STUDENT ENGAGEMENT,
THROUGH THE EYES OF AN ON-LINE LEARNER

PURDUE GLOBAL UNIVERSITY

FACILITATED BY: **SUZANNE GELLENS, MS**
suzanne.gellens@purdueglobal.edu
813-404-1382

LOIS WACHTEL, MS
lois.wachtel@purdueglobal.edu
770-207-5662 or 561-699-5841

FOCUS QUESTION

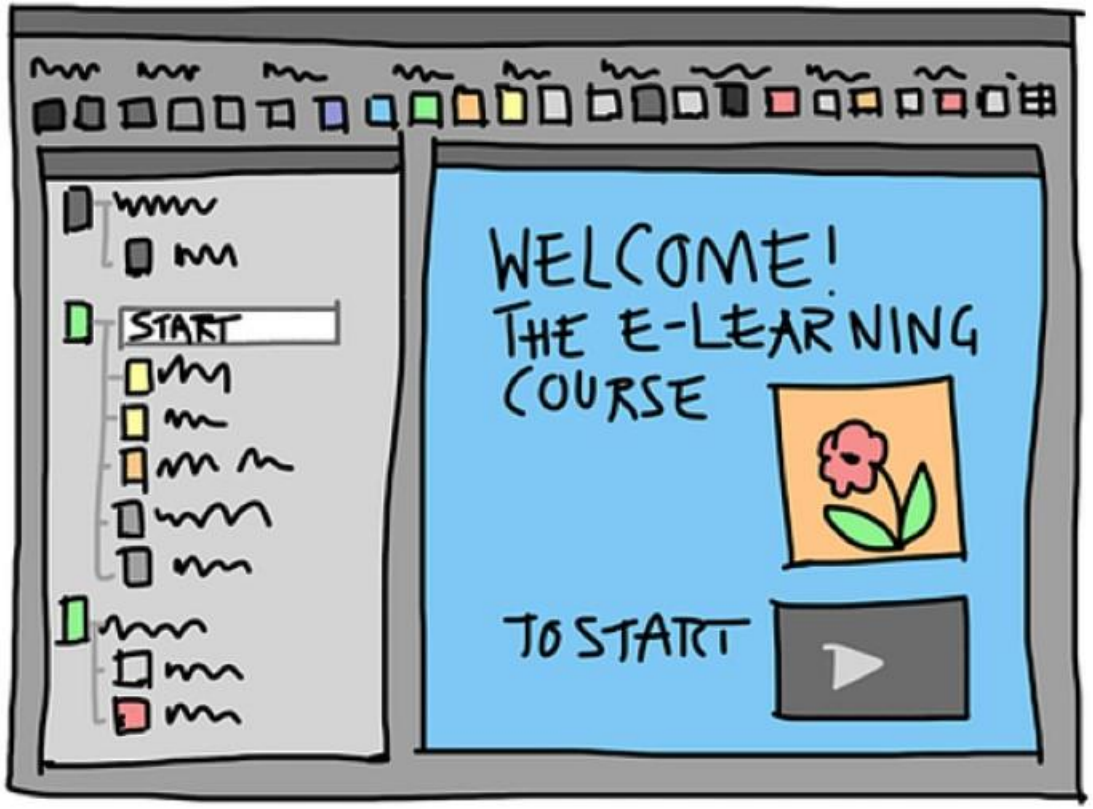
How can we improve student engagement and interaction in the on-line learning environment?

Begins with Relationships

- Your relationship with your students
- The relationship your students have with you
- The relationship your students have with their peers

EXPANDING UPON OUR FOCUS QUESTION

How can we build positive and productive learning connections between ourselves, our students, and the curriculum?



"Interacting with others is a key component of our ability to learn new things. This can happen naturally in a classroom, but it doesn't happen so easily online. Online students are typically isolated, sitting alone behind a computer screen, engaging with class content by themselves."

