UNDERGRADUATE BUSINESS STUDENTS PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHING PRESENCE

IN ONLINE BUSINESS COURSES


by


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B.F.A., Emporia State University, 2001
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AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION


submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree


DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY


Department of Curriculum and Instruction
College of Education


KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas


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# Abstract

The purpose of this case study was to explore Teaching Presence in the undergraduate online Business course environment. This study explored the following three Research Questions: 1. How do undergraduate Business students perceive Teaching Presence in online courses? 2. What Teaching Presence components do undergraduate Business students find valuable in online courses? 3. How do exemplary undergraduate online Business course faculty demonstrate Teaching Presence in online instruction?

The population of this study consisted of 20 undergraduate Business students and 3 student-nominated Business faculty. Participants included Business students enrolled in online Business courses. Based on the student interviews, the faculty most often nominated by the students as demonstrating effective methods of Teaching Presence in online Business courses served as faculty participants. Interviews of students and faculty were conducted during the Fall 2015 semester.

There were 101 units identified for Research Question 1, with 46 units for the theme of "Direct Instruction", 36 for the theme of "Discourse Facilitation", and 19 units for the theme of "Design and Organization". The major findings from these research questions were that undergraduate Business students perceived online course Teaching Presence most through Direct Instruction. Students perceived prompting student engagement in discussions and encouraging student participation as important elements of the "Discourse Facilitation" theme. Students perceived good course design methods as being important to Teaching Presence.

There were 245 units identified for Research Question 2, with 93 units for the theme of "Design and Organization", 88 units for "Discourse Facilitation" and 64 units for Direct Instruction". The major findings were that the "Design and Organization" theme was found to

be most valuable to undergraduate Business students in the form of designing methods and establishing time parameters. Setting a climate for learning within the "Discourse Facilitation" theme and confirming understanding within the "Direct Instruction" themes were important to students when discussing what Teaching Presence components they found valuable in online Business courses.

There were 81 units identified for Research Question 3, which consisted of faculty interviews focused on how exemplary online Business course faculty demonstrated Teaching Presence.  The themes that were found in the faculty interviews were 30 units for the "Design and Organization" theme, 26 units for the "Discourse Facilitation" theme and 25 units for the "Direct Instruction" theme.  The major findings were that the "Design and Organization" theme was found to be of the utmost importance to exemplary faculty when discussing the demonstration of Teaching Presence in online Business courses.  Within the "Discourse Facilitation" theme, faculty emphasized the importance of drawing in participants and prompting discussion.  Confirming understanding was found to be the most important aspect of the "Direct Instruction" theme.

Recommendations for the research setting were in the areas of learning activity clarity, the use of integrated video lectures, enriched student-instructor interaction strategies, and technological tools to identify student comprehension struggles.  Recommendations for future research including a study of Teaching Presence in different academic disciplines and in different academic environments, the efficacy of various technologies in enhancing Teaching Presence, and instructor attributes influencing Teaching Presence.

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Approved by:

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# Chapter 1 - INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

## Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the research problem, the growth of online learning at the collegiate level, online course enrollment in four-year institutions, technologies used in online course management to support faculty and student interaction, Teaching Presence as a theoretical framework, and the research location. The chapter ends with the purpose of the study, the guiding research questions, the context and significance of the study, background of the researcher, limitations and delimitations of the study.

## Online Learning Growth in Higher Education in the United States

"Grade Level: Tracking Online Education in the United States, 2014" provided the results of a 2014 survey completed by more than 2,800 colleges and universities (Allan & Seaman, 2015). Post-secondary students taking at least one online course exceeded 5.2 million students in 2013 (Allan & Seaman, 2015). The peak rate of growth occurred in 2005 with a decrease in years to follow (See Figure 1.1). Although the growth of online enrollment slowed in 2013 to 3.7%, over 185,000 additional students enrolled in at least one online course (Allan & Seaman, 2015). Public and private not-for-profit institutions continue to see steady growth at a rate of 4.6% for public institutions and 12.6% for private not-for-profit institutions (Allan & Seaman, 2015). The low growth percentage stems from the decrease in growth amount for-profit institution with a percentage decrease of 8% (Allan & Seaman, 2015).

**Figure 1.1 Growth Rate of Students Taking at Least One Online Course**
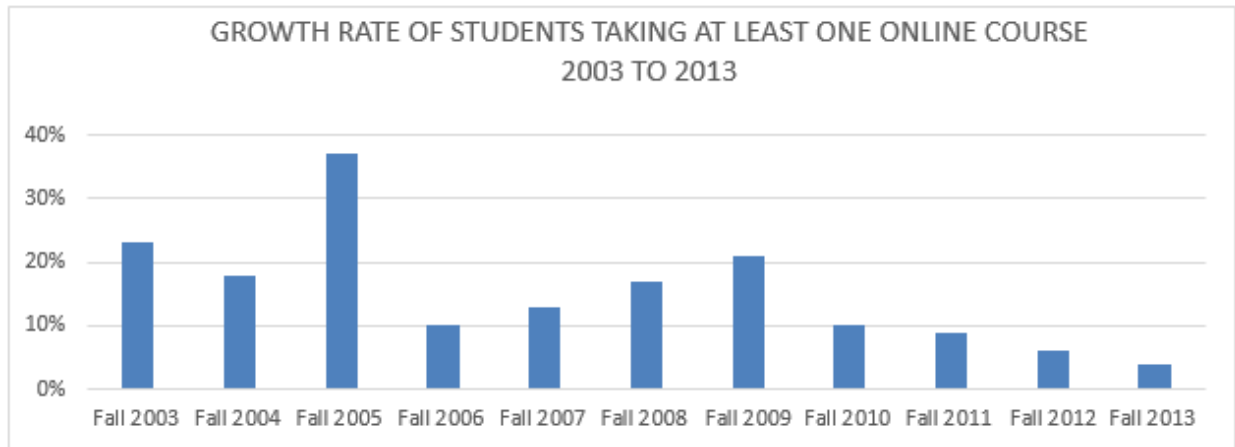


*The data in this chart is from Grade Level: Tracking Online Education in the United States, 2014, by I. E. Allen and J. Seaman, 2015, Babson Park, MA: Babson Survey Research Group and The Sloan Consortium.*

## Online Degree and Program Growth at Four-Year Institutions

Online learning continues to grow. In the fall of 2012 the Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) reported that over two and one-half million undergraduate students at four-year institutions (25 percent) enrolled in at least one distance education course (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). Additionally, the Instructional Technology Council found that a 3 percent decline in face-to-face student enrollment occurred among the respondents surveyed from fall 2012 to fall 2013 (Instructional Technology Council, 2014). While the respondents reported an overall decline in enrollment, a 5 percent rate of enrollment growth was reported in their online programs (Instructional Technology Council, 2014). Clinefelter & Aslanian (2014) found that "Business continues to be the largest field of study for online students, attracting more than one-quarter of all students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels" (p.7).

## Four-Year Institutions and Online Learning Opportunities

The National Center for Education Statistics reported 574,709 students attending public four-year institutions were enrolled in fully online programs in 2012, while 1,223,442 students attending public four-year institutions were enrolled in at least one online course (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). Not-for-profit institutions maintained 65% of online course enrollments, while for-profit institutions drew 35% of students (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). Additionally, Business students had the largest portion of online undergraduate enrollment, with over 25 percent of total enrollment (Clinefelter & Aslanian, 2014).

Reputation is the driving factor of online students when selecting a degree program (Clinefelter & Aslanian, 2014). Reputation, accreditation and price heavily sway student market share (Clinefelter & Aslanian, 2014). Availability of courses is also an important school choice factor (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). Additionally, students connect with the visual aspects of university websites and e-marketing tools (Štefko, Fedorko, & Bačík, 2015).

## Online Course Technology

Online course technology serves as a medium to connect students and faculty with course content (Dahlstrom, Brooks, Bichsel, 2014). Technology used properly can foster connections within the online classroom and enhance the overall education experience for students (Dahlstrom, et al., 2014). According to the EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative/New Media Consortium Horizon Report (Johnson, Adams, Estrada, & Freeman, 2015), there is a decided shift toward a mobile, creative learning culture with an emphasis on data-driven learning. "For learners, educators, and researchers, learning analytics is already starting to provide crucial insights into student progress and interaction with online texts, courseware, and learning environments used to deliver instruction. Data-driven learning and assessment will build on

those early efforts." (p. 12). Additionally, learning management systems are further developing voice and video tools to incorporate a more authentic learning experience to enhance the online classroom experience. An increased need for interaction and connection is driving additional communication features (Johnson et al., 2015).

### *Learning Management Systems (LMS)*

Learning Management Systems are "web-based systems that allow instructors and/or students to share materials, submit and return assignments, and communicate online" (Lonn, & Teasley, 2009). Learning Management Systems go beyond the dissemination of course materials by integrating additional functions that support faculty and student interaction through discussion, video, audio, and chat capabilities (West, Waddoups & Graham, 2007). Learning Management Systems also manage basic course functions. These functions include: announcements, assessment tools, collaboration management, conferencing, content library, document management, email, podcast management, application-integrated assignments using social media and web tools, test/quiz administration, assignment submission portals, grading, gradebook communication, discussion forum, competency management, survey management and course roster management, chat, content sharing, blogs, schedule, syllabus and wikis (Pappas, 2013; Lonn & Teasley, 2009) (see Table 1.1).

**Table 1.1 Learning Management Systems - Basic Course Functions**

| Learning Management Systems - Basic Course Functions | | |
|---|---|---|
| Announcements | Content Library | Podcast Management |
| Assessment Tools | Content Sharing | Schedule |
| Assignment Submission Portals | Course Roster Management | Social Media Tools |
| Blogs | Discussion Forums | Survey Management |
| Chat | Document Management | Syllabus |
| Collaboration Management | Email | Test/Quiz Administration |
| Competency Management | Gradebook Communication | Wikis |
| Conferencing | Grading | |

Adapted from Pappas, 2013; Lonn & Teasley, 2009

According to Educause (2014) 99% of higher education institutions use a Learning Management System. The Centre for Learning and Performance Technologies (2014) identified 183 Course/Learning Management Systems and Learning Platforms. The most commonly used Learning Management Systems in the education sector as of 2014 were Blackboard Learn, ANGEL, Moodle, Canvas, Desire2Learn and Sakai (Edutechnica, 2014). A survey conducted by EDUCAUSE Core Data Service EDUCAUSE Core Data Service (CDS) indicated that Blackboard held the largest market share among Learning Management Systems from 2002 to time of this research (Educause, 2014).

*Blackboard*

The terms "Learning Management System" (LMS) and "Course Management System" (CMS) are often interchangeable. This study used the Learning Management System definition by Lonn and Teasley (2009). It is defined as a "web-based system that allows instructors and/or students to share materials, submit and return assignments, and communicate online". Furthermore, Lonn and Teasley (2009), indicated that the following tools were commonly used:

- Announcements

- Assignments

- Chat

- Content Sharing

- Discussion

- Schedule

- Syllabus

- Wiki

The Learning Management System used in this study was Blackboard Learn Learning Management System, which was the Learning Management System for all online classes at the research location.  Blackboard Learn Learning Management System has a variety of communication and content features.  These elements included Announcements, Blogs, Calendar, Collaboration Tools, Contacts, Course Messages, Discussion Board, Email, Glossary, Journals, Roster, Tasks, Wikis (Blackboard Course Tools, 2013) (See Table 1.2).

**Table 1.2 Blackboard Learn Course Tools**

| Blackboard Learn Course Tools | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Achievements | Content Collection | Messages | Student Resources |
| Announcements | Content Sharing | My Grades | Surveys |
| Assignments | Discussion Board | Notification | Syllabus |
| Blackboard Help | eReserves | Portfolios | Tasks |
| Blogs | Files | Profiles | Test |
| Bookmarks | Glossary | Roster | Videos |
| Calendar | Groups | SafeAssignments | Virtual Classroom |
| Chat | Journals | Schedule | Wikis |
| Collaboration Tools | Learning Modules | Send Email | Workflows |
| Contacts | Meet Your Instructor | Spaces | |

*Adapted from Blackboard Course Tools (2013)*

## Teaching Online: Interaction through Learning Management Systems

Learning Management Systems are used to support faculty and student interaction through the various interactions such as the dissemination of feedback, distribution of course materials and connection via course discussions. Learning Management Systems contain and distribute interactions between faculty and students, as well as interactions among students. Teaching and learning activities are mediated through Learning Management Systems. Design and Organization, Discourse Facilitation, and Direct Instruction all take place within a Learning Management System.

A three-year study conducted by Rubin, Fernandes, & Avgerinou (2013) examined the influence of Learning Management Systems capabilities on student perceptions and their effect on Teaching Presence, social presence, and cognitive presence. The study found that Learning Management Systems used to teach online courses were important to the teaching and learning experience, particularly in the area of Teaching Presence (Rubin, et al., 2013). The study also found that students were inclined to hold faculty responsible for the technology features of the course (Rubin, et al., 2013). Rubin defined Teaching Presence as occurring "when instructors design, support and direct student activities to provide a powerful learning experience" (Rubin, et al., 2013, p. 49). Course design, student support, and the direction of student activities take place within a Learning Management System.

Throughout the years, the medium of higher education dissemination has changed through the increase of online education, Learning Management System development and the student driven expectation of mobile-based, individualized, and engaging course content (Dahlstrom, et al., 2014). The role of the course instructor has changed but still remains vital in the learning process. These changes have increased the focus on quality initiatives. There has

been an overriding theme of instructor interaction in quality initiatives (Rubin, et al., 2013; Dahlstrom, et al., 2014).   From this, the importance of Teaching Presence in online courses became apparent.  The course instructor plays a developmental and influential role throughout the learning process. Teaching Presence is defined and discussed in terms of three dimensions: Design and Organization, Discourse Facilitation, and Direct Instruction.  Teaching Presence begins prior to the course start date through instructional design and course development and continues throughout the course in the form of facilitation and direct instruction.

## Theoretical Framework – Teaching Presence

Teaching Presence is one of the Community of Inquiry Model's three components: Teaching Presence, Social Presence and Cognitive Presence. The major theorists of the Community of Inquiry Model framework were D. Randy Garrison, Terry Anderson and Walter Archer from the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.  Garrison et al., published a seminal paper on the Community of Inquiry Model in 2000.

### *Teaching Presence within the Community of Inquiry Model*

The three elements of the Community of Inquiry framework (Social Presence, Cognitive Presence and Teaching Presence) are multidimensional and interdependent (Swan, Garrison, Richardson, 2009). Together, the three components intersect to develop the educational experience (See Figure 1.2)

**Figure 1.2 Community of Inquiry Model**
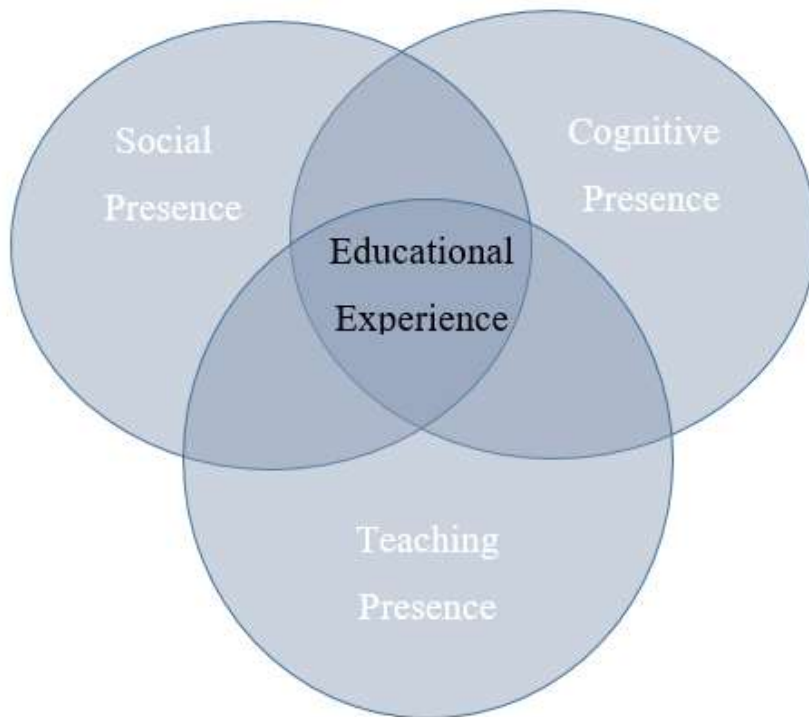


*Adapted from Anderson, Rourke, Garrison, and Archer (2001)*

Cognitive presence is "the extent to which the participants in any particular configuration of a Community of Inquiry are able to construct meaning through sustained communication" (Garrison et al., 2000, p. 89). As the Community of Inquiry Model developed, Garrison further described cognitive presence as "the exploration, construction, resolution and confirmation of understanding through collaboration and reflection in a Community of Inquiry," (Garrison, 2007, p. 65).

"Social presence is the ability of participants in a Community of Inquiry to project themselves socially and emotionally, as 'real' people through the medium of communication being used" (Garrison & Anderson, 2007, p. 28). Social presence creates a feeling of collaboration with members of the course, as opposed to impersonal names (Baker, 2010). The

community/collaborative focus of social presence has prompted research and inquiry among researchers (Bartruff, 2009; Baker, 2010; Ke, 2010; Archibald, 2011; Alaulamie, 2014).

