Instructor Presence in Online Courses: It’s Not Just a Façade

A research study on types of Instructor Presence

Sharon Watson & Daniel Sullivan
Instructor Presence linked to increased student satisfaction in online courses.

Numerous methods to enhance Instructor Presence.

**Research Questions**

- Which methods influence students’ perception of the instructor’s presence in the course?
- Which methods do students see providing value?
Forms of Instructor Presence: **Substantive**

**Instructor’s Responses to Questions**

**Lectures**

**Assignment Feedback from Instructor**

**Content Lectures**

**Instructor’s Weekly Updates**

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**Module 5 Comprehension Quiz**

Shawn Watson, Jain Randolph
BUAD 699, Corporate Strategy - Spring 2017

Hi Jain,

When there are significant gains to be had from economies of scale in the performance of a particular act, performed in one or a few locations, so that scale can be achieved. If the activity is performed in many different economies of scale. Thus, the answer you chose is incorrect, because it is advantageous to concentrate at economies of scale. Note that the question stem says EXCEPT.

However, if activities need to be customized to each location, then it is NOT advantageous to concentrate each location. Thus, that is the correct answer.

Let me know if you have any other questions, and thanks for asking.

Shawn

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**Weekly Update Module 2**

Shawn Watson, Jain Green
BUAD 699, Corporate Strategy - Spring 2017

Good morning Professor Watson,

I just wanted to check in with you and make sure the answer to one of the questions I had in my module was correct, and I was hoping you might be able to clarify the issue for me. Attached to this memo:

Thank you so much for your help, have a great day.

Jain Randolph

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Thank you for your contributions to the discussion, which added to the class’s understanding of Whole Foods Market’s strategy and how it is performing. You and your classmates evaluated WFM’s strategy in several ways and found it to be performing admirably. As you collectively pointed out, the strategy is mission driven, with the Whole Foods, Whole People, Whole Planet message evident throughout the various elements of the company’s strategy. Furthermore, as you pointed out in your own comments, the various elements of the Strategy Diamond are in alignment with the different elements.
Forms of Instructor Presence: **Stylistic**

- **Personal Course Introductory Video**
- **Instructor Bio Page**
- **Topic Intro Videos**
- **Instructor’s Introduction Post**

**Sharon Watson, Ph.D.**

**University of Delaware**

**Biography**

Sharon Watson is an associate professor of management at the University of Delaware. She has published widely on risk factors and acquisitions, the management of foreign subsidiaries, international aspects of top management succession, and the effects of cultural differences on behavior in organizations. Her work has appeared in such journals as Academy of Management Advances, Managerial and Decisional Behavior, and Human Resource Management. She has been an invited speaker at several international conferences and is the author of several articles on management and human resource management.

**Education**

- B.A. in International Business and Strategic Management, University of South Carolina, AED
- M.B.A., University of Delaware, 1994
- Ph.D. in Educational Psychology, University of Delaware, 1994

**Select Publications**


**Learning Objectives**

- By the end of this module, you will be able to:
  - Analyze the competitive conditions in a company's industry.
  - Understand the factors affecting industry competition.
  - Evaluate the attractiveness of an industry's outlook with respect to growth and profitability.
  - Determine the primary opportunities and threats associated with increased fire growth and profitability.
Student Survey Results

Which methods increase the instructor’s presence in the course?

- Responses to My Questions: 4.65
- Feedback on My Assignments: 4.55
- Weekly Update Message: 4.5
- Course Content Lectures: 4.41
- Personal Introduction Post: 4.33
- Course Intro Video: 4.31
- Topic Intro Videos: 3.98
- Instructor Bio Page: 3.95

Which methods provide the most value to students?

- Feedback on My Assignments: 4.66
- Course Content Lectures: 4.6
- Responses to My Questions: 4.58
- Weekly Update Message: 4.55
- Course Intro Video: 4.31
- Personal Introduction Post: 4.26
- Topic Intro Videos: 4.12
- Instructor Bio Page: 3.76
Results: Student Behavior

How do students’ behaviors indicate the value of instructor overview videos?

- Only 2/3 of the students opened the 2-minute Course Introduction video.
- Fewer students opened the 1-minute Module Introduction videos as the course progressed.
Conclusions

Students value **Substantive** Instructor Presence over **Stylistic**
Implications for Online Instructors

• Add Instructor Presence with methods that provide substantive value to students

• Key Means:
  • Quick response to student emails
  • Provide meaningful feedback
  • Inform and explain about course design
  • Notices of upcoming assignments
  • Clarify specification of course content
  • Specify schedule of key deliverables

• Question the benefits and costs of stylistic approaches
Questions

Comments

Recommendations
Evaluate Sessions and Win!

- Download and open OLC Conferences mobile app
- Navigate to specific session to evaluate
- Select “Evaluate Session” on session details screen (located under session type and track)
- Complete session evaluation*

*Each session evaluation completed (limited to one per session) = one contest entry

**Five (5) $25 gift cards** will be awarded
Must submit evals using the OLC Conferences mobile app or website