication
Personal introductions	Self disclosure	Affective response
Sharing images/and or photographs	Self disclosure	Affective response

Participant B

Participant B had not considered relationships with others before the programme, and said she did not gain a sense of belonging. She commented that discussion forums were an isolating experience as she was concerned about how she might be perceived by others in the online community. As a result of these feelings she did not express her true thoughts and ideas but moderated her views in these forums.

Participant D

Participant D had not thought about developing relationships prior to study. However, she highlighted discussion forums as providing an opportunity for reciprocal, responsive interactions and a 'sense of togetherness'. It seems that her online interactions generated feelings of connectedness and a sense of the other as learners co-constructed knowledge together. She explained this by saying:

> *I was able to gain an understanding of others, share experiences,*
> *similarities, differences, spark the interest of others and respond with*
> *interest to their contribution. I gained a sense of affirmation by other*
> *members of the group in their responses to what I had contributed*
> (Participant D- questionnaire data).

However, she acknowledged that it was the manner and socio-emotional content of contributions that supported these interactions and strengthened sense of belonging and relationships. She explained this further when she commented that:

> *Photos of group members, using peoples names, greetings and thanks,*
> *words of appreciation and empathy exchanged and those I read relating to*
> *the exchanges of others in the group – sense of togetherness and positivity*
> *as people striving to do the best for children and their families i.e., a love*
> *of life and people reflected in the communications* (Participant D
> questionnaire data).

Table 5.2 connects the factors that Participant D identified as being useful in encouraging a sense of belonging and fostering relationships to social presence indicators and categories.

Table 5.2 Categories of social presence afforded by discussion forums: Participant D

Factor identified by Participant D	Social presence indicator	Social presence category
Interactions between learners	Non specific	Open communication
Sharing of photographs	Self disclosure	Affective response
Using people's names	Vocatives	Cohesive response
Greetings	Phatics, salutations	Cohesive response

Participant E

Participant E had initially thought that although relationships were necessary for learning, they were not possible online. She changed her mind describing how discussion forums enabled her to contribute her own thoughts and ideas whilst providing opportunities to respond to others in the learning community. She connected her feelings to the Māori concept of ako (teaching and learning together) and commented that:

> *Through posting my thoughts and ideas in 'discussion forums' as well as reading and responding to the others encouraged me to feel a sense of belonging in the community of learners. Which reminds me of Maaori cultural values: the concept of 'ako', in which we learn and teach together. As a community learner, I believe the 'discussion forums' has helped me to learn and develop my own professional knowledge through interacting with others* (Participant E- questionnaire data).

Table 5.3 connects the factors that Participant E identified as being useful in encouraging a sense of belonging and fostering relationships to social presence indicators and categories.

Table 5.3 Categories of social presence afforded by discussion forums: Participant E

Factor identified by Participant E	Social presence indicator	Social presence category
Interaction between learners	Non specific	Open communication

Participant F

Participant F, like Participant E, had not initially seen that relationships were possible online, although she saw them as important for teaching. She identified that it was not just the act of participating in the forums, but also how learners interacted with her that contributed to her perception of the class as a community that helped each other. In particular she highlights personal greetings at the

beginning of discussion forums, and receiving peer feedback as being useful interactions. She explains this further by commenting that:

Whenever I had posted questions in the forums, the other classmates were all willing to help (Participant F questionnaire data).

Table 5.4 connects the factors that Participant F identified as being useful in fostering a supportive and friendly community to social presence indicators and categories.

Table 5.4 Categories of social presence afforded by discussion forums: Participant F

Factor identified by Participant F	Social presence indicator	Social presence category
Interaction between learners	Non specific	Open communication
Personal greetings	Phatics, salutations	Cohesive response

Summary of Discussion Forums (i) – Questionnaire responses

Discussion forums were identified by four of the six participants as being a key tool that encouraged a sense of belonging and fostered relationships. All of these four participants contended that the opportunity afforded by discussion forums for engaging in reciprocal interactions fostered a sense of a learning community where learners negotiated and made meaning together. However, each participant then described a unique personal perspective on the range of aspects that were afforded in the discussion forum that they felt contributed to this. For example, Participant A cited the uploading of photographs, responding to others comments, and words of greeting. Participant B, who did not gain a sense of belonging, commented, that the discussion forums were a negative isolating experience for her where she was concerned about how others might perceive her. These individual affordances can be connected to social presence categories and are demonstrated in Tables 5.1 to 5.4 and summarised in Figure 5.1. It is of note that four of participants perceived that all three categories of social presence are afforded by discussion forums.

Figure 5.1 Categories of social presence afforded by discussion forums
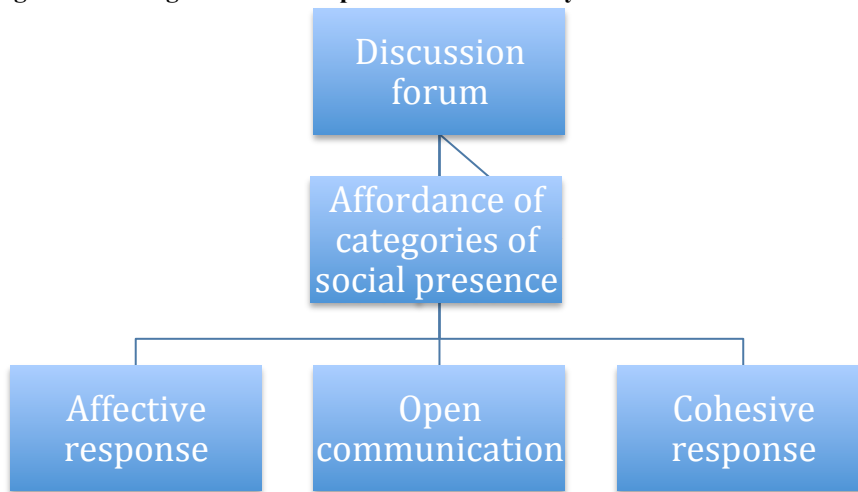
Discussion forums (ii) Quantitative data

The discussion forums in two papers from the Grad – Dip ECE programme were analysed using Garrison and Anderson's (1999) social presence framework (see chapter three). The papers are: 'Multiple literacies' and 'Community of learners'. The coded contributions from *all* participants in the study were analysed to identify individual indicators of social presence and also categories of social presence. The data is presented by bar graphs in Figures 5.2 to 5.5.

Figure 5.2 Indicators of social presence: Coded contributions from all participants during discussion forums across two papers using Garrison and Andersons (2004) Framework: 'Multiple literacies' paper.
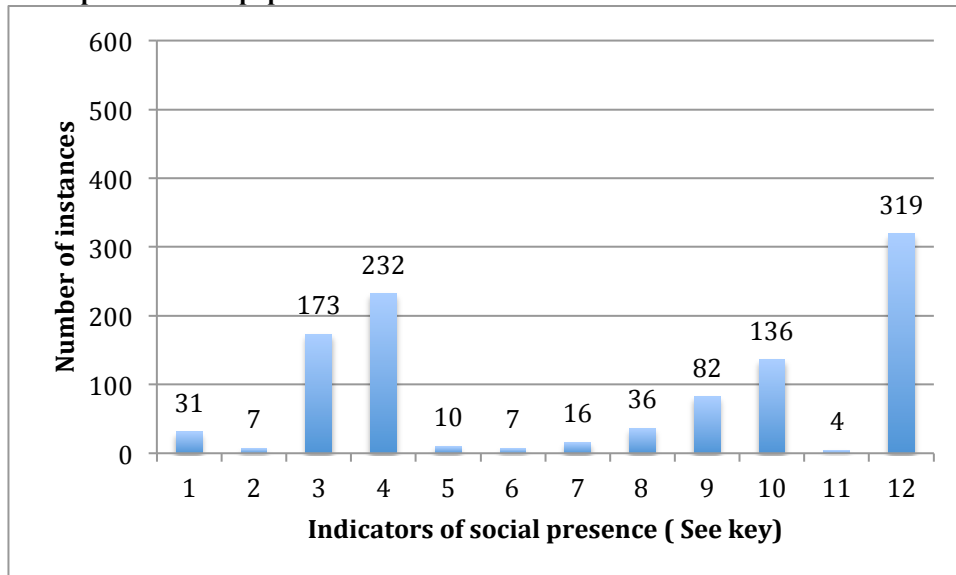
Key: 1) Expression of Emotions, 2) Use of humour, 3) Self-disclosure, 4) Continuing a thread, 5) Quoting from others' messages, 6) Referring explicitly to others' message, 7) Asking questions, 8) Complimenting, expressing appreciation, 9) Expressing agreement, 10) Vocatives-personal name, 11) Addresses or refers to the group using inclusive pronouns, 12) Phatics, salutations.

Figure 5.3 Indicators of social presence: Coded contributions from all participants during discussion forums across two papers using Garrison and Andersons (2004) Framework: 'Community of learners' paper.

Key: 1) Expression of Emotions, 2) Use of humour, 3) Self-disclosure, 4) Continuing a thread, 5) Quoting from others' messages, 6) Referring explicitly to others' message, 7) Asking questions, 8) Complimenting, expressing appreciation, 9) Expressing agreement, 10) Vocatives – personal name,11) Addresses or refers to the group using inclusive pronouns, 12) Phatics, salutations.

The quantitative data in Figure 5.2 and Figure 5.3 indicates that all indicators of social presence are afforded by the two discussion forums and follow a similar pattern of presence in both discussion forums (see Appendix 10 for individual participant data). In both papers it is clear that indicators 3, 4, 9, 10, and 12 appeared most frequently. The frequency of indicators 3 and 4 may be due to the marking criteria of the papers. The criteria requires that learners share experiences outside of the discussion forums (3 - self disclosure) and post at least 3 contributions per weekly discussion (4 - continuing a thread). However, indicators 9 (expressing agreement) and 10 (vocatives) seem to be naturally occurring and are indicators of open communication and cohesive responses. Indicator 12 achieved a high score in each forum because Phatics and salutations tended to appear in a pattern for each Participant at the beginning and end of an individual posting (see Appendix 8). This is a factor of the analysis design.

It is interesting that referring to others' messages (indicator 6) and asking questions (indicator 7) appear infrequently in both papers, although more often in the Community of learners paper. This is evident as in the Community of learners paper, indicator 6 (referring to others' messages) accounts for 1.28% and in the Multiple literacies paper 0.9%. Indicator 7 (asking questions) in the Community

of learners paper accounts for 7.1%, and in the Multiple literacies paper 2.2%. The content of this paper invites participants to share and explore their values and beliefs in the discussion forums. This may create greater opportunities for the sharing of socio-emotional feelings resulting in a higher density of social presence.

This data is now collated into a bar chart showing the three categories of social presence. This shows the levels of each category of social presence afforded within the discussion forums based on the number of indicators present. It is interesting to note that in both forums the levels of categories of social presence are similar. In both forums cohesive responses and open communication are dominant categories, with affective responses significantly lower. These findings correlate with the qualitative data that indicates all indicators and categories of social presence are afforded by discussion forums.

Figure 5.4 Categories of social presence: Coded contributions from all participants during discussion forums across two papers using Garrison & and Andersons (2004) Framework: 'Multiple literacies' paper.
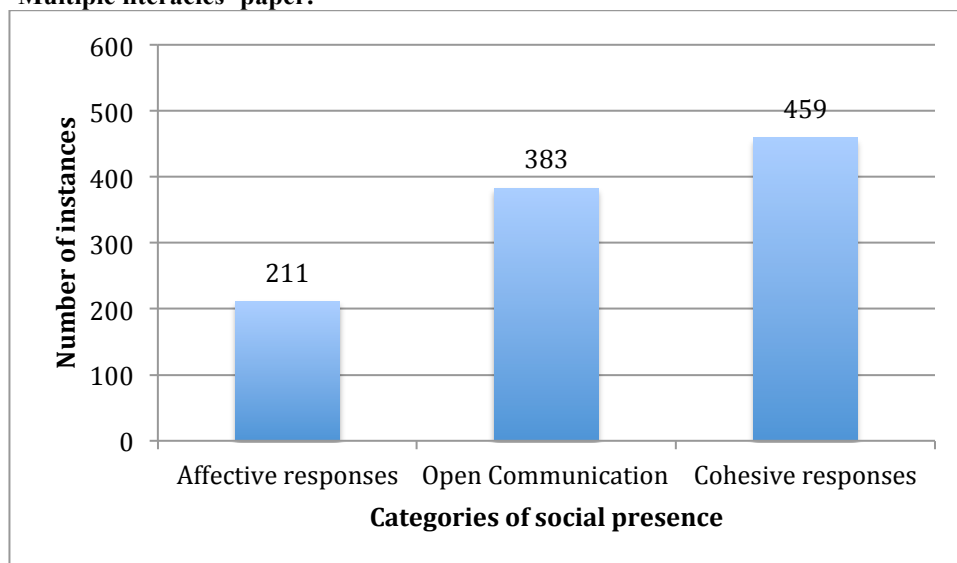
Figure 5.5 Categories of social presence: Coded contributions from all participants during discussion forums across two papers using Garrison and Andersons (2004) Framework: 'Community of learner' paper.
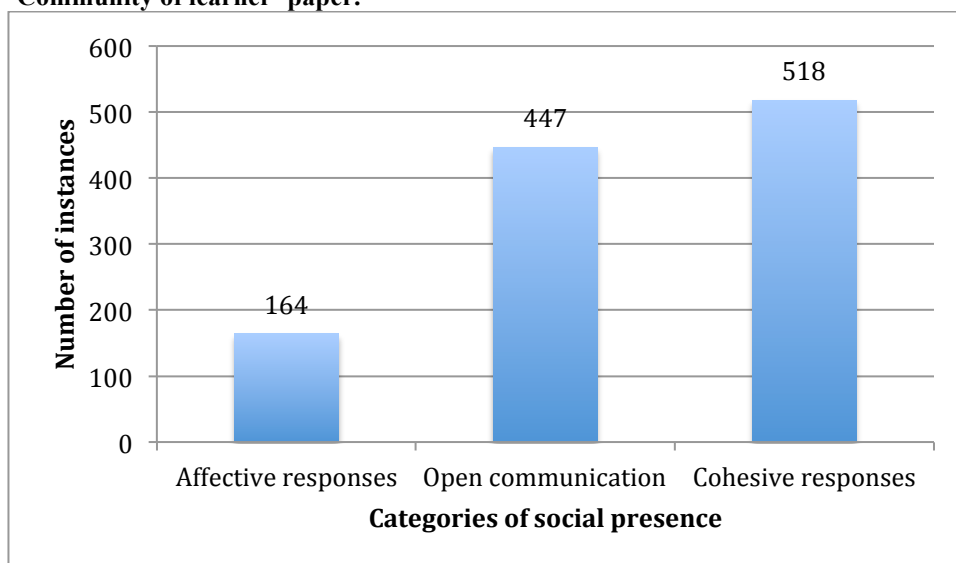
5.3 Collaborative Assignment

Students are required to participate in a collaborative assignment in the paper Community of Learners. In this paper learners worked together in pairs to create an early childhood policy document. They used a wiki located in Moodle to facilitate their work but could communicate together using any medium of their choice. Participation and expectations for the assignment were guided by a marking criteria (see Appendix 7). Three participants in this study identified the collaborative assignment as useful for fostering a sense of belonging. These perspectives will now be analysed.

Collaborative Assignment (i) Questionnaire data

Participant B

Participant B identified collaborative assignments as being an opportunity for developing relationships with her peers. Although text based in design she used the opportunity to contact her peers by telephone and identified this form of communication as being the most useful to building a sense of belonging. Table 5.5 connects the factors that Participant B identified as being useful in encouraging a sense of belonging and fostering relationships to social presence indicators and categories.

