

## **Using Teacher Presence in Online Higher Education to Foster Global Citizenship among Adult Learners**

*By Tanya M. Tarbutton<sup>\*</sup> & Lori B. Doyle<sup>‡</sup>*

Higher education institutions must recognize the responsibility to support online adult learners as members of a larger global community and technological advancements have made this a reality. COVID-19 restrictions to in-person learning highlighted the need for online learning platforms that promote the benefits of teacher presence, consider the tenets of the Community of Inquiry model, and commit to the principles of andragogy. A need to explore the possibilities for fostering global citizenship among adult learners in online higher education environments has been identified as a problem space and a methodological approach will be used to connect findings from the literature with best practices for practitioners. Global citizenship is not a new concept; however, current and worldwide events have created a renewed dedication to the construct. Discussions based on the literature and established theoretical frameworks will precede practical implications for directors, course designers, and instructors. Online education will be described as ripe with opportunities for higher education institutions to foster global citizenship among adult learners.

*Keywords:* global citizenship, online education, adult learners, higher education, Community of Inquiry, teacher presence

### **Adult Learners**

Online higher education has been on the rise as a result of technological advancements and a growing population of adult learners. There is a problem space or a need to explore the possibilities for fostering global citizenship among adult learners in online higher education environments. The United Nations (n.d.) recognized the responsibility of higher education institutions to support learners regarding their membership in the larger global community. Institutions utilizing online learning platforms are poised to promote this mindset and help learners capitalize on far-reaching opportunities. Online adult learners are best supported when practitioners build upon the principles of andragogy coupled with theoretical frameworks specific to online higher education (Knowles, Holton, Swanson, & Robinson, 2020). One theoretical framework that has received attention for its direct application to online education is Community of Inquiry (CoI) (Diep et al., 2019). The authors will investigate one aspect of CoI, teacher presence, and draw implications based on experience working in online higher education. Shutdowns due to COVID-19, an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus (World Health Organization, 2019), enhanced the focus and accelerated the time frame for

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<sup>\*</sup> Associate Professor, MAED and Program Director School Administration, Concordia University Irvine, USA.

<sup>‡</sup> Assistant Professor, MAED and Program Director Curriculum & Instruction, Concordia University Irvine, USA.

institutions to provide ways for students to connect with a larger, more global community. To address students' feelings of isolation, Tan (2021) suggested teacher presence is especially important and impactful during the recovery period following the pandemic. A methodological system was employed to establish a problem space, situate the problem within a theoretical framework, and draw implications for practitioners that are supported by the literature as well as personal experience. The authors hope to inspire higher education directors, designers, and instructors working in online environments and promote the tenets of teacher presence to support adult online learners and foster global citizenship.

### Global Citizenship

Global citizenship models have become increasingly more popular with the development of the internet and other technological advancements (Akkari & Maleq, 2019). According to the authors, "The concept of *citizen of the world* is not a new idea and can be traced back to cosmopolitan cities that have produced philosophers, writers, artists, and thinkers able to see identity across national, cultural and linguistic boundaries" (p. 176). Since the turn of the century, this concept has gained popularity as activists have attempted to address 21st-century challenges spanning the globe such as civic and citizenship education (Akkari & Maleq, 2019). The United Nations (n.d.) suggested, "Global citizenship is the umbrella term for social, political, environmental, and economic actions of globally minded individuals and communities on a worldwide scale" (para.1). More simply put, global citizenship was referenced as a "shared sense of identity and human values" (Akkari & Maleq, 2019, p. 176). The United Nations (n.d.) proposed, "Universities have a responsibility to promote global citizenship by teaching their students that they are members of a large global community and can use their skills and education to contribute to that community" (para.2).

