



Delivering Presence:

Creating Presence in Your Online Course

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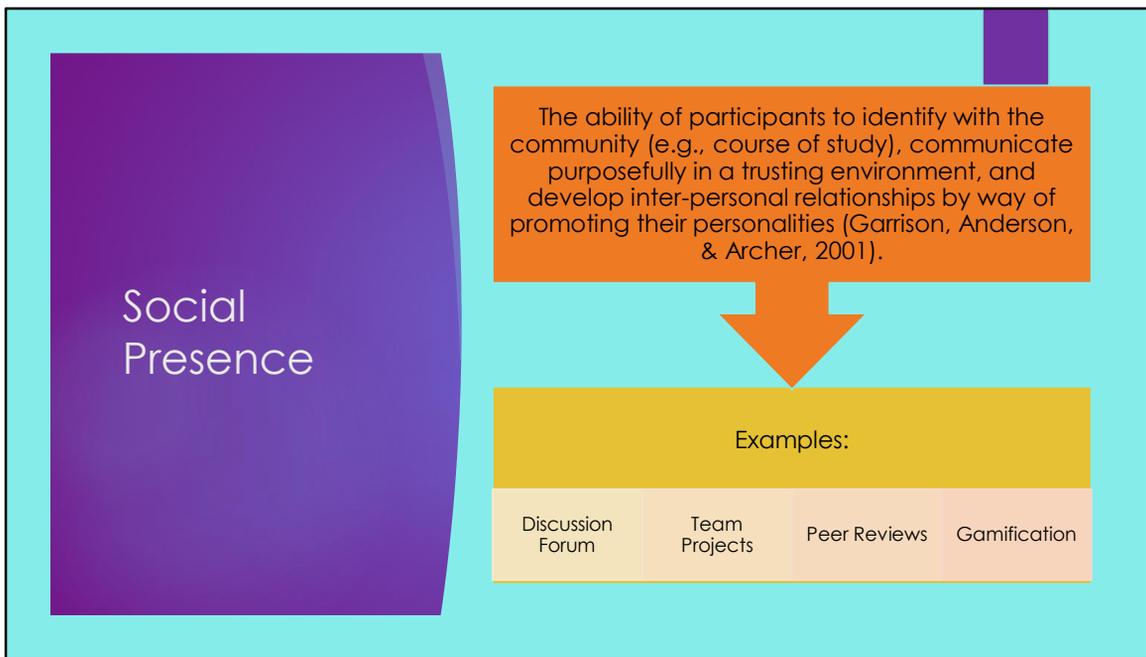
Perspectives on Presence

Social
Presence

Cognitive
Presence

Instructor
Presence

Developing a community of inquiry includes three perspectives on the presence in online courses that fulfill the educational experience for learners (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2001).



SOCIAL PRESENCE

Discussions: One specific strategy that creates a social presence in an online course is a well-structured discussion question. This strategy will start by allowing learners to use their knowledge and comprehension of the subject at the higher levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy cognitive domain, which includes the application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

Team Projects: Activities that include real-world applications provide learners the opportunity to work collaboratively, which often leads to interpersonal relationships.

Peer Reviews: Effective peer reviews help to build social presence and develop inter-personal relationships. Effective peer reviews help to build social presence and develop inter-personal relationships. Example: A peer review strategy that creates social presence. The criteria use a peer review assignment with a grading rubric that is associated with the assignment. Include a detailed list of peer review questions that make clear how the peer reviewer should address the review. An excellent way to offer peer review is to have learners self-select whose paper they wish to review. Learners can request a peer review by posting their draft paper on a discussion board, while other learners respond by selecting a draft paper to review. Not only does the feedback help the learner receiving the feedback, but the learner reviewing can also reflect on his/her work from a different perspective. This learner-to-learner

interaction strengthens opportunities to develop social presence, build higher-order thinking, and problem-solving skills. Learners share different views and challenge one another's thinking.

Gamification: Another fun and effective method to develop a social presence in an online course is gamification. Teams of learners can create a virtual game as a teach-back on a portion of the chapter reading, an exciting and fun activity. Engagement and active learning can be deep learning, which communicates a trusting environment that develops inter-personal relationships.

Cognitive Presence

- The extent to which learners can construct and confirm meaning through sustained reflection and discourse.
- Asking Probing Questions to Induce Critical Thinking (Elder & Paul, 2010)
- Example ... next slide

COGNITIVE PRESENCE

This strategy will create a cognitive presence in courses by utilizing Elder and Paul's (2010) set of intellectual standards in combination with the *elements of thought*. To improve learners' critical thinking skills that question the value of the information and ideas, and determine acceptability, ask probing questions to move learners from surface-level thinking to deep, critical thinking. This approach can be useful in both discussion boards and written assignments.