Teaching Presence, as defined by Anderson, Rourke, Garrison, and Archer (2001) is "the design, facilitation, and direction of cognitive and social processes for the purpose of realizing personally meaningful and educational worthwhile learning outcomes" (Anderson, et al., 2001). Teaching Presence is the virtual "visibility" of the instructor, as perceived by the student (Baker, 2010). The components of Teaching Presence are Design and Organization, Discourse Facilitation and Direct Instruction.  The Community of Inquiry Model subcomponents within the model are below (See Figure 1.3).

**Figure 1.3 Community of Inquiry Model Components and Subcomponents**

| Community of Inquiry Model | Cognitive Presence | Exploration |
| | | Resolution |
| | | Confirmation of Understanding |
| | Social Presence | Collaborative Events |
| | | Interaction |
| | | Social and Emotional Expression |
| | Teaching Presence | Design and Organization |
| | | Discourse Facilitation |
| | | Direct Instruction |

*Adapted from Anderson, Rourke, Garrison, and Archer (2001)*

Cognitive, Social, and Teaching Presence within the Community of Inquiry framework are multidimensional and interdependent (Swan, Garrison, Richardson, 2009). All aspects of the Community of Inquiry framework are important.  However, Teaching Presence was identified as the most significant in the areas of "student's satisfaction, perceived learning, and sense of community" (Garrison, 2007, p. 67). Teaching Presence precedes and causes social and cognitive presence (Anderson, Rourke, Garrison, Archer, 2001 Shea & Bidjerano, 2008).  Garrison &

Cleveland-Innes (2005) further supported this notion by asserting that Teaching Presence emerges before Social Presence and Cognitive Presence by providing structure through design and organization.

## Definition and History of Teaching Presence

Online learning continues to grow at a rapid pace, which accelerates the need to understand the impact of Teaching Presence in the online classroom. Teaching Presence is defined as "the design, facilitation and direction of cognitive and social processes for the purpose of realizing personally meaningful and educationally worthwhile learning outcomes" (Anderson et al., 2001, p. 5). Shea, Pickett and Pelz (2003) expanded on the definition of Teaching Presence as, "the facilitation and direction of social and cognitive presence" (p. 65). Teaching Presence is the virtual "visibility" of the instructor, as perceived by the student (Baker, 2012; Arbaugh & Hwang, 2006). Teaching Presence is comprised of three components: Design and Organization, Discourse Facilitation, and Direct Instruction.

<u>Design and Organization</u> included setting curriculum, designing methods, establishing time parameters, establishing netiquette and utilizing the medium effectively (Anderson, et al., 2001).

<u>Discourse Facilitation</u> included encouraging and prompting student participation, identifying areas agreement, assessing efficacy of the process, setting a climate for learning, reinforcing student contributions and seeking to reach consensus (Anderson, et al., 2001). Discourse facilitation is essential in the collaborative learning environment (Lobry de Bruyn, 2004).

<u>Direct instruction</u> included presenting content and questions, confirming understanding, diagnosing misconceptions, focusing discussions and injecting knowledge ((Anderson, et al., 2001). Learner–instructor communication contributes to student perception of teacher presence

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(Stein, Wanstreet, Calvin, Overtoom & Wheaton, 2005). The table, below, identifies and details the Teaching Presence Model Components and supporting elements (See Figure 1.4).

**Figure 1.4 Teaching Presence Model Components**

| Design and Organization |
|---|
| Setting Curriculum |
| Establishing Time Parameters |
| Utilizing Medium Effectively |
| Establishing Netiquette |
| Designing Methods |
| **Discourse Facilitation** |
| Identifying Areas of Agreement/Disagreement |
| Reinforce Student Contributions |
| Setting Climate for Learning |
| Drawing in Participants, Prompting Discussion |
| Assessing the Efficacy of the Process |
| Seeking to Reach Consensus |
| **Direct Instruction** |
| Present Content/Questions |
| Focus the Discussion on Specific Issues |
| Confirm Understanding |
| Diagnose Misconceptions |
| Inject Knowledge from Diverse Sources |

*Adapted from Anderson et al. (2001).*

Instructors play an essential role in the online classroom. Understanding Teaching Presence from the viewpoint of students enrolled in online Business courses can provide insight to instructors that seek to develop and maintain teaching practices that support students in an optimal manner. Additionally, understanding attitudes of exemplary Business faculty can further

develop best practices in the online learning environment. Researchers are just beginning to understand the role of Teaching Presence as a framework for describing, creating, evaluating and facilitating student learning and motivation online courses (Baker, 2008; Tabar-Gaul, 2008; Bouras, 2009; Laves, 2010; Catron, 2012; Feeler, 2012).

Several researchers have suggested that Teaching Presence is the most significant component within the Community of Inquiry Framework model (Baker, 2008; Tabar-Gaul, 2008; Archibald, 2011). Baker (2008) found that Teaching Presence was a significant predictor of affective learning, cognition, and motivation. Furthermore, Feeler (2012) found that Teaching Presence influenced active learning, self-direction, and self-teaching.

Previous research suggests that a high level of Teaching Presence is related to student course satisfaction (Bouras, 2009; Catron, 2012) and successful online learning (Tabar-Gaul, 2008), including affective learning, cognition, and motivation (Baker, 2008). Various studies of online Teaching Presence maintained that when greater Teaching Presence was demonstrated, students perceived enhanced learning outcomes (Baker, 2008; Tabar-Gaul, 2008; Bouras, 2009; Laves, 2010). Studies conducted by Swan (2001) and Shea et al., (2003) found that Teaching Presence is directly related to student's reported learning achievement.

## Background of the Issues

Business students are the largest portion of online undergraduate enrollment, with over 25 percent of total online course enrollment (Clinefelter & Aslanian, 2014). The impact of Teaching Presence has been studied in higher education at the university level, both in terms of its embodiment in practice and its importance to the notion of good teaching (Baker, 2008; Tabar-Gaul, 2008; Bouras, 2009; Catron, 2012; Feeler, 2012). However, studies could not be found on specific instructor attributes and practices of Teaching Presence from the perspective of

online undergraduate Business students.   Business students comprise the largest portion of undergraduate students in online courses, yet there was a lack of understanding in regard to what Business students perceived as good teaching in the online learning environment.  This was particularly so in the area of Teaching Presence and its components: Design and Organization, Discourse Facilitation and Direct Instruction.

The research location has an ongoing commitment to providing quality distance education offerings to students, yet there was little evidence-based research on Teaching Presence in Business undergraduate courses to use in developing and evaluating quality instruction for this large and specific student population.  The researcher and other instructors at the research location were committed to understanding and improving design and organization, course facilitation and instruction to provide better and more effective course work for students. The facilitation of good online instruction was believed to be vital to student satisfaction and enrollment, as well as university growth.  A deeper examination of how undergraduate Business students perceived Teaching Presence in online courses aids in the development of enhanced instructor practices that can ultimately lead to improved student satisfaction and learning outcomes.

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this case study was to explore how undergraduate Business students perceive Teaching Presence in online Business courses, what components of Teaching Presence undergraduate Business students find most valuable, and how exemplary Teaching Presence is demonstrated.

## Research Questions

This study explored the following research questions:

1.     How do undergraduate Business students perceive Teaching Presence in online courses?

2.     What Teaching Presence components (design and organization, discourse facilitation and direct instruction) do undergraduate Business students find valuable in online courses?

3.     How do exemplary undergraduate online Business course faculty demonstrate Teaching Presence in online instruction?

## Context of the Study

The research location was a public four-year university located in the Midwest with 5820 total students (Full-time students 4,284; Part-time students 1,518).  The research location had an established distance education offering with 39 online program options in the spring of 2015. The university was accredited by the North Central Association Higher Learning Commission. The student population was composed of 58 percent females; 42 males. The university was located in a suburban setting.  The city where the university is located had a population of approximately 49,526, with the next major town approximately one hour away. As of the fall 2014 semester, minority enrollment was 19 percent.  Additionally, the age demographic as of fall 2014 was: age 24 and younger - 70 percent; age 25 and above - 30 percent.

## Significance of the Study

Online education continues to grow (Allan & Seaman, 2015).  Distance education has become a common form of educational delivery to university level Business students.  The Community of Inquiry Model has gained recognition as a valid model for educational research and practice.  The Teaching Presence component within the Community of Inquiry Model was

considered to be the most significant within the model (Baker, 2008; Tabar-Gaul, 2008; Archibald, 2011; Garrison, 2007). Yet, research was lacking in this area.

No research could be found regarding Teaching Presence at the university level focused solely on online Business students and Business faculty members. This study focused on online Business student's perceptions using Teaching Presence as the theoretical framework. The research findings of this study can contribute to the research of online Business student perceptions of Teaching Presence, and add to the knowledge base regarding the three components of Teaching Presence (Design and Organization, Discourse Facilitation and Direct Instruction), and successful teaching activities in online courses.

This study expands our knowledge of Teaching Presence in online Business courses in several ways. First, the results will be shared with the chair of the Business department at the research location so that improvements can potentially be implemented to support the institution's continued efforts and ongoing commitment to providing quality distance education offerings to students. The findings of this study can drive faculty to better understand and improve teaching pedagogy, successful teaching activities and actions. Finally, the results have the potential to directly influence university decision makers in developing online courses that focus more clearly on the three components of Teaching Presence - Design and Organization, Discourse Facilitation and Direct Instruction – in order to facilitate enhanced online instruction.

## Background and Role of the Researcher

Qualitative research positioned the researcher to be a human instrument for data collection (Merriam, 2009; Denzin, & Lincoln, 2011). During this study the researcher served as a human instrument for data collection and had a vested interest in collecting reliable data, obtaining valid information based on the data collected and using the information obtained from

this research to explore and explain undergraduate Business student's perceptions of Teaching Presence in online Business courses, what components of Teaching Presence undergraduate Business students find valuable, and how exemplary online instruction is demonstrated.   The specific research questions in this study were prompted by the researcher's experience working with undergraduate Business students enrolled in online courses and teaching online courses at the undergraduate level for nine years.

The researcher felt that Teaching Presence was a viable issue to explore in order strength the knowledge base regarding quality teaching.   A deep desire to determine what signified effective teaching in online courses from the viewpoint of students drove the researcher to explore Teaching Presence.  The researcher is committed to creating a learning environment where students feel prompted to succeed and comfortable in the virtual classroom.  As her experience developed in the online learning environment, many wonderings formed regarding quality instruction and the creation of meaningful educational experiences.

While Teaching Evaluations (student surveys) touch on instructor attributes at a high-level, they lack the depth needed to gain a clear understanding of what students' value in online instruction.  The researcher sought to understand student perspectives in order to improve online course instruction and foster the creation of an online learning environment that focuses on educationally worthwhile experiences.  Instructors can get a broad sense of their abilities through evaluation.  Most often Teaching Evaluations (student survey) are only viewed by the designated instructor and interested university administrators.   The sharing of teaching attributes is often lost by the lack of disclosing information.  The Teaching Presence Model provided the researcher with far greater depth to explore her wonderings and provide her university with

relevant information to continue to produce a strong academic atmosphere through online instruction.

While seeking to collect valuable data and rich description, the researcher was not an unbiased contributor in the study.  It was the belief of the researcher that her knowledge of the research location's educational environment and staff was of benefit to the study. The research conducted in this study can prompt further enhancement to the online learning environment at the research location and support institution's continued efforts and ongoing commitment to providing quality distance education offerings to students.  The findings of this study can help the researcher and other instructors better understand and improve teaching pedagogy, successful teaching activities and actions. The results have the potential to directly influence the development of online courses that focus more clearly on the three components of Teaching Presence - Design and Organization, Discourse Facilitation and Direct Instruction – in order to facilitate enhanced online instruction.

While the researcher designed questions that attempted to explain and identify viewpoints and experiences, the researchers believed that she would find noticeable patterns in the data.  The researcher was familiar with various best practices in online teaching.  The researcher also had experience teaching online courses and communicating with online students and held the belief that the education process is a joint effort between the teacher and the student.  The researcher holds herself to high pedagogical standards and expects students to partner with her during their educational journey.  That said, the researcher was dedicated to gaining a better understanding of undergraduate Business student perceptions of Teaching Presence in online Business courses, rather than reinforcing her beliefs.

## Limitations of the Study

Limitations for this study include the following:

1. The researcher had taken and taught several online courses, including courses during the Fall 2015 semester. There may have been potential for researcher bias in the interpretation of findings.

2. The researcher was a faculty member at the research location. Student and faculty participants may have been inclined to answer in an overly positive way, rather than speaking frankly during the interview process.

## Delimitations of the Study

1. This study examined faculty and students at a single Midwest university in a mid-size city. Research findings may have limited transferability to institutions in different settings.

2. Student taking Business courses online during the Fall 2015 semester were selected to participate. The selected students did not represent the entire university population.

3. The researcher constructed the interview protocol on the concept of Teaching Presence and its three components in order to learn more about their individual importance within the model and their application to the population of this study.

## Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a brief overview of university level online enrollment, which continues to increase at a steady rate. Consistent online enrollment increases at the university level and the lack of qualitative research on Teaching Presence for undergraduate Business students, were the major motivators for this study. This study used the theoretical framework of Teaching Presence situated within Community of Inquiry Model.

This study's intent was to contribute to the knowledge base on the concept of Teaching Presence with respect to online undergraduate Business student perspectives and how exemplary Teaching Presence was successfully demonstrated in online Business courses. This chapter also identified the research questions, background of the issues, and the study's purpose, significance, limitations and delimitations.

## Definition of Terms

**Community of Inquiry Model (CoI) -** The Community of Inquiry model is devised of social presence, cognitive presence and teacher presence (Garrison et al., 2000).

**Teaching Presence** - The design, facilitation and direction of cognitive and social processes for the purpose of realizing personally meaningful and educationally worthwhile learning outcomes (Anderson et al., 2001, p. 5).

**Learning Management Systems** - Web-based systems that allow instructors and/or students to share materials, submit and return assignments, and communicate online (Lonn, & Teasley, 2009).

# Chapter 2 - REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

## Introduction

This case study explored how undergraduate Business students perceive Teaching Presence in online Business courses, what components of Teaching Presence undergraduate Business students find most valuable, and how exemplary online faculty demonstrate Teaching Presence. This chapter presents the in-depth literature review of Teaching Presence as the theoretical framework, research studies that focused on the three subcategories of Teaching Presence (Design and Organization, Discourse Facilitation and Direct Instruction) and the use of the Teaching Presence Model Scale within qualitative research. This study explored the following research questions:

1. How do undergraduate Business students perceive Teaching Presence in online courses?

2. What Teaching Presence components (Design and Organization, Discourse Facilitation and Direct Instruction) do undergraduate Business students find valuable in online courses?

3. How do exemplary undergraduate online Business course faculty demonstrate Teaching Presence in online instruction?

This literature review is organized into four main sections. The first section reviews the Community of Inquiry Model as a whole and introduces Teaching Presence as a theoretical framework. This section includes a detailed review of research studies with a strong focus on the Teaching Presence Model. The second section covers research focused on the three subcategories of Teaching Presence which include, (1) Design and Organization, (2) Discourse Facilitation, and (3) Direct Instruction. The third section reviews the most recent literature on the Teaching Presence Scale as a valid survey instrument. The fourth section reviews current

research methodology and discusses the need for qualitative research focusing on Teaching Presence.

## Theoretical Framework - Teaching Presence Model

In order to encourage the development of enhanced instructor practices, understanding quality and good teaching approaches in the online learning environment must be a priority. Teaching Presence as a theoretical framework serves as a model to explore and understand teaching practices in the areas of design and organization, discourse facilitation and direct instruction. A deeper examination of Teaching Presence in online courses can aid in the development of enhanced instructor practices that can ultimately lead to improved student satisfaction and learning outcomes.

### *Community of Inquiry Model*

Teaching Presences is an integral part of the Community of Inquiry Model. The Community of Inquiry Model serves as the larger instructional design model consisting of three emerging components. Together, the three components intersect to develop the educational experience in the online learning environment (Garrison et al., 2000). Teaching Presence, Social Presence and Cognitive Presence work together within the Community of Inquiry Model. The Community of Inquiry framework is used to evaluate high order thinking skills of online course participants (Garrison et al., 2000). Continued research supports the Community of Inquiry framework as a valuable theoretical tool to further understand causal relationships among Teaching Presence, Social Presence, and Cognitive Presence (Garrison, Cleveland-Innes & Fung, 2010).

Teaching Presence is defined and discussed in terms of three dimensions: Design and Organization, Discourse Facilitation, and Direct Instruction. Teaching Presence is defined as "the

design, facilitation and direction of cognitive and social processes for the purpose of realizing personally meaningful and educationally worthwhile learning outcomes" (Anderson et al., 2001, p. 5).

Cognitive presence is defined as "the extent to which the participants in any particular configuration of a Community of Inquiry are able to construct meaning through sustained communication" (Garrison et al., 2000, p. 89).  Additionally, cognitive presence includes "the exploration, construction, resolution and confirmation of understanding through collaboration and reflection in a Community of Inquiry," (Garrison, 2007, p. 65).  It is important to note that previous research indicates that high levels of interaction do not necessarily increase cognitive development within the online learning environment (Garrison & Cleveland-Innes, 2005).

Social presence is the ability of participants in a Community of Inquiry to "project themselves socially and emotionally, as 'real' people through the medium of communication being used" (Garrison & Anderson, 2007, p. 28) Social presence creates a feeling of collaboration with members of the course, as opposed to impersonal objects (Baker, 2010). The community/collaborative focus of social presence has prompted a great deal of research and inquiry among researchers (Bartruff, 2009; Baker, 2010; Ke, 2010; Archibald, 2011; Alaulamie, 2014).  Teaching Presence and social presence are closely related within the Community of Inquiry model. Additionally, social presence is driven by collaborative events and interaction among students and their instructor.