In September, 2015, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) adopted seventeen goals for sustainable development to be implemented by 2030 (Moul, 2017). Sustainable development goal number four focused on quality education. At the heart of this goal was global citizenship education (Moul, 2017). Such initiatives advocate for and highlight the importance of developing global citizenship in college classrooms. The Association of International Educators, once known as the National Association of Foreign Student Advisers (NAFSA) suggested that all universities and colleges desire to prepare global citizens and provide evidence of this through mission and vision statements alike (Connell, 2016). The interest in offering courses founded in global studies has increased as has the enthusiasm to learn about other cultures. The Association of American Colleges and Universities conducted a study in 2015 and discovered that nine out of ten higher education institutions identified learning about other cultures as a top priority (Connell, 2016). Information such as this supports the relevance and timeliness of using online learning platforms grounded in adult learning theories to enhance global citizenship efforts.

## **Online Education**

In 2020, the Novel Coronavirus-2019 forced many K-12 and postsecondary schools across the United States of America and around the globe to transition from in-person learning to distance learning. Milman (2020) suggested feelings of uncertainty as many traditional learning environments shifted online. House-Peters et al. (2017) referred to distance learning as education that transpires when the teacher and the learner are not physically in the same location. Distance learning has included correspondence learning whereby the learner reviewed videos, audio recordings or modules and returned completed work via mail correspondence (House-Peters et al., 2017). Distance learning has evolved to what is now known as online learning (Palvia et al., 2018).

The terms “online learning” and “online education” are often used interchangeably. According to Zalat, Hamed, and Bolbol (2021), “online e-learning is described as learning experiences using various electronic devices (e.g. computers, laptops, smartphones, etc.) with internet availability in synchronous or asynchronous environmental conditions” (p. 1). Broderick (2020) defined online education as, “Teaching and learning occurring primarily or entirely in an online (internet-based) environment” (p. 6). The authors of this paper are higher education online professors; therefore, will default to using the term, online education, throughout the paper.

Online education has helped bridge the gap between geography and education for some students as the physical distance obstacle has been removed (House-Peters, Del Casino, & Brooks, 2017). The authors continued to recognize the expanding diversity of the higher education student pool in online education classrooms, including mobility challenged individuals, employed individuals and lower socioeconomically able persons. Therefore, online education has the ability to connect learners on a global level unlike traditional educational platforms (House-Peters, Del Casino, & Brooks, 2017).

## **Online Adult Learners**

Prior to an examination of the specific population of online adult learners, adult learners, regardless of modality, will be discussed. Historical and contextual background provides fodder for considering the proliferation of educational research on every subgroup and variable affecting the field. The term, andragogy, is widely used to narrow the conversation to that which affects adult learners, and attempts at defining and labeling this population have been carried on for decades.

### **Andragogy and Influences on Adult Learners**

The term, andragogy, is defined as the art and science of teaching adults, and is a concept set apart from pedagogy, which encompasses the skills associated with teaching children (Knowles, Holton, Swanson, & Robinson, 2020). While Knowles did not coin the term, he has popularized it in Western culture and

brought attention to the merits associated with paying attention to that which influences adult learners (Ekoto & Gaikwad, 2015). The idea that adults learn differently than children do dates back to 1833 and the work of Alexander Kapp, a German educator (Ekoto & Gaikwad, 2015; Oyeleke & Adebisi, 2018), and if adults learn differently, then the process of educating adults must be done differently (Knowles, Holton, Swanson, & Robinson, 2020).

Knowles provided six characteristics for educators to consider as influential factors specific to adult learners (Ferreira & MacLean, 2017; Knowles, Holton, Swanson, & Robinson, 2020). The first influence is referred to as a learner's "need-to-know" and is focused on establishing value for the learner (Knowles, Holton, Swanson, & Robinson, 2020). This concept is supported in the literature, and Ferreira and MacLean (2017) wrote that adult learners prefer seeing the connections between what they are learning and the personal and professional benefits of it. Next, Knowles, Holton, Swanson, and Robinson, (2020) listed a learner's "self-concept" as a key influence and likened this to an existing level of self-awareness not typically formed in children. Third, the authors mentioned a level of consideration for "prior experiences" as paramount when working with adult learners. Similarly, Zhou et al. (2021) referred to the adult learner's unique ability to scaffold on past experiences and highlighted the importance of this constant building upon previous learning as essential to the learning process. Another key influence on adult learners was referred to by Knowles, Holton, Swanson, and Robinson (2020) as "motivation to learn" and was linked most directly to intrinsic forms of motivation. With this, a sense of personal enjoyment in the learning process is important to adult learners (Ferreira & MacLean, 2017). "Readiness to learn" is another key influence, and Knowles, Holton, Swanson, and Robinson (2020) aligned this with an adult learner's need for immediate and practical implications. The developmental stage of the learner cannot be removed from the equation; rather, it should be considered part of the picture and the landscape of learning (Ferreira & MacLean, 2017). Finally, a learner's "orientation to learning" will influence the experience; thus, active rather than passive involvement is optimal (Knowles, Holton, Swanson, & Robinson, 2020). Cochran and Brown (2016) highlighted a need to provide flexible methods for allowing adult learners to display their understanding of the content placing them at the center of their own learning. The six influences described by Knowles, Holton, Swanson, and Robinson (2020) are supported in the literature and have been studied, along with other concepts and theories, in an attempt to better understand and serve adult learners.