Table 5.5 Categories of social presence afforded by collaborative assignment: Participant B

Factor identified by Participant B	Social presence indicator	Social presence category
Interaction between learners	Non specific	Open communication (by telephone)

Participant D

Participant D expressed the view that that collaborative assignments provided further opportunities for reciprocal, responsive relationships but with the added dimension of needing a synergy of time to succeed in achieving a common goal. She asserts that:

> *In particular, working collaboratively where all involved depended on each other to contribute, value each others strengths and weaknesses…be understanding of each others limitations and time constraints (empathise) meant a lot as there was always a shared value in the value of the course and the motivation to assist each other to succeed* (Participant D questionnaire data).

Table 5.6 connects the factors that Participant D identified as being useful in encouraging a sense of belonging and fostering relationships to social presence indicators and categories.

Table 5.6 Categories of social presence afforded by collaborative assignments: Participant D

Factor identified by Participant D	Social presence indicator	Social presence category
Interaction between Learners	Non specific	Open communication

Participant E

Participant E also identified collaborative assignments as being valuable in contributing to a sense of belonging in the learning community. Similarly, to her perceptions of discussion forums, she felt that the opportunity to listen and respond to others whilst undertaking a collaborative piece of work fostered a sense of belonging. Initially she felt it hard to collaborate online as her partner had her own ideas on the how the project should be undertaken, but this issue was resolved, and is evident in her comment that:

> *Through positive and supportive attitudes, on-going communication (listening, as well as responding to each other), and understanding with positive attitudes of accepting others like what they accept me as who I am, which helped to break down the barriers of individual differences. We*

*have all managed to be involved and to reach agreements that were in
making sure everybody is satisfied with the decision that we have made
while working as a collaborative through feeling a sense of belonging to
the group we are in* (Participant E- questionnaire data).

Table 5.7 connects the factors that Participant E identified as being useful in
encouraging a sense of belonging and fostering relationships to social presence
indicators and categories.

Table 5.7 Categories of social presence afforded by collaborative assignment: Participant E

Factor identified by Participant E	Social presence indicator	Social presence category
Interaction between learners	Non specific	Open communication

Summary Collaborative Assignment (i) Questionnaire data

A different rationale supported participants' viewpoints on how collaborative
assignments developed a sense of belonging and established relationships within
the online community. Participants D and E both agreed that the opportunity to
work with a peer, and respond to, and affirm contributions were key factors in
establishing a sense of belonging. However, Participant B felt that the
opportunity to contact her peer on the telephone was fundamental to her
developing a relationships and feeling a sense of belonging. These individual
perspectives are connected to indicators and categories of social presence and
demonstrated in Figure 5.6. It is of note that from the participants' perspective
collaborative assignments afford one category of social presence, which is open
communication.

Figure 5.6 Categories of social presence afforded by collaborative assignments
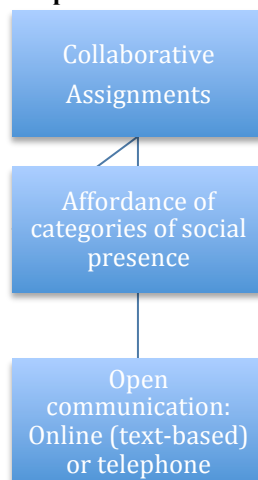
Collaborative assignment (ii) Quantitative data

A wiki located in Moodle was used by all participants in this study to prepare a collaborative assignment for the paper Community of learners. The contributions of *all* participants in the Wiki were coded and analysed using Garrison and Andersons' framework (1999) to identify indicators and categories of social presence. The data from this analysis is presented in bar charts shown in Figures 5.7 and 5.8.

Figure 5.7 Indicators of social presence: Coded contributions during from all participants during collaborative assignment in one paper using Garrison and Anderson's (2004) framework. 'Community of learners' paper.

Key: 1) Expression of Emotions, 2) Use of humour, 3) Self-disclosure, 4) Continuing a thread, 5) Quoting from others' messages, 6) Referring explicitly to others' message, 7) Asking questions, 8) Complimenting, expressing appreciation, 9) Expressing agreement, 10) Vocatives- personal name, 11) Addresses or refers to the group using inclusive pronouns, 12) Phatics, salutations

The quantitative data in figure 5.7 shows that social presence indicators 4, 7, 10 and 12 are dominant, whilst indicators 5, 6, and 11 are not present (see Appendix 11 for individual data). The numbers are not comparable with the graphs for the discussion forums as the pattern and number of indicators are different. However, it is interesting to note that indicator 7 (asking questions), although low in number, is more dominant in the collaborative assignment. The data is now collated into the three categories of social presence and presented in graph format (Figure 5.8). This data indicates a range of social presence indicators evident representative all three categories of social presence. The highest category is cohesive response, followed by open communication, and then affective responses. This is the same pattern as the discussion forums. Interestingly, the quantitative data does not correlate with the qualitative data. The three participants who identified

collaborative assignments as being useful for creating a sense of belonging and building relationships in the OCL only identify indicators representing open communication, and do not mention affective or cohesive responses.

Figure 5.8 Categories of social presence: Coded contributions from all participants during collaborative assignment in one papers using Garrison and Andersons (2004) Framework: 'Community of learners' paper.
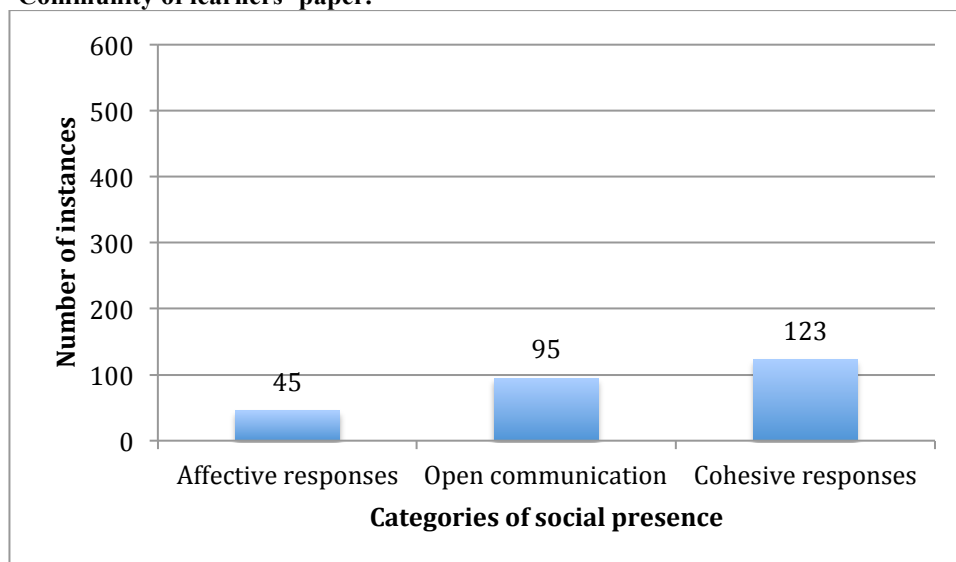

5.4 Social spaces

Each paper in the Graduate Diploma of Teaching –ECE has a space included for social interaction. The space is not a compulsory element of the programme and is described to participants as being a space where they "can let their hair down and talk about everything and anything not related to the paper". The space is open to all members of a particular stream. One participant identified social spaces as useful for fostering a sense of belonging. Her perspective is now analysed.

Social spaces (i) Questionnaire data

Participant A

Participant A identified social spaces as being a valuable forum to help form and strengthen relationships with peers. It seems that the opportunity for peer- to-peer interaction away from the main study focus questions provided a platform that enabled her to get to know others from a social perspective. She highlighted this opportunity when she commented that Social Spaces:

Added the ability to converse about things other than study that added depth to the understanding of fellow students' characters (Participant A questionnaire data).

Table 5.8 connects the factors that Participant A identified as being useful in encouraging a sense of belonging and fostering relationships to social presence indicators and categories.

Table 5.8 Categories of social presence afforded by social spaces: Participant A

Factor identified by Participant A	Social presence indicator	Social presence category
Learner interaction for social purposes	Non specific	Open communication Affective responses

Participant D did not participate in the social spaces.

Participant E did not participate in the social spaces.

Participant F did not participate in the social spaces.

Summary of social spaces (i) Questionnaire data

Participant A was the only person to identify social spaces as a valuable tool for developing a sense of belonging. This is an interesting finding as this was the only space in the programme that was designed to provide an opportunity for learners to interact purely for social means. Participant A maintained that this form of interaction was valuable for building relationships and developing a sense of belonging. It is also interesting to note that of the four participants who stated that they felt a sense of belonging to their community, three did not contribute to the social spaces, whereas the two participants who stated that they didn't gain a sense of belonging or develop relationships did contribute to the social spaces. Figure 5.9 demonstrates the affordances that the participant felt contributed to a sense of belonging.

Figure 5.9 Categories of social presence afforded by social spaces
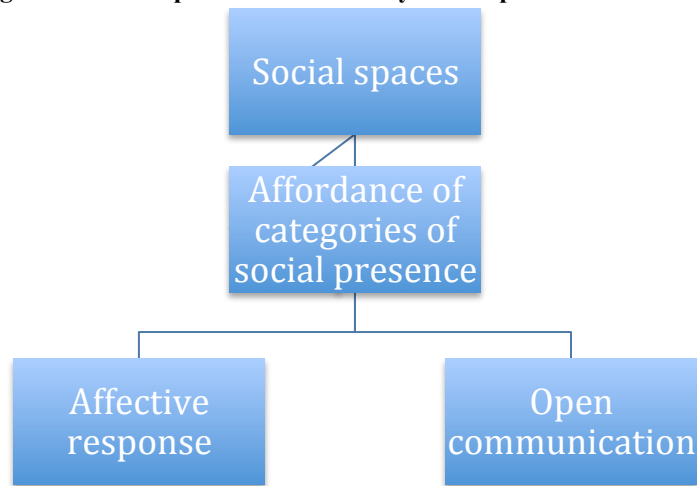
Social space (ii) Quantitative data

Each paper in the Grad-Dip ECE has a space for social interaction. The contributions in these spaces from *all* participants in the study were analysed using Garrison and Anderson's social presence framework (2004) to identify social presence indicators and categories. The instances of social presence indicators in each of the papers was very low so the data was combined. The data is presented in graph format in Figures 5.10 and 5.11.

Figure 5.10 Indicators of social presence. Coded from contributions of all participants in social spaces across two papers using Garrison and Anderson's (2004) framework. 'Multiple literacies' and 'Community of learners' papers.
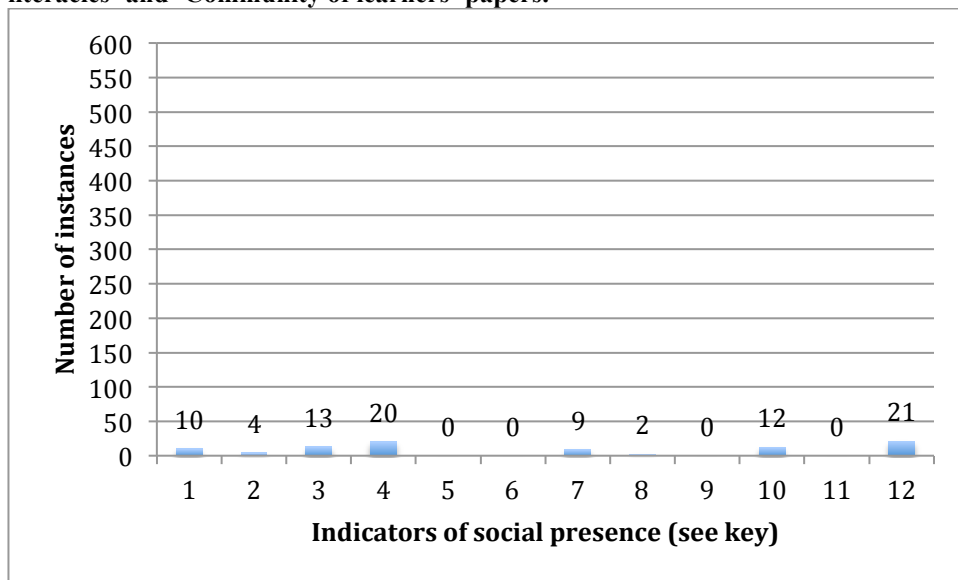
Key: 1) Expression of Emotions, 2) Use of humour, 3) Self-disclosure, 4) Continuing a thread, 5) Quoting from others' messages, 6) Referring explicitly to others' message, 7) Asking questions, 8) Complimenting, expressing appreciation, 9) Expressing agreement, 10) Vocatives- personal name, 11) Addresses or refers to the group using inclusive pronouns, 12) Phatics, salutations.

The quantitative data in Figure 5.10 shows very low levels of social presence afforded in the social spaces. Indicators 4 and 12 are dominant whilst indicators 5,

6, 9, and 11 are absent (see Appendix 12 for individual data). It is noticeable that there are low levels of affective responses in a space created for the sharing of socio-emotional feelings. This data is now collated into the three categories of social presence. Figure 5.11 shows the level of each category afforded within social spaces. It is of note that all three categories of social presence categories are evident. This contradicts the qualitative data that indicated that only Participant A found social spaces useful for facilitating open communication for social purposes. The levels of social presence categories evident in the social spaces are the same pattern as the discussion forums and collaborative assignment.

Figure 5.11 Categories of social presence: Coded contributions from all participants during social spaces across two papers using Garrison and Andersons (2004) Framework: 'Multiple literacies' paper and 'Community of learners' paper.
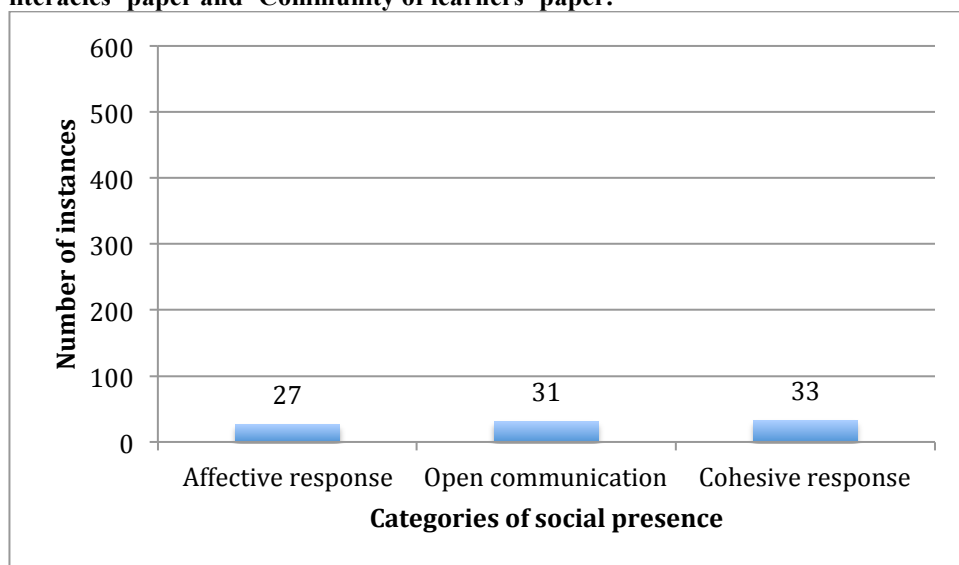
5.5 Podcasts

Podcasts are used in the Graduate Diploma of Teaching –ECE programme for a variety of purposes. They enable lecturers to socially 'catch up' with students, explain content and assignment expectations, and to also respond to students' questions in a timely and comprehensive manner. Quantitative data is not available for podcasts. Three participants identified podcasts as being useful for encouraging a sense of belonging. These three perspectives will now be analysed.

Podcasts (i) Questionnaire data

Participant A

Another tool highlighted by Participant A as being useful in creating a sense of belonging and fostering relationships was podcasts. The affordances of podcasts seemed to provide a range of opportunities for building relationships and fostering a sense of belonging. It seems they were particularly valuable as a tool for reciprocal communication and a means of learners being able to contribute to the programme. This seems evident when she comments:

> *Podcasts, especially when we were asked to contribute questions for the 'guest speaker' – I downloaded these and listened to them on my iPod whilst travelling* (Participant A questionnaire data).