## *Significance of the Teaching Presence Model*

All aspects of the Community of Inquiry Framework are important.  However, Teaching Presence is most significant in the areas of "student satisfaction, perceived learning, and sense of community" (Garrison, 2007, p. 67). Several researchers have suggested that Teaching Presence

is the most significant component with the Community of Inquiry Framework model (Baker 2008; Tabar-Gaul, 2008; Archibald, 2011).  Baker 2008 supported this finding by suggesting that Teaching Presence was a significant predictor of affective learning, cognition and motivation. Furthermore, Feeler (2012) found that Teaching Presence influenced students' growth in active learning, self-direction and self-teaching.  As online learning continues to develop and flourish, the need to understand the impact of Teaching Presence in the online classroom becomes more important.

A study by Catron (2012) analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of online teaching and learning quality.  The researcher examined all three components of the Community of Inquiry Framework in a mixed methods study using descriptive analysis, correlation and regression analyses and examination of volume and interaction patterns in discussion forums. Additionally, the researcher used qualitative methods through a secondary analysis of open-ended survey data. The final respondent data set included 252 completed surveys from students with varying majors taking online courses at the university level.  The rate of return for this data set was 49%.  The findings indicated that Teaching Presence exhibited the highest mean ratings (4.14 on a 5-point Likert scale) by students and the substantive relationship to student satisfaction (Catron, 2012). The correlation analyses in this study suggested that when the perception of Teaching Presence increased in the online classroom, overall satisfaction increases (Catron, 2012). Although the return rate was only 49% for this study, the use of both quantitative and qualitative research provided a suitable level of detail.  The qualitative narrative provided in this study supported the quantitative data collected in regard to the strong influence of Teaching Presence on student satisfaction (Catron, 2012).   This study prompted the need for additional qualitative research in the area of Teaching Presence. The research findings presented by Catron (2012) serve as a good

basis for additional qualitative research on specific instructor attributes that impact Teaching Presence.

A study by Archibald (2011) examined the extent that teaching and social presence contribute to cognitive presence.  This mixed methods study used quantitative data collection in the form of survey research and qualitative data collection in the form of semi-structured interviews.   The final quantitative respondent data set included 189 completed surveys from students taking online research methods courses and educational research courses at the university level.  The rate of return for this data set was 69%.  The qualitative data included 25 interviews.  The quantitative research findings by Archibald (2011) found that Teaching Presence was the foundation for social presence and the sustained development of cognitive presence. Research results indicated that Teaching Presence had a strong positive relationship to cognitive presence.  The standard regression analysis in the study suggested that Teaching Presence made significant contribution to explaining cognitive presence ($\beta$ = .45) Therefore, the hypotheses of "Teaching Presence will be positively related to cognitive presence" was accepted. The qualitative findings helped elaborate the significance of the quantitative results, particularly in the area of making connections.   The research findings presented by Archibald (2011) provide a foundation for future qualitative research in the area Teaching Presence characteristics that develop student connections.

In 2008, Baker examined the potential relationship between instructor immediacy and Teaching Presence.  This quantitative study used bivariate correlation, multiple linear regression analysis and factorial ANOVA analysis.  The study participants consisted of 377 undergraduate and graduate student respondents enrolled in online courses at a state university with varying majors. A response rate of 54% was attained.  The students in the Baker (2008) study indicated

that Teaching Presence was a major predictor of affective learning, cognition, and motivation. The students reported that there was a positive correlation between Teaching Presence and affective learning (t = 13.4), as well as student cognition (t =10.84) (Baker, 2008). The study also suggested a significant positive relationship among Teaching Presence and student motivation (t = 9.19) (Baker, 2008). This study was highly detailed and encompassed a great deal of data. The study showed a clear and positive correlation between Teaching Presence and affective learning, student cognition and student motivation. This study is a springboard for additional research in the area of specific instructional strategies (Baker, 2008).

A study conducted by Tabar--Gaul (2008) examined Teaching Presence, along with social and cognitive presence. The study focused on interactions between students and faculty in an introductory computer course at the community college level. Online communication technology and possible online retention components were also included in this study. Through quantitative descriptive statistics, the research concluded Teaching Presence was the most significant factor for successful online learning (Tabar--Gaul, 2008). Based on the student surveys, 74% of students strongly agreed or agreed that Teaching Presence was the most important component in the effectiveness of their online learning experience (Tabar--Gaul, 2008). Of the faculty members surveyed, all strongly agreed or agreed that Teaching Presence was one of the most important components for student success (Tabar--Gaul, 2008). It is important to note the limited response rate provided in this study. The student response rate was relatively low with 99 students completing the survey, providing a 23% return rate. The faculty response rate was higher, at 72% with 10 out of 13 participating faculty members. While the information provided value a larger response rate is needed to further the research. Tabar-Gaul (2008) provided qualitative analysis that was also used to further support the statistical data

through one open-ended question specifically addressing Teaching Presence.  This study prompts additional research in the area of online interactions between faculty and students (Tabar--Gaul, 2008).  While this study addressed the importance of Teaching Presence, the specifics regarding attributes and online best practices need further exploration.  This study was a springboard to further, more specific research in the area of Teaching Presence.

In 2009, Bouras sought to evaluate the effect of Teaching Presence and learner presence on student learning and satisfaction.  This study used Spearman's rank correlation coefficient to examine the relationship between the variables. The final respondent data set included 58 completed surveys from graduate distance education students.  The rate of return for this data set was 72.5%. The students in the Bouras (2009) study reported a positive relationship between Teaching Presence and perceived learning, as well as student satisfaction. The Spearman Rho correlation in the study suggested a moderately strong positive relationship to Teaching Presence and perceived participant satisfaction, rs = 0.45.  Additionally, the study indicated that as Teaching Presence scores increased, learning and satisfaction scores also increased (Bouras, 2009).  Two noteworthy future research recommendations emerged from this study.  Bouras highlighted the need to use a measurement instrument specific to Teaching Presence for future research.  Additionally, the data presented in this study is based on quantitative data and does not focus on perceptions of successful and unsuccessful teaching methods.

A research study by Laves (2010) revealed a positive relationship between Teaching Presence, perceived learning, and sense of community in online courses. This mixed methods study sought to identify a relationship between Teaching Presence and perceived learning through survey research and course instructor interviews.  The final student respondent data set included 397 completed surveys from students with varying majors taking online courses at the

university level.  The rate of return for this data set was 32.7%. The final faculty respondent data set included 32 completed surveys from students taking online courses at the university level. The rate of return for this data set was 41%.  The low return rate is a significant limitation of this study.  However, the coupling of qualitative data with quantitative data provided a merged method that allowed for greater clarification through explanation.  The study suggested that students and instructors perceived positive relationships between Teaching Presence and sense of community, as well as Teaching Presence and perceived student learning (Laves, 2010). Teaching Presence was shown to be predictive of high perceived student learning and sense of community through the results from the regression analysis model (F (3, 382) =18.859, p<.001). The qualitative data results indicated that design and organization (a component of Teaching Presence), was essential to creating and managing meaningful learning in online courses (Laves, 2010).  Laves (2010) presented an example of the use of the Teaching Presence Scale as a measurement instrument for both quantitative and qualitative data.  The main contribution of this study is the establishment of the Teaching Presence Scale as a data collection instrument in a qualitative study.

In a 2012 grounded-theory study, Feeler explored the perceptions of online students in order to produce a theory of community college student's perceptions of Teaching Presence. The researcher used active interviewing and a Straussian grounded-theory design to generate a substantive theory. Data was collected through 16 interviews with community colleges students with different majors who had taken a minimum of four online courses at the research site. Feeler's (2012) study developed the theory of establishing and sustaining instructor presence to enable student learning.  The result of this grounded-theory study was the Theory of Establishing and Sustaining Instructor Presence to Enable Student Learning.  The emergent theory asserts that

student-instructor relationships are created and maintained through four phases of instructor action and student response (Feeler, 2012). The four phases include the conditional phase, invitation to full participation, sustained instructor presence and development of self-directedness and self-teaching (Feeler, 2012). An emerging theme from this study was that Teaching Presence is vital to student development in the areas of active learning, self-direction and self-teaching (Feeler, 2012). This study provided a great deal of influence for future qualitative research focusing on Teaching Presence. While the focus of this study was on community college student's perceptions of Teaching Presence, Feeler strongly encouraged further qualitative research on perceptions of students at other levels of study.

In 2014, Alaulamie examined cognitive, social, and Teaching Presence as predictors of students' satisfaction in the online classroom through quantitative research methods by using a multiple linear regression method. Alaulamie's study consisted of 2442 completed surveys from students with varying majors in online programs. The survey was sent to 30,000 random students and resulted in a response rate of less than 10%. Of the 2442 completed surveys, 814 responses were used in the multiple regression analysis. All 2442 completed surveys were used to conduct the cross-validity procedure to verify data validity. Results in the Alaulamie (2014) study reported positive correlation between Teaching Presence students' satisfaction ($F(2, 811) = 180.291$, $p < .05$). Additionally, both social presence and Teaching Presence predicted 31.4% of the variance in students' satisfaction (Alaulamie, 2014). This study further supports previous research asserting that Teaching Presence had a positive impact on student satisfaction. Open ended questions within the survey provided greater detail regarding student's observation of Teaching Presence in online courses. Through this study, researchers and educators are prompted to recognize that Teaching Presence has a positive impact on student satisfaction.

However, the fine details and attributes were not explored. Alaulamie (2010) encouraged future research focused on improving Teaching Presence in online programs and the need for specific instructor strategies related to Teaching Presence.

The research conducted in the eight studies, above, suggest that Teaching Presence is fundamentally important in the online classroom. Various research suggested that Teaching Presence is the most significant component with the Community of Inquiry Framework model (Baker 2008; Tabar-Gaul, 2008; Archibald, 2011). Teaching Presence is a significant predictor of affective learning, cognition, and motivation (Baker, 2008) and influences students' growth as active learning, self-direction and self-teaching (Feeler, 2012). A high perceived level of Teaching Presence had a substantial relationship to student course satisfaction (Bouras, 2009; Ke, 2010; Catron, 2012; Alaulamie, 2014). Additionally, students perceived enhanced learning outcomes when greater Teaching Presence is demonstrated (Baker, 2008; Tabar-Gaul, 2008; Bouras, 2009; Laves, 2010).

Some research suggests that a high level of Teaching Presence is related to student course satisfaction (Bouras, 2009; Catron, 2012; Alaulamie, 2014), successful online learning (Tabar-Gaul, 2008), as well as affective learning, cognition and motivation (Baker, 2008). Various studies of online Teaching Presence maintain that students perceived enhanced learning outcomes when greater Teaching Presence is demonstrated (Baker, 2008; Tabar-Gaul, 2008; Bouras, 2009; Laves, 2010). Furthermore, Feelers (2012) found that "students perceived themselves as more capable of becoming active and self-directed learners in an environment with strong instructor presence" (p. 168). Students at varying education levels, ranging from undergraduate to graduate students, found Teaching Presence to be important (Tabar-Gaul, 2008; Catron, 2012; Archibald, 2011).

Most studies provided in this review focus on undergraduate, university level student populations with varying majors. However, Baker focused on both graduate and undergraduate students, while the research conducted by Bouras focused exclusively on graduate level students. The study conducted by Feeler focuses on community college level students. The research studies conducted to date focus on varying methods, although qualitative research is lacking particularly in the area of detailed student perceptions and specific instructor attributes. None of the research studies in the area of Teaching Presence focused solely on undergraduate Business students.

## Teaching Presence Components

The three subcategories of Teaching Presence include (1) Design and Organization, (2) Discourse Facilitation, and (3) Direct Instruction. Design and Organization includes establishing curriculum, setting course timeframes, defining topics and methods of instruction (Garrison et al., 2000). Discourse facilitation includes encouraging and prompting student participation, seeking agreement and understanding, and establishing a positive learning environment (Garrison et al., 2000). Direct instruction involves presenting content and resources, directing discussion involvement, providing assessment and feedback, along with addressing concerns (Garrison et al., 2000). The Teaching Presence Model and components are shown below (See Figure 2.1).

**Figure 2.1 Teaching Presence Model**
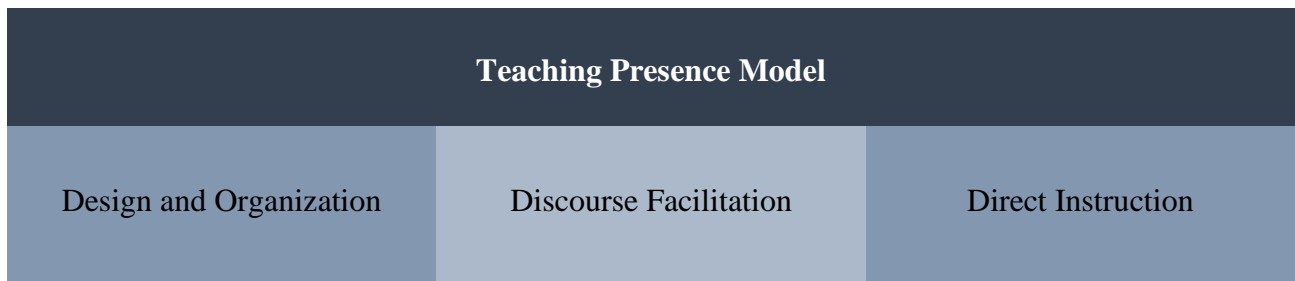
| Teaching Presence Model | | |
|---|---|---|
| Design and Organization | Discourse Facilitation | Direct Instruction |

*Adapted from Anderson et al. (2001).*

*Design and Organization*

Design and Organization includes setting curriculum, designing methods, establishing time parameters, establishing netiquette and utilizing the medium effectively (Anderson, et al., 2001). The current research on Design and Organization further described its elements and explored Design and Organization within the Teaching Presence Model. This section will analyze recent research findings on Design and Organization within the Teaching Presence framework. The Design and Organization components elements are shown below. (See Figure 2.2 Design and Organization Elements for the Design and Organization Component Element)

**Figure 2.2 Design and Organization Elements**

| Design and Organization |
| --- |
| Elements |
| Setting Curriculum |
| Establishing Time Parameters |
| Utilizing Medium Effectively |
| Establishing Netiquette |
| Designing Methods |

*Adapted from Anderson et al., 2001*

A study conducted by Spiro in 2011 provided a great deal of insight into Design and Organization as a component of the Teaching Presence Model. Spiro (2011) used quantitative and qualitative methods to obtain data from doctoral students enrolled in a Doctor of Education program. The baseline data for this study was in the form of a survey with 105 participants, yielding a response rate of 49.8%. The qualitative data was collected in the format of telephone interviews with three student-nominated exemplary online Business course instructors and a

student focus group.  Within this study thirteen Teaching Presence indicators were ranked.  Of the thirteen ranked indicators, four of the five highest ranked indicators were identified within the category of design and organization, with rankings of 4.38 to a high of 4.59, falling within the range of agreement to strong agreement (Spiro, 2011).   Spiro identified the importance of design and organization and set the stage for additional research within this component of Teaching Presence.

In 2014, Hayden examined expanding the definition of the Design and Organization component of the Teaching Presence Model, to include four sets of priorities in online course design.  The study conducted by Hayden focused solely on university-level faculty teaching online or blended format courses.  Sixteen faculty members agreed to participate in a 60-90-minute interview.   The researcher also examined course documents, the faculty's course management system and biographical information.  Common themes emerged from the interview and observational data.  Hayden's expansion of design and organization prompts educators to look beyond instruction design and consider four online course design priories: 1. instructional design, 2. compositions, 3. multimedia design and 4. aesthetics (Hayden, 2014).  This study provided a more dynamic examination of design and organization and prompts researchers examine Teaching Presence components in a qualitative manner.  This study also prompted the question of how differing teaching styles and educational preferences influence Teaching Presence.

The current research on Design and Organization sought to describe the elements of effective Design and Organization, as well as position its importance into the greater realm of Teaching Presence. Several researchers provided descriptions regarding what Design and

Organization entails and how it is communicated (Baker, 2008; Jinks, 2009; Spiro, 2011; Hayden, 2014).

Establishing curriculum and methods of dissemination (Setting Curriculum); developing course materials (Designing Methods); providing guidelines and expectations (Utilizing Medium Effectively) (Spiro, 2011); determining time parameters (Establishing Time Parameters); establishing netiquette (Establishing Netiquette) (Jinks, 2009) are key elements of Design and Organization. Design and Organization is communicated through a variety of mediums; including the course syllabus, course discussions, e-mail communication, video lectures and conferencing sessions.

Multiple studies were conducted on effective design and organization attributes (Bouras, 2009; Spiro, 2011). Spiro (2011) stated that, "good course design is essential to an online course because it provides students with the necessary support to navigate successfully" (p. 174). Additionally, it is important to have multiple channels for student-instructor communication (Spiro, 2011). Bouras (2009) pointed out that interaction built into the curriculum design through timely feedback and approachability increased the perception of student learning and course satisfaction. Hayden (2014) identified course design as an instructor's first priority through the organization and selection of course resources. Instructors in this study also pointed to the need to consider and emphasize course composition (Hayden, 2014).