### **Defining Adult Learners**

One absolute or working definition of what it means to be an adult learner is difficult to find in the existing body of literature, but a brief historical overview of education in America will provide context prior to discussing attributes of this important population. American grammar schools date back to 1635, and in 1770, the common school was introduced as part of an initiative to reinforce democracy (Crooks, 2020). The landscape of American education has changed over the last

century. This can be seen in higher education as the number of students has risen tremendously from 3% of adults over the age of 25 having a post-secondary degree in 1910 (Hanson, 2021) to 32.1% in 2019 (Nietzel, 2021). According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) (2021), in 2019, students ages 25 and older enrolled in full-time Public University was 62% of the total higher education population (2021). This number was even larger for private, non-profit universities at 68%. This number continued to climb in examining private, for-profit universities where 91% of the enrollment was comprised of learners over the age of 25. An interest in higher education and adult learning dates as far back as 1926 when the American Association of Adult Education was established (Knowles, Holton, Swanson, & Robinson, 2020). Many have contributed to the understanding and improvement of education, to include higher education, and adult learners represent a key population within higher education.

One starting place in an attempt to define or, at minimum, describe adult learners has researchers and institutions focused on the chronological factor of age and the widely accepted delimiter that adult learners are those age 25 and older, which introduces the notion that there is a distinction from those considered traditional undergraduate students, ages 17-24 (Kasworm, 2018). Knowles, Holton, Swanson, and Robinson (2020) listed other ways adult learners have been delineated: (a) by legal age at which certain responsibilities are understood, (b) by social status in terms of adult behaviors such as marriage, or (c) in psychological terms regarding maturity and even self-realization.

In the past seventy years, phenomena specific to the population of adult learners have been studied and one discovery consistent in the literature is a desire of adult learners to be recognized as significant (Hunt, Rasor, & Patterson, 2019; Kern, 2018). Kasworm (2018) posited one possible explanation for this determination, that being the amount of importance placed on understanding and catering to the more traditional undergraduate student population. The author discussed a number of additional factors, one being a one-size-fits-all approach regarding expectations, policies, procedures, services, and access points for undergraduate and adult learners, an approach fraught with potential challenges.

Efforts to compartmentalize adult learners, for the sake of research, are complicated by the span of generations currently affected, each generational subgroup bringing with it the influences and learning traditions rooted in decades of experience (Holyoke & Larson, 2009). Cultural norms and differences also add to the complexity and scope of definition attempts. A common term for this reality is cultural confusion (Kasworm, 2018). Endeavoring to describe adult learners according to traits typically falls short, and Kasworm (2018) lamented that it is no wonder adult learners feel a sense of disconnectedness when they fit some but not all possible labels, such as the following: re-entry, non-residential, non-traditional, evening or weekend, adult degree, e-based, or distance learning.

A contrast to narrowing or clustering adult learners into labeled boxes is the appeal to meet each adult learner where he or she is and recognize each as arriving with a unique set of experiences and goals that cannot be forced into a defined role. This does not negate the need for research, models, and frameworks focused on how best to serve adult learners, but it does require a different, more inward-

focused lens than the traditional one that starts first with a definition and moves outward. Diep et al. (2019) applied this concept when suggesting a number of models or theories be considered to support - more so than define - adult learners. One such theory is Community of Inquiry, a framework that applies three presences: cognitive presence, social presence, and teaching presence (Fiock, 2020). The CoI framework is most often applied when studying the population of online adult learners, a growing subset of students that cannot be ignored in social science and educational research (NCES, 2017).