Table 5.9 connects the factors that Participant A identified as being useful in encouraging a sense of belonging and fostering relationships to social presence indicators and categories.

Table 5.9 Categories of social presence afforded by podcasts: Participant A

Factor identified by Participant A	Social presence indicator	Social presence category
Asking questions	Asking questions	Open communication

Participant B

The key tool identified by Participant B was audio podcasts. She highlighted the value of podcasts for building a sense of belonging as being two fold. Initially, she identified that the content of the podcasts enabled her to make sense of what she needed to be doing, and condensed the learning that helped her to feel a sense of belonging. However, she also explained that the informal, one to one delivery and nature of the podcasts helped to develop relationships with her lecturers but not with her peers. She explains this point further by saying:

> *They cemented relationships not with my peers but with lecturers and made you (them) appear human and approachable. A voice made a huge difference for me. The "sense of belonging" was strengthened with each podcast and I loved the fact that the podcast was directed at just me. Hearing the humour, jokes and camaraderie that the lecturers had amongst themselves when there was more than one in a podcast was the best, as they bounced ideas off each other also and made it seem more real than just one at a time* (Participant B- questionnaire data).

Table 5.10 connects the factors that Participant B identified as being useful in encouraging a sense of belonging and fostering relationships to social presence indicators and categories.

Table 5.10 Categories of social presence afforded by podcasts: Participant B

Factor identified by Participant B	Social presence indicator	Social presence category
Humour, jokes	Use of humour	Affective response

Participant F

Participant F found podcasts helped her gain a sense of belonging as they could help her understand the programme content which may have reduced feelings of isolation and disconnectedness. She further explains her point by saying that:

> *The podcasts were extremely helpful to me as English is my second language. If I missed something or could not understand something at the first time, I could always go back and listen to it again until I totally understand it* (Participant F questionnaire data).

Table 5.11 connects the factors that Participant F identified as being useful in encouraging a sense of belonging and fostering relationships to social presence indicators and categories.

Table 5.11 Categories of social presence afforded by podcasts: Participant F

Factor identified by Participant F	Social presence indicator	Social presence category
Revisiting content	Non specific	Open communication

Summary of podcasts

Participants A, B and F agreed that the podcasts had helped them to gain a sense of belonging and build relationships. However, all learners attributed this to different reasons. Participant A asserted that to be able to contribute questions which were answered via a podcast, established a sense of belonging. Participant B said that hearing a voice established relationships between the lecturer and herself and enabled her to understand content and programme expectations. Finally, Participant F commented that being able to revisit content in her own time and own pace meant that she did not feel isolated. These points are demonstrated in Figure 5.12.

Figure 5.12 Categories of social presence afforded by podcasts
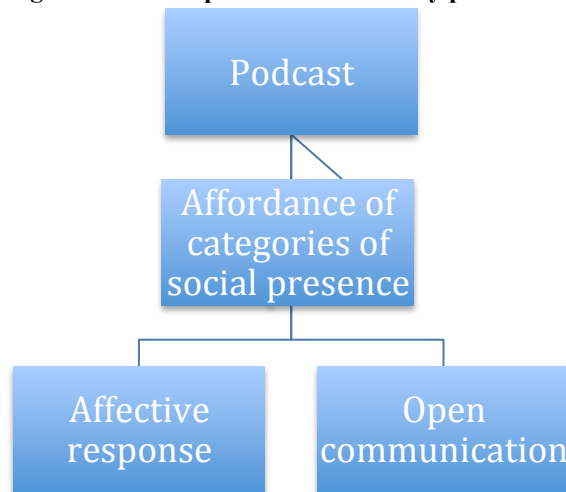
5.6 Summary of chapter

This chapter has drawn from qualitative and quantitative data to explore the affordances of particular tools and processes in an online teacher education programme. The focus of the findings has been to investigate the affordance of social presence by particular tools that foster a sense of belonging and building relationships. Participants identified tools that they felt fostered a sense of belonging and contributed to the development of relationships within the programme. They also identified particular affordances of the tools that had a particular personal resonance. These affordances have been linked to indicators of social presence and the category they represent.

The following chapter will discuss these findings and consider the implications of them.

Chapter Six: Discussion, implications for practice and conclusion

6.1 Overview of chapter

There are five major conclusions from this research, and this chapter will outline them and add some implications for practice. They are: (i) The six participants had different journeys to do with their perceived experience of social presence and some of them changed their perceptions. (ii) Discussion forums are a key tool in strengthening a sense of belonging within this online community. (iii) Surprisingly, the collaborative assignment did not appear to afford social presence and collaboration. (iv) A number of questions are raised by the data regarding participation in the social spaces. (v) The podcasts afforded unexpected ways of strengthening a sense of belonging to this programme.

6.2 (i) Participants Sense of belonging and relationships

The findings of the study indicate that participants seemed to have little desire or understanding of how to develop a sense of belonging or create relationships during their study in an online teacher education programme. Literature states that people choose to undertake online learning for the flexibility and convenience that it can offer (Palloff & Pratt, 2003), and this seems very true for participants A and D who strongly agreed that being a member of an OCL, and building relationships in the community would be a hindrance to their main goal of achieving a qualification. However, it was interesting to note that Participant A was also unsure of how she might form relationships online which she comments may have contributed to her reticence. This feeling of uncertainty was shared by Participant E, who along with Participant F, valued relationships in educational contexts but was unsure of how they could be supported in an online environment. Participant B and C had given no thought to forming relationships. Therefore, it is interesting to note that both of these participants stated that they did not gain a sense of belonging in the programme. These findings are of key interest as literature asserts the need for community building early on in the programme as it is integral to the process of socially mediated learning (Salmon, 2006). It would seem from the findings that the tools chosen to foster a sense of belonging and the

development of relationships in an OCL, need to appeal to resonate with a diversity of people. For example, in this small sample alone, two people have made a decision that they don't want to be part of a community and develop relationships, two people feel uncertain of how to be part of an OCL, and two people have no feelings on the topic. These findings suggest that a potential challenge maybe to create an environment using tools to develop an OCL which is inviting, accessible, and accommodating of all initial perspectives. This will encourage and motivate participants to want to gain a sense of belonging and foster relationships within the OCL.

6.3 (ii) Discussion forums

One purpose of a discussion forum in an OCL is to "influence thinking in a critical and reflective manner" (Garrison & Cleveland Inness, 2005, p.3). Discussion forums can provide an opportunity for learners in an OCL to interact with content, lecturers, and other learners using CMC. Interactions are central to the learning process as they are an integral factor in an OCL, and consequently, discussion forums play a key part in an OCL to facilitate interaction (Thomas, 2002; Marra et al, 2004; Garrison & Cleveland-Innes, 2005). The findings of this study suggest that from a learner's perspective discussion forums can also be seen as a key tool that can encourage a sense of belonging and social presence. This is evident from the comments by four of the six participants in this study who identified discussion forums useful for this purpose (see Table 4.1). It was interesting to note that these four participants highlighted the act of engaging in reciprocal interactions with others in the discussion forums as the key to fostering a sense of belonging. However, literature also suggests that there are other significant factors that can contribute to creating a sense of belonging in an OCL. These factors will now be discussed. In this study the findings indicate that the characteristics of a sense of belonging are encouraged and afforded in the discussion forums through the interactions people have with each other. However, participants indicated it was not only the act of participation but *how* people participated that was important. The design of the forums was important, which includes discussion group size, topic, and timely feedback from the lecturers. This suggests that a sense of belonging can be strengthened by the individual papers' marking criteria, programme netiquette guidelines, and programme

protocol. The marking criteria and netiquette guidelines set the expectations and behaviours of participants whilst they interact online, and consequently, seem to create an environment supportive of belonging. Similarly, programme protocol guides lecturers on response times and the setting of the environment (group sizes) to support a sense of belonging and social presence. For example, the requirements of participation are clearly defined in the marking criteria (see Appendices 6 & 7), which encourage participants to feel comfortable with the routines, customs, and regular events in the online discussion forum. Te Whāriki for instance, asserts that people feel a sense of belonging when "They know they have a place; they feel comfortable with the routines, customs, and regular events; they know the limits and boundaries of acceptable behaviour" (MoE, 1996, p54). Perhaps, without these guidelines and protocols, opportunities for participants to gain a sense of belonging during discussion forums, may be minimised or lost, and are therefore important factors to consider within the OCL.

Literature asserts that social presence " or the ability of participants in a community of inquiry to project themselves socially and emotionally, as 'real' people (i.e., their full personality) through the medium of the communication being used" (Garrison & Anderson, 2004, p. 49) is an important factor in establishing a OCL, as it can foster trust and a sense of belonging (Rovai, 2002). The characteristics that participants highlighted as being useful in discussion forums for fostering a sense of belonging were translated into social presence indicators and then matched to categories of social presence (see Tables 5.1 to 5.4). The qualitative findings in this study indicate that from these participants' perspectives, all three major categories of social presence in Garrison and Anderson's (2004) framework (affective response, open communication, and cohesive responses), were afforded in the discussion forums (see Figure 5.1). These findings correlate with the quantitative data from *all* participants which indicate that not only are all three categories of social presence facilitated in the forums but that each individual indicator of social presence is also evident (see Figure 5.1 and 5.2). They provide an additional insight into each category of social presence, and participant's perspectives on what is useful.

(a) Open communication in discussion forums

Each of the four participants identified the process of *interaction* in the discussion forums as being an important factor in developing a sense of belonging. In this study, interaction was connected to the social presence category of open communication (See Tables 5.1 to 5.4). These findings correlate with the quantitative date of *all* participants (see Figure 5.2 and 5.3) that show that all six indicators of open communication are facilitated in the discussion forums. This equates to 36% and 40% of social presence levels found in the discussion forums for the Multiple literacies paper, and Community of learners paper respectively (see Figure 5.4 and 5.5). One indicator of open communication is initiated by the programme design (indicator 4 -continuing a thread), but the other indicators were naturally occurring within the participants' contributions. These findings indicate that discussion forums afford a high level of the social presence category open communication and, specifically, enabling the discussion to 'continue a thread'.

(b) Affective and cohesive responses in discussion forums

Aside from the consensus of the four participants that interaction in the discussion forums afforded a sense of belonging, new considerations emerged from the findings. Each participant perceived different factors in the discussion forums that had a particular, personal resonance when fostering a sense of belonging, including sharing of images, personal introductions, and greetings. These factors identified by the participants also indicated that the categories and indicators of affective responses and cohesive responses were present in the discussion forums (see Table 5.1 to 5.4). Affective responses and cohesive responses are particularly personal and individualised. In the case of affective responses the sharing of socio-emotions and are "a facilitating condition for engagement in meaningful dialogue and an educational experience" (Garrison & Anderson, 2004, p. 52). Cohesive responses support the group cohesion and are essential " to sustain the commitment and purpose of the community" (Garrison & Anderson, 2004, p. 52). Both categories are intertwined, and along with open communication can foster a sense of belonging in an OCL. Therefore, the findings are of major interest as they show that a "one size fits all' approach to fostering a sense of belonging in an OCL discussion forum does not work. The findings highlight the individuality of participants, and suggest the need to include

a range of opportunities in the discussion forums to afford individual preference. The findings indicate that this could be achieved in the design of forum, topic of discussion, and culture of interaction. For example, Participant A comments that having the opportunity for participants to introduce themselves and share images was important in the fostering of her sense of belonging. These findings align with literature that suggests that the topics of the discussion forum (for example, asking people to introduce themselves) can impact on people's sense of belonging (Swan & Shih, 2005).

6.4 (iii) Collaborative assignments

The literature suggests that peer-to-peer collaboration and interaction can provide valuable opportunities for learners to develop a sense of belonging as they help in the fostering of relationships between OCL participants. Iverson (2005) comments that the process of interaction and collaboration in peer-to-peer activities can provide "learners with a greater sense of connection …so they can facilitate and support each other's online learning experience" (Iverson, 2005, p.91). With that in mind, it was interesting to note that three of the six participants in this study identified collaborative assignments as being useful in fostering a sense of belonging. In one respect the findings agree with the literature, as all the three participants agree that it was having the opportunity to form responsive, reciprocal relationships whilst interacting with each other that contributed to their sense of belonging. In the case of Participant B, who did not gain a sense of belonging in the programme, the interaction was conducted via the telephone. She commented that being able to contact her partner by telephone was the most helpful from her perspective in fostering a sense of belonging. The option of learners having the opportunity to choose how they communicate is a key point especially as technologies are ever evolving and can support interaction in many forms (Skype for example). Although three participants indicated collaborative assignments can afford a sense of belonging, the perspective of the participants does not correlate with the quantitative data (see Figure 5.8). The number of instances of social presence indicators shows that the collaborative assignment in this study has low levels of social presence. Also, the data shows that three indicators (5, 6, & 11) of social presence are not evident at all (see

Figure 5.7). One consideration is that there are not enough guidelines to help learners interact in this way.

In this study the marking criteria for the collaborative assignment (see Appendix 7) details the expectations of assignment content but does not detail the expectations of how to work collaboratively to complete the assignment. For example, how often to communicate and how to ask questions that facilitate the collaboration. Also, unlike the discussion forums in the programme, it is the outcome of the collaboration that is graded rather than the process. This lack of guidance could mean that characteristics of a sense of belonging as defined by Te Whāriki would be absent. For example being familiar with routines and understanding the limits and boundaries of acceptable behaviour (MoE, 1996). From these findings it would seem the challenge is to design the collaborative assignment so that learners are not only given expectations of content but also expectations and guidelines on how to interact and collaborate online. This would make the most of the opportunity of peer-to-peer interaction that are essential to an effective OCL as collaborative assignments could afford a greater density of social presence. The findings suggest that an important part of these guidelines would be the opportunity for learners to interact in a medium of their choice, for example Participant B who chose the telephone. The potential flexibility of the assignment could provide additional ways of interacting in mediums that some literature defines as having higher levels of social presence.

6.5 (iv) Social spaces

Literature emphasises the importance of creating social spaces where people can interact socially. The advantages are that social interaction can encourage a strong sense of belonging for participants in an OCL (Bender, 2003). It is also argued by many that social spaces can afford social contact that can help to nullify learner concerns of isolation when working in an online environment (Salmon, 2006). Palloff and Pratt (2007) acknowledge that many online tools can foster a sense of belonging and develop social presence, but stress the importance of the need for spaces purely for social interaction. Social spaces can afford learners with opportunities to share their lives and families outside of the OCL, which can contribute to a sense of belonging as an environment that supports self-disclosure

can add to trust (MoE, 1996; Garrison & Anderson, 2004). Three participants contributed in the social spaces. Of these three participants, two said they did not gain a sense of belonging in the programme at all. The remaining participant however, identified social spaces as a useful tool for fostering a sense of belonging. These findings indicate extreme views from a limited number of participants. However, the one participant who did identify social spaces as a valuable forum for strengthening relationships with peers (see Table 4.1) commented that:

> *The ability to converse about things other than study added depth to the understanding of fellow students' characters.* (Participant A)

In this study, social interaction aligns with open communication, and affective communication categories of social presence (see Table 5.8). However, the quantitative data of the three participants who did contribute to the social spaces indicates that affective responses, open communication, and cohesive response categories of social presence were evident in the social spaces (See Table 5.10). A main objective of this forum is to share socio-emotional feelings, and although low in instances, the three indicators of affective responses are present. Therefore, the quantitative data findings indicate that social spaces can afford all categories of social presence, in particular affective responses. This then raises the question, if social spaces can afford these qualities why are the social spaces in this study not being by used by participants to their full advantage? One possibility is that unlike other tools in the programme, such as discussion forums and collaborative assignments, the social spaces are not compulsory. I hesitate to suggest that a programme should introduce compulsory participation in social spaces as this would seems at odds with the informal social networks that Palloff and Pratt (2007) describe. I would also question the authenticity and value of people being *made* to talk with each other. Perhaps the answers lie within making the spaces more inviting, and having initiated conversation in which the online teacher plays a role. Palloff and Pratt (2007) include a trigger question to start conversation in their social spaces. Their study that asked people to share favourite dishes, started a conversation and provided people with an entry point, but also enabled them to share culture and family. It was a perfect topic for affording affective response and sense of belonging.

