

The Ripple Effect of Engagement



The Ripple Effect of Engagement

How Student-Centered Design
Fosters Connection for Both
Learners and Faculty

**Soohyoun
Ahn, Ph.D.**



University of Florida
College of Agricultural and Life Sciences
Food Science and Human Nutrition

**Jason Frank,
Ed.D.**



Instructional Design Coordinator
Santa Fe College, Gainesville, FL

**Bojan
Lazarevic,
Ph.D.**



University of Florida
College of Education

**Meredith
Nappy**

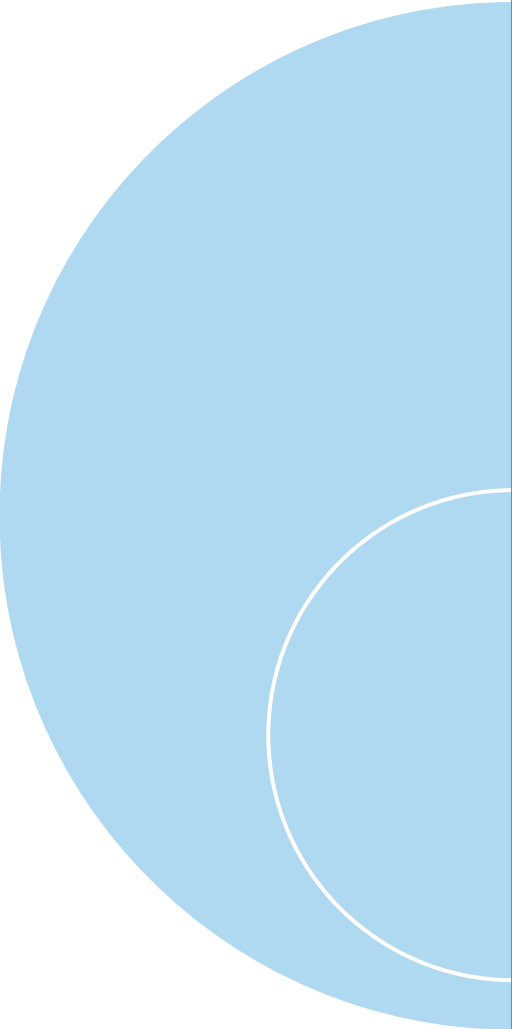


Instructional Designer I
University of Florida
College of Public Health and Health Professions

How do we design online learning that keeps human connection at the center, especially now, as AI disrupts how we teach and how students learn?

2025 EDUCAUSE AI Landscape Study

Reveals a tension in higher education:



