



STITCHES



Course Design Social Presence Strategies Used and Rationale

Strategy	Rationale
- Instructor sent a welcome video to the students on the first day of the course.	

	<p>provided the opportunity to view the instructor as “real.” Immediacy is a critical element in social presence, and communication in real time often enhances social presence when handled well (Richardson & Swan, (2003). The personal call in the initial two weeks of the course helps students understand that the instructor is a real person and is interested in the student's success and development</p>
<p>- Prior to each module, students were sent a 2-5 minute module orientation video recorded by the instructor that briefly went over learning objective(s), course readings and assignments for that unit</p>	<p>Videos with high numbers of views usually have a direct connection to course assignments (or course assessments). If a video contains required content that a student must use for an assignment or discussion posting, it is correlated with higher view numbers. Research shows one of the benefits video can offer is creating faculty presence in an online environment (Jaggars, Edgecombe, & Stace, 2013).</p>
<p>Instructor allowed and encouraged instant messaging via iChat, Google chat and text messaging. Instructor used IM for conducting synchronous chat sessions, as well as to provide individual communication with students.</p>	<p>Maintains a sense of connection with others and gave a greater sense of shared context. Instant messaging helped students feel a greater sense of presence by enabling them to communicate in real-time and be aware of others who are online (Karen (2010).</p>
<p>Due to the fact that courses were 100% online, with a large number of adult learners who do the majority of their work at night and on the weekends, instructors made themselves available for online office hours for a minimum of four evening hours during the week, as well as four hours on the weekends</p>	<p>Students who enroll in online courses might not live on campus and this provides an opportunity for online instructors to support these students by hosting virtual office hours (Edwards & Helvie-Mason, 2010). Virtual office hours provide opportunities for students to communicate with their professor without the constraints of traditional office hours.</p>
<p>In hopes to make communication more compatible with the mobile lifestyle of today's students. Instructors decided to allow and encourage students to use SMS text messaging at their leisure. It was encouraged especially for things that needed be addressed</p>	<p>IM increases the level of access that students have to the instructor. Research has shown that students participating in distance education courses indicated that text messaging is a technology they enjoy using to communicate and that SMS text-messaging tool also provided a medium for</p>

immediately (quiz or an assignment submission needing to be reset).	communication and dialogue, which engendered the "immediacy" sought by many online learners (DuVall et al., 2007).
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Table 4: Course Instruction Social Presence Strategies and Rationale

Instructor sent a minimum of two announcements each week, which consisted of weekly updates, course reminders, when assignments were scheduled for submission	Instructor sends weekly announcement dates consistent, sending module reminders every Monday morning and weekly updates on Thursdays. This keeps the students informed on a regular basis and eliminates any ambiguity about what was expected and when materials were due.
Individual and class emails were used during IAA courses.	Email can be used in three ways in online teaching: class email, group email, and individual email. According to Horton (2000), class email is "email broadcast," and it is used for important announcements such as schedule changes, to correct misunderstandings or clarify misconceptions. Group email can be used to provide students with ideas, guidance, or feedback on group projects. Individual email can be used for many situations, such as answering individual questions, providing feedback on assignments, motivating students to learn, and following up with students for special situations.
Instructor responded to initial posts/replies and periodically throughout the semester on subsequent submissions.	For the first initial discussion board it is imperative that the facilitator comment on student posts to guide their learning. If instructors do not plan on responding to all posts, it is important to inform students of this in the beginning and reiterate that all posts will be read so as to prevent a perception of lack of interest. The instructor should intervene when the discussion seems to be struggling or headed the wrong way (Palloff & Pratt, 2001), but should not over-participate in the discussion, as this will be considered stifling and restrictive

A netiquette policy was posted in the syllabus and on the discussion board forum. It is also noted in the courses orientations videos.

Offering an education in netiquette, the etiquette of online communication with students provides a firm foundation for establishing a socially present classroom and a community of learners (Weiss, 2000).

<p>board, while encouraging others to submit high quality, in-depth, posts.</p>	<p>required of each submission, after the first MVDB was announced. If an instructor places emphasis on discussion board participation with a grade weight of 20% and clear guidelines for participation, student engagement and community development are more likely to occur (Rovai, 2001, p. 45).</p>
<p>After the final project, instructor sent a class email summarizing the course; highlight the high points and sending best-wishes to all.</p>	<p>Instructors encourage students maintain future communication so that the sense of the online community, and personal relationship, would be ongoing even after completion of the course.</p>