Another personal hypothesis, which is based on anecdotal and observational evidence from other students in this programme, is that social spaces may provide an opportunity for legitimate peripheral participation (LPP) in the OCL Wenger, White & Smith, 2009). A conversation with one student disclosed that she enjoyed reading the social spaces and they made her feel connected to the OCL but she did not want to contribute. Another participant contributed to the social space in the programme three quarters of the way through the year to share the news that she had had a baby and to upload photographs. Both examples suggest that the social spaces are valuable for fostering a sense of belonging and social presence without the participant needing to contribute regularly. If this is the case, social spaces could be a space for legitimate peripheral participation in the OCL that would also contribute to the life of an OCL. In this study, the findings raise many questions about social spaces. Could social spaces provide an opportunity for legitimate peripheral participation in an environment where people who do not participate in forums are deemed to be 'lurkers' (a negative descriptor) and not present to the whole community? (Preece, 2000). This is perhaps a topic needs further exploration.

6.6 (v) Podcasts

A strong body of literature asserts that podcasts can be used in many ways to support on-line learning (Salmon, 2008; Archard & Merry 2010; Campbell, 2005). Three of the six participants in this study identified Podcasts as being useful for fostering a sense of belonging and social presence but for various reasons.

Participants B and F comment that being able to re-visit content, through listening to Podcasts from the lecturers outlining expectations and explaining paper requirements were useful. These feelings connect to Te Whāriki's definitions of belonging that recognise the importance of regular events (MoE, 1996). Participant A found podcasts that invited her to contribute to the community by asking questions really helpful. Participant B highlighted the fact that podcasts helped her to build a sense of belonging but with lecturers and not peers. From the participants' perspectives Podcasts afforded affective responses and open communication (Figure 5.12). A surprise finding was Participant A noting

that being able to contribute to the programme via Podcasts was meaningful and engaging. The findings suggest that Podcasts used in innovative and a variety of ways, allowed participants to engage in ways that had particular value for them. This is evident when Participant A comments that she gained a sense of belonging from contributing questions in a text based form to a guest speaker who then answered the questions in a podcast. This supports the view in the discussion of collaborative assignments, that asking questions may need to be deliberately encouraged.

6.7 Implications for practice: Two themes

The research question for this research is: In what ways do the pedagogical tools in an online teacher education programme facilitate a sense of belonging and social presence, and the thesis argued that these features encourage an online community of learners that, in turn facilitated learning. In the process of exploring this question two key themes have emerged from the findings of this study.

(i) The findings in this research indicate that online tools can facilitate a sense of belonging and afford social presence. These findings agree with current literature and contemporary pedagogy of online study. However, one key finding from this study is that it is the way the tools are used which impacts upon their effectiveness. It is really clear that different tools have different affordances. Therefore, it is vital that online teachers have an understanding of these affordances and how the tool can be used to the best advantage to learners, and the community as a whole. For example, each tool in this study affords interaction either between learner and learner, learner and content, and/or learner and teacher. In this study the findings indicate that discussion forums afforded, at a high level, a sense of belonging and social presence, and collaborative assignments supported *learner-to-learner* interaction. Podcasts were shown to support *learner-to-lecturer* interaction, and social spaces tended to support social interaction between all participants.

Particular tools lend themselves to meeting certain opportunities for a sense of belonging (McInnery & Roberts, 2004). For example, social spaces are especially able to provide opportunities for socio-emotional interactions. What is apparent from the findings is that having a range of tools that are appropriately designed,

i.e. with guidelines and clear expectations, along with the online teachers support, will enable the tool to foster these aspects of a sense of belonging and social presence, just as asking questions and following a thread appear to facilitate learning. Indeed, one could use the metaphor of a jigsaw puzzle to demonstrate how each tool fits together as part of a big picture to make the whole. In the puzzle each piece has a different design and purpose but together they create a balanced whole.

(ii) The second significant finding in this research is that everyone is different! It was really noticeable that participants, even from the small cohort of this study, found different tools had different affordances that had particular individual resonance. For example, in the discussion forums, four participants identified the usefulness to providing a sense of belonging and social presence, but then went on to identify different aspects within forums that had a personal resonance for them. It was also interesting to note that Participant B chose a tool outside of the OCL as her preferred medium of interaction. This implies, that despite the range of tools within the programme, not every participant will find value in them. Therefore, the findings would strongly advocate that not only is a wide range of tools be utilised within the programme, but that there be flexibility for personal choice within the tools where appropriate.

6.8 Limitations of study

There are limitations related to this research that must be taken into consideration. This is a small, singular case study of six participants in one teacher education programme. To gain a better insight into the research question, having a greater number of participants from more than one teacher education programme could have provided a wider focus and offered a greater range of data to draw from. Also, the questionnaire was a good instrument for gaining initial answers from participants, but perhaps following the questionnaires with interviews could have added depth to the data collected. Another limitation in this study is that the world of technology moves quickly and that since the start of this study many new tools are now available for learning and teaching (for example, twitter). This study does not include them, which limits the findings.

6.9 Recommendations for future study

I would see great benefit to implementing the understandings discovered in this present study by disseminating the findings to the teaching team in the Grad Dip – ECE. As the coordinator, I have been surprised at many of the conclusions and feel that it is important to share the findings to strengthen the programme in future years. This would include discussing the affordances of the tools in the programme, adding clear guidance for students when using the tools, and changing the marking criteria to support the tools.

It would then be interesting to repeat this study. Research could be incorporated into the programme from the start, asking students to participate in an online survey at the beginning, in the middle, and at then end. In this study, particular interest would be the social spaces tool as this it raises a number of questions.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Letter of invitation to participants

Kia ora,

Following on from an email I sent in October, I am writing to invite you to participate in a research project that is the topic for my Masters of Education.

Over the past year, we've noted a high level of commitment to and enthusiasm for this Graduate Diploma of Teaching learning community. We've also noted that there have been strong, reciprocal relationships formed within it. With this in mind, I would like to research how particular processes and practices used to personalise the e-Environment may have contributed to this. A strong motivation for this research is the continued development of the Graduate Diploma of Teaching that has had, as a major strength, the relationships we have all formed. I believe your views and experiences are vital to this research project so that you have the opportunity to influence the future design of the Graduate Diploma of Teaching and allow me an insight into your online studies.

The papers I would like to research are TEPS755-08A (NET) - Learning and development in the early years, TEP756-08A (NET) - Play and creativity in the curriculum, TEPS757-08B (NET) - Communities of Learners and TEPS758-08B (NET) - Multiple Literacies which I co taught with Rosina Merry. She is very happy for the research to go ahead and I'd like to add that any data collected will be viewed as a comment on the programme itself and not individual lecturers and as such will not offend or upset either Rosina or myself.

Your participation would involve consent to use some of your evaluative comments throughout the year from various forums and also the completion of an online questionnaire which would take up to 30 minutes. All the data would be anonymous and subject to your approval before being included in the analysis. Participation is voluntary and you can decline to answer questions and withdraw from the study up until you have viewed the data chosen to be analysed and before I have commenced the analysis. All data will be treated confidentially and

stored securely. Data may also be used in seminars, and/or conference presentations, publications and research and teaching periodicals. Any reports of this research will employ pseudonyms to retain confidentiality and you are invited to choose your own pseudonym.

I have included a participant information sheet and consent form. The information sheet outlines details of the topic and procedure of the research, including your involvement. Please read it and if you have any queries you are very welcome to contact me.

If you would like to participate in this research please sign the consent form and return to myself in the enclosed envelope.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and I hope to hear from you soon,
Kind Regards
Sara Archard

Appendix 2: Participant information sheet

THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

Project Title
How personalising the e-Learning environment may impact on the development
of relationships within a community of learners in a fully online Graduate
Diploma of Teaching

Purpose
This research is for a thesis as partial requirement for a Masters of Education.

What is this research project about?
This research is to investigate how strong, reciprocal relationships may develop
through personalising the e-Learning environment. It will consider in what sense
an e-Learning class can be described as a community of learners and what
practices and processes may contribute to this.

What will you have to do and how long will it take?
The researcher will invite you to complete an online survey questionnaire. This
should take no longer than 30 minutes. The researcher may ask for relevant
contributions from retrospective discussion forums from papers TEPS755-08A
(NET) - Learning and development in the early years, TEP756-08A (NET) - Play
and creativity in the curriculum, TEPS757-08B (NET) - Communities of Learners
and TEPS758-08B (NET) - Multiple Literacies. for this research.   You will be
asked to give written consent for the use of this data.

What will happen to the information collected?
The information collected will be used by the researcher to write a research report
for the researcher's Master's thesis. It is possible that articles and presentations
may be the outcome of the research. Only the researcher and her supervisors will
see the raw data. The university requires that the original documents will be held
for five years. The researcher will keep online copies of the discussions but will
treat them with the strictest confidentiality. No participants will be named in the

publications and every effort will be made to disguise their identity. Participants will be invited to choose their own pseudonym.

Declaration to participants
If you take part in the study, you have the right to:

- Refuse to answer any particular question, and to withdraw from the study before analysis has commenced on the data.
- Ask any further questions about the study that occurs to you during your participation.
- Be given access to a summary of findings from the study when it is concluded.

Who's responsible?
If you have any questions or concerns about the project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:

Researcher: Sara Archard

                School of Education

                University of Waikato

                Private Bag 3016

                Hamilton

Email: sarchard@waikato.ac.nz
Tel: 07 838 4500 x 7777

Supervisors:
Russell Yates

HOD Professional Studies in Education

School of Education & Dept of Professional Studies in Education

University of Waikato

Private Bag 3016

Hamilton

Margaret Carr

Wilf Malcolm Institute of Education Research

University of Waikato

Hamilton

Private Bag 3016

Appendix 3: Participant consent form

THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

Consent Form for Participants

I have read the **Participant Information Sheet** for this study. I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I also understand that I am free to withdraw from the study before I have viewed and agreed my contributions to the research, or to decline to answer any particular questions in the study. I understand I can withdraw any information I have provided up until the researcher has commenced analysis on my data. I agree to provide information to the researchers under the conditions of confidentiality set out on the **Participant Information Sheet**.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Participant Information Sheet.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Please choose your own pseudonym: _____

Researcher's Name and contact information:

Sara Archard
School of Education
University of Waikato
Private Bag 3016

Hamilton

Email: sarchard@waikato.ac.nz
Tel: 07 838 4500 x 7777

Supervisor's Name and contact information:

Russell Yates

HOD Professional Studies in Education

School of Education & Dept of Professional Studies in Education

University of Waikato

Private Bag 3016

Hamilton

Margaret Carr

Wilf Malcolm Institute of Education Research

University of Waikato

Private Bag 3016

Hamilton

Appendix 4: Letter seeking permission from the Chair of the department

Dear Russell,

As you are aware, I am currently studying for my M Ed at The University of Waikato. The working title for my study is 'How Personalising the e-Learning environment may impact on the development of relationships within a community of learners in a fully online Graduate Diploma of Teaching.'

Through this research project I will be exploring how personalising the eLearning environment can impact on the development of relationships within the online community of learners. I hope that my findings will contribute to the continuing development of the Graduate Diploma of Teaching by seeking to maintain and extend the strong reciprocal relationships achieved during the first year.

I seek your permission, as Head of the Professional Studies Department in Education, to work with fulltime students enrolled in 2008 papers TEPS755-08A (NET) - Learning and development in the early years, TEP756-08A (NET) - Play and creativity in the curriculum, TEPS757-08B (NET) - Communities of Learners and TEPS758-08B (NET) - Multiple Literacies.

This research would involve using some of the students' evaluative comments throughout the year from various forums in these papers and also the completion of an online questionnaire which would take up to 30 minutes.

All participants are anonymous. Participation is voluntary and participants can decline to answer questions and withdraw from the study before analysis has commenced on the data. All data will be treated confidentially and stored securely. The primary use of the data will be to contribute to my M Ed. Data may also be used in seminars, and/or conference presentations, publications and research and teaching periodicals

I have attached a copy of the general research questions and look forward to hearing from you.

If you have any queries please contact me.

Yours sincerely

Sara Archard

Department of Professional Studies
School of Education

University of Waikato

Private Bag 3016

Hamilton

Email:sarchard@waikato.ac.nz

Appendix 5: Letter seeking permission from the Coordinator of the Graduate Diploma of Teaching –ECE

Dear Rosina,

As you are aware, I am currently studying for my M Ed at The University of Waikato. The working title for my study is 'How Personalising the e-Learning environment may impact on the development of relationships within a community of learners in a fully online Graduate Diploma of Teaching.'

Through this research project I will be exploring how personalising the eLearning environment can impact on the development of relationships within the online community of learners. I hope that my findings will contribute to the continuing development of the Graduate Diploma of Teaching by seeking to maintain and extend the strong reciprocal relationships achieved during the first year.

I seek your permission, as co-ordinator of the Graduate Diploma of Teaching, to work with fulltime students enrolled in 2008 papers TEPS755-08A (NET) - Learning and development in the early years, TEP756-08A (NET) - Play and creativity in the curriculum, TEPS757-08B (NET) - Communities of Learners and TEPS758-08B (NET) - Multiple Literacies.

This research would involve using some of the students' evaluative comments throughout the year from various forums in these papers and also the completion of an online questionnaire which would take up to 30 minutes.

All participants are anonymous. Participation is voluntary and participants can decline to answer questions and withdraw from the study before analysis has commenced on the data. All data will be treated confidentially and stored securely. The primary use of the data will be to contribute to my M Ed. Data may also be

used in seminars, and/or conference presentations, publications and research and teaching periodicals

I have attached a copy of the general research questions and look forward to hearing from you.

If you have any queries please contact me.

Yours sincerely

Sara Archard

Department of Professional Studies
School of Education

University of Waikato

Private Bag 3016

Hamilton
Email:sarchard@waikato.ac.nz

Appendix 6: Multiple literacies paper outline

2008

THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

Paper Outline

Multiple Literacies

TEPS758-08B(NET)

Department of Professional Studies in Education
Te Tari o te Akoranga Umanga

School of Education
Te Kura Toi Tangata

SECTION A

The Teaching Team
Coordinator: Sara Archard
Extension: 7777
Room: TT7.07
Email: sarchard@waikato.ac.nz

Lecturer: Rosina Merry
Extension: 7807
Room: TL3.11
Email: rosinam@waikato.ac.nz

To phone direct, dial (07) 8384466, then at the prompt dial the extension number of the person whom you wish to call.

Introduction
Introduction / He korero whakataki
Nau mai! Haere mai! Welcome to TEPS758-08B Multiple literacies. We hope that you find the paper challenging and meaningful to your continued growth as a teacher. Our exploration of the Principle of Empowerment/Whakamana, particularly in relation to the adult's role, and, in the context of multiple literacies in the early childhood education environment will equip you with teaching strategies and approaches, to provide infants, toddlers and young children with the best learning environment in which to maximise their potential.

We hope that through participation in this paper your views about learning, teaching and multiple literacies will be challenged and enhanced so that new ideas and understandings are formed for use in your ongoing development as a teacher.

This paper provides further opportunities for students to develop the skills, attributes, and knowledge of the University of Waikato, School of Education, Graduate Profile, particularly those that relate to an understanding of the curriculum, teaching and learning theories, working collaboratively with colleagues, selecting appropriate curricula content. Students completing this paper also develop their professional knowledge, practice, values and relationships as outlined in the New Zealand Teachers Council Graduating Teacher Standards. Specific standards identified in this paper are 1a, 1c, 2b, 2c, 4b, 4c, 4d, 5a, 5b, 6e & 7c.

Description and Structure

This paper examines the role of adults in developing interactive environments in which children learn multiple literacies for communicating, representing and

making sense of their worlds. (Literacies include languages; the arts are included in TEPS756-08A and TEPS746-08A.)