## **Theory**

To continue with the methodological approach, the problem space - a need to explore the possibilities for fostering global citizenship among adult learners in online higher education environments - will be further explored and solutions will be suggested based on findings from the larger body of literature. Educational research is situated within the larger scope of the social sciences, a field focused on human phenomena. To discuss topics in an empirical and scientific manner, frameworks and theories are used as a conduit for narrowing and measuring constructs that are, in and of themselves, not quantifiable. One such theory often applied in the context of educational research is Community of Inquiry.

### **Community of Inquiry**

One popular framework in online education is the Community of Inquiry (CoI) theoretical framework developed by Garrison, Anderson, and Archer (2000). The CoI framework identifies three key components used in establishing meaningful learning for students - social presence, cognitive presence, and teaching presence - and is one of the most widely used frameworks for online education (Castellanos-Reyes, 2020; Fiock, 2020). The term “Community of Inquiry” has been present in higher education for decades as it has roots in collaborative-constructivist education (Garrison, 2009). Fiock (2020) suggested that the CoI framework considers the needs of adult learners and is beneficial for developing effective online education environments. Castellanos-Reyes (2020) suggested the need for CoI considerations at both the teaching and the planning stages. Yildirim and Seferoglu (2021) conducted a quantitative research study that looked at the effectiveness of online courses through the lens of a CoI framework. The authors determined a correlation between CoI elements and student satisfaction and academic success, thus confirming the importance of teaching and planning efforts that promote a sense of community in the online learning environment.

Social presence as maintained by Lowenthal and Lowenthal (2010) “is a theory that explains the ability of people to present themselves as real people through a communication medium” (p. 1). Garrison et al. (2000) claimed that social presence could be visible via three avenues: 1) emotional expression, 2) open communication, and 3) group cohesion (p. 89). Put another way, social presence or the sharing of one’s authentic self could be accomplished by obtaining a social

identity, engaging in intentional communication, and building nurturing relationships (Kreijns, VanAcker, Vermeulen, & Buuren, 2014).

Cognitive presence is centered around critical thinking and includes an individual's ability to make meaning out of communicated learning (Garrison et al., 2000). There are four stages associated with cognitive presence: 1) a triggering event, 2) exploration, 3) integration and 4) resolution (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000, p. 89). Saadatmand et al., (2017) elaborated on this idea by suggesting that cognitive presence referred to the student's ability to personally interact with the content.

It is important to acknowledge that social presence and cognitive presence do not take place automatically or effortlessly, but rather, with the assistance of the final presence, teacher presence. Castellanos-Reyes (2020) suggested teacher presence was the instructor's organization and running of the class. Teachers were the supervising good shepherds of their classrooms. As an authority, Anderson, Rourke, Garrison, and Archer (2001) defined teacher presence as "the design, facilitation, and direction of cognitive and social processes" (p. 5). The author continued by noting that teacher presence included three key elements: 1) instructional design and organization, 2) facilitating discourse, and 3) direct instruction (Anderson, Rourke, Garrison, & Archer, 2001, p. 4). It would seem that teacher presence is a necessary component for effective social presence and cognitive presence to occur. Tan (2021) conducted a quantitative study on CoI factors and the impact of helping students recover during and after the shift to more online and less in-person education as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The study findings confirmed that teacher presence had the most significant impact regarding recovery which highlighted the importance of teacher presence in the online learning environment.

In the following sections of this paper, the authors will provide a closer analysis of teacher presence in the online adult learner classroom as it relates to fostering global citizenship. As claimed by Akkari and Maleq (2019), "Social networks are borderless and globalization has gone digital" (p. 179). Online educators have more opportunities than ever before to cultivate adult learners as citizens of a broader global world. Akkari and Maleq (2019) affirmed, "Individuals do not have an innate understanding of our shared humanity but learn this over time through socialization, education, and schooling. Global citizenship is therefore fostered through education" (p. 179). To this end, online instructors have a responsibility to enhance their teacher presence in the online classroom.