Flower Darby, *Small Teaching Online*

Hopes & Fears of On-Line Instructors: Your Reflections

- Think back to an on-line course which did not quite work… you might have been the teacher, facilitator, or student… what happened?
- Now think of an outstanding on-line course where you were a student… or an on-line course that you taught when was a total success for students… what happened?

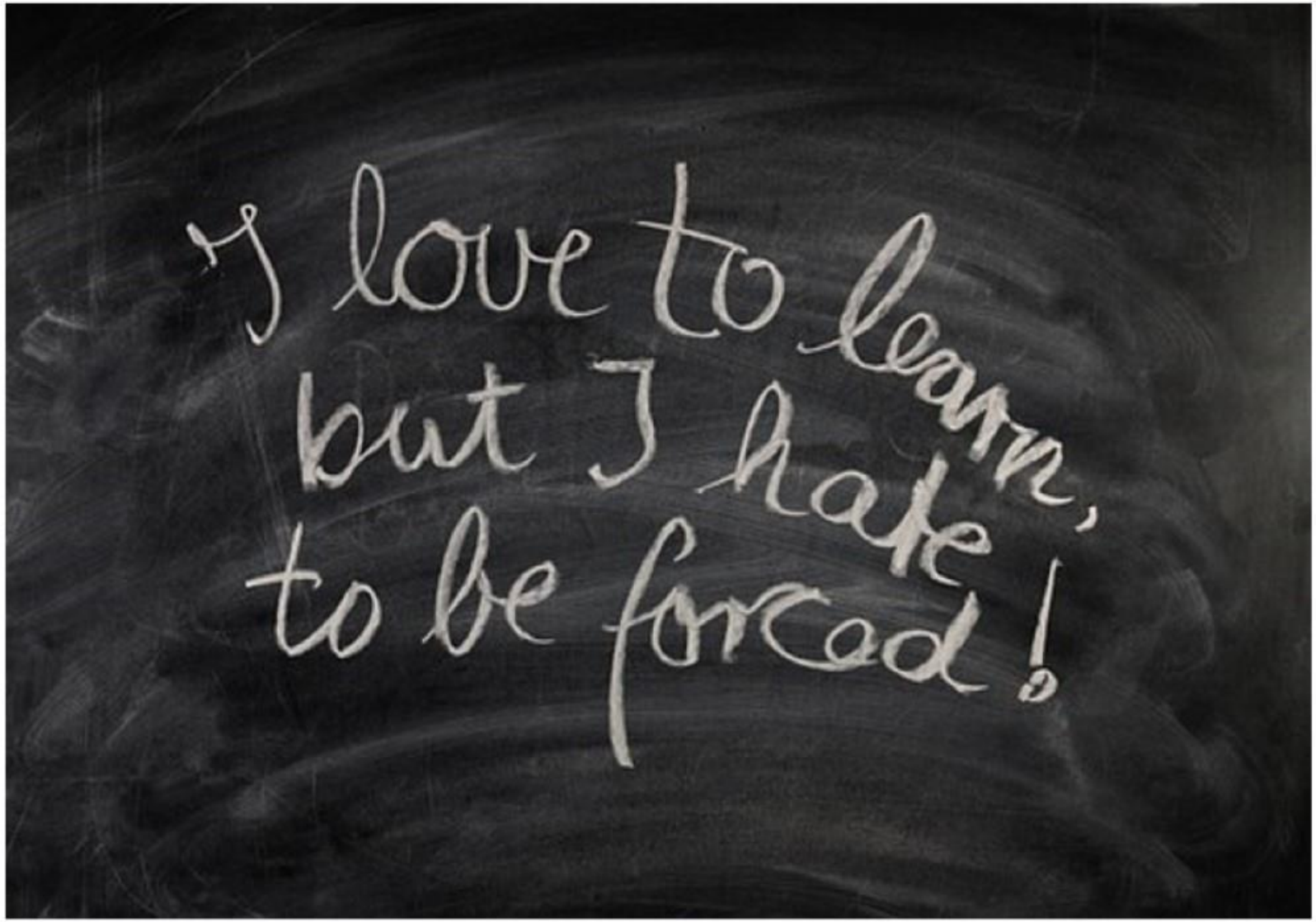
Now let's discuss what you need to assure that you will achieve the 'best' outcomes from your students?