This paper is taught entirely online in weeks 29-42 between Monday, 14 July and Friday, 17 October 2008. All class interaction takes place in Moodle, the Learning Management System used at the University of Waikato. Most of the activity is asynchronous however there will be regular 'chat' opportunities with staff through the 'Virtual Coffee Club'. The paper will be supported by regular podcasts and video streaming where appropriate.

Objectives/Learning Goals

Students in this paper will:

1. Develop knowledge of theory and research relevant to the development of languages
    acquisition
2. Explore the role of the environment in enhancing children's learning and examine their
    own skills and role in relation to the development of children's multi literacies.
3. Develop a wide range of practices for assisting children to make sense of their world, with
    a particular focus on languages, mathematics and ICT.

Content

*   Develop knowledge of a range of detailed studies of theory and research relevant to the development of languages acquisition.
*   Identify a range of strategies in order to provide a 'rich' environment that offers young children opportunities for becoming competent in multiple literacies.
*   Develop skills in analysing interactions between adults and children with a focus on multiple literacies and problem solving.
*   Develop a wide range of practices for assisting infants, toddlers and young children to make sense of their world, with particular emphasis on mathematics and ICT.

Workload
Monday, 14 July until Friday, 17 October 2008 (online). This paper has a credit value of 17 points. There will be a total of 170 learning hours.

Week Commencing	Supporting Assignment Information Located in the Building Site (Assignment Resource Support Folder in Moodle)	Online Discussions
Week 1 14 July	Introduction to the theory and research relevant to the development of	Mathematics and the early childho curriculum

	languages acquisition	
	(Participation)	
	(*Learning outcome 1*)	(*Learning outcome 2.3*)
Week 2 21 July	Consideration of language acquisition from a Mäori perspective	Mathematics and the early childho curriculum (cont)
		(Assessed 4%)
	(*Learning outcome 1,2*)	(*Learning outcome 2,3*)
Week 3 28 July	Literacy as a social practice (Chapter three required text)	Mathematics from a Mäori perspe
		(Assessed 4%)
	(*Learning outcome 2,3*	(*Learning outcome 2,3*)
Week 4 4 August	Emergent Literacies	Introducing mathematics into an e childhood/Köhanga reo environm
		(Assessed 4%)
	(*Learning outcome 2,3*)	(*Learning outcome 2,3*)
Week 5 11 August	Emergent Literacies (cont)	Scaffolding and interactions
		(Assessed 4%)
	(*Learning outcome 2,3*)	
		(*Learning outcome2,3*)
Week 6 18 August	Revisiting the topics	Revisiting the topics
		(Assessed 4%)
	Assignment One: Essay 25% Due: Post in assignment area by midnight on Sunday, 24th August.	
	(*Learning outcome 1,2,3*)	(*Learning outcome 2,3*)
25 August 1 September	TEACHING RECESS 25 August – 7 September	
Week 7 8 September	Multiple literacies and Diversity	Information communication techno (ICT) in ECE
		(Participation)
	(*Learning outcome 2,3*)	(*Learning outcome2,3*)
Week 8 15 September	Literacies and identities	ICT and the curriculum
		(Assessed 4%)

	(*Learning outcome 2,3*)	(*Learning outcome 2,3*)
Week 9 22 September	Multiple literacies and gender (*Learning outcome 2,3*)	ICT and the curriculum (cont) **(Assessed 4%)** (*Learning outcome 2,3*)
Week 10 29 September	Multiple literacies and children with special needs (*Learning outcome 2,3*)	Children using ICT to make sense of their worlds **(Assessed 4%)** (*Learning outcome 2,3*)
Week 11 6 October	New pathways for early childhood literacies (*Learning outcome 2, 3*)	Integrating ICT into your practice **(Assessed 4%)** (*Learning outcome 2,3*)

Week 12 13 October	Revisiting the topics **Assignment Two: Article plus print prop 35%** **Due: Post in assignment area by Midnight on Sunday, 19 October** (*Learning outcome 2,3*)	Reflecting on ICT and early childhood education **(Assessed 4%)** (*Learning outcome 3*)

Required Text
Makin L., Diaz, C.J, & McLachlan, C. (2007) *Literacies in childhood 2nd edition*
Sydney: MacLennan & Petty.

Required Readings
A book of readings of readings will be provided which includes:

 Anthony, G & Walshaw, M. (2007). Effective *Pedagogy in Mathematics /Pangarua*
Chapter 3:
    EarlyYears Mathematics Education pp.26-55

Any other required readings will be provided as online links, or shared as part of the general class
information online.

Assessment

In order to pass paper TEPS758-08B(NET) **<u>all</u> assignments must be submitted.**

(a)   The requirements for assessed work are detailed in Moodle. They consist of discussion participation and a series of activities. All referencing should be in APA style. Assessment components, percentages and due dates are detailed below.

(b)   The internal assessment/examination ratio is 1:0.

(c)   Details of where assessed items are to be placed will be stated in each Module. Staff feedback, comments and grades will be found in individual feedback areas in Moodle within 14 days of the due date.

(d)   Assessment criteria is found at the end of each module and in the area called 'Assessment and Requirements Overview' in the course information folder.

(e)   Requests for extensions and special consideration can be made on the 'Request for Extension to Module Due Date' form in the Administration Centre for the class.

ASSIGNMENTS

Please note that your essays may be copied for moderation purposes.

Assignment 1:   **Essay**
Due: **Midnight on Sunday, 24th August**
Weighting: **25%**
Length: **1500 words**

You are required to discuss the following question:
 "How can early childhood education environments support the ongoing development of children's first oral languages?"

Points to consider*:*
• The theory and research relevant to the acquisition, and development of a first language.
• Language acquisition for a Mäori perspective
• The role of the early childhood environment
• The role of home environments in language development
• Cultural capital in the language curriculum in an early childhood setting.

Marking Criteria:
• A clear understanding of the theory and research relevant to the acquisition, and development of a first language.
• Consideration of language acquisition for a Mäori perspective.
• Recognition of the role of home environments, and cultural capital in the language curriculum in an early childhood setting.
• Links to the role of the early childhood environment.
• In-depth research including a range of credible sources.

- Presentation includes competent writing style, clearly sequenced ideas and accurate APA referencing.

Submit your 1500 words plus a reference list into the assignment area by midnight on Sunday, 24th August.

Assignment 2:	**Article for early childhood journal**
Due:	**Midnight on Sunday, 19 October**
Weighting:	**Article for Journal 35%**
	(20% text, 15% print prop)
Length:	**Article - 1000 words plus photo of print prop**
	Print prop resource

You have been asked by an early childhood journal to choose one aspect of Multiple Literacies and Diversity from Part 3 of Markin et al (2007) text and write an article.

As an expert on this topic your article will set out and critique the ways in which early childhood education environments can afford and constrain this aspect of learning. The journal has also requested that you create and include a print prop that can be used in an early childhood environment to support your chosen topic and afford learning.

Points to consider for article:
- Constraints with the environment
- Affordances within the environment
- Positive practice you have observed during your practicum
- Implications for early childhood practice
- Implications for your own teaching practice.
- Relevant print prop and rationale for use.

Marking Criteria for article:
- A clearly stated aspect of multiple literacies and diversity together with reason for the choice.
- The analysis of the affordances and constraints is comprehensive and clearly set out.
- The article provides a critique of alternative views on this aspect, drawing on a range of literature outside the prescribed readings.
- Clear rationale for print prop and relevance to subject.
- Photograph of print prop is uploaded and integrated into article
- Presentation includes competent writing style in appropriate genre, clearly sequenced ideas and accurate APA referencing.

Information about print props:
- Print props are items to encourage literacy and can be used by children in sociodramatic play
- Collect a set of print props around your chosen aspect of Multiple Literacies and Diversity from Part 3 of Markin et al (2007) that could be used to encourage play and support your stance. Decide on a theme and begin to

- collect and develop appropriate and meaningful resources that are creative and stimulating.
- Themes to encourage play could be a doctor's office, a post office, a marae, a grocery store, hairdressers, restaurant, airport, travel agency, office et cetera.
- Remember that the print props also need to include telephone/books, magazines/pictures, pen and paper for writing with, sign charts et cetera.
- These print props will be used and shown to your evaluative lecturer during your next practicum.

Points to consider
- Your print prop needs to support and be relevant to the aspect you have chosen from Multiple Literacies and Diversity from Part 3 of Markin et al (2007).
- Ensure each resource is durable and safe.
- Ensure each resource is colourful and appealing.
- Appropriateness of each resource for language/ literacy development for your chosen aspect from Multiple Literacies and Diversity from Part 3 of Markin et al (2007).

Submit your 1000 article plus a reference list and a photo of your print prop into the assignment area by midnight on Sunday, 19 October.

A six-week online discussion
Weighting: 20%

Weeks 1-6

A six-week online discussion of mathematics education in the early years.
- This discussion will initially be based on Chapter 3 in Antony & Walshaw (2007).
- It will include why, and how mathematics can be introduced in early childhood settings
- What outcomes are intended
- And the relationship with cultural capital from home and other outside environments outside an early childhood setting.

Weekly questions and other supporting information will be posted in the online discussion folders in Moodle.

Marking Criteria:
- **(4 Marks)** Substantive comments that significantly enhance the groups discussion
- Used examples, follow-up questions and offered new perspectives on the topic
- Evidence of wide reading on the topic
- Evidence of a Mäori perspective

- **(3 Marks)** Differences of opinion expressed in a respectful considered manner

- Consistently clear, concise and relevant comments
- Shows understanding of the topic and integrates readings effectively.

- **(2 Marks)** Developed ideas discussed by previous speaker/s
- Shared aspects from relevant readings thst extend the conversation
- Shared your own experiences in relation to the conversation

- **(1 Mark)** No evidence of reading on the topic
- Irregular participation
- Reference to a few comments made by other students in the group

- **(½ Mark)** One posting of a substantives nature
- Responded to one comment made by another student
- Comments generally showed little or no relevance to the topic.

A six-week online discussion
Weighting: 20%

Weeks 7-12:

A six-week online discussion of the pros and cons of teachers using information communication technology (ICT) in early childhood curriculum.
This discussion will include why and how children might be involved with ICTs and why and how teachers might use ICTs to enhance the children's learning.

Marking Criteria:
- **(4 Marks)** Substantive comments that significantly enhance the groups discussion
- Used examples, follow-up questions and offered new perspectives on the topic
- Evidence of wide reading on the topic

- **(3 Marks)** Differences of opinion expressed in a respectful considered manner
- Consistently clear, concise and relevant comments
- Shows understanding of the topic and integrates readings effectively.

- **(2 marks)** Developed ideas discussed by previous speaker/s
- Shared aspects from relevant readings that extend the conversation
- Shared your own experiences in relation to the conversation

- **(1 Mark)** No evidence of reading on the topic
- Irregular participation
- Reference to a few comments made by other students in the group

- **(½ Mark)** One posting of a substantives nature
- Responded to one comment made by another student
- Comments generally showed little or no relevance to the topic.

Weekly questions and other supporting information will be posted in the online discussion folders in Moodle.

General Marking Criteria

The following general criteria are used when grading written assignments:

A. Demonstrates excellent understanding of links between theory and practice.
Critical reflection is from a wide range of perspectives.
There is exceptional clarity and preciseness in the synthesis of experiences and learnings (including workshops, readings, in-school tasks and tutorial tasks).
APA referencing is used correctly and effectively.
Writing style is highly effective with writing conventions adhered to i.e. grammar and spelling.
Work is within word limit.

B. Demonstrates a good understanding of links between theory and practice.
Critical reflection is from a range of perspectives.
There is clarity and preciseness in the synthesis of experiences and learniings (including workshops, readings, in-school tasks and tutorial tasks).
APA referencing is mostly used correctly and effectively.
Writing conventions are mostly used effectively i.e. style, grammar , spelling.
Work is within word limit.

C. Demonstrates satisfactory understanding of links between theory and practice.
Critical reflection from a limited range of perspectives.
There is some clarity in the synthesis of experiences and learnings (including some of these - workshops, readings, in-school tasks and tutorial tasks).
APA referencing is not used consistently or correctly.
Some problems with writing conventions i.e. style, grammar, spelling.
Work is within word limit.

D. Demonstrates weak understanding of links between theory and practice.
Reflection is not critical.
Little evidence of synthesis of experiences and learnings (including limited workshops, readings, in-school tasks or tutorial tasks).
APA referencing incorrectly used.
There may be problems with writing conventions i.e. style, grammar and spelling.
Work is well outside word limit.

E.   Lacks evidence of links between theory and practice.
No evidence of critical reflection.
No evidence of synthesis of experiences and learnings (workshops, readings, in-school tasks or tutorial tasks not included).
APA referencing is incorrect or not used.
Major problems in expressing ideas coherently and/or using correct writing conventions i.e. spelling and grammar.
Work is well outside word limit.

Paper Regulations
The School of Education has regulations which relate to their programmes. It is your responsibility to collect one copy of these regulations, each year, which relate to all the papers taught in the School of Education. These include regulations about late work, work written in Māori, attendance, referencing and many other matters of importance. Copies can be collected from the Department of Professional Studies in Education Administrative Secretary in TT2.12B. These regulations are also be available on the edLinkEd site:

www.soe.waikato.ac.nz/
click on: edLinked - SOE portal
click on: login (and log in with your regular email username and password)
click on: student information

Late Assignments
You are required to submit your internally assessed work by the specified dates. Assignments submitted after the due date, with no extension granted, may be awarded no grade. In order to be deemed to have met paper requirements, an assignment of satisfactory quality must be received before the marked assignments have been returned, or by a date negotiated with your paper coordinator.

Extensions
In exceptional circumstances (other than serious sickness, injury or bereavement which will be treated on a case-by-case basis) up to 72 hours extension may be granted by the paper coordinator on an approved form available from the School of Education reception or from the departmental administrative secretary. You must personally hand the form to the paper coordinator, or their nominee. Wherever possible, an application for an extension should be made at least 24 hours prior to the due date, but in exceptional circumstances you may apply for an extension up to 24 hours after the due date.

Special Consideration for Missed Assessment or Impaired Performance
Should you wish to apply for special arrangements for examinations and/or special consideration of internal assessment as advised, you should refer to the *Assessment Regulations 2005* in the current University of Waikato Calendar.

Review of Final Grade

If you consider that a mistake has been made in the process of calculating or determining a final grade you should discuss this with the paper coordinator, or their nominee, in the first instance, not more than 14 days after receiving notification of the grade. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of this discussion you may contact the Chairperson of Department. You are advised to refer to the *Assessment Regulations 2005* in the current University of Waikato Calendar.

Re-submissions

If you have received a failing grade, resubmission of one piece of work <u>may be possible</u> during the paper. A resubmitted assignment can only be considered for improvement to a C grade maximum. In order to resubmit an assignment you should contact the paper coordinator, or their nominee, within 48 hours of the assignment being returned, to negotiate arrangements for resubmitting it.

Assignments written in Mäori

University policy on assignments written in Mäori will be adhered to (see the current University of Waikato Calendar). For further details, please contact your lecturer <u>at beginning of this paper</u> for each assignment to be submitted in Mäori.

Reference to University Regulations
Your attention is drawn to the following regulations and policies, which are published in the current University of Waikato Calendar:
• Assessment Regulations 2005
• Computer Systems Regulations 2005
• Human Research Ethics Regulations 2005
• Policy on the Use of Mäori for Assessment
• Student Discipline Regulations 2006
• Student Research Regulations 2000

SECTION B

Referencing Guidelines
You are referred to the APA Reference Guide in the Virtual Education Reference Desk in Moodle where guidelines for APA Referencing can be found in the Key resources for online learning area.

Caution against Plagiarism
Plagiarism means present as one's own work the work of another, and includes the copying or paraphrasing of another person's work in an assessment item without acknowledging it as the other person's work through full and accurate referencing; it applies to research and to assessment (as defined in the *Assessment Regulations 2005* in the University of Waikato Calendar) presented through a written, spoken, electronic, broadcasting, visual, performance or other medium.