### **Teacher Presence: Implications Based on Experience in the Field**

Teacher presence is not taught in an isolated fashion, but rather through overlapping and interwoven elements. For the purpose of synthesis, teacher presence will be examined through the following lenses: 1) course design, 2) instructional delivery and 3) assessment. The following sections will provide examples of ways teacher presence has impacted one university's approach

regarding design and implementation in the online learning environment. These will be discussed through the shared experience of two program directors.

### **Course Design**

Course designers can only affect teacher presence to a certain degree by creating opportunities, so a challenge is the reliance on adjunct, contingent, or non-designer instructors (NDIs) to carry much of the responsibility (Silva, Shuttlesworth, & Ice, 2021). As curriculum writers and designers for online graduate-level courses, this issue has been addressed proactively based on an understanding of teacher presence. A meet-the-instructor area exists in the online classroom where instructors are required to post a picture, a welcome video, and a short biography with personal and professional background information. Weekly materials have been provided with pre-determined due dates, but an open invitation is given for instructors to post additional and supplemental materials based on their areas of expertise. Placeholders are provided for instructors to post a weekly announcement, written in the form of a friendly message highlighting important information for the new week. A general trend toward incorporating global citizenship elements in teacher training programs should encourage universities to incorporate required readings and subsequent discussions focused on global themes (Yemini, Tibbitts, & Goren, 2019).

### **Instructional Delivery**

Digital and technological resources can enhance the learning experience for online students when teacher presence is used to create an environment of collaboration (Vaughan & Wah, 2020). Discussion Board threads are utilized each week where students are required to provide scholarly support for an initial response and then a minimum number of ongoing participation replies. Instructors are encouraged to participate in the dialogue, summarize student ideas, provide supplemental information, or introduce tangent topics. One practice that sets the program apart is the requirement for instructors to produce an informative instructor video to be posted at the start of each week. The goal for the videos is a balance between personal expertise as practitioners in the field and a preview of content and expectations for the week. Within each course, one assignment is intentionally designed to require a collaborative group effort. Group discussion boards and virtual breakout rooms are provided as platforms for student groups while instructors have access for overseeing purposes. Vaughan and Wah (2020) suggested that individual and group assignments contain a metacognitive element enhanced through teacher presence as students are encouraged to reflect on what did or did not foster growth both in terms of content and communication efforts. Reflective blogs, focused on required standards, are woven into the weekly tasks, providing students the opportunity to analyze their understanding of course content and the impact on their future practice. An element to further foster global citizenship, student accountability partners can be assigned, thereby turning an



online learning environment into an opportunity to support and collaborate using digital tools (Vaughan & Wah, 2020).

### **Assessment**

One of the roles associated with teacher presence is the effective monitoring of classroom assessments, and this holds true in the online learning environment (Gallavan, 2020). Rapanta et al. (2020) noted inherent challenges for instructors when moving from a traditional to an online classroom, considering the focus on individualized learning. To address this as program directors, assignments are thoughtfully designed to include detailed instructions and accompanying rubrics to ensure expectations are clearly communicated. Teacher presence comes into play through assignment previews, virtual office hours, and individualized as well as group instructor feedback. Individualized assessment is very time-consuming for the online instructor due to the asynchronous nature of the learning environment. Therefore, templates, pacing guides, APA videos, writing resources, and rubrics are provided with the understanding that students must self-regulate and monitor their progress (Rapanta et al., 2020). Instructors must be proactive to address common errors based on prior trends. As course custodians, Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) create videos for instructors to watch prior to teaching and include proactive suggestions along with tips and tricks for successfully teaching the course. Program directors, SMEs, and instructors work in conjunction during the term to ensure expectations are met and academic rigor is maintained. Teacher presence is bolstered through assessment feedback measures. Global citizenship should be an intentional consideration when creating online assessment instruments (Borders, 2018). Within programs, candidates are encouraged to examine critical and complex issues through a variety of perspectives outside their personal or authentic work environment.