This section analyzed recent research findings on design and organization within the Teaching Presence framework. Studies conducted by Baker (2008), Jinks, (2009), Bouras (2009), Spiro (2011) and Hayden (2014) added to the knowledge base regarding design and organization and its elements in Teaching Presence. Additionally, the research finding presented provided further detail relating to communication methods that are associated with design and

organization.   The research findings presented highlighted the need for further research focusing

on teaching styles and attributes, as well as on interaction methods.

### *Discourse Facilitation*

Discourse Facilitation included encouraging and prompting student participation,

identifying areas agreement, assessing efficacy of the process, setting a climate for learning,

reinforcing student contributions and seeking to reach consensus (Anderson, et al., 2001).   The

current research on Discourse Facilitation outlines elements and important factors that impact

Discourse Facilitation within the Teaching Presence Model. This section will analyze recent

research findings on Discourse Facilitation within the Teaching Presence Model.   The available

literature on facilitation as a component of Teaching Presence points to several attributes.

Discourse Facilitation elements are shown below (See Figure 2.3 Discourse Facilitation

Component Elements).

**Figure 2.3 Discourse Facilitation Component Elements**

| Discourse Facilitation |
| --- |
| Elements |
| Identifying Areas of Agreement/Disagreement |
| Reinforce Student Contributions |
| Setting Climate for Learning |
| Drawing in Participants, Prompting Discussion |
| Assessing the Efficacy of the Process |
| Seeking to Reach Consensus |

*Adapted from Anderson et al., 2001*

A research study conducted by Ruhlandt in 2010 found that an instructor's facilitation abilities were crucial in establishing Teaching Presence. The research population for this study consisted of university-level, undergraduate students majoring in Business or marketing, enrolled in online or blended delivery courses. Ruhlandt hypothesized that the three presences within the Community of Inquiry model would be more supported in the blended delivery courses. However, the data indicated that the mode of delivery was not a determining factor in educational outcomes (Ruhlandt, 2010). This study used causal comparative design using retention, social presence, cognitive presence, Teaching Presence, learning, and satisfaction as the dependent variables. Thirty students completed the research study survey. Although the response rate of 24% was low, this study did provide useful information by highlighting the importance of instructor facilitation in both online and blended-delivery courses.

In a 2011 mixed methods study, Lazarevic explored how asynchronous videos in an online course effect students' perception of Teaching Presence. Lazarevic found a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group in the area of facilitation. The control group in this student consisted of 40 students. The experimental group in this study consisted of 47 students. There was a considerable difference in the mean value of the experimental group and the control group in the area of facilitation when using video announcements in the experimental group. This was also supported by qualitative results of positive student interview responses supporting video-based announcements that were not articulated by the control group that received text-based announcements. The research study found that "video announcements can be an effective way to increase the level of students' perception of instructors' facilitation role in online courses" (Lazarevic, 2011, p.155). Lazarevic further explained that the use of video-based communication prompted a great reception to the

instructor's facilitation efforts throughout the course (Lazarevic, 2011).  Additionally, the use of video-based communication prompted a greater connection to the instructor and brought about a stronger impression of presence within the course.

A 2013 study by Hall investigated community college students' perceived levels of Teaching Presence in conjunction with periodic learning-reflection activities presented throughout the span of the course.  This correlational study consisted of a control group with 85 students and an experimental group of 61 students. The survey response rate was 60%.  The perceived levels of an instructor's Teaching Presence were significantly higher in courses with reflective learning activities, opposed to courses without reflective activities (Hall, 2013).  The reflective learning activities are an example of sharing meaning through facilitation (Hall, 2013). Additionally, the results of this study provide an example of demonstrating a greater extent of Teaching Presence through specifically directed instructor facilitation (Hall, 2013).

Archibald (2011) furthered the research by advocating for support and guidance in online classroom discussions. This mixed methods study examined the extent that teaching and social presence contribute to cognitive presence.  The quantitative respondent data set included 189 completed surveys from students taking online research methods courses and educational research courses at the university level.  The rate of return for this data set was 69%.  The study also included qualitative data from 25 interviews.  The quantitative data in this study suggested that Teaching Presence made a significant contribution to explaining cognitive presence ($\beta$ = .45). The qualitative findings helped to elaborate on the significance of the quantitative results, particularly in the area of making connections.   Archibald (2011) stated that, "many of the participants interviewed expressed their appreciation for the support and guidance the researcher provided through the discussions.  In fact, there were 20 references made to the connection

learners made with the facilitator" (p. 183). The research conducted by Archibald asserted that the facilitator was essential in the progress of the discussion forum by presenting questions, providing guidance and answers, as well as providing additional resources (Archibald, 2011). When the facilitator role is abandoned or neglected social and cognitive presence diminishes (Archibald, 2011).

Laves (2010) suggests that facilitation includes focusing discussion, confirming student understanding, sharing information, and keeping students on track within the course. Additionally, Spiro (2010) emphasizes that welcome letters, personalized and bulk emails, announcements and virtual office hours are an important aspect of facilitation. Instructors must establish the overall climate for learning within the course (Catron, 2012). This indicates that facilitation goes beyond the online classroom discussion forums by pointing to additional areas of communication within the course and through email.

Research studies regarding the dimension of facilitation within Teaching Presence had three common themes: overall facilitation abilities of the instructor, support and guidance in discussion forums, and perceived connection with the course instructor (Lave, 2010; Ruhlandt, 2010; Lazarevic, 2011; Hall, 2013). Tabar-Gaul (2008) further supported the importance of facilitation by suggesting that effective online facilitation through regular interactions with their instructors was very important in students' overall success in a course. Furthermore, Archibald (2011) suggested that instructors should work to facilitate collaboration among their students to ensure meaningful learning in the online classroom.

This section analyzed recent research findings on discourse facilitation within the Teaching Presence framework. Studies conducted by Tabar-Gaul (2008), Lave (2010), Ruhlandt (2010), Lazarevic (2011), Archibald (2011) Catron (2012) and Hall (2013) added to the

knowledge base regarding discourse facilitation and its elements, as well as communication

methods that are associated with discourse facilitation.   The research findings presented

emphasized the need for further research focusing on effective online facilitation attributes and

perceived connections between students and instructors.

## *Direct Instruction*

Direct Instruction included presenting content and questions, confirming understanding,

diagnosing misconceptions, focusing discussions and injecting knowledge (Anderson, et al.,

2001).  The current research on direct instruction seeks to describe its attributes and explore

Direct Instruction within the Teaching Presence Model. This section will analyze recent research

findings on Direct Instruction within the Teaching Presence Model.   The available literature on

direct instruction as a component of Teaching Presence points to several attributes.  Direct

Instruction component elements are shown below. (See Figure 2.4 Direct Instruction Component

Elements).

**Figure 2.4 Direct Instruction Component Elements**

| Direct Instruction |
| --- |
| Elements |
| Present Content/Questions |
| Focus the Discussion on Specific Issues |
| Confirm Understanding |
| Diagnose Misconceptions |
| Inject Knowledge from Diverse Sources |

*Adapted from Anderson et al., 2001*

A study done by Antonacci (2011) examined the influence of Direct Instruction in online classroom discussion forums by using content analysis of discussion messages. Data for this study was obtained through content analysis of course discussions within an online graduate course. The discussions analyzed were produced by 15 students and one course instructor. This study examined the direct instruction component of Teaching Presence in terms of understanding and classifying instructor discussion messages within the online learning environment. Additionally, the influence of the instructor's message content in regard to student reply messages was examined in this study. The researcher used content analysis to classify and code the course discussion posts. Through this analysis it was determined that a considerable amount of direct instruction is done within course discussion threads (Antonacci, 2011). The researcher found that direct instruction messages that centered on confirming and focusing methods received more student reply messages than instructor messages that simply presented content information (Antonacci, 2011). This study presented a need for greater understanding of what prompts student interest and action within course discussions.

A 2009 study conducted by Bartruff was designed to illustrate the interactions of students and instructors through a descriptive case study analysis of one online graduate level education course. Thirteen students were enrolled in the online graduate course that was examined in this study. Eleven of the thirteen students enrolled participated in the end of the course survey. The analysis of this study determined that direct instruction provided four-fifths of all Teaching Presence communication within the online course in the study. The researcher concluded that course content is presented, questions are addressed, misconceptions are identified and understanding is confirmed through direct instruction (Bartruff, 2009). Direct instruction indicators identified in this study included focusing discussions, summarizing discussion,

providing feedback, providing additional source and responding to technical concerns (Bartruff, 2009).

Laves (2010) mixed methods study used the Teaching Presence Scale as the quantitative measure to explore the impact of Teaching Presence on students' perceptions of learning and sense of community in intensive online distance education courses. The student respondent data set included 397 completed surveys from students with varying majors taking online courses at the university level.  The rate of return for this data set was 32.7%. The faculty respondent data set included 32 completed surveys from students taking online courses at the university level. The rate of return for this data set was 41%.   This study identified a relationship between Teaching Presence and perceived learning through survey research and course instructor interviews.  In addition to uncovering positive relationships among Teaching Presence, perceived learning, and sense of community Laves (2010) found that both students and instructors considered direct instruction as the most important component of Teaching Presence in regard to learning.

A study by Catron (2012) analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of online teaching and learning quality.  The respondent data set included 252 completed surveys from students with varying majors taking online courses at the university level.  The rate of return for this data set was 49%.  The qualitative narrative provided in this study supported the quantitative data collected in regard to the strong influence of Teaching Presence on student satisfaction (Catron, 2012).   Additionally, Catron (2012) found that timely feedback, clear communication of course topics and communication of course goals to be the highest rated items when researching quality of online teaching and learning.

Several research studies supported the importance of Direct Instruction within the Teaching Presence Model (Bartruff, 2009; Laves,2010; Spiro, 2010; Antonacci, 2011; Catron, 2012). Direct Instruction demonstrates the instructor's authority as a subject matter expert (Spiro, 2010). There are a variety of ways that instructors demonstrate Direct Instruction, such as instructor-led synchronous chat sessions, assignment feedback, and additional resource postings (Spiro, 2010; Laves, 2010). Another Direct Instruction example includes responding to technical concerns (Jinks, 2009). In addition, varying sources of technology can be used for direct instruction, such as videos, podcasts, wikis and Google documents (Laves, 2010).

This section analyzed recent research findings on Direct Instruction within the Teaching Presence Model. Studies conducted by Bartruff, (2009), Jinks (2009), Laves (2010), Spiro (2010), Antonacci (2011) and Catron (2012) added to the knowledge base regarding Direct Instruction component elements, as well as communication methods that are associated with direct instruction The research findings presented suggested the need for further research focusing on instructor actions that prompt student interest and engagement.

## *Teaching Presence Model, Components and Elements*

The Teaching Presence Model is comprised of three components: Design and Organization, Discourse Facilitation, and Direct Instruction. Each Teaching Presence Model component is comprised of specific elements further characterize each of the three Teaching Presence Model components. The Teaching Presence Model components and elements are shown below (See Figure 2.5 Teaching Presence Model Components and Elements).

**Figure 2.5 Teaching Presence Model Components and Elements**

| Model | Components | Elements |
|---|---|---|
| **Teaching Presence Model** | Design and Organization | Designing Methods |
| | | Establishing Netiquette |
| | | Establishing Time Parameters |
| | | Setting Curriculum |
| | | Utilizing Medium Effectively |
| | Discourse Facilitation | Identifying Areas of Agreement/Disagreement |
| | | Reinforce Student Contributions |
| | | Setting Climate for Learning |
| | | Drawing in Participants, Prompting Discussion |
| | | Assessing the Efficacy of the Process |
| | | Seeking to Reach Consensus |
| | Direct Instruction | Present Content/Questions |
| | | Focus the Discussion on Specific Issues |
| | | Confirm Understanding |
| | | Diagnose Misconceptions |
| | | Inject Knowledge from Diverse Sources |

*Adapted from Anderson et al. (2001)*

The Teaching Presence Model component elements provide additional finite details about the Teaching Presence Model components and the Teaching Presence Model as a whole. The Teaching Presence Model components and element descriptions are shown below (See Figure 2.6 Teaching Presence Model Components and Elements Descriptions).

**Figure 2.6 Teaching Presence Model Components and Elements Descriptions**

| Teaching Presence Component Elements  Descriptions | |
| --- | --- |
| **Design and Organization Element** | **Description** |
| Establishing time parameters | Communicating important due dates, establishing time frames for learning activities that assisted students with keeping pace in a course |
| Designing methods | Providing clear instructions regarding the completion of course learning activities |
| Utilizing medium effectively | Providing information regarding to how use the medium to assist student learning |
| Establishing netiquette | Proving information help students understand and practice acceptable behaviors in the online learning environment |
| Setting curriculum | Communicating important course topics (course overview, learning objectives). |
| **Discourse Facilitation Element** | **Description** |
| Drawing in participants, prompting discussion | Instructor involvement and the prompting of student involvement to engage in productive dialog |
| Assessing the efficacy of the process | Proving assistance in regard to keeping participants on task |
| Setting climate for learning | Proving encouragement regarding the exploration of new ideas |
| Reinforce student contributions | Acknowledging student contributions within the course |
| Seeking to reach consensus | Guiding the class discussions to promote the understanding  of course topics |
| Identifying areas of agreement/disagreement | Identifying areas of agreement and disagreement on course topics |
| **Direct Instruction Element** | **Description** |
| Confirm understanding | Providing explanatory responses in the form of explanation and feedback |
| Present content/questions | Presenting content or questions |
| Diagnose misconceptions | Guiding student to revise their thinking and correct misunderstandings |
| Focus the discussion on specific issues | Providing focus to discussions on relevant issues |
| Inject knowledge from diverse sources | Providing useful information from a variety of sources |

## The Teaching Presence Scale

The Teaching Presence Scale was designed to measure Teaching Presence in the areas of

Design and Organization, Discourse Facilitation, and Direct Instruction, as well as serve as a

common survey instrument to measure learners' sense of Teaching Presence in their online courses (Shea, Li, Swan & Pickett, 2005). The Teaching Presence Scale is a seventeen-question questionnaire (derived from the Community of Inquiry Framework) that is designed to measure Teaching Presence using six items for Design and Organization, six items for Discourse Facilitation, and five items for Direct Instruction (Shea et al., 2005). This serves as a common survey instrument to measure learners' sense of Teaching Presence in their online courses (Shea et al., 2005, p. 70). Additionally, the Teaching Presence Scale can assist faculty in identifying what drives students and what matters most to them in an online learning environment.

Shea, Li, Swan and Pickett (2005) collaborated in the development of the Teaching Presence Scale. Anderson, an author of the Community of Inquiry model, provided consultation on the development of the survey instrument (Shea et al., 2005). An initial study was done by Shea, Li, Swan & Pickett in 2005 to validate the instrument. A follow up validation study was done by Shea, Li & Pickett in 2006. Arbaugh and Hwang (2006) followed the initial verification studies with multi-institutional samples, providing additional validation of the Teaching Presence Scale.

*Initial Validation*

Validation and measurement of reliability of the Teaching Presence Scale was initially verified by Shea, Li , Swan and Pickett (2005). The initial study was designed to determine the validity and reliability of the Teaching Presence Scale. A multi-institutional survey including 2036 students at 32 colleges was conducted in 2004. The return rate was 93%. Factor analysis and multiple linear regression analysis were used to draw conclusion of validity and reliability. In this study, reliability of the Teaching Presence Scale was significant, with a Cronbach's alpha score of .98 for the entire survey (Shea et al., 2005). The major implication of this study was the

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emerging factor analysis data supporting a two-component model using instructional design and organization and "directed facilitation" (Shea et al., 2005).

A follow-up study conducted by Shea, Li & Pickett in 2006 further validated the Teaching Presence Scale and yielded similar results. The student survey data collected consisted of 1,067 students across 32 colleges, with a 47% return rate. Shea et al. (2006) applied factor analysis on data collected from the Teaching Presence Scale using instructional design and organization and directed facilitation as the two model components. Multiple regression analysis determined that 78% of the variability of the Teaching Presence construct was accounted for by the two components of instructional design and organization and directed facilitation (Shea et al., 2006). A two factor model was proposed in both the Shea et al. (2005) and Shea et al. (2006) studies while validating the use of the Teaching Presence Scale as a reliable survey instrument with a Cronbach's alpha score of. 98 for the entire survey.

While Shea et al. (2005) and Shea et al. (2006) concluded that a two factor model fit their data, Arbaugh and Hwang (2006) concluded that the original three factor model fit their data. Arbaugh and Hwang (2006) drew data from 190 MBA students in 14 graduate classes at a Midwestern university who completed the Teaching Presence Scale, resulting in a 57.6% return rate. The survey was administered to students via email with a paper copy of the survey provided to non-respondent students 7-10 days after the email survey was distributed. This study used confirmatory factor analysis to validate the original three-factor model of Teaching Presence with reliability coefficients of .90, .94 and .89, respectively. The researchers found that although the components are highly correlated, all three components: instructional design and organization, direct instruction, and discourse facilitation are important in the online classroom (Arbaugh & Hwang, 2006). This study further supports the use of the Teaching Presence Scale

and the three-factor model that includes instructional design and organization, direct instruction, and discourse facilitation.

Although the two-factor model and the three-factor model differences are worth noting, the differing models did not affect this study. The three-factor model was used. The reliability results reported by Shea et al. (2005), Shea et al. (2006) and Arbaugh & Hwang, (2006) of the overall survey supported that the Teaching Presence Scale is a reliable and valid survey for evaluating Teaching Presence in online courses.