Any form of plagiarism is a break of the *Student Discipline Regulations 2006* (as defined in the current University of Waikato Calendar).

Health and Safety
Learning online has the potential to impact on your physical wellbeing if long periods are spent at the keyboard. Careful attention should be paid to seating and the height of your desk so that your feet are able to sit flat on the floor and your elbows, hips and knees are at right angles. It is suggested that regular breaks are taken and activities are alternated to avoid staying in one position for too long.

Class Representation
The appointment of a Class Representative will take place early in the semester. Details will be provided in Moodle. The Academic Administrator in the Academic Services Division, who co-ordinates the class representation system is Hannah Brett, The Gateway, phone 07 8562889 ext 6264, email: student.reps@waikato.ac.nz

Student Concerns and Complaints Procedures
You are encouraged to raise matters causing concern to you with the relevant staff member, in the first instance. This can be done by email, in the e-Folio area or a telephone conversation. If you are not satisfied with the outcome with the staff member concerned, you are advised to discuss the matter with the Chairperson of Department. A formal complaint may be made in writing and addressed to the Dean. It should be lodged with the Personal Assistant to the Dean who will log the complaint, acknowledge it in writing and pass it to the Dean for appropriate action. Generally, complaints will be referred to the appropriate manager for investigation. Managers include Chairperson of Departments, Assistant Deans and the Administration Manager. If the complaint is about an action of one of these managers, the Dean will handle the matter. These procedures follow those laid out in the University brochure Student Concerns and Complaints Policy, which is available at the School of Education Reception and the Student and Academic Services Division.

Appendix 7: Community of learners paper outline

2008

THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

Paper Outline

Communities of Learners

TEPS757-08B(NET)

Department of Professional Studies in Education
Te Tari o te Akoranga Umanga

School of Education
Te Kura Toi Tangata

SECTION A

The Teaching Team

Coordinator / Centre Manager: Rosina Merry
Extension: 7807
Room: TL 3.11
Email: rosinam@waikato.ac.nz

Lecturer/ Team Leader :   Sara Archard
Extension: 7777
Room: TT 7.07
Email: sarchard@waikato.ac.nz

To phone direct, dial (07) 8384466, then at the prompt dial the extension number of the person whom you wish to call.

Description and Structure

This paper is taught entirely online in weeks 29-42 between Monday, 14 July and Friday, 17 October 2008. All class interaction takes place in Moodle, the Learning Management System used at the University of Waikato. Most of the activity is asynchronous however there will be regular 'chat' opportunities with staff through the 'Virtual Coffee Club'. This paper will be supported with regular podcasts and video streaming where appropriate.

This paper is constructed as a virtual early childhood centre and throughout the 12 weeks we will explore a range of key ideas and theories that relate to our teaching teams within the centre . Through our collaborative participation we will explore some key theories and practices associated with *Belonging - Mana Whenua* (children and families' feelings of belonging) *Contribution - Mana Tangata* (opportunities for learning are equitable and each child's contribution is valued). In particular, the paper looks at the socio-cultural context of learning. You will be encouraged to integrate theories with practice through readings, online discussion and activities.

This paper provides further opportunities for students to develop the skills, attributes, and knowledge of the University of Waikato, School of Education, Graduate Profile, particularly those that relate to: building positive relationships and working collaboratively with children, families/ whanau and colleagues; performing confidently in early childhood education settings; and systematically

and critically engaging with evidence to reflect on and refine their professional practice of teaching. Students completing this paper also develop their professional knowledge, practice, values and relationships as outlined in the New Zealand Teachers Council Graduating Teacher Standards. Specific standards identified in this paper are 3a, 3c, 5a, 6a, 6b, 6c, 7a, 7b, 7c & 7d.

Learning Outcomes

Satisfactory completion of this paper will require you to acquire:

1. A capacity to identify theory and practice that supports children's social development.
2. An understanding of the theoretical issues and how they relate to policy and early childhood educational practice;
3. An understanding of and the skills to use appropriate teaching techniques that are appropriate for working with infants, toddlers and young children;
4. An awareness of the diverse nature of family/whänau and the ways in which family/whänau and early childhood programmes can develop authentic partnerships and facilitate children's sense of belonging and contribution in society

Content

- An exploration of the research, theory and practice related to social contexts for learning;
- Reflection on working with children and applying guiding principles that are appropriately linked with 'child management' and Te Whäriki.
- An examination of the role of the educator in supporting children's social development within early childhood programmes with particular reference to Mana Tangata and Mana Whenua.
- A critique of stereotypes, prejudices and myths about family, whänau and community an
- An exploration of legal, ethical and other issues related to empowerment as they relate to early
  childhood care and education.

- An exploration and analysis of the definitions of whänau and community in relation to early childhood care and education;

Workload

Monday, 14 July until Friday, 17 October 2008 (online). This paper has a credit value of 17 points. There will be a total of 170 learning hours.

Week Beginning	Topics	Online Conversations
14 July **Week 1**	Introduction to socio-cultural theory, Mäori and western perspectives on children's social development including Rogoff's theory of guided participation. Implications of the social-cultural theory in terms of understanding social interactions in early childhood centres/Köhanga reo in the context of Aotearoa/New Zealand. *Links to Learning Objective 1 & 2*	Staff room conversations
21 July **Week 2**	Socio-emotional development *Links to Learning Objective 1 & 2*	Staff room conversations
28 July **Week 3**	Goals of Social Development Power Play: Gender, and Racism. A focus on observing power dynamics in children's play, and identifying a philosophy and practice for facilitating play equity. *Links to Learning Objective 1 & 2*	Provocation One (10%)
4 August **Week 4**	• Exploring policy and philosophy. • The role of the adult and the environment in relation to children's behaviour. • Collaboration and participation in establishing behavioural parameters: meeting children's needs *Links to Learning Objective 3*	Provocation One (cont)
11 August **Week 5**	• Exploring policy and philosophy. • The role of the adult and the environment in relation to children's behaviour. • Collaboration and participation in establishing behavioural parameters: meeting children's needs *Links to Learning Objective 3*	Provocation Two (10%)
18 August **Week 6**	Response to Child Behaviour Management Scenarios *Links to Learning Objective 3*	Provocation Two (cont)
TEACHING RECESS **25 August – 7 September**		
8 September **Week 7**	Family/whänau in Aotearoa/New Zealand An exploration of the meaning of family within a socio-	Provocation Three (10%0

	historical context of Aotearoa/New Zealand. Links to Learning Objective 4	
15 September Week 8	A sociological analysis of family types within society in Aotearoa/New Zealand Links to Learning Objective 4	Provocation Three (cont)
22 September Week 9	An exploration of processes that are common during transitions related to changing family situations. Links to Learning Objective 4	Provocation Four (10%)
29 September Week 10	A historical and cultural investigation of the gap between rich and poor in Aotearoa/New Zealand Links to Learning Objective 4	Provocation Four (cont)
6 October Week 11	Family Law/ Children's Rights and Child Protection Links to Learning Objective 4	Staff Retreat
13 October Week 12	Defining Partnerships*:* Between early childhood services, caregivers, whänau and community. Links to Learning Objective 4	Staff celebrations

Required Readings
A book of readings will be provided for this paper. Any other readings will be provided as online links, or shared as part of the general class information online.

Assessment

In order to pass paper TEPS757-08B(NET) <u>**all** assignments must be submitted.</u>

(a)   The requirements for assessed work are detailed in Moodle. They consist of discussion participation and a series of activities. All referencing should be in APA style. Assessment components, percentages and due dates are detailed below.

(b)   The internal assessment/examination ratio is 1:0.

(c)   Details of where assessed items are to be placed will be stated in each Module. Staff feedback, comments and grades will be found in individual e-Folios in Moodle within 14 days of the due date.

(d)   Assessment criteria is found at the end of each module and in the area called 'Assessment and Requirements Overview' in the course information folder

(e) Requests for extensions and special consideration can be made on the 'Request for Extension to Module Due Date' form in the Administration Centre for the class.

ASSIGNMENTS

Please note that your assignments may be copied for moderation purposes.

Assignment 1: **Socio-cultural Theory Assignment**
Weighting: **20%**
Due: **Midnight on 3 August**
Length: **1000 words**

You have been asked to write a 1000 word essay as part of your teacher registration advice and guidance progamme on socio-cultural theory.

A leading socio-cultural theorist, Barbara Rogoff (2003) makes the point that human development is a cultural process and that:
'people develop as participants in cultural communities. Their development can be understood only in the light of the cultural practices and circumstances of their communities – which can also change' (p.g3.4).

You must discuss this statement making links to the key aspects of Rogoff's theory of socio-cultural development and Mäori cultural understandings, values and practices. You must also make links to practice in early childhood services and your own experiences.

Criteria and points to note for assignment one:
• Clearly discusses socio-cultural theory making links cultural practices, values and to teaching practice in early childhood service
• Depth of analysis and reflection
• In-depth research evident including a range of relevant sources.
• Presentation includes competent writing style, clearly sequenced ideas and accurate APA referencing.

Submit your 1000 words plus reference list by midnight on 3 August.

Assignment 2a: **Collaborative Development of a Child Behaviour Management Policy Weighting:** **25%**
Due: **Midnight on 7 September**
Length: **1500 words**

Currently the Ministry of Education requires every licensed early childhood centre in Aotearoa/New Zealand to develop a child management policy. In your teaching teams you are required to develop a new early childhood centre policy on *Child Behaviour Management* based on legal requirements.

Your teaching team will be randomly selected and information regarding these groups will be posted in the staff room area of Moodle. Using a wiki for the initial collaboration you are required to develop a 1500 word policy document There are two parts to the policy, the rationale (**the why)** in which you outline the key philosophical principles that will underpin the second component, your centre practice **(the how).** When the collaborative document policy is completed it will be submitted into the assignment area.

Your centre policy must be clearly written, reflect a consideration of Mäori values and beliefs and be accessible to a wide range of relevant people including: centre whänau/families and tamariki/children; staff including relievers; management; as well as outside agencies such as ERO. Ensure that your philosophy and practice is well grounded in government regulations, policy and guidelines, as well as current research and theory sourced from, and correctly referenced to, the following materials:

- Early Childhood Regulations:
  http://www.legislation.govt.nz/browse_vw.asp?content-set=pal_regs
- Te Whäriki (Ministry of Education)
- Providing Positive Guidance (Ministry of Education)
- Guiding Young Children (Reynolds) (In the paper Readings Booklet)
- Theory and research (In the paper Readings Booklet)

Marking Criteria
- Awareness of legislation
- Understanding of Child Behaviour Management strategies
- Clarity of expression of philosophy
- Relevant links credible sources of literature
- Includes the Why and the How
- Consideration of Mäori values and beliefs
- **Clear evidence of collaboration**
- Presentation includes competent writing style, clearly sequenced ideas and accurate APA
   referencing

Submit your 1500-word policy and a reference list by midnight on 7 September.

Assignment 3:   **Annual Appraisal Goals**
Weighting: **15%**
Due: **Friday on 27 October**
Length: **10-minute tape recording plus 800 word summary.**

During this year's annual appraisal you indicated that one of your professional goals was to strengthen and sustain meaningful relationships within this early childhood setting. To achieve this you agreed that you would develop **three goals** for your own teaching practice.

You are required to create a 10-minute tape recording in which you will articulate these goals and strategies and write a 800-word summary of the literature that you used to develop these.

Here are some points to consider when developing your tape and written summary.

- You are expected to make links to early childhood practice, which relate to family and community.
- You may wish to choose a particular area of focus from the weekly topics, e.g sole parents.
- Take into account historical, socio-cultural, political and philosophical implications.
- Consider different perspectives from the literature and the online discussions.

Marking Criteria:
- An understanding of meaningful partnerships clear articulated.
- Historical, socio-cultural, political and philosophical implications considered.
- Implications for your own teaching practice identified
- Three goals for own teaching practice expressed.
- Presentation of summary includes competent writing style, clearly sequenced ideas and accurate APA referencing.

Post your tape and written summary to:
Rosina Merry
Department of professional Studies in Education
The University of Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton 3240
By Friday on 27 October

Online Provocations
Weighting: 10% each (x4)

Provocation 1:   28 July – 10 August
Provocation 2:   11 August – 24 August
Provocation 3:   8 September – 21 September
Provocation 4:   22 September – 5 October

During these provocations you will have the opportunity to articulate your understandings of the topics including how the ideas and concepts have

challenged your thinking and supported the development of alternative perspectives and identify the implications for early childhood services and professionals

Marking Criteria:
- Understanding of issues related to topics covered.
- Depth of reflection including alternative perspectives and critical analysis.

- Connections to readings.
- Minimum of 6 contributions at regular intervals per provocation

General Marking Criteria

The following general criteria are used when grading written assignments:

A. Demonstrates excellent understanding of links between theory and practice.
Critical reflection is from a wide range of perspectives.
There is exceptional clarity and preciseness in the synthesis of experiences and learnings (including workshops, readings, in-school tasks and tutorial tasks).
APA referencing is used correctly and effectively.
Writing style is highly effective with writing conventions adhered to i.e. grammar and spelling.
Work is within word limit.

B. Demonstrates a good understanding of links between theory and practice.
Critical reflection is from a range of perspectives.
There is clarity and preciseness in the synthesis of experiences and learniings (including workshops, readings, in-school tasks and tutorial tasks).
APA referencing is mostly used correctly and effectively.
Writing conventions are mostly used effectively i.e. style, grammar , spelling.
Work is within word limit.

C. Demonstrates satisfactory understanding of links between theory and practice.
Critical reflection from a limited range of perspectives.
There is some clarity in the synthesis of experiences and learnings (including some of these - workshops, readings, in-school tasks and tutorial tasks).
APA referencing is not used consistently or correctly.
Some problems with writing conventions i.e. style, grammar, spelling.
Work is within word limit.

D. Demonstrates weak understanding of links between theory and practice.
Reflection is not critical.
Little evidence of synthesis of experiences and learnings (including limited workshops, readings, in-school tasks or tutorial tasks).
APA referencing incorrectly used.
There may be problems with writing conventions i.e. style, grammar and spelling.
Work is well outside word limit.

F. Lacks evidence of links between theory and practice.
No evidence of critical reflection.
No evidence of synthesis of experiences and learnings (workshops, readings, in-school tasks or tutorial tasks not included).
APA referencing is incorrect or not used.
Major problems in expressing ideas coherently and/or using correct writing conventions i.e. spelling and grammar.
Work is well outside word limit.

Paper Regulations
The School of Education has regulations which relate to their programmes. It is your responsibility to collect one copy of these regulations, each year, which relate to all the papers taught in the School of Education. These include regulations about late work, work written in Māori, attendance, referencing and many other matters of importance. Copies can be collected from the Department of Professional Studies in Education Administrative Secretary in TT2.12B. These regulations are also be available on the edLinkEd site:
www.soe.waikato.ac.nz/
click on: edLinked - SOE portal
click on: login (and log in with your regular email username and password)
click on: student information

Late Assignments
You are required to submit your internally assessed work by the specified dates. Assignments submitted after the due date, with no extension granted, may be awarded no grade. In order to be deemed to have met paper requirements, an assignment of satisfactory quality must be received before the marked assignments have been returned, or by a date negotiated with your paper coordinator.

Extensions
In exceptional circumstances (other than serious sickness, injury or bereavement which will be treated on a case-by-case basis) up to 72 hours extension may be granted by the paper coordinator on an approved form available from the School of Education reception or from the departmental administrative secretary. You must personally hand the form to the paper coordinator, or their nominee. Wherever possible, an application for an extension should be made at least 24 hours prior to the due date, but in

exceptional circumstances you may apply for an extension up to 24 hours after the due date.

Special Consideration for Missed Assessment or Impaired Performance
Should you wish to apply for special arrangements for examinations and/or special consideration of internal assessment as advised, you should refer to the *Assessment Regulations 2005* in the current University of Waikato Calendar.