### **Best Practices:**

#### **Online Education and Global Citizenship among Adult Learners**

A need to explore the possibilities for fostering global citizenship among adult learners in online higher education environments has been supported by the literature and this will inform best practices for practitioners. In order to best serve adult students, it is important that higher education instructors consider adult learning theories when designing and delivering online education opportunities. One effective way to do this is by incorporating Knowles, Holton, Swanson, and Robinson's (2020) adult learner assumptions coupled with those concepts from the Communities of Inquiry framework in the online environment (Fiock, 2020; Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000). In Table 1 are examples showing how this process could be achieved considering the teacher presence variable.

Table 1. Application Examples

| Knowles' Assumptions of Adult Learners | Community of Inquiry Framework: Teacher Presence | Practical Application Examples  |
|--|--|---|
| Need to Know                           | Teacher Presence                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Intentionally introduce students to the importance of the concept (syllabus/announcements/emails).</li> <li>● Include clear directions and expectations for all assignments (rubrics/samples/instructor previews).</li> <li>● Share course learning outcomes at the beginning of the course.</li> <li>● Model error-free writing and professional communication.</li> <li>● Support global learning skills through an up-front and complete look at the course objectives, outcomes, and expectations to allow for individualized learning (Knowles, Holton, Swanson, &amp; Robinson, 2020).</li> </ul>  |
| Self-Concept                           | Teacher Presence                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Create collaborative, respectful learning environments where all opinions are welcome (ice breaker activities/scavenger hunts/netiquette rules/classroom norms).</li> <li>● Provide opportunities for student choice in learning activities and assignments (topic options/differentiation in content, process, or product/grade- or state-specific standards) (Tomlinson, 2017).</li> <li>● Preview program or course policies to avoid frustration due to surprises.</li> <li>● Encourage students to use self- and group-reflective practices necessary in today's global and virtual learning environments (self-efficacy activities/empathy-focused prompts) (Vaughan &amp; Wah, 2020).</li> </ul>  |
| Prior Experience                       | Teacher Presence                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Encourage collaboration and sharing of ideas and experiences (discussion boards/breakout rooms/group projects).</li> <li>● Assess student experience in relation to the CLOs early on via verbal or written communication (journaling/survey/discussion board).</li> <li>● Allow for immediate implications based on student experience or need.</li> <li>● SMEs intentionally locate resources and materials that focus on global themes (Yemini, Tibbitts, &amp; Goren, 2019).</li> </ul>  |
| Motivation to Learn                    | Teacher Presence                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Be active in the online classroom as students seek affirmation (respond to all students weekly/identify common trends/share additional resources/reply within 24 hours).</li> <li>● Include self-reflective and metacognitive components in assignments (journaling/video reflection/ discussion boards/voice-over components).</li> <li>● Provide clear, timely, and constructive feedback (instructor videos/phone calls/gradebook accuracy/discussion boards/announcements/emails).</li> <li>● Strike a balance between professional and friendly tone.</li> <li>● Prepare students to function effectively in the global arena (timely and relevant materials/virtual and technological communication skills) (Aktas, Pitts, Richards, &amp; Silova, 2017).</li> </ul> |

|                         |                  |  |
|-------------------------|------------------|--|
| Readiness to Learn      | Teacher Presence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Include ongoing authentic assessment and evaluation (positive tone even when setting high expectations).</li> <li>● Seek student input (make this specific and directed to avoid general confusion).</li> <li>● Demonstrate immediate implications for learning and invite students to share examples.</li> <li>● Use up-to-date information and revisit/revise curriculum on a yearly basis.</li> <li>● Move global education to a place of foundational importance due to the interconnected nature of higher education in the 21st century (Pais &amp; Costa, 2020; Yemini, Tibbitts, &amp; Goren, 2019).</li> </ul> |
| Orientation to Learning | Teacher Presence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Incorporate real problems to be addressed (Capstone/Thesis/ Culminating projects should be useful).</li> <li>● Design courses to be current and relevant.</li> <li>● Require students practice finding relevant literature and resources.</li> <li>● Explain how students get out what they put in.</li> <li>● Emphasize the need for virtual and technological skills based on global communication trends (International Telecommunication Union News, 2018).</li> </ul>  |