The seventeen-question survey is designed to measure Teaching Presence, specifically in the areas of instructional design and organization, facilitation of productive discourse, and direct instruction. The questions regarding Design and Organization focus on setting curriculum, design methods, timeframes, use of the medium and netiquette (Shea et al., 2005). The areas of focus for discourse facilitation included the instructor's ability to drive consensus, identify agreement/disagreement, valuing student contributions, setting a climate for learning, assisting student with remaining on task and encouraging participation (Shea et al., 2005). Lastly, questions regarding Direct Instruction focused on the presentation of the course content and questions, focusing discussions, confirming understanding, identifying misperceptions, and providing supplementary resources (Shea et al., 2005). (See Appendices B and C)

## *Current Research Studies*

Three research studies utilized the Teaching Presence Scale as a survey instrument. All three studies used the Teaching Presence Scale as a quantitative tool for research. Research conducted by Baker (2008); Jinks (2009) and Laves (2010) supported the use of the Teaching Presence Scale as a reliable survey instrument and verified the validity of the Teaching Presence

Scale (Baker 2008; Jinks; 2009; Laves 2010) with a Cronbach's alpha scores of .97, .98, .96 respectively.

In a 2009 quantitative study Jinks used the Teaching Presence Scale in conjunction with the Classroom Community Scale to study how Teaching Presence and the sense of community aided in the prediction of perceived student learning in online course. The researcher used a 51 question survey to address the relationship between Teaching Presence and the sense of community with students' perceived learning in an online course. The 17-question Teaching Presence Scale was part of the 51 question survey provided to 115 undergraduate students enrolled in online courses. Jinks (2009) used the Teaching Presence Scale to measure Teaching Presence as the independent variable. Survey results were examined using a multiple linear regression, a correlation matrix, and a series of t-tests and ANOVAs. Results from this study indicated that Teaching Presence and the sense of community predicted 45% of the variance of perceived student learning. The data from the study revealed that perceived student learning was aided by Teaching Presence and sense of community in the online classroom (Jinks; 2009).

In a 2010 mixed methods study Laves used the Teaching Presence Scale as the quantitative measure to explore the impact of Teaching Presence on students' perceptions of learning and sense of community in intensive online distance education courses. In addition to the Teaching Presence Scale, Laves (2010) used the Classroom Community and School Index to survey instructors teaching intensive online courses and participating students that were enrolled in intensive online courses. This mixed methods study identified a relationship between Teaching Presence and perceived learning through survey research and course instructor interviews. The final student respondent data set included 397 completed surveys from students with varying majors taking online courses at the university level. The rate of return for this data

set was 32.7%. The final faculty respondent data set included 32 completed surveys from students taking online courses at the university level. The rate of return for this data set was 41%. Through the use of the Teaching Presence Scale, Teaching Presence was shown to be predictive of high perceived student learning and sense of community through the results from the regression analysis model (F (3, 382) =18.859, p<.001. The study resulted in uncovering positive relationships among Teaching Presence, perceived learning, and sense of community using the Teaching Presence Scale, the Classroom Community and School Index and opened ended interview questions for faculty members that completed the survey (Laves, 2010).

A research study by Baker (2008) used the Teaching Presence Scale to examine instructor immediacy and instructor presence with respect to student affective learning, cognition, and motivation. Baker (2008) used the Teaching Presence Scale to measure instructor presence. This quantitative research study used the Verbal Immediacy Scale, the Six-Scale Measure of Affective Learning, Learning Loss Scale and the Motivation Scale in addition to Teaching Presence Scale (Baker, 2008). The study participants consisted of 377 undergraduate and graduate student respondents enrolled in online courses at a state university with varying majors. The students in the Baker (2008) study indicated that Teaching Presence was a major predictor of affective learning, cognition, and motivation. This quantitative study used bivariate correlation, multiple linear regression analysis and factorial ANOVA analysis. The students reported that there was a positive correlation between Teaching Presence and affective learning (t = 13.4), as well as student cognition (t =10.84) (Baker, 2008). The study also suggested a significant positive relationship among Teaching Presence and student motivation (t = 9.19) (Baker, 2008). The results indicated that Teaching Presence was a major predictor of affective learning, cognition and motivation (Baker, 2008).

There is a need to further explore Teaching Presence using qualitative methodology (Jinks, 2009; Laves, 2010).  The lack of qualitative data in relation to the Teaching Presence Model was an opportunity to further the research in a productive manner.  Multiple researchers supported this assertion (Baker 2008; Jinks; 2009; Laves 2010).  The Teaching Presence Scale was a reliable and valid survey instrument that was used as part of the interview protocol in this qualitative research study.

## Teaching Presence Model - Qualitative Research

The current research presented in this literature review provided insight into the Teaching Presence Model, its three components (Design and Organization, Discourse Facilitation and Direct Instruction), as well as the Model Presence Model component elements.
The use of the Teaching Presence Scale as a reliable and valid survey instrument was also discussed.   There was a need to study teaching pedagogy and successful teaching activities in the area of Teaching Presence through more qualitative research (Bouras, 2009).  Tabar-Gaul (2008) suggested additional research on Teaching Presence through exploring strategies that contribute to student success in online classrooms and identifying the most effective online facilitation skills and methods that best equipped the instructor with facilitation proficiency. Spiro (2011) further supported the need for additional qualitative research on the three components of Teaching Presence, indicating that additional qualitative studies were needed to gain more in-depth data comparing faculty perceptions with student perceptions.  Gaining insight in regard to varying perceptions of Teaching Presence could assist in a better understanding successful pedagogy and instructor activities.

A quantitative study conducted by Jinks (2009) used the Teaching Presence Scale in conjunction with the Classroom Community Scale to study how Teaching Presence and the sense

of community aided in the prediction of perceived student learning in an online courses.  Jinks (2009) used the 17-question Teaching Presence Scale as part of the 51 question survey completed by 115 undergraduate students enrolled in online courses.  In this study Jinks (2009) stressed the need to examine specific actions taken by online instructors in regard to strategies used for direction instruction and communication. Jinks (2009) suggested that, "while the research is overwhelmingly positive in valuing Teaching Presence in an online course, the research available on pedagogy and actions that increase Teaching Presence in an online course are contradictory and underdeveloped" (p. 39). The need to examine specific actions taken by online instructors in regard to strategies used for direction instruction and communication is also stressed in this study.

The grounded-theory study conducted by Feeler (2012) provided the emergent Theory of Establishing and Sustaining Instructor Presence to Enable Student Learning and outlined four phases of instructor action and student response. Feeler (2012) studied the perceptions of online students in order to produce a theory of community college student's perceptions of Teaching Presence.  The researcher used active interviewing and a Straussian grounded-theory design to establish a substantive theory. Data was collected through 16 interviews with community colleges students with different majors who had taken a minimum of four online courses at the research site.  An emerging theme from this study was that Teaching Presence is vital to student development in the areas of active learning, self-direction and self-teaching (Feeler, 2012).  As a result of this study, the researcher identified the need to explore faculty demonstration of Teaching Presence in order to provide a worthwhile understanding of student perceptions and instructor practices.

Laves (2010) sought to identify a relationship between Teaching Presence and perceived learning through survey research and course instructor interviews. This study revealed a positive relationship between Teaching Presence, perceived learning, and sense of community in online courses (Laves, 2010). The student respondent data set included 397 completed surveys from students with varying majors taking online courses at the university level. The rate of return for this data set was 32.7%. The faculty respondent data set included 32 completed surveys from students taking online courses at the university level. The rate of return for this data set was 41%. As a result of this study, the researcher further supported an in-depth study of instructor characteristics including, but not limited to, teaching experience in the online classroom, familiarity of instructional design, and personal confidence with technology.

In general, research on Teaching Presence suggested that more qualitative research is needed in order to explore this area more fully and provide more insight into this concept. Several studies used qualitative research as a way to further verify quantitative data (Tabar-Gaul, 2008; Laves, 2010; Archibald, 2011; Lazarevic, 2011; Sprio, 2011; Catron, 2012). These studies served as a springboard for additional qualitative research focused on Teaching Presence. Bartruff, (2009), Feeler (2012) and Hayden (2014) conducted studies using qualitative research and emphasized the need for additional studies building upon their findings. Additionally, Baker (2008), Jinks (2009) and Laves (2009) supported the assertion that qualitative data in relation to Teaching Presence is an opportunity to further the research in a productive manner.

## Chapter Summary

This literature review discussed the Community of Inquiry Model as a whole and introduced Teaching Presence as a theoretical framework. It provided a detailed review of studies that conducted research focusing on Teaching Presence. Research studies that focused on

the three components of Teaching Presence (Design and Organization, Discourse Facilitation and Direct Instruction) and the Model Presence Model component elements were outlined. The use of the Teaching Presence Scale within qualitative research and current research studies using the Teaching Presence Scale were examined. The facilitation of good online instruction is key to student satisfaction and enrollment and to university growth. The research conducted in this review suggested that a high level of Teaching Presence is related to student course satisfaction (Bouras, 2009; Catron, 2012; Alaulamie, 2014), successful online learning (Tabar-Gaul, 2008), and affective learning, cognition and motivation (Baker, 2008). Additionally, studies of online Teaching Presence maintained that students perceived enhanced learning outcomes when greater Teaching Presence is demonstrated (Baker, 2008; Tabar-Gaul, 2008; Bouras, 2009; Laves, 2010).

Current research methodology presented within this review supported the need for additional qualitative research focusing on Teaching Presence. Although substantial research was provided in the chapter regarding Teaching Presence, there was a need for a deeper examination of how undergraduate Business students perceive Teaching Presence in online courses, what components of the Teaching Presence Model are most valuable to students and how faculty demonstrate Teaching Presence in the online learning environment. The lack of qualitative research in this area, provided pathway for this research study. Issues illustrated in the literature guided this study to question how undergraduate Business students perceive Teaching Presence in online Business courses and what components of Teaching Presence undergraduate Business students find most valuable. Additionally, student-nominated faculty were interviewed to further develop the research on the demonstration of Teaching Presence in undergraduate online Business courses.

# Chapter 3 - METHODOLOGY

## Introduction

This case study explored the online Business course environment through the experiences of individual learners and exemplary faculty in order to gain more insight regarding Teaching Presence. This chapter outlines the research methods and procedures that were used in the study, starting with the research questions, the rationale for qualitative research, case study rationale, the data collection methods that were employed, the research setting and participants of the study. This chapter ends with the information regarding trustworthiness of the research and the ethical considerations of this research study. The appendices include the Kansas State University IRB approval letter, the Missouri State University IRB approval letter, Participant Letter of Consent, as well as the Student and Faculty Interview Protocols.

## Research Questions

This study explored the following research questions:

1.     How do undergraduate Business students perceive Teaching Presence in online courses?

2.     What Teaching Presence components (Design and Organization, Discourse Facilitation and Direct Instruction) do undergraduate Business students find valuable in online courses?

3.     How do exemplary undergraduate online Business course faculty demonstrate Teaching Presence in online instruction?

## Rationale for Qualitative Research

This study used a qualitative research design to explore the research problem and to study a particular population (Creswell, 2013).   According to Creswell (2013), "qualitative research begins with assumptions, an interpretive/theoretical lens and the study of research problems

exploring the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (p. 64).

Identifying the problem and seeking to understand was the first step in conducting this

qualitative research study. There was a need to understand the results of this study with a great

deal of description, questioning, interpretation and empowerment (Merriam, 2009).

Qualitative researchers seek to describe and interpret human phenomenon through the

collection of data in a natural setting (Creswell, 2013). More complex and rich understanding of

a particular issue will then unfold. This offers researchers the opportunity to provide

descriptions and interpretations of the problem they are addressing through distinctive

approaches to inquiry (Creswell, 2013). In this case study, the researcher served as a key

instrument through the collection process of multiple sources - interviews, observations and

documentation (Creswell, 2013). The focus was on the participant's meaning regarding the

research problem. Multiple views emerge through the interpretation of the reader, participant

and researcher (Creswell, 2013).

Qualitative research is inductive and shaped by the data collection process (Creswell,

2013), this afforded researcher an opportunity to explore, describe and become immersed in the

research topic. This was particularly beneficial and one of the primary means of conducting

research within social sciences (Thomas, 2011). The role of the researcher was to understand

and describe. Researchers moved toward understanding and possibly building a theory, rather

than proving or disproving a hypothesis. As a result, inductive reasoning lent itself to greater

exploration and description (Merriam, 2009).

This research study followed the used key steps that researchers must engage in to

complete a qualitative research study outlined by Creswell (2013): identify a research problem,

review relevant literature, choose a working title, identify the qualitative approach, write a

purpose statement, write the central research question, write the research sub-questions, write data collection procedures, write data analysis procedures, collect and analyze the data, and present and discuss the findings.

This study used a qualitative design to explore and understand the research problem through an observational case study approach.  Using qualitative research methods to study undergraduate Business student's perceptions of Teaching Presence, its components, and how exemplary faculty demonstrated Teaching Presence in online Business courses provided a robust and meaningful understanding of the nature and attributes of Teaching Presence in online Business courses.

## Case Study Rationale

The rationale for conducting case study in this research study was to allow exploration of how undergraduate Business students perceive Teaching Presence in online courses, what components of the Teaching Presence Model are most valuable to students and how faculty demonstrated Teaching Presence in the online learning environment.  Through the interview process, rich descriptions and interview findings were analyzed and described.  Case study research lent itself well to this exploratory study based on the researcher's desire to search for meaning and gain understanding of Teaching Presence in online Business courses.  This study was an "instrumental" case study.  Instrumental case studies are designed to provide insight and facilitate understanding (Stake 2005, Merriam, 2009) and can drive practitioner reflection, elucidate an approach, issue, or situation and change practice.

The case study research used a blend of approaches from two predominant methodologists with complementary viewpoints, Merriam (2009) and Stake (2005).  The combination of approaches supported the researcher's epistemological leaning. Stake's (2005)

position and perspectives regarding case study research were used to support and develop this study. Viewpoints provided by Stake (2005) offer a foundation for emerging case study research through the strongly denoted importance of gathering and interpretation. Merriam's (2009) viewpoints and approach contributed heavily in the area of data collection and data anaysis. Contributing views from Robert Yin were also noted. Yin's (2013) positivistic approach differs from the constructivist viewpoints presented by Merriam (2009) and Stake (2005). However, the focused approach presented by Yin detailing design and investigation was useful in the case study research process. The researcher's prior exposure to various case study approaches and viewpoints, coupled with the desire for flexibility and reflexive data analysis was supported by the use of multiple techniques and strategies provided predominately by Merriam (2009) and Stake (2005).

Case study research is an essential method of research in the field of social sciences and is sufficient and substantial when compared to other science research methodologies (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 2005; Yin, 2013; Creswell, 2013). Case studies are bounded or described with specific parameters and provide rich description. Creswell (2013) asserted that case study research is a methodology, as well as a product of inquiry.

Thomas (2010), building off of prior assertions from Yin and Flyvbjerg, emphasized that case study research, "can stand on its own as a method based in the phronesis both of the inquirer and the reader" (2010, p. 581). Additionally, Thomas (2010) urged the need to recognize individual phronesis and value experiences, in order to gain insight and understanding in case study research. Case study validity can develop through sharing connections and insights (Thomas, 2010).

During this research study, the researcher served as an instrument for data collection and analysis (Merriam, 2009; Denzin, & Lincoln, 2011). Furthermore, a researcher can be a teacher, an advocate, an evaluator, a biographer, and an interpreter (Stake, 1995). These varying roles demonstrate the importance of the researcher and the significance of ethics in case study research. Case study researchers are attempting to teach their readers, share experiences and provide a picture (Stake, 2005). Within the role of teacher, case study researchers serve as advocates that relay a message, persuade the reader to believe their statements (Stake, 2005) and provide an illustration of an experience (Merriam, 2009).

## Case Study Data Collection

Typically, multiple data collection methods are used in case study research. Interviews, documents and observations are common data collection methods (Eisenhardt, 1989). Case study research is designed to seek understanding. Doing so cannot fully eliminate subjectivity (Stake, 2005). This further emphasizes the need for validation protocols. When observing the issue of the subjectivity and how researchers seek to understand in case study research it is important to thoroughly comprehend data collection and analysis. Data collection and analysis plays a significant role in the overall success of case study research. Stake explained that researchers find meaning rooted in their own experiences, the experiences detailed by the individuals they interview and through document observation (Stake, 2005). This is an important point as researchers consider their own personal bias in collection and analysis. Researchers may have preconceived notions regarding the data based on prior experiences. Adequate engagement and purposefully seeking variation are two important strategies when attempting to identify emerging findings and provide understanding (Merriam, 2009).

A strength of case study research is that it provides a deep and holistic description of a phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). Therefore, how the researcher interprets the data and presents it to the reader requires protocols (Stake, 1995). It is not enough to assume that our common sense will provide the accuracy and exclamation needed to comprehensively describe the case study (Stake, 2005). This is where the need for validation and triangulation comes into play. Without these protocols the case study researcher may bring forth only a single view when multiple perspectives need to be represented (Stake, 1995). Proper evaluation requires in-depth description. Within case study research, the researcher provides the reader with a deep explanation therefore serving as a biographer (Stake, 2005). The case study researcher brings forth meaning to the study in the form of interpretation. Case study researchers have a great deal of responsibility in terms of how they interpret their data and observations. It is important to note that researchers draw their own conclusions. There is no guide for converting inspections into assertions. Researchers and readers must be aware of author bias (Merriam, 2009).

