Heather Lister
ITC 435
Emerging Technologies in Distance Education –Chapter 7

Chapter 7, "Creating a Culture of Community in the Online Classroom Using Artistic Pedagogical Technologies", focuses on artistic pedagogical technologies, also referred to as APT's. APT's are teaching strategies that are found in the arts, including literary, musical, and dramatic elements. The teaching strategies found in APT's place a strong emphasis on creativity.

The chapter explains that online learning needs to be more than a teacher delivering information online. Instead, online learning needs to establish a community where students and teachers are exchanging information, rather than just receiving information. Many studies featured throughout the chapter emphasize the importance of collaboration and interaction, which increases higher-order thinking and retention. The chapter also discusses the idea of establishing a "social presence" in an online course. A social presence is defined as the ability of students and teachers to project their personal characteristics into the online class.

Overall, the chapter mainly focuses on the importance of community within an online course. Two definitions of community were shared: 1) A shared culture in the online community, including shared values, norms, and beliefs and 2) a classroom in which knowledge is mutually constructed. APT's are viewed as methods to increase this sense of community because of the interaction it promotes among students and the teacher. The chapter explains that interaction through the arts promotes both intrapersonal and interpersonal reflection.

This chapter explained that there is very little published research on teaching strategies that promote the sense of community in an online environment; however, the chapter suggested three methods: Photovoice, Virtual Reflective Centers, and Conceptual Quilting. These three were selected because they provide three conditions: ability, opportunity, and motivation.

The chapter also stated that, in regards to online discussion posts, the teacher should focus on quality rather than quantity and it is the teacher's responsibility to promote and facilitate the strong, quality interaction.

While the chapter was certainly informative, I was hoping I would learn more about some strategies or tools to promote the sense of community.