Can You Hear Me Now?
The Importance of Instructor Presence & Engagement.

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Learning Objectives

1. Identify core distance education concepts that relate to Touro College’s Graduate School of Social Work moving a portion of its MSW curriculum to a blended/hybrid format.

2. Review results from TCGSSW's study of student perceptions of instructor presence & engagement in blended and traditional courses.

3. Discuss successful techniques for maintaining instructor presence & engagement when moving Social Work content from a traditional to a blended format.
Community of Inquiry Model
(Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000; 2010)
Planning and Maintaining Presence = Engagement

Presence is maintained by:

- **Communication** that reduces the social and psychological distance between the instructor and the students
- **Actions** within the online community that facilitate student comfort with the course
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proportion of course online</th>
<th>Type of course</th>
<th>Typical description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>Course where no online technology used; content is delivered in writing or orally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-29%</td>
<td>Web Facilitated</td>
<td>Course that uses web-based technology to facilitate what is essentially a face-to-face course. May use a learning management system (LMS) or web pages to post the syllabus and assignments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-79%</td>
<td>Blended/ Hybrid</td>
<td>Course that blends online and face-to-face delivery. Substantial proportion of the content is delivered online, typically uses online discussions, and typically has a reduced number of face-to-face meetings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80+ %</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>A course where most or all of the content is delivered online. Typically have no face-to-face meetings.</td>
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Traditional → Web Facilitated → Blended → Online

Synchronous / Asynchronous
Blended Learning:
“The best of both worlds”

“A pedagogical approach that combines the effectiveness and socialization opportunities of a classroom with the technologically enhanced active learning possibilities of the online environment” (Dziuban, Hartman, & Moskal, 2004)
Blended Learning

*A shift in pedagogy*

- Moving from lecture-to-student instruction to a format where students become active & interactive learners
- Planned interaction between student-instructor; student-student; student-content; student-outside resources
- Includes an integrated formative & summative evaluation component for students and instructor
Presence & Engagement Survey Questions

• We developed 5 Presence Questions & 4 Engagement Questions

• Presence & Engagement questions were integrated into to all course evaluations in both traditional and blended coursework - all students answered them

• Integrating the Presence & Engagement questions means that they were not separated out from other questions or identified as a special set of survey questions - they appeared with all of the other questions

• All questions were designed as 5-point Likert scales – The answer choices ranged from 1= Strongly Agree to 5=Strongly Disagree
Presence and Engagement: Study Results

• A total of 2,841 responses were collected from student course evaluations

• Presence scores for Blended sections were equal to those for the Traditional sections

• Engagement scores for Blended sections were equal to or higher in some semesters that Traditional sections.
Other Areas of Interest from Presence & Engagement (P & E) Data

1. Full Time professors had higher P & E scores than Part Time professors.

2. There was little difference in the P & E scores between Traditional and Blended sections of Foundation Year Social Work Practice courses.

3. Spring semesters of both traditional and blended courses received higher P & E than Fall for the most part.
So...

The first place for Social Work educators to start a successful transition of traditional course content to an online format is with...
## Basic Social Work Practice!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SW Engagement Skills</th>
<th>Online Engagement Skills</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Greeting your client and setting the stage for them to feel comfortable to talk to you</td>
<td>• Welcoming your students to an online/blended class and setting the stage for them to feel comfortable to talk to you and each other virtually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Orienting the client to a helping relationship</td>
<td>• Orienting students to an online or blended class</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Discussing expectations</td>
<td>• Discussing expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Facilitating a decision if it’s a good “fit” between the social worker and client</td>
<td>• Facilitating a decision if it’s a good “fit” between a student and an online class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Attention to building and maintaining a relationship</td>
<td>• Attention to building and maintaining a relationship with &amp; among the students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Common objectives in the development of Social Work education

• Establish a consistent, safe, environment (actual and relational) where you and your students engage in the work.

• Provide students with optimal access and exposure to content that supports and furthers their MSW education.

• Facilitate rich and engaging discussions about course material or current events that impact social work practice.

• Provide students with the opportunity to practice and demonstrate their mastery of Social Work concepts.
**Recommended “tech tools” that meet Social Work education objectives**

<table>
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<th>SW Objective</th>
<th>Tools</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Consistent Space</td>
<td>Well organized LMS; Adobe Connect; Zoom</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Access &amp; Exposure to material</td>
<td>Lecture Capture software such as Screencast-O-matic; Podcasts (yours or others); Kaltura and other streaming video libraries; iTunes U</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Rich Discussions</td>
<td>LMS discussion forums; organized blogs; Wikis; VoiceThread</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Opportunity to practice and demonstrate mastery</td>
<td>Organized LMS platforms for video uploads; YouSeeU</td>
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QUESTIONS?
Thank-you!