Type of Question	
Clarity Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would you elaborate further? • Would you illustrate what you meant? • Would you provide us with an example?
Accuracy Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How could we check on that? • How could we find out if that is true? • How could we verify or test that?
Precision Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would you be more specific? • Would you provide us with more details? • Would you be more exact?
Relevance Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does that relate to the problem? • How does that bear on the question? • How does that help us with the issue?
Depth Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What factors make this a difficult problem? • What are some of the complexities of this question? • What are some of the difficulties we need to deal with?
Breadth Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we need to look at this from another perspective? • Do we need to consider another point of view? • Do we need to look at this in other ways?
Logic Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does all of this make sense together? • Does the first paragraph fit in with the last paragraph? • Does that statement follow from the evidence?
Significance Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this the most important problem to consider? • Is this the central idea to focus on? • Which of these facts are most important?
Fairness Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do others have a stake in this issue? • Is this sympathetically representing the viewpoint of others?

Base questions on helping learners think critically. The Elder and Paul (2010) questions with slight modifications.

Cognitive Presence cont.



Self-reflective questioning (Stavredes, 2011).



A practical self-reflection questioning approach allows learners, a) to consider course goals and learning objectives, b) determine their current level of achievement, and c) identify areas to focus their attention.



Example: This approach can be put into practice in the discussion board and can help learners self-direct and set personal goals for learning. Learners reflect on activities, see growth, and set goals for areas of improvement.

Reflection allows learners to consider where they have been, where they are, and where they should go. Self-reflective learners are in control of their learning, which leads to a plan for continuous improvement. Learners see both areas of growth and areas that require additional attention.

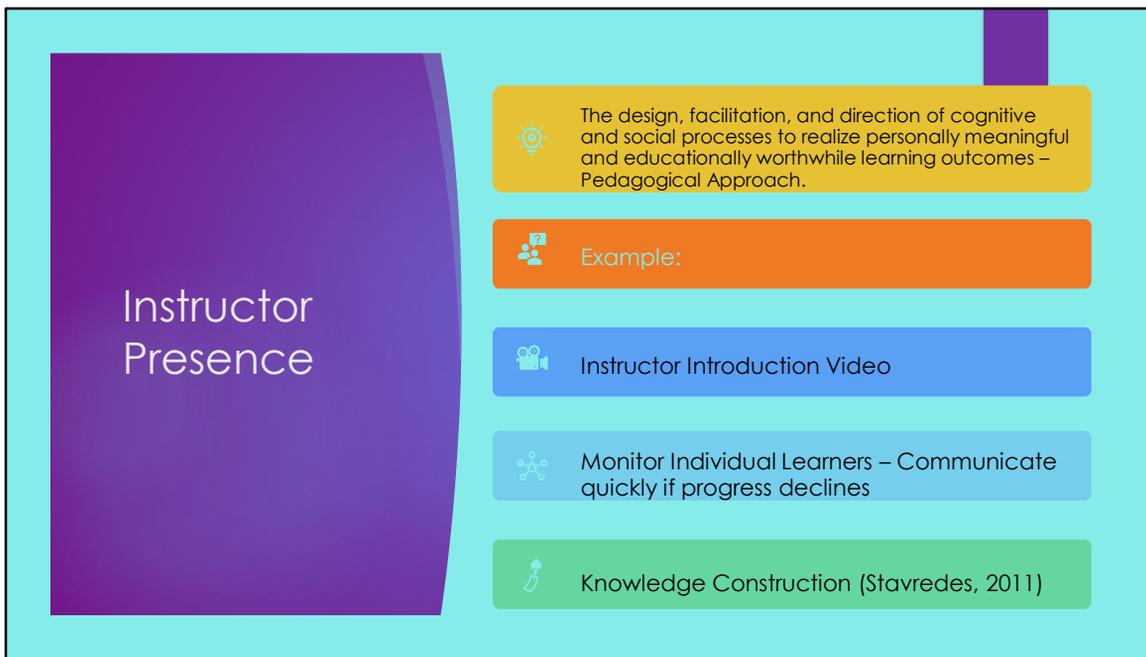
Cognitive Presence cont.

Active Learning with Videos (Moore, 2013)

Example:

- Assign a video about a real-world issue on a topic studying.
- Have students locate a second video that (supports, defends, opposes, elaborates, etc.) the original video. Note: If students need scaffolding to complete this exercise, provide guidelines for searching the Web and vetting sources.
- Use students "found" videos as the basis for online peer discussions. Ask students to comment, via the discussion board, on how well the clips shared by their classmates met the selected criterion.

This active learning strategy is placing the responsibility of learning on the learner. Having learners select videos to supports defends, opposes, or evaluates learners' position is an effective method to strengthen online research skills while driving conceptual understanding. This active learning strategy includes real-world issues, which adds another layer of the higher-order thinking process to this activity.



