# **Instructor Presence in the Online Classroom**

Instructor’s presence in a classroom can enhance the cognitive and social development of students.[[1]](#endnote-1) It may be more difficult to establish an instructor presence in an online class, however, research has found strategies that you can utilize to establish your presence in an online class as an instructor and connect with your students. Communication in an online course 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 a strong instructor presence in an online space. Utilizing the following three strategies will enhance your presence as an instructor in an online class.

**Course Communications**

* Present yourself as authentic, empathetic, and engaged with the course.[[2]](#endnote-2)
* Post weekly announcements with reminders of upcoming assignments and tips for success.[[3]](#endnote-3)
* Post a welcome video at the start of the semester to students can get to know you as a person rather than another piece of a virtual course. [[4]](#endnote-4)
* Avoid using animated characters or avatars in place of your real-life persona.[[5]](#endnote-5)
* Consider filming announcement videos while going for a walk or running an errand to display that you exist outside of the virtual space the same as they do. [[6]](#endnote-6)

**Student-Instructor Availability**

* Be aware of peak activity times on the course by students to plan when is most convenient to post communications or respond to messages.[[7]](#endnote-7)
* Clearly provide your availability schedule so students have appropriate expectations on when to expect communications from you. [[8]](#endnote-8)
* Do not assume that every student is able to navigate technological spaces easily. Provide images demonstrating course navigation so students are able to learn how to get around the course. [[9]](#endnote-9)

**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.[[10]](#endnote-10)
* Implement peer-to-peer feedback on essays and discussion boards to lessen your workload and increase student communication.[[11]](#endnote-11)

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