Using a case study approach, semi-structured interviews were conducted with students and exemplary Business faculty that teaching online courses. Additionally, Teaching Evaluations and course documents of the exemplary faculty were used to further explore successful teaching activities and actions taken by online instructors. Yin (2011) asserted that interviews are an essential to case study research and offer deeper and more extensive data and that multiple forms of evidence builds validity. Therefore, semi-structured interviews, observations and course documents were used as evidence to address the research questions.

From the viewpoint of Stake (1995), case is designed for the researcher to provide analysis of an event, activity, process of one or more individuals and are bound by time and activity. In this study, the researcher investigated individual learners and business faculty

members to understand the perspectives of business students taking online course, to gain insight into the components of the Teaching Presence Model and to understand how exemplary Teaching Presence is demonstrated. Each study participant had an experience to express, and was provided clear boundaries within which to explore their perspectives. During interview process, participates shared their experiences and feelings that shaped their perceptions, offering the researcher insight into viewpoints the participants. The case for the study were business students taking online courses and student-nominated business faculty members that taught online courses at a four-year university in a Midwestern state.

The role of a case study researcher is to collect detailed information using multiple data collection procedures during a continuous period of time (Stake, 1995). For this study, the researcher collected data through semi-structured in-depth interviews, and by reviewing documents and observational data provided by the student-nominated business faculty members that participated in the student. Interviews were conducted over the phone, resulting in audio recording. The recordings were uploaded into NVivo 10, transcribed via the TranscribeMe transcription service and returned to NVivo 10 for coding. Documents and observation data was uploaded and stored as Memos in NVivo for review.

The purpose of this case study was to explore undergraduate Business student's perceptions of Teaching Presence in online Business courses, what components of Teaching Presence undergraduate Business students find valuable, and how exemplary Teaching Presence is demonstrated. Student and faculty participants were encouraged to share their experiences, methods and viewpoints, allowing the researcher to gain understanding from the student's perspective and from the viewpoint of exemplary faculty. The use of a qualitative method approach thoroughly represented the research method presented in this study.

## Research Setting

The study was conducted at a public four-year university located in the Midwest with 5820 total students (full-time students 4,284 and part-time students 1,518). The research location had an established distance education offering with 15 online degree options in the fall of 2015. The university was accredited by the North Central Association Higher Learning Commission. The student population was composed of 58 percent females and 42 percent males. The university was located in suburban setting. The city where the university was located had a population of approximately 49,526, with the next major town approximately one hour away. As of the fall 2014 semester, minority enrollment was 19 percent. Additionally, the age demographic as of fall 2014 was: age 24 and younger - 70 percent; age 25 and above - 30 percent.

## Research Location Online Course Offerings

The college was established in 1937 and has steadily expanded its physical location, course offerings and delivery methods. The university reported a steady enrollment in online education offerings with 2,344 students enrolled in at least one online course during the Fall 2014 semester. Online learning accounted for 385 courses offered in 2014. The university online credit hours 14,272 accounted for approximately 22 percent of the institution's total credit hours (66,163 credit hours).

At the research location, online classes began at the beginning of each semester with classes available in the Fall, Spring, and Summer sessions. The typical online course followed a traditional 16-week (a full semester long) schedule. Online sections had a limit of 25 students per section. All online courses used the Blackboard Learn as the Learning Management System

for online course delivery.  Online courses were made available to students two days before the

semester start date of the course and were accessed through the Blackboard Learn portal.

**Figure 3.1 Online Enrollment at the Research Location**
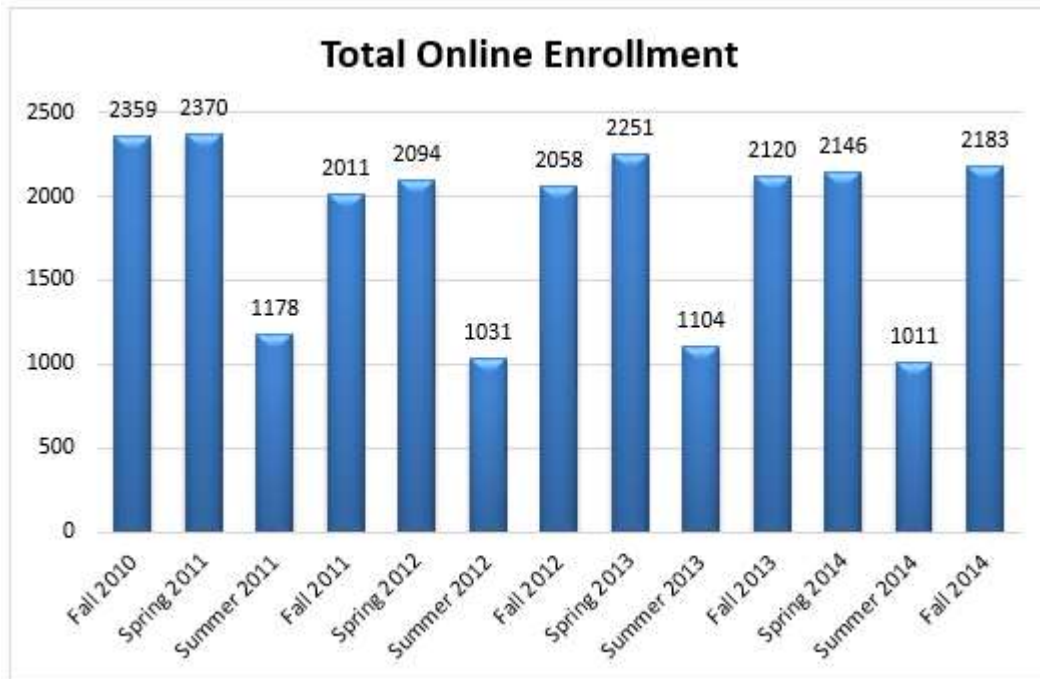


**Table 3.1 Total Students Enrolled in Online Courses, Total Online Credit Hours**

| Semester | Total Students Enrolled in Online Courses | Credit Hours |
|---|---|---|
| Fall 2010 | 2359 | 14202 |
| Spring 2011 | 2370 | 13596 |
| Summer 2011 | 1178 | 5385 |
| Fall 2011 | 2011 | 11502 |
| Spring 2012 | 2094 | 12284 |
| Summer 2012 | 1031 | 4541 |
| Fall 2012 | 2058 | 12140 |
| Spring 2013 | 2251 | 13194 |
| Summer 2013 | 1104 | 4897 |
| Fall 2013 | 2120 | 12273 |
| Spring 2014 | 2146 | 12007 |
| Summer 2014 | 1011 | 4529 |
| Fall 2014 | 2183 | 13176 |

## Business Department Research Site

There were twenty-five full-time faculty members in the School of Business and twenty-one adjunct instructors, with thirty-two total faculty members teaching online each semester at the research site. The Business department offered a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA) with eight undergraduate majors. The Business department also allowed two master's degrees. Students pursuing master's degrees were not included in this study. The study focused on students pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA). Approximately 24 percent of the institution's total student population was pursuing a degree in Bachelor of Science in Business Administration.

The faculty participants taught courses within the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA) program. No courses were specifically created for this research study. All course materials were available online within the course portal—Blackboard Learn. Each faculty member had control over the content of the courses. However, all online classes shared some common features such as Announcements, Course Home, Meet Your Instructor, Student Resources and My Grades. All courses were divided into weekly modules (Weeks) totaling 16 weeks.

## Participants of the Study

The participants in the study consisted of 20 Business students and 3 student-nominated online Business faculty. The student participants consisted of freshman, sophomore, junior and senior students that were enrolled in at least one online Business course during the Fall 2015 semester at the research location. Based on the student interviews, the faculty most often nominated by the students as demonstrating effective methods of Teaching Presence served as faculty participants.

*Student Selection Criteria*

The population of this study consisted of students enrolled in at least one for-credit, undergraduate online Business course during the Fall 2015 semester at the university. The researcher purposefully selected undergraduate Business students enrolled in at least one online Business course as participants in order to investigate Teaching Presence in online Business courses. The selection process of the Business students was based on the following criteria: (1) the student was enrolled in at least one online Business course at the research location (2) the student's enrollment consisted of at least one a for-credit three-hour course and (3) the student is a degree seeking Business student. The participants in the study consisted of 20 Business students from all academic levels, both male and female students, seeking a degree a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA) in the Robert Plaster School of Business.

The researcher applied purposeful selection of undergraduate Business students enrolled in at least one online Business course to be interviewed based on the criteria identified above. The researcher identified all Business students at varying levels that were taking at least one online course during the Fall 2015 semester. The approximate enrollment in the School of Business at the research location for the Fall 2015 semester was 905 total students. There were approximately 175 students at freshman standing, 160 students at sophomore standing, 260 students at junior standing and 310 students at senior standing.

**Table 3.2 Total School of Business Student Population**

| Total School of Business Student Population | |
|---|---|
| Total Enrollment | 905 |
| Freshman | 175 |
| Sophomore | 160 |
| Junior | 260 |
| Senior | 310 |

The total population from all degree-seeking student within the Robert Plaster School of Business was 905.  Approximately 40% of students at the research location took at least one online course per semester.  Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations prevented the university from providing the researcher with a list of students taking specific online courses. Students that were enrolled in at least one online Business course during the Fall 2015 semester were asked to participate in the study, resulting in 20 student participants – 3 freshmen, 3 sophomores, 6 juniors and 8 seniors.  The academic level representation of the student participants was based on proportional sampling guided by enrollment by class standing level.  During the interview, students who were enrolled in more than one online course or had previous online Business course experience often discussed all of their courses.

**Table 3.3 Student Participant Descriptions**

| Student 1 | 50-year-old junior who worked 40-50 hours per week; enrolled in 9 credit hours (3 courses) online |
|---|---|
| Student 2 | 33-year-old senior who worked 45-60 hours per week, while being enrolled in 15 credit hours (5 courses) online |
| Student 3 | 23-year-old senior who worked 5-10 hours per week, while being enrolled in 15 credit hours (5 courses) online |
| Student 4 | 43-year-old senior who worked 43 hours per week, while being enrolled in 9 credit hours (3 courses) online |
| Student 5 | 44-year-old senior who worked 48 hours one week and 36 the 2nd week, 12hr shifts, while being enrolled in 6 credit hours (2 courses) online |
| Student 6 | 36-year-old junior who worked 45+ hours per week, while being enrolled in 15 credit hours (5 courses) online |
| Student 7 | 26-year-old senior who worked 50 hours per week, while being enrolled in 12 credit hours (4 courses) online |
| Student 8 | 31-year-old junior who worked 42 hours per week, while being enrolled in 12 credit hours (4 courses) online |
| Student 9 | 32-year-old senior who worked 55-65 hours per week, while being enrolled in 12 credit hours (4 courses) online |
| Student 10 | 23-year-old junior who worked 30 hours per week, while being enrolled in 15 credit hours (5 courses) online |
| Student 11 | 19-year-old freshman who worked 25 hours per week while being enrolled in 16 credit hours; taking one online course |
| Student 12 | 46-year-old freshman who worked 20 hours per week, while enrolled in 12 credit hours; enrolled in 12 credit hours (4 courses) online |
| Student 13 | 22-year-old junior who worked 30-40 hours per week, while being enrolled in 12 credit hours (4 courses) online |
| Student 14 | 32-year-old sophomore who worked 40 hours per week, while being enrolled in 9 credit hours (2 courses) online |
| Student 15 | 39-year-old senior who worked 40 hours per week, while being enrolled in 12 credit hours (4 courses) online |
| Student 16 | 20-year-old freshman who worked 30-35 hours per week on campus, while being enrolled in 15 credit hours - 1 course online, 2 hybrid courses and 2 face-to-face courses |
| Student 17 | 35-year-old junior who worked 50 hours per week, while being enrolled in 12 credit hours (1 course) online |
| Student 18 | 20-year-old sophomore who worked 22 hours per week, while being enrolled in 14 credit hours (2 courses) online |
| Student 19 | 22-year-old senior who worked 25 hours per week, while being enrolled in 17 credit hours (5 courses) online |
| Student 20 | 35-year-old sophomore who worked 40 hours per week, while enrolled in 6 credit hours (2 courses) online |

*Student Profiles*

Twenty students participated in the interviews, which began on November 11th and were completed on November 23rd during the Fall 2015 semester. All of the interviews were completed by phone. The student interviews ranged in time from 22 to 52 minutes, depending on the participant. On average, junior and senior student participant interviews were 10 minutes longer than freshman and sophomore interviews. The detailed interviews provided the researcher with specific background information and online course experiences of each student participant.

**Student 1** was a 50-year-old, male, junior who worked 45-50 hours per week while being enrolled in 9 credit hours. He was enrolled in 9 credit hours (3 courses) online and had extensive experience taking online courses. All of his coursework at Missouri Southern State University was completed online. He lived seven miles from the university but preferred to take courses online,

> *I don't have the opportunity or time to go to the classroom and learn, being able to do online has been beneficial. I considered doing this for a long time and it hasn't really been until about the last five, six years that online classes have really gotten to the point where it could work with my working schedule*

Furthermore, he stated his comfort level with online courses and noted improvements in the online course environment. *I will say I've been taking online classes now for close to five years off and on, and I've seen some vast improvements in that period, if that's what you're interested in knowing.* He was a business owner pursuing a degree to gain qualifications to support his Business operations. During the interview, he offered many specific and detailed answers. For

example, when the researcher asked, *Can you describe what methods of design and organization are most beneficial to you as a student, and in an online Business course?* His response was,

>One of the things that I really like now is the weekly format with a good agenda for each week, what's due each week. At the beginning they would just throw out a syllabus and you kind of had to pick through the syllabus to figure out what was due this week, and that made it very difficult. And it's gotten much, much better, the classes are much better organized online. There's very set criteria that must be met each week, and I find that much easier. I can sit down on Sunday night or Monday morning and I know exactly where I'm going for the week and where I can fit it into my work schedule.

**Student 2** was a male student that worked 45-60 hours per week. He was a 33-year-old senior enrolled in 15 credit hours. He had taken at least five online courses at the university. His reason for taking online classes was because of convenience,

>It makes it a lot easier that whenever I get off of work I can jump go home, jump on the computer and start getting my course work that way. I work full-time. I work at least 50, 60 hours a week most of the time. It makes it a lot, lot easier for me to do that. He mentioned that he enjoys both online and face-to-face courses - I'll be honest with you. Online classes, like I said, make it a lot easier to work around my schedule with, but I do prefer going to class too. You learn from both.

He also reported that his reason for taking the current online courses was to meet degree requirements. His extensive knowledge as an online student provided a great deal of information. During the interview, he offered many specific and detailed answers. For example, when the

researcher asked, *can you describe what methods of design and organization are most beneficial to you as a student in an online Business course?* his response was,

> *The design work of it depends on the professor, of course. For example, my Consumer Behavior class that I'm taking as of current, I like the way she has us go in, take the quizzes, she has us write an essay on or do a case brief, and from there we're able to understand why the things that we're doing, why they matter, and understand what it is and how it's relevant to the class.*

**Student 3** took both online as face-to-face courses at the research location. She was a 23-year-old senior who worked 5-10 hours per week, while being enrolled in 15 credit hours (5 courses) online and face-to-face. She identified the reason for taking online courses based on the nature of the course,

> *I usually just go through my schedule and just figure out which ones would be better or easier to take in class. And then whatever that-- I make that schedule first of what I really need to take in class. And then whatever I know that I can probably deal with from a distance and just deal with professors over email, I do that online, so I can do it at my own convenience.*

When asked, *would you prefer to take Business courses online or in the classroom?* she responded,

> *I feel I'm more focused when I take in class just because you have to show up for it and you're present. Sometimes online is super convenient, I like that but you're not like, "I'm just in my house," so you're not like in the classroom.*

**Student 4** indicated that he had completed about 95% of his coursework online. He was a 43-year-old senior who worked 43 hours per week, while being enrolled in 9 credit hours (3 courses) online.   He identified scheduling as the main reason for taking online courses.  He said,

> *I have to work around my current work schedule and then also my home responsibilities and my-- I officiate high school football also in the fall, so I got to work around that. So, it seems like the online classes are best for my schedule.*

When asked, would you prefer to take Business courses online or in the classroom? He responded,

> *Ten years ago I would have said, "In person," but over the last five years, I've mastered how to manage my time to be able to accommodate, or be able to succeed in the online classes. 10 years ago, 20 years ago, I probably would have said, "No, I probably need to be there in person," but I think as I've matured and gotten a little bit older, it's been easier for me to take the online courses.*

**Student 5** had completed all of her coursework at Missouri Southern State University completed online, with the exception of math and chemistry.   She was a 44-year-old senior who worked 48hrs one week and 36 the 2nd week, 12hr shifts, while being enrolled in 6 credit hours (2 courses) online.  She discussed her reasoning for taking online courses.  She said,

> *For me, the online class was the way to go back to school. I always wanted to finish my degree. It's hugely beneficial what I do, because I understand a lot more of the background of why my boss asked me to do certain things and why we handle HR things the way we handle them with the classes that I'm taking. Online classes are much easier for me for that purpose.*

When asked, would you prefer to take Business courses online or in the classroom? She responded,

> *I think for non-traditional students - especially somebody with work experience and a background of doing supervisory work, or really into that Business background - then online is probably their preferred method. Because a lot of that stuff they have already had some sort of exposure to.*