INSTRUCTOR PRESENCE

It is essential to maintain motivation throughout the course. A strategy to encourage participation in the online courses includes starting strong with enthusiasm with a positive perspective, which goes a long way.

Video Post: Post an instructor introduction video in the Introductions discussion forum that includes both professional and personal information. Instruct learners to do the same. Then, reply to each learner individually by video post. Comment on something the learner mentioned, which is a beautiful way to make each learner feel special and welcomed in the course and helps to establish a personal relationship between the instructor and the learner. Creating a personal relationship is quite effective in building rapport between instructors and learners. Learners understand that a real person, who acknowledges them, is present in the course. Instructor-to-learner interaction is a critical component of learner satisfaction.

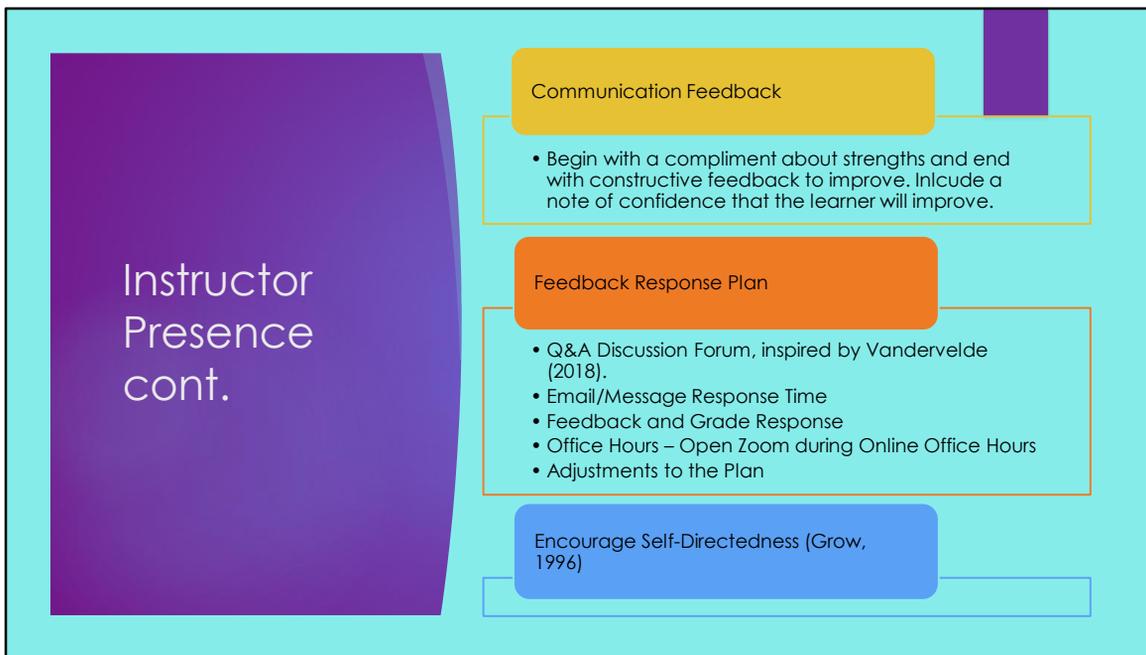
Monitor Learners: Monitor the progress of individual learner activity, keep track of each learner's development and progress in the course, and gauge learner performance weekly is critical to maintaining social presence. This monitoring provides the opportunity to find learners who are behind or struggling in the course. The instructor can swiftly communicate with the learner and give feedback to help overcome issues. This way, learners will understand the problems and how to

improve performance. This strategy conveys a message that the instructor is actively monitoring learner's progress and concerned about learner's success in the course.

Knowledge Construction: A strategy used to encourage knowledge construction and critical thinking in the online courses is to structure discussion posts, so there is more than one answer. Facilitate and share knowledge through the use of prompts, elaboration, clarification, weaving, perspectives, inferences, or assumptions, implications, and summaries. For instance, if a learner's line of reasoning is difficult to follow, a request to restate the response differently may help to flesh out ideas to provide clarity. The engagement with knowledge construction and critical thinking creates active learning. This strategy helps the learner to realize that the instructor is committed to maintaining the interest, motivation, and engagement of learners.