### Considerations

Knowles, Holton, Swanson, and Robinson (2020) suggested online education allows for more detailed student progress monitoring and assessment, provides enhanced simulation opportunities, affords greater instructional flexibility, and produces overall increased student retention rates. There is support for applying the CoI model when creating and maintaining online adult education programs (Castellanos-Reyes, 2020; Fiock, 2020). While all aspects of the CoI model have merit, the element of teacher presence should be considered during the planning, facilitating, and assessing stages and is especially important considering the rapid shift to online learning (Tan, 2021). Instructors must utilize technology in ways that encourage collaboration and the exchange of ideas even when the learning environment is virtual (Vaughan & Wah, 2020). However, online education, while commonplace in North America, may be less prevalent in non-English speaking countries (Gao, 2020). Online instructors must consider the barriers associated with early access stages of online education as they work with a more globally-based student body.

One common complaint or accusation regarding online education centers on the potential for isolation, and it can be a challenge to establish personal points of contact. The CoI model has been widely studied due to a concern for establishing communities of learning, even in the online learning environment (Garrison, 2009; Yildirim & Seferoglu, 2021). Much of the onus is rightly placed on the instructor to establish teacher presence, but opportunities should also be considered by course designers, SMEs, and program directors. One challenge regarding teacher presence is the expectation and pressure for the instructor to be available to students, 24/7. It is important that instructors set reasonable boundaries, clearly communicate their virtual office hours, provide and stick to return rates for emails

and assignments, and encourage students to trouble-shoot prior to reaching out with a question. Another challenge communicated often by online instructors is that the amount of feedback on student work feels open-ended. A solution is to train students to assume responsibility and self-monitor their own progress (Rapanta et al., 2020). Silva, Shuttlesworth, and Ice (2021) wrote about the possible disconnect between teacher presence opportunities, as intended by a course designer, and the ability of the instructor to successfully fulfill these expectations. Support systems among directors, SMEs, course designers, and instructors must be in place with the ultimate goal of injecting every course with the benefits of teacher presence. Most online adult programs rely heavily on non-design instructors (NDIs) and there are inherent challenges (Vaughan & Wah, 2020). When addressed proactively, not only can teacher presence be infused in online adult programs, it can also be used to foster best practices in support of global citizenship.

### Conclusions

In this article, ways to foster global citizenship among adult learners in online higher education environments were explored. The authors used a methodological approach as a way to glean best-practice suggestions based on support from the literature and authentic experience. Since its onset, COVID-19 has placed online education at the center of educationally focused discussions as curriculum developers and educators imagine how to improve the online education experience for all learners (Gao, 2020). Given the advancements of technological platforms, higher education institutions must embrace the benefits of fostering communities on a larger and more global scale. The National Education Association (NEA) recognized the reality that individuals are more interdependent and connected virtually than ever before and, as a result, global citizenship should be an intentional consideration for the educational community (Borders, 2018). As a tool, online education can assist in strengthening global citizenship efforts. While linguistic, cultural, religious and other differences exist among and within countries, there are shared pedagogical and andragogic similarities that can be embraced in teaching and learning in the online classroom (Gao, 2020). Willett (2021) suggested that faculty members should build community in their classrooms as a way to support the most disconnected students; directors and course designers have a responsibility to set instructors up for success by considering theories and practices grounded in teacher presence. Intentional considerations for injecting teacher presence into course design, instructional delivery, and assessment measures can result in cultivating community in the online learning environment to support global citizenship among adult learners. Knowles, Holton, Swanson, and Robinson's (2020) six assumptions of adult learning pair nicely with the tenets of the Community of Inquiry model and therefore should be at the forefront regarding best practices in the online learning environment. The authors identified how teacher presence and Knowles' six assumptions of adult learners, when combined, can inform best practices for directors, course designers, and instructors.

Online education is a conduit for higher education institutions to develop global citizens by considering theoretical frameworks as well as practical models.

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