Her substantial knowledge as an online student provided a great deal of information. During the interview, she offered many specific and detailed answers. For example, when the researcher asked, *how can a course instructor help you in keeping pace with the course and meeting due dates and time frames?* Her response was,

> *It's so much easier if they lay out when things are due at the beginning, they have a class calendar. I prefer that. If they give everything is due on Sunday at 11:59 PM versus this week, it's due Wednesday and next week it's due Tuesday and this week it's due Friday. Just because working overnights and working two or three days in a row, you kind of lose track of what day you're on somewhere in there [chuckles]. And your first day off is half your sleep day. So I'm a lot of times in two, three, four o'clock in the morning emailing professors, because that's when I'm doing homework.*

**Student 6** was a 36-year-old, female, junior who worked 45+ hours per week, while being enrolled in 15 credit hours (5 courses) online. She indicated that she completed all of her coursework online. She identified flexibility as the main reason for taking online courses. When asked, would you prefer to take Business courses online or in the classroom? She responded,

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*There are some classes that I wish I was able to be in front of the teacher and*

*have that one-on-one. Some of the classes are really hard, and when it's midnight*

*and you're trying to answer questions and you don't have any one that you can*

*reach out to.*

She provided very specific examples throughout the interview.   For instance, when the

researcher asked, *what ways can an instructor assist your learning in the online environment*

*through the design and organization of a course*? her response was,

*My marketing class, everything is outlined, and the expectations are there. You*

*have your interactive videos, and assignments, and quizzes. Everything is there*

*that what you don't get right, you have the ability to look at and it explains to you*

*where you went wrong. I think that's very beneficial to an online student who*

*doesn't have that teacher in front of them.*

**Student 7** had completed all of her coursework online at the time of the study. She was a 26-

year-old senior who worked 50 hours per week, while being enrolled in 12 credit hours

(4 courses) online.  She identified convenience as the main reason for taking online courses.  She

said, *The work isn't easier, but it's easier for me to come home at night and do it than actually go*

*to class every day.*

When asked, would you prefer to take Business courses online or in the classroom? She

responded, *I guess I'm just torn. Some of them it's really great. But again, overall, I do have to*

*take them online. I just have to deal with the difficulty if I run into it.*  Her extensive online

course history allowed her to offer very thorough illustrations throughout the interview.   For

example, when the researcher asked, *What ways, if any, can an instructor help keep the*

*participants on task in a way that assists student learning?* her response was,

> *Always touching base or just seeing how the class is doing. Or they'll make*
> *general announcements that the class did very well on a test, or this is the*
> *median, and also providing information upfront when the class begins just to*
> *know a little background about the instructor also helps*

**Student 8** was a 31-year-old junior who worked 42 hours per week, while being enrolled in 12 credit hours (4 courses) online.  To date, she had completed all of her coursework online.  When asked, would you prefer to take Business courses online or in the classroom? She responded, *I think it all comes down to, if it's online that's fine, as long as the teacher is interactive, that's the main concern.*  She clearly articulated her stance on interview topics. When the researcher asked her to, *tell me about ways about that an instructor has prompted engagement to assist you as an active learner, her* response was,

> *It's more when the teachers are more involved with the students when they have*
> *several questions. You know the teacher's probably been asked the same question*
> *a thousand times. But when they're patient and they really go into extreme detail*
> *about how you can how you can learn this and what they expect, and what they*
> *want you to get out of it. It makes it easier for you to be engaged in the topic. It*
> *makes easier for you to understand and actually retain it.*

**Student 9** was completing her second bachelor's degree.  She was a 32-year-old senior who worked 55-65 hours per week, while being enrolled in 12 credit hours (4 courses) online.  To date, she had completed all of her coursework online. She cited freedom and scheduling as the main reasons for completing her coursework online.  She said,

> *I work a full-time job usually anywhere from 50 to 60 or so hours a week and I*
> *would not have time to be at work every day, and also in a classroom at specific*

> *times. It just gives me the freedom to do the course work when I have the time to*
>
> *do the course work.*

She preferred online courses over face-to-face courses.  When asked, would you prefer to take Business courses online or in the classroom? She responded, *I would prefer to take them online. I don't know how much of that is just because of my schedule, but I do like the flexibility that online classes provide.*

**Student 10** was a 23-year-old junior who worked 30 hours per week, while being enrolled in 15 credit hours (5 courses) online.  To date, she had completed eleven online courses at the university. She elected to take courses online to remain near her family.   She said,

> *The reason I took online courses is because I really didn't want to leave my*
>
> *family, where I live right now. I realized that taking my courses online was the*
>
> *best thing for me instead of going every single day driving to Missouri. That was*
>
> *pretty much my idea why I decided to take my online courses.*

She preferred online courses over face-to-face courses.  She described how much she enjoyed taking online course.  She said, *My experience with online classes has been great.* Additionally, she was happy to participate in the interview.  She explained, *I was glad to be doing this participation, and I really enjoyed answering all the questions actually.*

**Student 11** took one online course during the semester to get a feel for the experience.  She was a 19-year-old freshman who worked 25 hours per week while being enrolled in 16 credit hours; taking one online course. She stated that her decision to take online Business courses going forward will be dependent upon the class.

**Student 12** was taking all of her courses at the university was completed online at the time of the study. She a 46-year-old freshman who worked 20 hours per week, while enrolled in 12 credit

hours; enrolled in 12 credit hours (4 courses) online. She took previous online courses at a local community college. All of her current courses work at the university was completed online. She stated that her decision to take online Business courses was to work at her own pace.

**Student 13** was a 22-year-old junior who worked 30-40 hours per week, while being enrolled in 12 credit hours (4 courses) online. All of her coursework at the university was completed online. She discussed her reasoning for taking online courses. She said,

> *I've found that sometimes I work better at night from 10:00 to midnight or 1:00 o'clock in the morning, and that you don't normally get that in a normal classroom setting, to take quizzes and tests and things like that. It's just the flexibility that I like. This is my third year doing it. It's just kind of become normal to me.*

**Student 14** was a 32-year-old sophomore who worked 40 hours per week, while being enrolled in 9 credit hours (2 courses) online. She enjoyed and preferred online courses because of their flexibility and independent learning aspect. She discussed her partiality for online courses by stating,

> *So far, with my experience that I've had with those classes, I think I like the online. I'm able to go back and review the videos that the professors post, and if I don't understand something, I can go back and listen to it again. I like that because you cut down a lot of the questions that maybe other students are asking, that maybe you already understood and so I don't have to basically waste my time listening to that when I got that point. So kind of learning at my own pace and having that flexibility is what I like about it.*

**Student 15** indicated that she takes at least two online courses per semester based on her strengths in the course subject matter. She was a 39-year-old senior who worked 40 hours per week, while being enrolled in 12 credit hours (2 courses) online. She preferred face-to-face courses but cited time management as the reason for taking online courses. She said, *I'm working full-time and going to school full-time, and I have five children, so I have a full-time family, so the need for the online class is to be able to degree in a reasonable amount of time.* Her substantial online course history allowed her to offer very thorough specific examples throughout the interview. For example, when the researcher asked, C*an you tell me what actions prompt substantive interaction?* her response was,

> *If I don't understand an assignment, or need a little more detail on, say, what I did wrong on a test, and then I email the instructor and tell them, and they're quick to get back with me and give me advice on where I can get help with that, or if I can come in and talk with them.*

**Student 16** was a 20-year-old freshman who worked 30-35 hours per week on campus, while being enrolled in 15 credit hours - 1 course online, 2 hybrid courses and 2 face-to-face courses. She planned to continue to taking Business courses online. Her enrollment selection depended on the course subject matter. She provided substantial answers to the researcher's questions despite her limited online course experience. For example, when the researcher asked, *Can you think of any specific strategies the instructors have used to create a presence in an online Business course*? she said,

> *The online lectures that some instructors post whether it's a video lecture or an audio lecture, just having that makes you feel like it actually really is a person*

*teaching you and not just a computer. That helps and then some people post a bio*

*or something like that that helps you to kind of get to know them.*

**Student 17** had taken four online courses to date. He was a 35-year-old junior who worked 50 hours per week, while being enrolled in 12 credit hours (1 course) online. He indicated that his schedule is the primary reason for taking online course when given the option. He added that his degree minor in entrepreneurship in only offered via online courses. When asked, *Would you prefer to take Business classes in a classroom or online?* He indicated,

> *I think, I could go either way depending on how the instructor-- how the professor*
>
> *sets up the course, can make a big difference. I like the in class debate that can*
>
> *happen but the flexibility of online is definitely nice. But honestly I think if time*
>
> *allowed for it, I would prefer to be in a classroom.*

**Student 18** was a 20-year-old sophomore who worked 22 hours per week, while being enrolled in 14 credit hours (2 courses) online. Her enrollment in online courses was dependent upon availability. She was very specific when conveying the need for online Business course instructor communication. For example, she said,

> *Take initiative to email the students personally, maybe, and just tell them what the*
>
> *class will pertain-- a really written syllabus that's friendly, and just explaining*
>
> *what he expects and what he or she needs to do, and what they will try to help*
>
> *with.*

**Student 19** typically took half of his coursework online and the other half in the traditional classroom at the time of the study. He was a 22-year-old senior who worked 25 hours per week, while being enrolled in 17 credit hours (5 courses) online. Typically, he took half of his coursework online and the other half in the traditional classroom. He completed two internships

with the Disney College Program in Orlando.  He took all of his courses online during that time to maintain his full-time student status.   When given the option, his decision to take a course online versus face-to-face is solely dependent upon the course instructor. When asked, *Would you prefer to take Business classes in a classroom or online?* He indicated,

> *For me, it all depends on the instructor, because the more challenging classes, you'd think it'd be more difficult to take online, but if I already know the instructor's basically layout of how they teach and I can get into contact with them, then more than likely I prefer to take it online than in the classroom.*

**Student 20** was a 35-year-old sophomore who worked 40 hours per week, while enrolled in 6 credit hours (2 courses) online. To date, all of his coursework had been taken online.  His previous educational background paired well with online classes.  He elaborated by stating,

> *I grew up home schooled so teaching in front of a professor is actually more difficult for me than just learning it myself - that's how I taught myself computers and everything. So that online aspect of that appealed to me a little bit more and the convenience of time.   I'm at work during the day and then when I come home we've got soccer practice and basketball practice and all that, so a lot of my school work is done during the weekend, so obviously with an in-class study, weekend is not an option.*

He added a great deal of insight to the study regarding online Business student perception of Teaching Presence in the online environment.  For example, he elaborated on organization by stating,

> *One of my biggest pet peeves is when you don't know what's going to happen for the week until they release that week on that Monday and then you've got "Okay,*

*this is due," so I like having the entire semester - not necessarily what it is - but*
*just have the due dates for everything and that entire semester in the calendar.*
*That's really helpful.*

### *Faculty Selection Criteria*

The twenty student participants interviewed were asked to name Business courses and the course faculty that they perceived as demonstrating Teaching Presence in online instruction, based on the three components of Teaching Presence (Design and Organization, Discourse Facilitation and Direct Instruction). The researcher compiled a list of the noted courses and faculty. The researcher selected the three most-named faculty and conducted in-depth interviews with the student-nominated exemplary faculty. All faculty interviewed were full-time faculty members, although adjunct faculty members were named several times during the student interviews.

During the interview process, the researcher asked the student participants the following questions to compile the faculty list. (1) Which online Business courses and instructors do you feel successfully demonstrate effective methods of design and organization? (2) Which online Business courses and instructors do you feel successfully demonstrate effective methods of facilitation? (3) Which online Business courses and instructors do you feel successfully demonstrate effective methods of direct instruction? If a student named multiple courses that the same faculty taught, the researcher counted the faculty name one time. The focus was on faculty practices and attributes; therefore, the researcher selected the faculty participants based on the student participant's recognition. Faculty M (which became Instructor 1) had the most nominations in the overall total, and all three Teaching Presence Model component questions. Faculty Y (which became Instructor 2) had the second largest amount of nominations in the

overall total, and second largest amount of nominations for the Direct Instruction and Discourse Facilitation Teaching Presence Model component questions. Faculty G (which became Instructor 3) had the third largest amount of nominations in the overall total, and second largest amount of nominations for the Design and Organization Teaching Presence Model component question. The researcher selected the three faculty members with the highest total for all three questions. The nomination count for the individual Teaching Presence Model component questions also drove this decision.  The researcher elected to use the count of seven as the break-point for the faculty interviews due to the large number of faculty with a total count of five as the next interval.  See Table 3.3 for the complete faculty list and the frequency for which faculty member was named as exemplary from the student interview comments.

**Table 3.4 Student-Nominated Faculty List and Frequency**

| Total | | Design and Organization | | Direct Instruction | | Discourse Facilitation | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Instructor Pseudonym | Frequency | Instructor Pseudonym | Frequency | Instructor Pseudonym | Frequency | Instructor Pseudonym | Frequency |
| Faculty M (Instructor 1) | 21 | Faculty M (Instructor 1) | 6 | Faculty M (Instructor 1) | 5 | Faculty M (Instructor 1) | 10 |
| Faculty Y (Instructor 2) | 8 | Faculty G (Instructor 3) | 4 | Faculty Y (Instructor 2) | 3 | Faculty Y (Instructor 2) | 4 |
| Faculty G (Instructor 3) | 7 | Faculty N | 2 | Faculty G (Instructor 3) | 2 | Faculty A | 3 |
| Faculty A | 5 | Faculty T | 2 | Faculty H | 2 | Faculty O | 3 |
| Faculty H | 5 | Faculty V | 2 | Faculty L | 2 | Faculty H | 2 |
| Faculty O | 5 | Faculty A | 1 | Faculty P | 2 | Faculty I | 2 |
| Faculty P | 5 | Faculty B | 1 | Faculty W | 2 | Faculty J | 2 |
| Faculty I | 4 | Faculty H | 1 | Faculty A | 1 | Faculty P | 2 |
| Faculty J | 4 | Faculty I | 1 | Faculty B | 1 | Faculty U | 2 |
| Faculty L | 4 | Faculty J | 1 | Faculty D | 1 | Faculty B | 1 |
| Faculty N | 4 | Faculty K | 1 | Faculty E | 1 | Faculty C | 1 |
| Faculty W | 4 | Faculty L | 1 | Faculty I | 1 | Faculty F | 1 |
| Faculty B | 3 | Faculty O | 1 | Faculty J | 1 | Faculty G (Instructor 3) | 1 |
| Faculty U | 3 | Faculty P | 1 | Faculty N | 1 | Faculty K | 1 |
| Faculty K | 2 | Faculty Q | 1 | Faculty O | 1 | Faculty L | 1 |
| Faculty Q | 2 | Faculty S | 1 | Faculty Q | 1 | Faculty N | 1 |
| Faculty T | 2 | Faculty U | 1 | Faculty X | 1 | Faculty R | 1 |
| Faculty V | 2 | Faculty W | 1 | Faculty C | 0 | Faculty W | 1 |
| Faculty X | 2 | Faculty Y (Instructor 2) | 1 | Faculty F | 0 | Faculty X | 1 |
| Faculty C | 1 | Faculty C | 0 | Faculty K | 0 | Faculty D | 0 |
| Faculty D | 1 | Faculty D | 0 | Faculty R | 0 | Faculty E | 0 |
| Faculty E | 1 | Faculty E | 0 | Faculty S | 0 | Faculty Q | 0 |
| Faculty F | 1 | Faculty F | 0 | Faculty T | 0 | Faculty S | 0 |
| Faculty R | 1 | Faculty R | 0 | Faculty U | 0 | Faculty T | 0 |
| Faculty S | 1 | Faculty X | 0 | Faculty V | 0 | Faculty V | 0 |
| Total | 98 | Total | 30 | Total | 28 | Total | 40 |

The three faculty participants were interviewed, beginning on December 2, 2015 and concluding on December 4, 2015. All three faculty interviews were conducted by phone and transcribed word-for-word.

*Faculty Profiles*

**Instructor 1** was a full-time Business instructor at the university. She began teaching online in 2008 as an adjunct instructor. She began teaching full-time in 2010 and taught one or two course online each semester. The instructor taught two online Business courses in the Fall 2015. The instructor participated in various committees at the research location and was an academic advisor for Business students. Additionally, the instructor served on the College Distance Learning Committee. Furthermore, the instructor stated that *online instruction is something*

*that's near and dear to me*.  Her educational background included a Master's degree in Business Administration and a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration.

**Instructor 2** was a full-time Business instructor at the university. She had been teaching at the university for five years and had taught courses online for four and a half years.  The instructor taught two online Business courses in the Fall 2015.  Her educational background included a Master's degree in Business Administration and a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration.

**Instructor 3** was a full-time Business instructor at the university. She had been teaching at the university for five years.  The instructor taught two online Business courses in the Fall 2015. She served on several campus committees.  Her educational background included a Master's degree in Business Administration and a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration.

## Data Collection and Analysis

This study used interviews, observations, and documentation in the data collection process.  The type of qualitative data a researcher uses is based heavily on the problem and purpose of the study being conducted (Merriam, 2009).  It is important to note that "wondering will implore multiple forms of data collection" (Dana and Yendol-Hoppey, 2009, p. 112).

To contribute to the researcher's understanding of Teaching Presence in the online classroom, Business students taking online courses and student-nominated exemplary online Business course faculty served as the participants in this study.  Data was collected through individual semi-structured interviews of students and faculty (Appendix D and Appendix E). The researcher based certain semi-structured interview questions on the Teaching Presence Scale (Appendix A - Teaching Presence Scale).