Review of Final Grade
If you consider that a mistake has been made in the process of calculating or determining a final grade you should discuss this with the paper coordinator, or their nominee, in the first instance, not more than 14 days after receiving notification of the grade. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of this discussion you may contact the Chairperson of Department. You are advised to refer to the *Assessment Regulations 2005* in the current University of Waikato Calendar.

Re-submissions
If you have received a failing grade, resubmission of one piece of work <u>may be possible</u> during the paper. A resubmitted assignment can only be considered for improvement to a C grade maximum. In order to resubmit an assignment you should contact the paper coordinator, or their nominee, within 48 hours of the assignment being returned, to negotiate arrangements for resubmitting it.

Assignments written in Mäori

University policy on assignments written in Mäori will be adhered to (see the current University of Waikato Calendar). For further details, please contact your lecturer <u>at beginning of this paper</u> for each assignment to be submitted in Mäori.

Reference to University Regulations
Your attention is drawn to the following regulations and policies, which are published in the current University of Waikato Calendar:
• Assessment Regulations 2005
• Computer Systems Regulations 2005
• Human Research Ethics Regulations 2005
• Policy on the Use of Mäori for Assessment
• Student Discipline Regulations 2006
• Student Research Regulations 2000

SECTION B

Referencing Guidelines
You are referred to the APA Reference Guide in the Virtual Education Reference Desk in Moodle where guidelines for APA Referencing can be found in the Key resources for online learning area.

Caution against Plagiarism
Plagiarism means present as one's own work the work of another, and includes the copying or paraphrasing of another person's work in an assessment item without acknowledging it as the other person's work through full and accurate referencing; it applies to research and to assessment (as defined in the *Assessment Regulations 2005* in the current University of Waikato Calendar) presented through a written, spoken, electronic, broadcasting, visual, performance or other medium. Any form of plagiarism is a break of the *Student Discipline Regulations 2006* (as defined in the current University of Waikato Calendar).

Health and Safety
Learning online has the potential to impact on your physical wellbeing if long periods are spent at the keyboard. Careful attention should be paid to seating and the height of your desk so that your feet are able to sit flat on the floor and your elbows, hips and knees are at right angles. It is suggested that regular breaks are taken and activities are alternated to avoid staying in one position for too long.

Class Representation
The appointment of a Class Representative will take place early in the semester. Details will be provided in Moodle. The Academic Administrator in the Academic Services Division, who co-ordinates the class representation system is Hannah Brett, The Gateway, phone 07 8562889 ext 6264, email: student.reps@waikato.ac.nz

Student Concerns and Complaints Procedures
You are encouraged to raise matters causing concern to you with the relevant staff member, in the first instance. This can be done by email, in the e-Folio area or a telephone conversation. If you are not satisfied with the outcome with the staff member concerned, you are advised to discuss the matter with the Chairperson of Department. A formal complaint may be made in writing and addressed to the Dean. It should be lodged with the Personal Assistant to the Dean who will log the complaint, acknowledge it in writing and pass it to the Dean for appropriate action. Generally, complaints will be referred to the appropriate manager for investigation. Managers include Chairperson of Departments, Assistant Deans and the Administration Manager. If the complaint is about an action of one of these managers, the Dean will handle the matter. These procedures follow those laid out in the University brochure Student Concerns and Complaints Policy, which is available at the School of Education Reception and the Student and Academic Services Division.

Appendix 8: Participant questionnaire

Kia ora

I am interested in exploring what processes and procedures you found contributed to personalising the eEnvironment and building reciprocal relationships in your community of learners.

The term 'processes and procedures' refers to particular tools used throughout the programme such as podcasts, discussion forums, collaborative assignments virtual coffee clubs and so on.

Below is a list of questions that I would very much appreciate you answering.

1) What were your initial thoughts about forming online relationships prior to starting the graduate Diploma of Teaching?

2) Were there processes or procedures that strengthened relationships or a sense of belonging? Please explain and provide examples.

3) In what ways did you gain a sense of belonging and feel that you were part of the relationships in a community of learners? Please give examples.

4) Which processes and procedures did you feel personalised the e-learning environment? Please explain in as much detail as you can.

5) Students came to this programme with a range of cultural backgrounds and experiences. Comment on whether you think this programme could be described as *inclusive* of diversity. Please be as specific as you can

Appendix 9: Netiquette Guidelines for programme participants

- Keep entries to approx 150- 200 words. More than this may seem to dominate the discussion

- Participation is required at least 3 times a week.

- Read the readings as they will support the discussion topic. When making links to the readings and any other sources you have found, remember to APA reference.

- Remember your words are not accompanied by body language/prompts. If appropriate use emoticons. Re read and think through your posting as it is easy to inadvertently offend. Make use of the 30 minute editing time.

- Be respectful of others cultures and viewpoints when contributing. Consider what they are saying even if you disagree.

- Recognise and value the experiences, abilities, and knowledge each person brings to the discussion.

- Be open to be challenged or confronted on your ideas or prejudices. However, remember that it is the idea that is being challenged and not you personally.

- Challenge others with the intent of developing and co-constructing knowledge in your learning community. Be careful not to embarrass other participants.

- Use the discussion area for discussion only. Queries, private questions etc need to be put in the appropriate area.

Appendix 10: Indicators of social presence. Coded contributions during discussion forums across two papers using Garrison and Anderson's (2004) framework.

Participant A: Discussion forum participation in one paper (Multiple literacies)
Social presence indicators
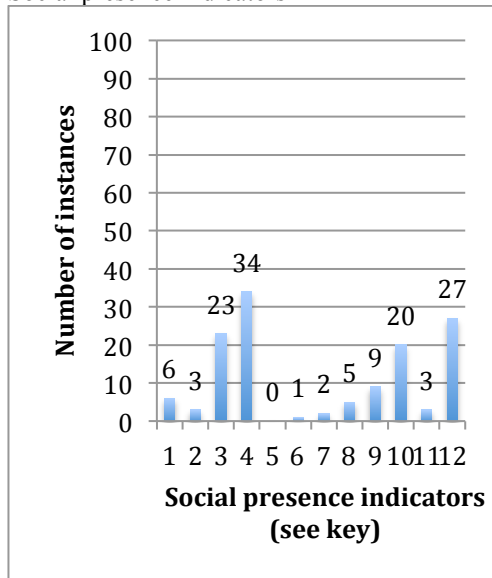
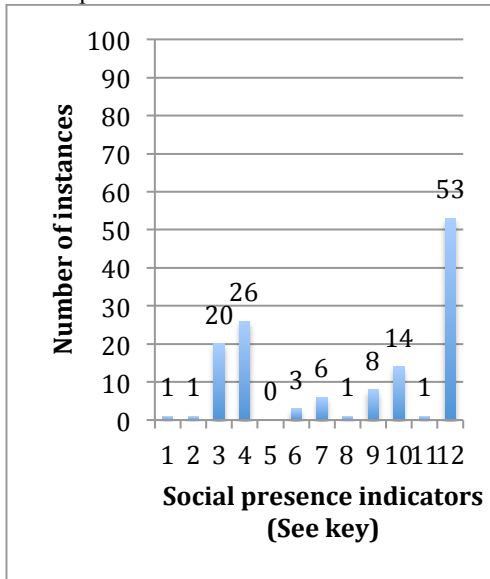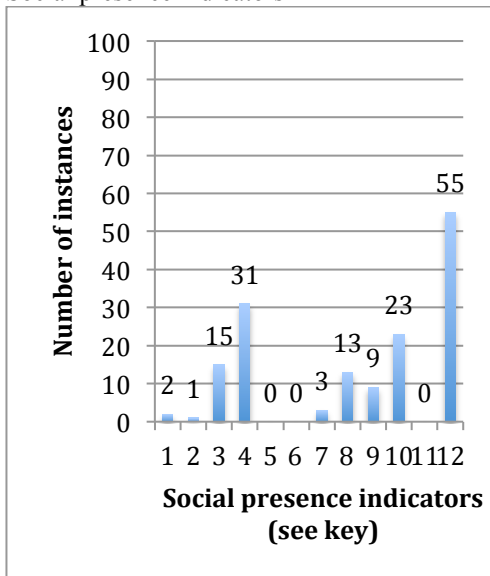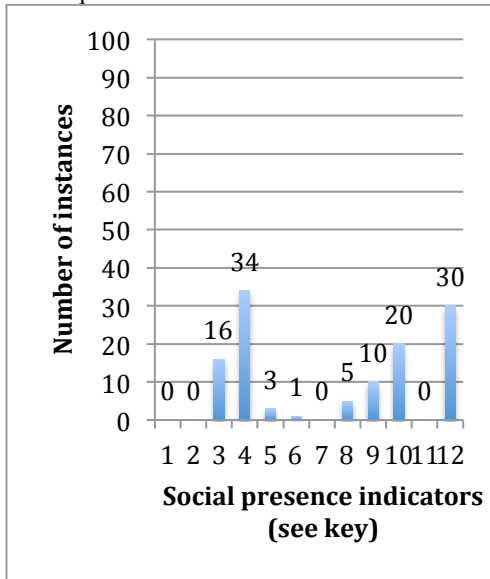Participant A: Discussion forum participation in one paper (Community of learners)
Social presence indicators
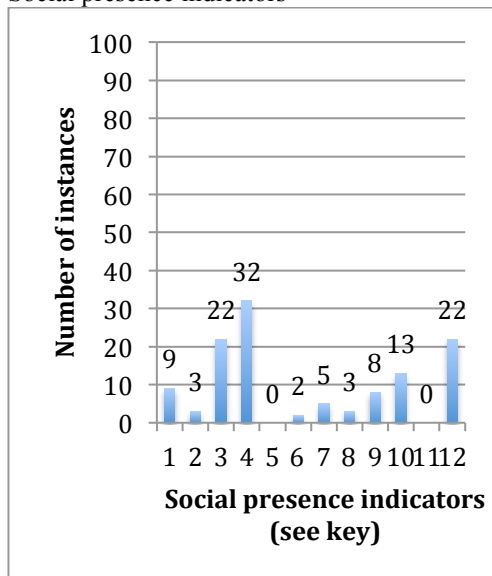
Figure   Figure

Key: 1) Expression of Emotions, 2) Use of humour, 3) Self-disclosure, 4) Continuing a thread, 5) Quoting from others' messages, 6) Referring explicitly to others' message, 7) Asking questions, 8) Complimenting , expressing appreciation, 9) Expressing agreement, 10) Vocatives, 11) Addresses or refers to the group using inclusive pronouns, 12) Phatics, salutations
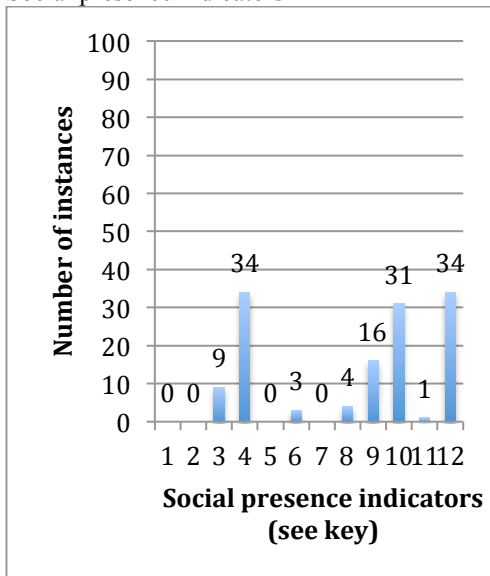
Participant B: Discussion forum participation in one paper (Multiple literacies)
Social presence indicators

Participant B: Discussion forum participation in one paper (Community of learners)
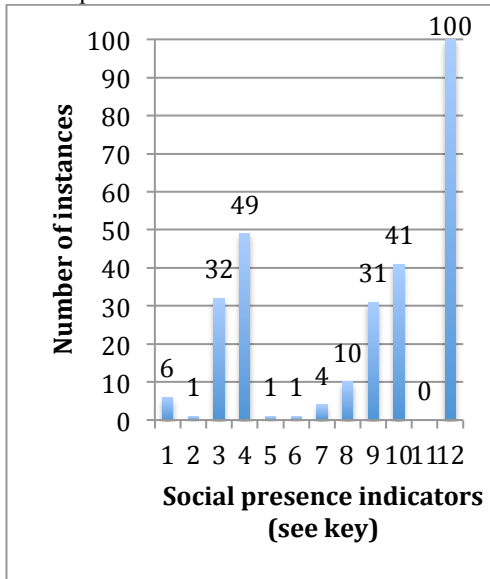Social presence indicators

Key: 1) Expression of Emotions, 2) Use of humour, 3) Self-disclosure, 4) Continuing a thread, 5) Quoting from others' messages, 6) Referring explicitly to others' message, 7) Asking questions, 8) Complimenting, expressing appreciation, 9) Expressing agreement, 10) Vocatives, 11) Addresses or refers to the group using inclusive pronouns, 12) Phatics, salutations
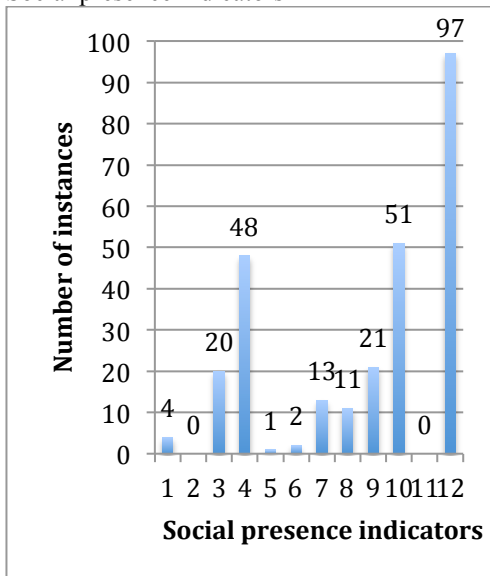
Participant C: Discussion forum participation in one paper (Multiple literacies)
Social presence indicators

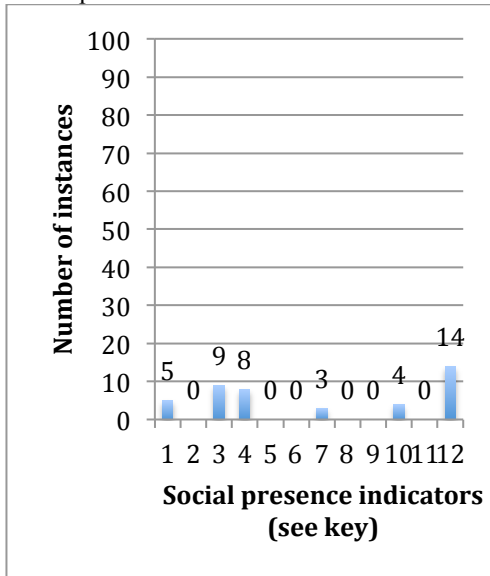Participant C: Discussion forum participation in one paper (Community of learners)
Social presence indicators

Key: 1) Expression of Emotions, 2) Use of humour, 3) Self-disclosure, 4) Continuing a thread, 5) Quoting from others' messages, 6) Referring explicitly to others' message, 7) Asking questions, 8) Complimenting, expressing appreciation, 9) Expressing agreement, 10) Vocatives, 11) Addresses or refers to the group using inclusive pronouns, 12) Phatics, salutations
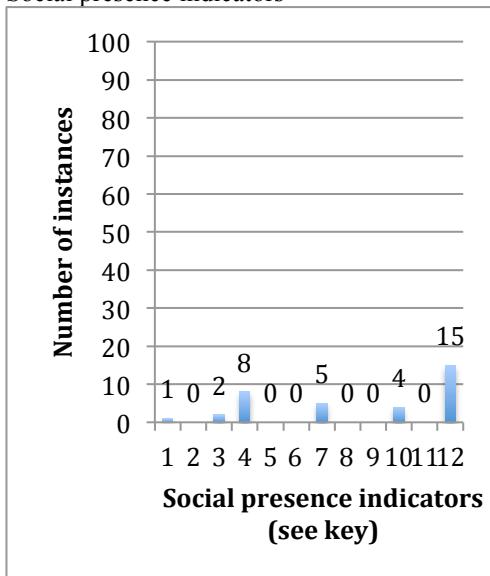
Participant D: Discussion forum participation in one paper (Multiple literacies)
Social presence indicators