Fear that AI will Depersonalize Learning

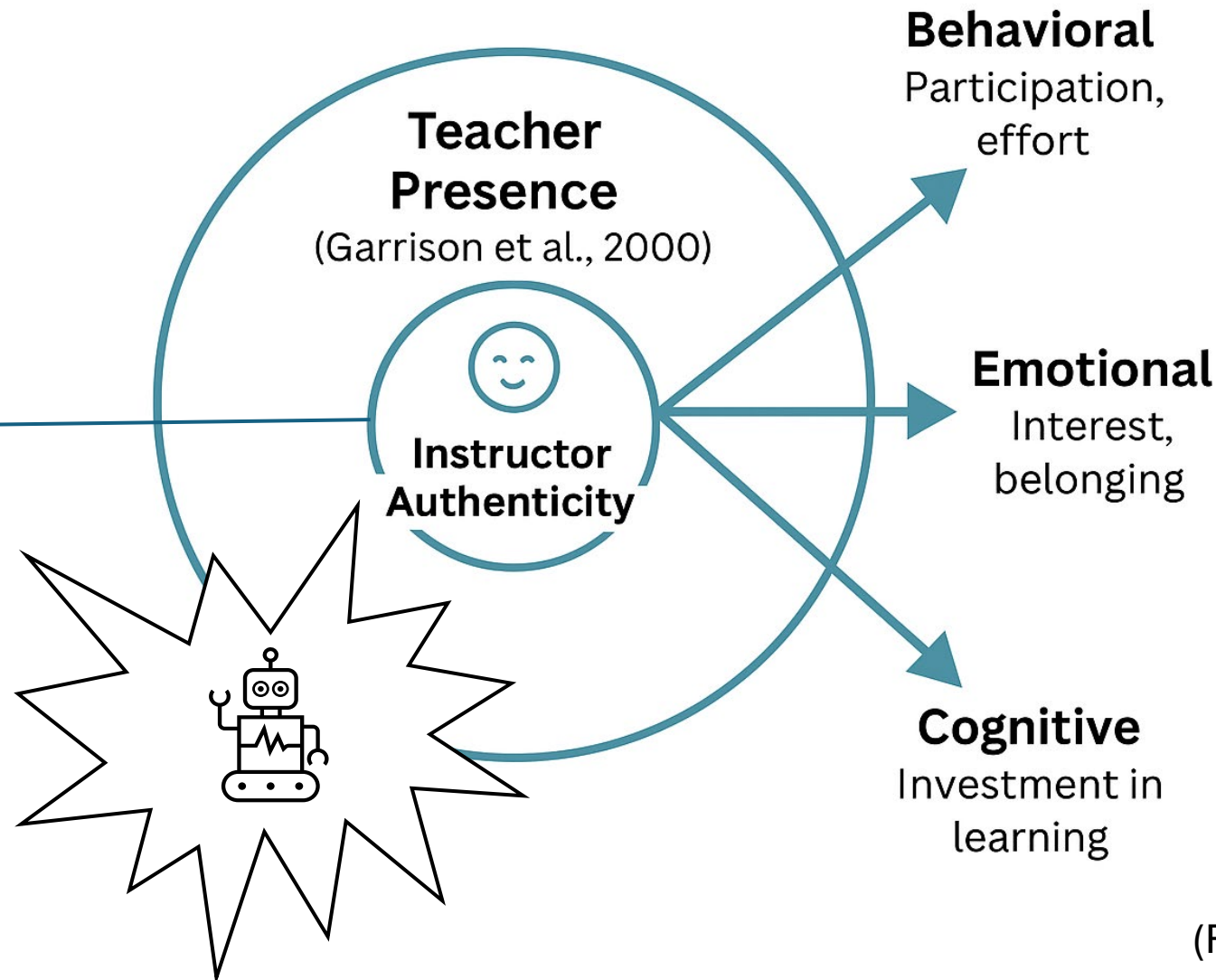
- **73%** are concerned to “a great extent” or “somewhat concerned” less personalized work and learning
- **66%** are concerned to “a great extent” or “somewhat concerned” marginalizing individuality
- **59%** are concerned to “a great extent” or “somewhat concerned” diminishing personal relationships in learning environments

Optimism for Enhanced Personalization

- AI may support personalized and self-guided learning
- AI may improve accessibility for students, faculty, and staff with disabilities
- Many institutions are attempting to improve students’ learning experiences and outcomes through AI-related strategic planning.

The Ripple Effect of Engagement

Humanizing online learning is the intentional design of online education that centers the shared humanity of all participants by fostering connection, dialogue, care, critical thought, and diverse perspectives (Dias & Boulder, 2023).



(Fredricks et al. 2004)

How do we design online learning that keeps human connection at the center, especially now, as AI disrupts how we teach and how students learn?

Soohyoun Ahn, Ph.D.



University of Florida

College of Agricultural and Life Sciences

Food Science and Human Nutrition

Soohyun Ahn, Ph.D.

Fostering Connection in Online Classes



Challenges in Fostering Connection

Large Enrollment Class

- FOS2001 Man's Food (450-550)
- Student anonymity
- Limited interaction
- Limited personalized feedback

Small Enrollment Class

- FOS4731 Food Regulations (20-40)
- Silence
- Over-dependence of instructor
- Fewer perspectives