Challenges to effective online feedback

- Visual cues are non-existent
- Anxious and concerned about succeeding on-line
- For many learners, school is new to them
- Fear of the unknown
- Life is a balancing act
- Vulnerable when receiving feedback

Let’s discuss ways some ways that you can build a community feeling (presence) within your on-line classrooms

- Announcements
- Shout-Outs to Students and Class
  - Encourages support, rather than feeling alone or isolated
- Emails
  - To individual students: midway through the course
  - Duplicate important information
- Reflection throughout



Now let's discuss how you get students involved in the discussions… more than just responding to the 2 peers required?

Maintaining Presence and Encouraging Involvement within the Discussion Board

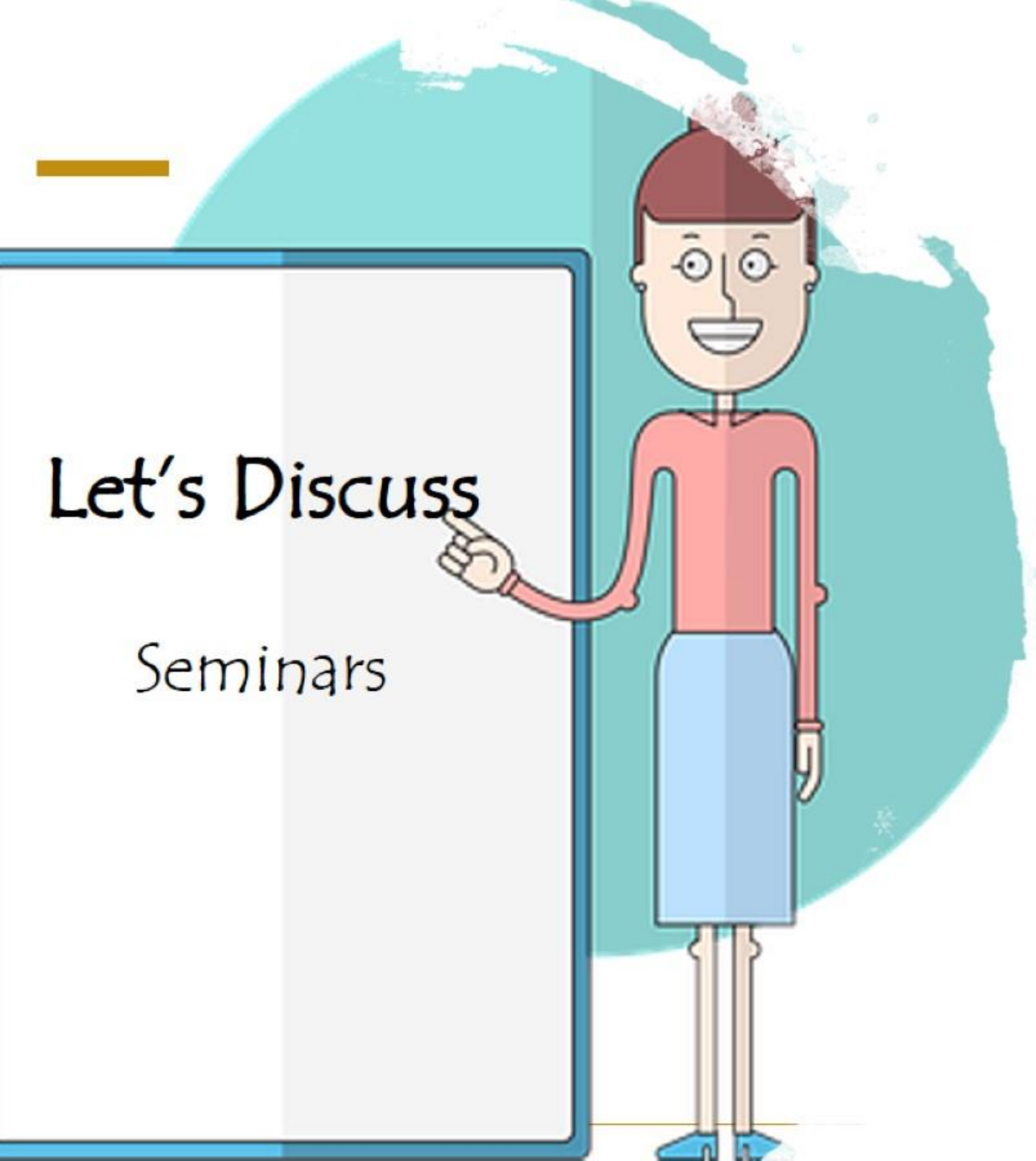
- Set the tone for discussions… safe, respectful, inviting
- Maintaining presence: Guide the discussions… keep the discussion on-track… encourage participation
- Recognize and validate the ideas shared
- Extend the discussion beyond what is expected in the initial discussion board question…

