



Instructor Presence in the Online Classroom

An instructor's presence in a course can enhance the cognitive and social development of students.ⁱ

Research has identified strategies for instructors to connect with students in online classes.

Communication is especially important because it may be the only social contact students have with instructors. Additionally, clearly outlining your availability as an instructor and opening up the course to student feedback and interaction can foster strong instructor presence in an online space. Utilizing the following three strategies will enhance instructor presence in an online class.

Course Communications

- ❑ Present yourself as authentic, empathetic, and engaged with the course.ⁱⁱ
- ❑ Post weekly announcements with reminders of upcoming assignments and tips for success.ⁱⁱⁱ
- ❑ Post a welcome video at the start of the semester to students can get to know you as a person.^{iv}
- ❑ Avoid using animated characters or avatars in place of your real-life persona.^v
- ❑ Consider filming announcement videos while going for a walk or running an errand to show that you exist outside of the virtual space.^{vi}

Student-Instructor Availability

- ❑ Be aware of peak activity times in the course to plan when to post or respond to messages.^{vii}
- ❑ Provide your availability so students know when to expect communication from you.^{viii}
- ❑ Ease course navigation by providing images of how to use the course.^{ix}

Course Design Considerations

- ❑ Consider a "Liquid Syllabus" where students can share their ideas for the course and allow you to adapt it to student needs.^x
- ❑ Implement peer-to-peer feedback on essays and discussion boards to lessen your workload and increase student communication.^{xi}

ⁱ Roque-Hernández, R. V., Díaz-Roldán, J. L., López-Mendoza, A., & Salazar-Hernández, R. (2021). Instructor presence, interactive tools, student engagement, and satisfaction in online education during the COVID-19 Mexican lockdown. *Interactive Learning Environments*, 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10494820.2021.1912112>

ⁱⁱ Cartee, J. (2021). Strategic empathy in virtual learning and instruction: A contemplative essay about teacher-student rapport during times of crisis. *Journal of Instructional Research*, 10, 12–19. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1314158>

ⁱⁱⁱ Glazier, R. A. (2021). *Connecting in the online classroom: Building rapport between teachers and students*. Johns Hopkins University Press.

^{iv} Glazier, R. A. (2020). Making human connections in online teaching. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 54(1), 175–176. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s1049096520001535>

^v Yuan, M., Zeng, J., Wang, A., & Shang, J. (2021). Would it be better if instructors technically adjust their image or voice in online courses? Impact of the way of instructor presence on online learning. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.746857>

^{vi} Pacansky-Brock, M., Smedshammer, M., & Vincent-Layton, K. (2020). Humanizing online teaching to equitize higher education. *Current Issues in Education*, 21(2), 1–21.

^{vii} Fendler, R. J. (2021). Improving the "other side" to faculty presence in online education. *Online Journal of Distance Learning and Administration*, 24(1), 1–16. <https://web-s-ebshost-com.libproxy.library.unt.edu/ehost/detail/detail?vid=1&sid=de2a9571-984d-40fa-a6cb-13703375be75%40redis&bdata=JnNjb3BIPXNpdGU%3d#AN=149565474&db=eue>

^{viii} Park, M., & Koo, J. (2022). It takes a village during the pandemic: Predictors of students' course evaluations and grades in online team-based marketing courses. *Marketing Education Review*, 1–10. <https://doi-org.libproxy.library.unt.edu/10.1080/10528008.2021.2023577>

^{ix} Gloria, A. M., & Uttal, L. (2020). Conceptual considerations in moving from face-to-face to online teaching. *International Journal on E-Learning*, 19(2), 139–159. <https://www-learnlib-org.libproxy.library.unt.edu/primary/p/184150/>

^x Pacansky-Brock, M., Smedshammer, M., & Vincent-Layton, K. (2020). Humanizing online teaching to equitize higher education. *Current Issues in Education*, 21(2), 1–21.

^{xi} Foo, S. Y. (2021). Analysing peer feedback in asynchronous online discussions: A case study. *Education and Information Technologies*, 26(4), 4553–4572. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-021-10477-4>