Participant D: Discussion forum participation in one paper (Community of learners)
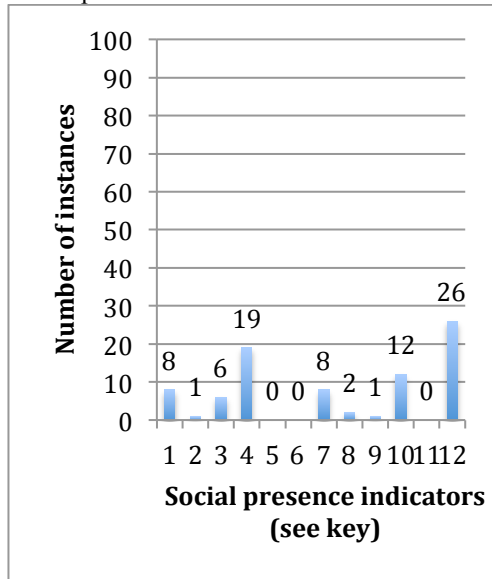Social presence indicators

Key: 1) Expression of Emotions, 2) Use of humour, 3) Self-disclosure, 4) Continuing a thread, 5) Quoting from others' messages, 6) Referring explicitly to others' message, 7) Asking questions, 8) Complimenting, expressing appreciation, 9) Expressing agreement, 10) Vocatives, 11) Addresses or refers to the group using inclusive pronouns, 12) Phatics, salutations

Participant E: Discussion forum participation in one paper (Multiple literacies)
Social presence indicators

Participant E: Discussion forum participation in one paper (Community of learners)
Social presence indicators

Key: 1) Expression of Emotions, 2) Use of humour, 3) Self-disclosure, 4) Continuing a thread, 5) Quoting from others' messages, 6) Referring explicitly to others' message, 7) Asking questions, 8) Complimenting, expressing appreciation, 9) Expressing agreement, 10) Vocatives, 11) Addresses or refers to the group using inclusive pronouns, 12) Phatics, salutations

Participant F: Discussion forum participation in one paper (Multiple literacies)
Social presence indicators

Participant F: Discussion forum participation in one paper (Community of learners)
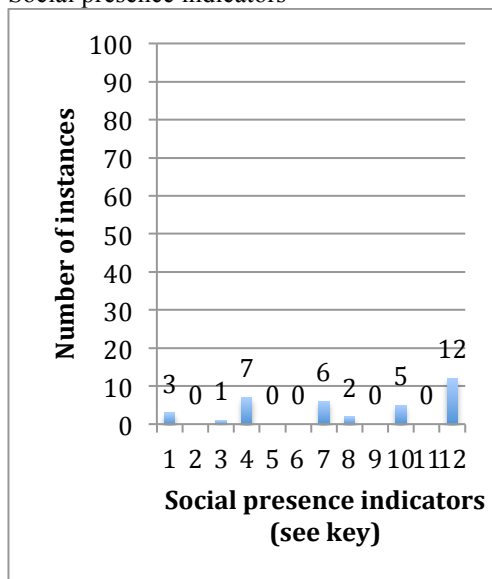Social presence indicators

Key: 1) Expression of Emotions, 2) Use of humour, 3) Self-disclosure, 4) Continuing a thread, 5) Quoting from others' messages, 6) Referring explicitly to others' message, 7) Asking questions, 8) Complimenting, expressing appreciation, 9) Expressing agreement, 10) Vocatives, 11) Addresses or refers to the group using inclusive pronouns, 12) Phatics, salutations

Appendix 11: Indicators of social presence coded contributions during collaborative assignment in one paper using Garrison and Anderson's (2004) framework.

Participant A: Collaborative assignment participation in one paper (Community of learners)
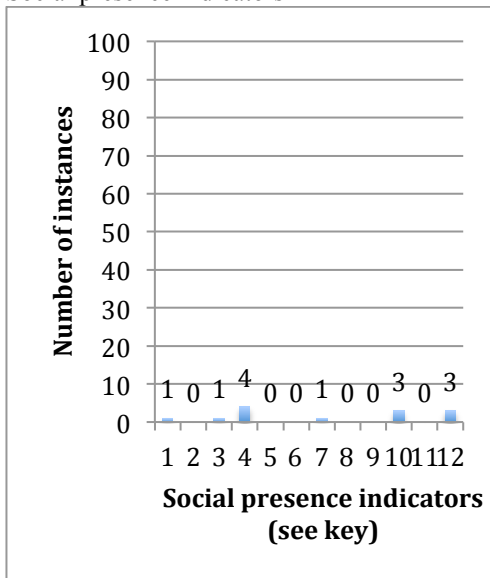Social presence indicators

Key: 1) Expression of Emotions, 2) Use of humour, 3) Self-disclosure, 4) Continuing a thread, 5) Quoting from others' messages, 6) Referring explicitly to others' message, 7) Asking questions, 8) Complimenting, expressing appreciation, 9) Expressing agreement, 10) Vocatives, 11) Addresses or refers to the group using inclusive pronouns, 12) Phatics, salutations

Participant B: Collaborative assignment participation in one paper (Community of learners)
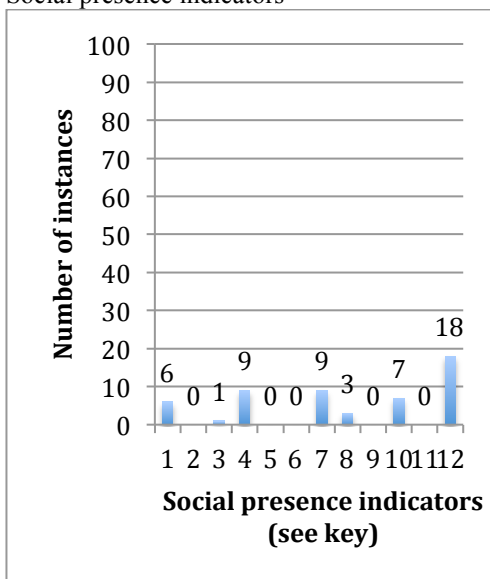Social presence indicators

Key: 1) Expression of Emotions, 2) Use of humour, 3) Self-disclosure, 4) Continuing a thread, 5) Quoting from others' messages, 6) Referring explicitly to others' message, 7) Asking questions, 8) Complimenting, expressing appreciation, 9) Expressing agreement, 10) Vocatives, 11) Addresses or refers to the group using inclusive pronouns, 12) Phatics, salutations

Participant C: Collaborative assignment participation in one paper (Community of learners)
Social presence indicators

Key: 1) Expression of Emotions, 2) Use of humour, 3) Self-disclosure, 4) Continuing a thread, 5) Quoting from others' messages, 6) Referring explicitly to others' message, 7) Asking questions, 8) Complimenting, expressing appreciation, 9) Expressing agreement, 10) Vocatives, 11) Addresses or refers to the group using inclusive pronouns, 12) Phatics, salutations

Participant D: Collaborative assignment participation in one paper (Community of learners)
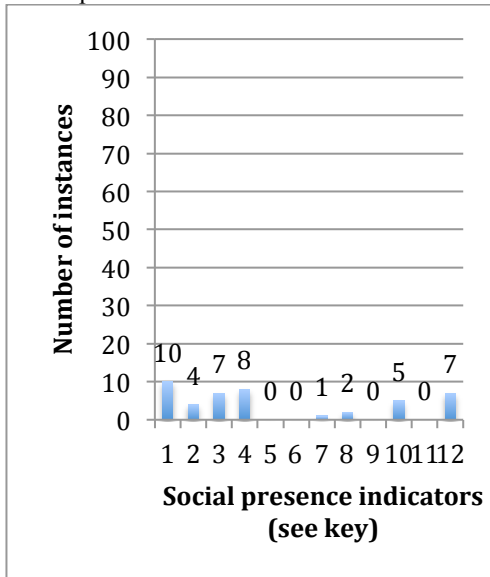Social presence indicators

Key: 1) Expression of Emotions, 2) Use of humour, 3) Self-disclosure, 4) Continuing a thread, 5) Quoting from others' messages, 6) Referring explicitly to others' message, 7) Asking questions, 8) Complimenting, expressing appreciation, 9) Expressing agreement, 10) Vocatives, 11) Addresses or refers to the group using inclusive pronouns, 12) Phatics, salutations

Participant E: Collaborative assignment participation in one paper (Community of learners)
Social presence indicators

Key: 1) Expression of Emotions, 2) Use of humour, 3) Self-disclosure, 4) Continuing a thread, 5) Quoting from others' messages, 6) Referring explicitly to others' message, 7) Asking questions, 8) Complimenting, expressing appreciation, 9) Expressing agreement, 10) Vocatives, 11) Addresses or refers to the group using inclusive pronouns, 12) Phatics, salutations

Participant F: Collaborative assignment participation in one paper (Community of learners)
Social presence indicators

Key: 1) Expression of Emotions, 2) Use of humour, 3) Self-disclosure, 4) Continuing a thread, 5) Quoting from others' messages, 6) Referring explicitly to others' message, 7) Asking questions, 8) Complimenting, expressing appreciation, 9) Expressing agreement, 10) Vocatives, 11) Addresses or refers to the group using inclusive pronouns, 12) Phatics, salutations

Appendix 12: Indicators of social presence coded contributions during social spaces across two papers using Garrison and Anderson's framework.

Participant A: Social space participation in two papers (Community of learners and Multiple literacies)
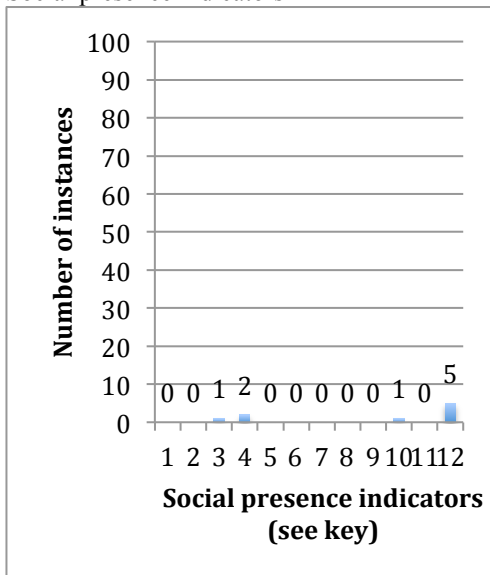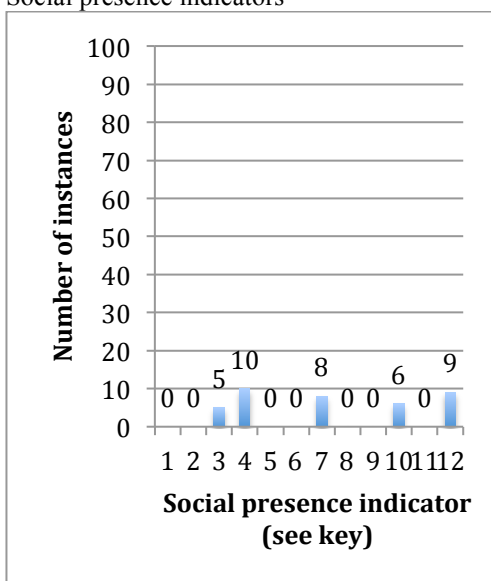Social presence indicators

Key: 1) Expression of Emotions, 2) Use of humour, 3) Self-disclosure, 4) Continuing a thread, 5) Quoting from others' messages, 6) Referring explicitly to others' message, 7) Asking questions, 8) Complimenting, expressing appreciation, 9) Expressing agreement, 10) Vocatives, 11) Addresses or refers to the group using inclusive pronouns, 12) Phatics, salutations

Participant B: Social space participation in two papers (Community of learners and Multiple literacies)
Social presence indicators

Key: 1) Expression of Emotions, 2) Use of humour, 3) Self-disclosure, 4) Continuing a thread, 5) Quoting from others' messages, 6) Referring explicitly to others' message, 7) Asking questions, 8) Complimenting, expressing appreciation, 9) Expressing agreement, 10) Vocatives, 11) Addresses or refers to the group using inclusive pronouns, 12) Phatics, salutations

Participant C: Social space participation in two papers (Community of learners and Multiple literacies)
Social presence indicators

Key: 1) Expression of Emotions, 2) Use of humour, 3) Self-disclosure, 4) Continuing a thread, 5) Quoting from others' messages, 6) Referring explicitly to others' message, 7) Asking questions, 8) Complimenting, expressing appreciation, 9) Expressing agreement, 10) Vocatives, 11) Addresses or refers to the group using inclusive pronouns, 12) Phatics, salutations

Participant D: Did not contribute to the social spaces.

Participant E: Did not contribute to the social spaces.

Participant F: Did not contribute to the social spaces.

Appendix 13: Example of coded discussion forums analyses using Garrison and Anderson's (2004) Framework

Topic 2

Resource: **Karakia**
Never seen

Resource: **Waiata**
Never seen

Resource: **The Staff Room**
Never seen

Forum: **Staff room conversations**

Re: Staff team C
by - Monday, 21 July 2008, 12:04 PM
Reference: 2

hen I hear the term 'theory' I think 'opinion'. I also think of theory to be an academic way of explaining an aspect of everyday life as a vehicle for either professional advancement or political change. "*A well expressed opinion is usually better than a badly expressed fact so far as profesional advancement goes.*" (*D Gabaldon*).
I think it...
Kia ora koutou.
I too think opinion when I hear theory, I think it is important for us to understand and identify theories because it gives us an awareness of where our 'theories' come from. Which I believe come from our own social and cognitive development, how we were raised, our beliefs around gender roles, our values, our concept of self, and they way in which we also socialised and have relationships with others. If we have this awareness then i believe only then can we have the ability to listen to others theories. And by doing that then we can think outside the square and not be restrictive in our teaching practices.
Show parent | Show Replies | Edit | Split | Delete

> **Comment [1]:** 4
> **Comment [2]:** 12

Re: Staff team C - Monday, 21 July 2008, 10:13 PM
Re: Staff team C
by - Tuesday, 22 July 2008, 12:04 PM
Reference: 7
rote on Tuesday, 22 July 2008, 09:28 AM
Hello Name
,
I do agree with your ideas of theory and social development.
My understanding of theory is that it is like your opinion, ideas, and how I think about something that is related to others and me could be in general personal, study, work.
I believe my ideas and thoughts are based on my beliefs, spiritual, mind, about my...
Kia ora koutou.
Name I like what you said "when people stop questioning the validity of a theory it becomes normalised". THis comes down to even the simplist of tasks in our everyday work. WHy do we do things this way? Is it because it has been done this way for the past five years. Like you said normal is not necessarily good, if we normalise things, I believe we tend to just go through the motions of something.
Name

> **Comment [3]:** 4
> **Comment [4]:** 12
> **Comment [5]:** 6
> **Comment [6]:** 7

Show parent | Show Replies | Edit | Split | Delete

Re: Staff team C - Tuesday, 22 July 2008, 04:26 PM
Re: Staff team C - Tuesday, 22 July 2008, 04:35 PM
Re: Staff team C
by Name
- Thursday, 24 July 2008, 01:56 PM
Reference: 19

Hi Name
,
You raised up some interesting points.
You wrote that "we just accept the theory and follow it, is rather then questioning, "Why we are doing it this way? What if we try different way?". If teachers do not reflect on "Why we are doing it this way? What if we try different way?", then we are not flexibe and ...
Hi girls.
You guys explained the normalising theorising really well, its such a mouthful. I think to bring it into context for us as teachers is that Te Whaariki is not based on Piaget and his theories, but the historical curriculum was. Educators obviously didn't let the status quo just be, they questioned it and have since changed it.
Name
Show parent | Show Replies | Edit | Split | Delete

> **Comment [7]:**

> **Comment [8]:** 4
> **Comment [9]:** 12
> **Comment [10]:** 8

Re: Staff team C - Thursday, 24 July 2008, 02:31 PM