Strategies for Engagement

Small Class

- Real-life case examples
- Open-ended discussions
- Personalized feedback

Food adulteration in lecture



Find real food adulteration cases



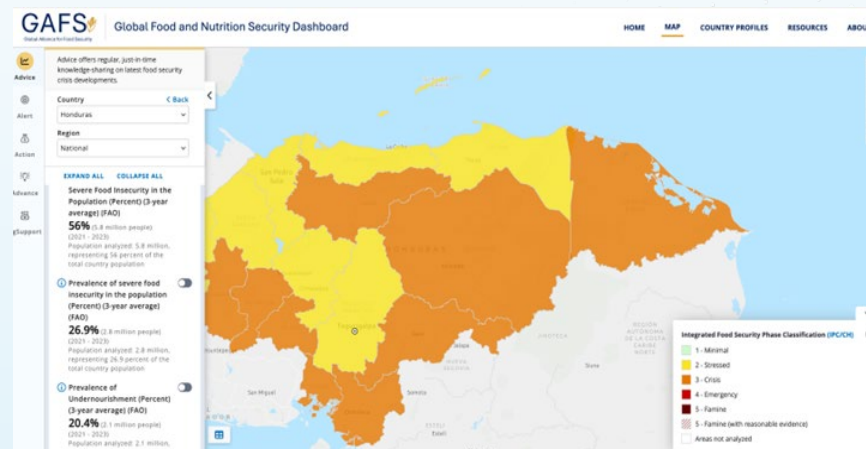
Discuss the cases and connect it with the specific clauses in the act



Strategies for Engagement

Large Class


- Virtual field trips
- Experiential assignments
- Collaborative learning with light facilitation



Strategies for Engagement

Large Class

- Virtual field trips
- Experiential assignments
- Collaborative learning with light facilitation



United States Department of Agriculture
Food Safety and Inspection Service

Food Safety Information

Food Safety Tips for College Students

When students pack up for college, they take along the basics - TV, laptop, MP3 player and cell phone. Many students will also arrive at school with a microwave oven, tabletop grill, mini-fridge and toaster-oven in tow. Most students, however, don't know there are food safety considerations when cooking with these appliances.

Students face many rigors while studying for a college education and they often eat whenever and wherever convenient. But when it comes to safely preparing meals, many college kids simply don't know what it takes to make the grade in food safety, and far too many could end up with a foodborne illness.

The **USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline** receives many calls from parents or students with questions about the handling and storage of food for college kids. Here is a sampling of those questions about how to safely cook and prepare foods while away at school.

Q Several slices of pizza have been left out overnight. Is the pizza still safe to eat?

A No. Perishable food should never be left out of refrigeration more than two hours. This is true even if there are no meat products on the pizza. Foodborne bacteria that may be present on these foods grow fastest at temperatures between 40 and 140 °F and can double in number every 20 minutes.

Other take-out or delivered foods such as chicken, hamburgers, cut fruit, salads, and party platters, must also be kept at a safe temperature. The rule is to "Keep HOT Food HOT and COLD Food COLD! To keep hot foods safe, keep them at 140 °F or above. Cold food must be kept at 40 °F or below (in the refrigerator or freezer). Bacteria grow rapidly

A When using frozen meats, thaw them in the refrigerator — NOT on the counter. Don't allow raw meat or poultry juices to drip on other foods. Wash your hands before and after preparing foods. Always use clean paper towels. Wash used cutting boards and utensils in hot, soapy water.

Use a food thermometer to check internal temperatures. Cook hamburger and other ground meats (veal, lamb, and pork) to an internal temperature of 160 °F and ground poultry to 165 °F. Beef, veal and lamb steaks and roasts may be cooked to 145 °F for medium rare. Whole poultry should be cooked to 180 °F as measured in the thigh; breast meat to 170 °F. All cuts of pork should reach 160 °F. Foods from the microwave should be steaming hot. Finally, if you feel food has not been handled safely, throw it out.

Q I don't have a car on campus so I have to take the bus to get my groceries. Will the food be safe by the time I get it to my apartment?

A Whether you use public transportation or have your own car, it's important that perishable purchases are refrigerated within 2 hours (1 hour when the temperature is above 90 °F). First, when buying food, avoid cross-contamination by placing raw meat, poultry, and seafood in plastic bags and

Current conversation

Allowing frozen meats and fish to thaw on the counter was a practice that I saw my parents do and I did as well when I moved away from home, into my own apartment. Although, after reading Module 5, I have realized that the thawing methods that my parents used were unsafe and can easily lead to foodborne illnesses and can even cause cross contamination. Now, I will thaw out my frozen meat and fish in the refrigerator the night before I want to make the food item. +1 ✓