Student's Responses

- "Be nice."
- "Grade fast. I get so scared when I press the submit button."
- "Do we have to use APA; I have so much trouble with APA."
- "Can I email you if I have questions?"
- "Don't mind if I'm a pain. It takes me awhile to understand the written stuff."

Effective On-Line Feedback

- Be Specific, Actionable
  - What is working?
  - What can be improved?
  - Are students reading your feedback?
- Be Positive (encourage improvement) & Avoid Negativity
  - I like the way you… I enjoyed… thank you for sharing about…
  - You've got this
  - I'm excited to read your next paper
- Use students' names
  - Personalizing feedback
- Be Available, if needed, to answer feedback questions
- Offer additional support opportunities
  - Writing center
  - Spell check, Grammarly



- Ice Breakers
  - Quick 'games' (learning)
  - Family Feud, Scategories, What Would You Do?, Majority Rules
- Having students take on the role of teacher
- Power of Group Work
- Current Events
- Opportunities to send in assignment drafts & enhance assignment submitted

Your thoughts on Community Agreements?

Be present throughout

Be an active participant

Agree to disagree respectively

Be responsible for due dates

Check Announcements & Emails regularly

Work hard to submit initial discussion post by Saturday or Sunday

Extend the discussion to encourage further learning

Ask questions

Building On-Line Community through Cognitive Presence, Social Presence, and Teaching Presence

COGNITIVE PRESENCE: interested in topic, motivated to explore more, ask questions, open to new ideas, demonstrate knowledge

SOCIAL PRESENCE: willingness to share emotions & feelings… ideas are important… safe to disagree… respect… 'real people'

TEACHING PRESENCE: icebreakers, discussions, announcements, emails, seminars

"Even for experienced online learners and instructors, it's easy to forget that a name on the screen represents a human being who can benefit from your presence and benefit your learning with their presence."

"It's not enough for students to work with you. They must work with each other, too, to learn and succeed in our online classes."
Flower Darby, *Small Teaching Online*

Final Thoughts

Thank you so much for joining us and allowing us to share our passion for on-line learning.

We hope you leave the workshop energized to move beyond what is expected… to be creative… and to expand your presence, and the presence of your students with each other, via the on-line environment.

It would be fun to continue discussing ideas further, and we encourage you to reach out to us at

Lois Wachtel

lois.wachtel@purdueglobal.edu

Suzanne Gellens

suzanne.gellens@purdueglobal.edu

Have a great rest of the conference!

References

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