Prompts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have been monitoring the forum and have not seen any posts, so I wanted to give you a little more information to get you started. Consider the following elements as you compose your discussion response this week [list elements]. For example: Consider the following scenario [to put the discussion in context] ... Let me give you a concrete example ... From my experience, an example to help you understand the concept is ...
Elaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You have a great start on the discussion this week. Can you elaborate on your thoughts and ideas and consider the following in your response. List areas where learner has not responded fully to the discussion question?
Clarification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I appreciate your comments about ... Can you clarify your response, so we can clearly thoughts and ideas? Can you provide an illustration or example? Can you state this in a different way? I appreciate your comment; however, I am unclear how this relates to the discussion question. Can you provide more information to help us see the connection to the topic we are discussing this week?
Weaving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I really appreciate the multiple perspectives on the issue we are discussing this week. John, Sue, and Nancy believe ... while Paul, Jerry, and Carrie believe ... How do you reconcile the different views? Is there compelling evidence to support one view over the other? Are there other ways of viewing this issue that have not been considered? For example, in my experience ... One aspect of the readings that has not been discussed is ... What impact does this have?
Off-Topic Weaving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I really appreciate the points that have been on the issue including ... it appears that some of the points do not relate specifically to this topic such as ..., so please be sure that you consider ... as you discuss the topic to ensure that all of your comments help us develop a deeper understanding of the topic or issue.
Perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the following alternative scenario ... How would this influence your view of the issue? According to ... there is another side to this issue. They cite ... as evidence for their perspective. How does this information fit with your perspective on the issue? Is there another way of looking at this perspective from a different lens? What if you were faced with ...? What would you do if ... occurred? How would you feel if ...? From my experience, I have found ...
Inferences and Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can you discuss the specific inferences and assumptions you are making from this perspective? For this to be true, then ... would also have to be true. Have you considered this? For this to be true, then you must also believe that ... What evidence do you have to support the inferences and assumptions you are making? What inferences and assumptions does the author make to lead to his/her conclusions?
Implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can you discuss the implications of your line of reasoning on this issue? If this is true, how will this influence the present conditions? What will that mean for the future? If this is true, what actions must be taken today? In the future? What groups will this line of reasoning affect?

Knowledge Construction Chart – Adapted from Stavredes (2011).



Communication Feedback: Providing prompt, clear, and concise feedback about grading assignments based on criteria in the grading rubric is helpful to learners. Beginning with a compliment on the learner’s strength(s) and ending with a note of confidence that the learner will improve their performance and complete the activities. The feedback is helpful because learners are interested in knowing how they are doing in the course. This strategy provides the learner with information that the instructor is concerned about the successful performance of the learner. Learners are interested in knowing how they are doing in the course. Again, this strategy provides the learner with information that the instructor is concerned about the successful performance of the learner.

Feedback Response Plan:

Q&A Forum on the Discussion Board

Communicating feedback on performance in online courses is essential to developing social presence in an online course. Include a Q&A Forum on the discussion board. Chances are there is another learner who has the same problem, and everyone can see the answer at the same time. Encourage learners who know the answer to a question to reply. Sharing information is a team effort. Instructors should check the Q&A form first after logging into the course each day. Instruct learners to message the instructor directly through email with any personal or grade questions.

Email/Message Communication and Response Time

Include the preferred method of communication about grades or personal topics (Canvas message is suggested due to open record laws). Also, include the response time to email and messages. For example, "I will respond to Canvas messages and emails within 24 hours Monday - Friday."

Feedback and Grade Response

Learners must receive feedback in time to complete their next assignment, to process, and to include the instructor's feedback for the next assignment. Example: "I will respond with feedback and a grade within 48 hours Monday – Friday from the assignment due date."

Office Hours

Include an "Office Hours" Module in Canvas, so learners can easily access your Zoom link during your office hours.

Adjustment to the Plan

In the event of an emergency, when the plan cannot follow its course, post an announcement, and message learners that the instructor will be offline for X number of hours. Learners should be considerate of the instructor because the instructor is considerate of learners who have emergencies.

Stages of Self-Directedness	Examples of Instruction
Stage 1: Dependent Learner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners require more frequent feedback to let them know how they are doing and if they are meeting your expectations. • Feedback should include prompts to help dependent learners become more independent. • Include a process for overcoming roadblocks as they engage in learning activities, including road maps, checklists, due date document, outlines, rubrics, and any other resources available to support a dependent learner.
Stage 2: Lack of Confidence and Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be encouraging and acknowledge that the learners' willingness and enthusiasm for learning will help them be successful. • Help learners build their confidence so that they can accomplish the objectives of the course. • Help learners expand on explanations and encourage learners to review their work before submitting it for grading. • Encourage learners to ask questions early on instead of struggling with activities and assignments; this can help alleviate frustration and stress from not being sure of the requirements or the activities
Stage 3: Confident and Motivated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help learners expand their thinking by having them explore higher levels of thinking on the subject. • Help learners apply their understanding in novel ways
Stage 4: Self-Directed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide specific feedback on learners' assignments that points out excellence and why it is excellent. • Help learners self-evaluate their performance to enhance critical thinking skills and determine any gaps in learning. From the self-evaluation, they can develop a plan to fill any gaps to continue to build their knowledge and skills.

A communication strategy to encourage self-directedness in online courses is dependent on the learner's stage of learning development. There are four stages of self-directedness (Grow, 1996).