Feb 17 10:37 pm

When it comes to thawing meat or other food products, I've always done so in the refrigerator. This prevents the food product from becoming contaminated. If it were being thawed at room temperature, it would increase the chances of becoming unsafe to consume. In the case of using cold water or a microwave, I would only do this if I were to start cooking/preparing it immediately. +1 ✓

Feb 18 1:45 pm

I have always thawed meats (specifically chicken and beef) in the refrigerator instead of on the counter in a room-temperature environment. My mother taught me well when cooking my food (even though I don't cook often), and I understand how leaving raw meats on the counter could cause contamination. I have also thawed meat in the microwave or cold water, but this only occurs when I'm in a rush or have forgotten to thaw meat in the fridge the previous day. +1 ✓

Feb 24 1:59 am

I am so glad I read this food safety tip. I have always thawed my chicken and ground beef on my kitchen counter. Usually when I put it in the refrigerator, it does not fully defrost. From now on, I will thaw my meats in the fridge, even if it takes longer to fully defrost. I did not realize the dangers of thawing frozen meats on the kitchen counter. Allowing raw meat or poultry juices to drip on other foods is extremely dangerous and can lead to food

LG

Strategies for Engagement

Both classes

- Weekly announcements
- Self-reflections
- Instructor presence in lecture recordings
- Frequent, low-stakes assessments

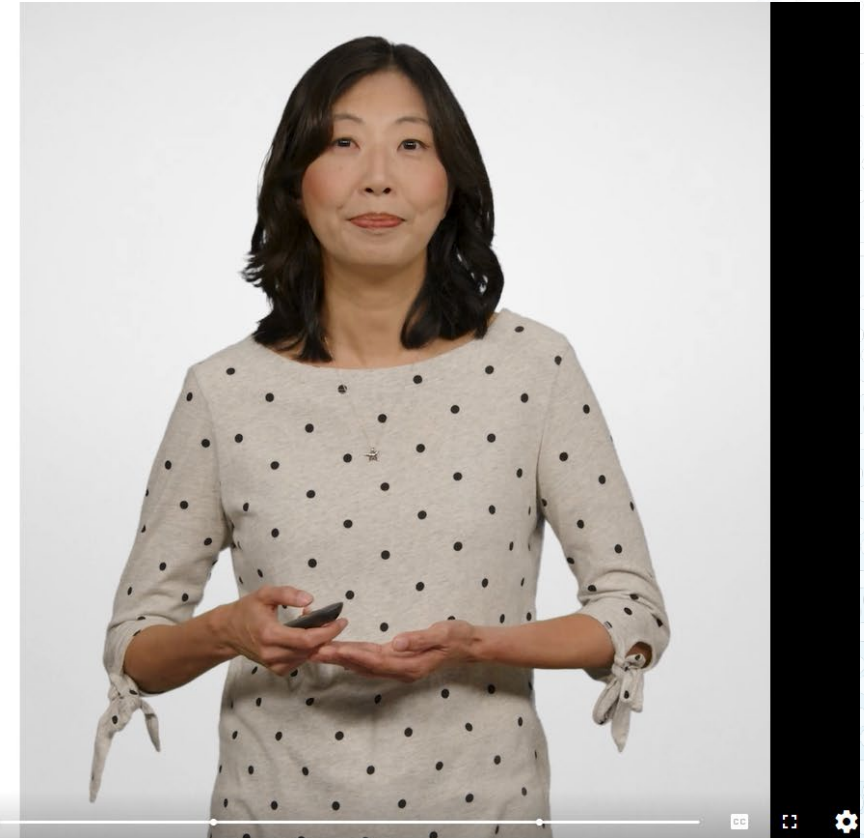


Soohyoun Ahn (She/Her) AUTHOR | TEACHER

Six Basic Nutrient Groups

A pie chart divided into six equal segments, each representing a basic nutrient group. The segments are labeled as follows: Carbohydrates (black), Protein (orange), Lipids (teal), Vitamins (green), Minerals (blue), and Water (dark blue). The chart is centered on a white background.

In-person office hour: T/R 9:00 to 10:00 am, all other times - by appointment



Student Feedback & Future Plans

I really enjoyed the international cuisine assignment. Great way to learn while I'm in an online class!

I felt more connected to my peers in this class than in any other online course!!



