Asserting Online Teaching Presence

Asserting (instructor's) Social Presence and Immediacy

- Address students by name.

- Express yourself with occasional (and appropriate) humor and passion.

- Share profile (biography and photo) to acquaint students with your personal story.

- Share personal experiences and insights related to course topic throughout the term.

- Provide prompt, timely and frequent feedback to all emails and forum questions.

- Begin course with a friendly, warm welcome message or via email (consider recording a short audio or video clip). Consider also a safe texting service tool like Remind.com.

- Subscribe to Q&A Forum to receive email alerts when students post a question (and answer immediately)

Managing Online Discussions

- Assign collaborative (group) discussions and other learning activities, if appropriate.

- Urge students to contribute to discussions throughout the week, rather than one batch of postings on the last day of the week.

- Encourage students to post an initial contribution to discussions as early as possible to encourage timely and free-flowing engagement.

- Contribute to discussions when appropriate to assert presence, clarify confusion (misperceptions), and model professional behavior.

- Monitor discussions and encourage non-participating students to engage and contribute.

- Intervene when discussions veer off track.

- Provide a summary of key takeaway points, model posts, and resolutions, if appropriate.

Designing Teaching Presence (if you create your own courses)

- Create a variety of formative assessments, with feedback, to encourage deep thinking.

- Begin each week or module with a brief commentary on the topic, sharing personal insights or experiences (in text or audio/video).

- Provide a transition to the next week or module.

- Periodically offer progress reports to students on their progress and quality of work.

- Create podcasts (audio only) or screencasts (narrated video) to demonstrate procedures or to provide direct instruction (see our Screencasting Guide).

- Encourage students to relate course topics to their own experiences or career goals.

- Encourage students to engage, contribute and deepen their thinking through reflection and discourse (i.e. deep, critical discussion).

- Specify in your syllabus how promptly you will respond to questions or provide feedback.