

# Establishing Social Presence for the Classroom/Online

## Overview

As one of the three core elements of the Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework (cognitive presence, social presence, and teaching presence), social presence is the quality of being noticeable or important. It plays a vital role in how people interact and communicate. It is what makes the virtual experience feel real. Establishing social presence in a course can aid in the learner's experience and improve learning.

## Understanding Social Presence for Learning

- It is important because connection is a basic human need
- Students enjoy the opportunity to make connections and discuss issues with their classmates
- Learning is social
- Integrate social areas to encourage connection

## Utilizing a wide selection of tools, media, and reflective activities

- Collaborative tools – e.g., Microsoft 365 products, Padlet, Trello, Linoit
- Online Discussions – video discussions (Flipgrid)
  - Peer-to-peer interactions
  - Able to see expressions
  - Can speak with emotions in a conversational manner
  - Can also provide an opportunity for new questions to develop
- Annotation software - Hypothesis
- Polling Tools – e.g., Zoom, Kahoot, Poll Everywhere, Microsoft Forms

## Strategies to Improve (or implement) Social Presence

- Incorporate personal introductions, slides/photos.
- Offer early and frequent feedback; consider video feedback
- Include multiple, simple formative assessments
- Incorporate reflective activities
- Share personal stories and professional experiences
- Use expressions of emotions