- Exploring more AI-powered feedback tools
- Incorporating more interactive tools

Final Takeaway

- Intentional design fosters connection – regardless of class size or format



Jason Frank, Ed.D.



Instructional Design Coordinator
Santa Fe College, Gainesville, FL



“Relationships are central to a successful college experience. They are the necessary precondition, the daily motivator, and the most valuable outcome... Relationships are important because they raise or suppress the motivation to learn; a good college fosters the relationships that lead to motivation.”

Danial Chambliss and Christopher Takacs
(From Relationship-Rich Education)



A.I. TURNS THIS SINGLE
BULLET POINT INTO A
LONG EMAIL I CAN
PRETEND I WROTE.



A.I. MAKES A SINGLE
BULLET POINT OUT OF
THIS LONG EMAIL I CAN
PRETEND I READ.



AI AND EXPERTISE

A.I. is already promising that we won't need institutions or expertise. It does not just speed up the process of writing a peer review of research; it also removes the requirement that one has read or understood the research it is reviewing. A.I.'s ultimate goal, according to boosters like Cuban, is to upskill workers — make them more productive — while delegitimizing degrees. Another way to put that is that A.I. wants workers who make decisions based on expertise without an institution that creates and certifies that expertise. Expertise without experts.

Tressie Cotton McMillan

OpenAI is building a social network



Sam Altman. Image: Cath Virginia / The Verge; Getty Images

/ Is Sam Altman ready to up his rivalry with Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg?

“The Grok integration with X has made everyone jealous...Especially how people create viral tweets by getting it to say something stupid.”

-Anonymous AI Engineer

by [Kylie Robison](#) and [Alex Heath](#)

Apr 15, 2025, 11:43 AM EDT



70 Comments (70 New)

Bojan Lazarevic, Ph.D.



University of Florida

College of Education

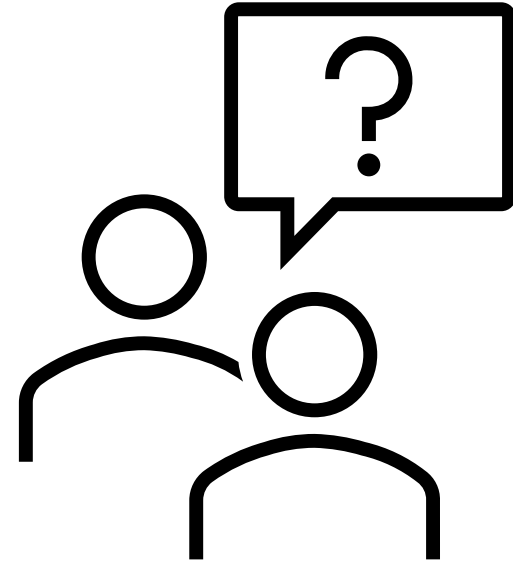
Meredith Nappy



Instructional Designer I
University of Florida
College of Public Health and Health Professions

How do we design online learning that keeps human connection at the center, especially now, as AI disrupts how we teach and how students learn?

Questions & Discussion





Contact Information

Soohyoun Ahn - sahn82@ufl.edu

Jason Frank - jason.frank@sfcollge.edu

Bojan Lazarevic - blazarevic@coe.ufl.edu

Meredith Nappy - m.nappy@phhp.ufl.edu

Kathryn Rush - krush@ufl.edu

References

- Dias, B., & Boulder, T. (2023). Toward humanizing online learning spaces. *The Journal of Applied Instructional Design*. <https://doi.org/10.59668/806.12879>
- Fredricks, J. A., Blumenfeld, P. C., & Paris, A. H. (2004). School engagement: Potential of the concept, state of the evidence. *Review of Educational Research*, 74(1), 59–109. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543074001059>
- Garrison, D. R., Anderson, T., & Archer, W. (1999). Critical inquiry in a text-based environment: Computer conferencing in higher education. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 2(2), 87–105. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1096-7516\(00\)00016-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1096-7516(00)00016-6)
- Robert, J., & McCormack, M. (2025). *2025 EDUCAUSE AI landscape study: Into the digital AI divide* [Research Report]. EDUCAUSE. <https://library.educause.edu/resources/2025/2/2025-educause-ai-landscape-study>