Upon the conclusion of the semi-structured interviews, the interview recordings were transcribed. After being transcribed the data was entered into a qualitative software program, NVivo 10. The transcript data was verified using member checks for confirming transcription information (Stake, 2005) which confirmed the themes presented in this study. Principles of data analysis in qualitative research presented by Miles and Hubermann's (2013) were used in the coding process.

NVivo was used to store, organize and analyze the data collected in this study. NVivo is a qualitative analysis software that organizes and analyzes unstructured data information (QSR, 2014). The NVivo 10 software was accessible through the Kansas State University website. The use of NVivo 10 assisted the researcher in organizing the data. Interview transcripts, course documents, and observational data was stored in NVivo on the researcher's computer. The researcher used NVivo for analyzing the interviews, documentation and observational data. Themes and categories were broken into Nodes within NVivo and matching comments were coded within each node. Documents and observational data were collected and organized as Memos within NVivo. See Appendix L and Appendix M for the organizational structure that was used for the Theme/Categories and the Document and Observational Data.

Course documents provided by the exemplary faculty were used to help further explore the successful demonstration of Teaching Presence by detailing the activities and actions taken by the identified exemplary faculty. Teaching Evaluations were provided by the exemplary faculty were to support the interview data presented. Focusing on student participant's perceptions and student-nominated exemplary faculty practices and viewpoints provided a broad picture in this case study.

Additionally, the researcher requested to access to the faculty's Fall 2015 online course Blackboard Learn sites.   Each faculty member taught two courses online during the Fall 2015 semester.  All three instructors granted access to their Fall 2015 courses within Blackboard Learn.  The researcher had access to the faculty's courses but could not view email correspondence or grades.  The researcher could view announcements from the instructor, course units, courses syllabi, course lectures, course documents, course rubrics, course discussion forums and instructor profiles.   For each course, observational data and documentation was screen captured using Snipping Tool and uploaded into NVivo for review.

*Interviews*

Interviews served as a catalyst to collect information regarding perceptions, feelings, intentions and information that the researcher was unable to observe (Merriam, 2009; Stake 2005).  Yin (2011) asserted that interviews are essential to case study research and should be guided conversation to maintain fluidity during the process.  The benefit of interviewing was that the researcher gained access to information that cannot be observed. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner.  The interviewer's main job during the process included focusing on the specific line of inquiry as determined by the study protocol, presenting the interview questions in a conversational, unbiased manner and collecting unique information and interpretations held by the participant being interviewed (Stake, 2005; Yin, 2011). The researcher conducted interviews with 20 Business students and 3 student-nominated online Business faculty during the Fall 2015 semester.

*Purposeful Sampling*

Purposeful sampling was used for this case study research project.  Purposeful sampling involved relying on experience and insight from a select sample and is considered to be the most

common sampling approach in qualitative research (Gay et al., 2009).  The sample selection was based on the researcher's random selection of students from all departments in the College of Business.

### *Semi-Structured Interview Questions*

The researcher used semi-structured interview questions to conduct the interviews (Appendix D – Student Interview Protocol and Appendix E - Faculty Interview Protocol) to maintain consistency during the interviews.  Interviewing was conducted over the phone using the I-Phone Tape-a-Call app.  The interviews were transcribed by TranscribeMe transcription service after the audio files were uploaded into NVivo 10.  The transcripts were analyzed to develop patterns and themes.  The process described above was used throughout the coding process.

### *Interview Protocols*

Two interview protocols were developed for this study (Appendix D – Student Interview Protocol and Appendix E - Faculty Interview Protocol). The first was the student interview protocol and second was the exemplary faculty interview protocol.  The Teaching Presence Scale was used as a guide for some questions within the interview protocol, since the Teaching Presence Scale elements were useful in developing interview questions.  Selected questions from the Teaching Presence Scale were useful in the student and faculty interview protocols and were incorporated for the purpose of guiding the interviews.   Questions addressed in the Teaching Presence Scale included:

- Establishing Time Parameters

- Designing Methods

- Utilizing Medium Effectively

- Establishing Netiquette

- Setting Curriculum

- Drawing in Participants, Prompting Discussion

- Assessing the Efficacy of the Process

- Setting Climate for Learning

- Reinforce Student Contributions

- Seeking to Reach Consensus

- Identifying Areas of Agreement/Disagreement

- Confirm Understanding

- Present Content/Questions

- Diagnose Misconceptions

- Focus the Discussion on Specific Issues

- Inject Knowledge from Diverse Sources

The reliability results reported by Shea et al. (2005), Shea et al. (2006) and Arbaugh & Hwang, 2006) supported the Teaching Presence Scale as being a reliable and valid survey for evaluating Teaching Presence in online courses.  Reliability was supported by the Cronbach alpha scores of the overall survey of .97 (Shea et al. 2005), and .98 (Shea et al, 2006) and the reliability coefficients of .90, .94 and .89, respectively, which were provided in the Arbaugh and Hwang (2006) study.

*Student Interviews*

The individual student interviews took place during the Fall 2015 semester. Each student participant was offered various times for a phone interview. All interviews were recorded using a digital audio recorder iPhone app. The researcher asked the interviewee if he/she had any questions or additional information he/she felt may benefit the study. Upon transcription, the researcher requested that all participants review their transcript and make changes or provide further explanation, if needed. One student replied correcting the name of the community college that she transferred from. Another student replied with a few word updates and the name of the university that she transferred from. The rest of the interview participants replied, stating no transcript changes needed to be made.

The researcher used the semi-structured Interview Protocol provided in Appendix D and Appendix E. The Interview Protocol was used to provide consistency during the interviews. At the beginning of each interview the researcher reminded all participants that the study was voluntary, and that participants could elect not to answer questions and/or withdraw from the interview at any time during the study. All interview sessions began with an overview of the consent for participation. The researcher also restated the purpose of the research study, the importance of student confidentiality, interview question topics and approximate interview length of time. Participants were reminded that the researcher took safeguards to uphold confidentiality. Before the interview began, the researcher asked if the participant had any questions, and reminded the participant that the interview was being recorded. All twenty student participants approved of the audio record process.

*Faculty Interviews*

The instructors that were most mentioned during the student interviews as demonstrating Teaching Presence were interviewed during the Fall 2015 semester. Each faculty participant was offered various times for a phone interview. All interviews were recorded using a digital audio recorder iPhone app. The researcher asked the interviewee if he/she had any questions or additional information he/she felt may benefit the study. Upon transcription, the researcher requested that faculty participants review their transcript and make changes or provide further explanation, if needed.

All digital audio recordings were saved using a pseudonym for each participant in the study. The pseudonym was also used to name the transcript file. Only the researcher knew the actual student/ faculty name and the pseudonym used for each student/faculty participant.

*Transcription*

The interviews were conducted over the phone using the I-Phone Tape-a-Call app resulting in a digital audio file. The digital audio recordings were uploaded to the researcher's secure Dropbox account. After the digital file was uploaded to Dropbox, the researcher uploaded the file to NVivo 10. Once uploaded to NVivo 10, the researcher submitted the NVivo audio file to the TranscribeMe transcription service for transcription via the Purchase Transcript link within NVivo. Interviews were transcribed into text verbatim from the digital audio file. Filler words were omitted. The researcher's interview statements were identified as S1. The interviewee interview statements were identified as S2. Upon transcription, the text file of each interviewee's interview transcript was sent via email for member checking. Member checking was used to verify that the information from the interview was accurate. Each interviewee had the opportunity to correct, add detail and clarify their interview comments. All interview

participants responded to the member checking request.   After the participants reviewed their

individual transcript for accuracy, the transcribed text was stored as an Internal source within

NVivo for coding.

### *Observations*

Although interviews were the primary method of data collection, observational data was

recorded throughout the study.  Observation data is used to further triangulate findings and

further support interview findings (Merriam, 2009).  Additionally, during this study

observational data was used to further illustrate specific behaviors within the online learning

environment and provide context by sharing firsthand accounts of the student-nominated

exemplary courses.  Observational data was presented in the form of discussion posts,

announcements and recordings provided by the exemplary faculty participants. The researcher

saved all course observation data in Microsoft Word before importing the data into NVivo 10 to

maintain formatting. The use of NVivo 10 assisted the researcher in examining the course data

provided as observations in the research study.

### *Documentation*

Documents included faculty documents, pictures and physical objects that related to the

research study (Merriam, 2009).  Examples of documents in this study were online course

content and materials, as well as Teaching Evaluations (student survey responses) provided by

the exemplary faculty participants.  Documentation of this form was different than the

observational data collected.  Documents used were in the form of course content and materials,

while observational data was collected in the form of discussion posts, emails, announcements

and gradebook comments provided by the faculty participants.  The researcher saved all course

documentation data in Microsoft Word before importing the data into NVivo 10 to maintain

formatting. The use of NVivo 10 assisted the researcher in examining the course data provided as documents in the research study.   A benefit of documents was that they were already produced and were not altered in any way for the research study.  A basic limitation of documents was that they were not developed for research purposes and may have been incomplete from a research standpoint (Merriam, 2009).

## *Teaching Evaluations*

The exemplary faculty's Teaching Evaluations from their online courses during Spring 2015 semester were provided directly to the researcher.  Each faculty participant provided the researcher with two Faculty Teaching Evaluations in the form of course surveys, one from each online business course that they taught during the Spring 2015 semester.  Each instructor taught two different courses during the Spring 2015 semester.  Therefore, each instructor provided the researcher with two Teaching Evaluations for two different courses.  The verbiage below was used and approved in the IRB applications at Kansas State University and the research location:

> *Course documents of the nominated business instructors will be used to help further explore successful teaching activities and actions taken by online instructors.  This includes all course documents, course communication and teaching evaluations voluntarily provided by the exemplary course instructors.*

The IRB applications, with the above verbiage, were approved by the Kansas State University Institutional Review Board and the Institutional Review Board at the research location. All three faculty participants voluntarily provided their Online Survey Response Summaries to the researcher as attachments via email to the researcher.  The data was then uploaded to NVIVO for future use. The researcher used the Teaching Evaluations to come to a greater understanding of the faculty attributes, based on anonymous student reviews during the

previous academic semester.  The Teaching Evaluation data was used to provided further

description when addressing how exemplary faculty demonstrate Teaching Presence in online

instruction.

### *Data Coding and Analysis*

Qualitative data analysis is a reflexive process that starts when data collection begins and

continues throughout the research process.  Researchers cannot provide explanation without

proving both interpretive and aggregative data (Stake, 2005). Provided descriptive information of

documents and observation data within the study, as well as cross-study analysis was used to

provide rich description and identify emerging themes (Stake, 1995; Merriam, 2009).

In addition, pattern coding, developed by Miles & Huberman, (2013), was used.  This

process assisted the researcher in compiling interview and document materials into meaningful

and confined units of analysis (Miles & Huberman, 2013).  Pattern coding provided the

researcher with several key analytic functions.  One main benefit of pattern coding is that the

researcher is actively involved in analysis while collecting data (Miles & Huberman, 2013).  This

active analysis process paved the way for the development of common themes when the

researcher was engaged in the coding process.   Additionally, ideas and reactions developed

freely throughout the research process, allowing the researcher to observe themes as they

progressed (Miles & Huberman, 2013).

During the coding process, the researcher was meticulously focused on the purpose of the

study, paying special attention to tying all information back to the following research questions:

- Research Question 1 - Student Perceptions of Teaching Presence "How do undergraduate

    Business students perceive Teaching Presence in online courses?

- Research Question 2 - Teaching Presence Components (Design and Organization, Discourse Facilitation and Direct Instruction) "What Teaching Presence components (design and organization, discourse facilitation and direct instruction) do undergraduate Business students find valuable in online courses?"

- Research Question 3 – Demonstration of High Teaching Presence "How do exemplary undergraduate online Business course faculty demonstrate Teaching Presence in online instruction?"

*Research Question 1*

The first research question was designed to gain understanding regarding how undergraduate Business students perceive Teaching Presence in online courses.  Data was gathered from the student interviews using the interview protocol.  The student interviews were analyzed and coded in NVivo 10 using extensive analysis to develop thematic categories. Merriam's process of category construction was used to verify that the most relevant units were identified in the data and coded into appropriate categories for Research Question 1.  Categories were developed to "reflect the purpose of the research" (Merriam, 1998, p. 183), which, in this case, were the Teaching Presence components.

Miles & Huberman's (2013) pattern coding approach was applied to reduce the data into smaller analytical units and develop common themes. The researcher identified interview units that specifically addressed student's perceptions of Teaching Presence to address Research Question 1.  The units identified for Research Question 1 were placed into Nodes based on the Teaching Presence components (Design and Organization, Discourse Facilitation, and Direct Instruction).  Sub-nodes were created within each Node based on the Teaching Presence Model component elements.  The Teaching Presence component elements made up each theme were

used to code the student interviews.   After the initial analysis, categories were reviewed and

revised, paying special attention to the use of sensitizing concepts (Merriam, 1998). The

interview protocol for this study only addressed the Teaching Presence components.   Therefore,

there were no outliers for Research Question 1. The analysis process flow for the data coding is

shown in Figure 3.2.

**Figure 3.2 Analysis Process for Research Question 1 Data Coding Using NVIVO 10**

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│        Imported interview transcript data into NVivo │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Identified the data units to appropriate to Research Question 1 │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Created Nodes in NVivo based on the Teaching Presence Components │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│        Coded data by Teaching Presence Component     │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Created Sub- Nodes in NVivo based on the Teaching Presence Component │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│     Coded data by Teaching Presence Component Elements │ ⟳
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│           Coding was reviewed and revised            │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│   Themes and Categories for Research Question 1 Emerged │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```
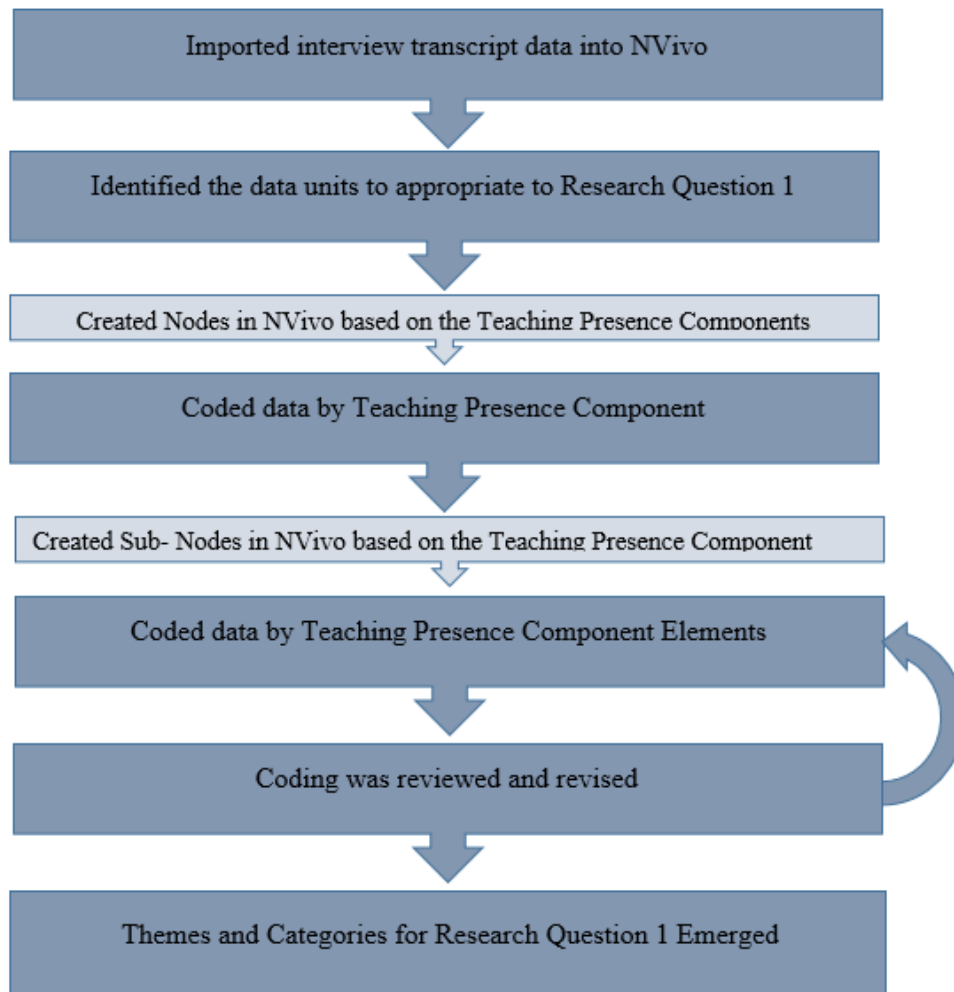
From the student interviews, a total of 101 units were found for Research Question 1. The student interviews indicated that each of the three Teaching Presence themes and 12 of the Teaching Presence component elements were perceived aspects of Teaching Presence in online Business courses. The component elements were used as "units" and those with the most prominent number of comments from the student interviews: 31 interview comments were coded as "Confirm Understanding", 14 interview comments were coded as "Drawing in Participants, Prompting Discussion", 13 interview comments were coded as "Present Content/Questions", 11 interview comments were coded as "Designing Methods ", 9 interview comments were coded as

"Setting Climate for Learning" and 8 interview comments were coded as "Assessing the Efficacy of the Process".  See Table 3.5 for the complete list of the themes, categories and the frequency of each theme and category within the student interview data. The components and elements listed in Table 3.5 were part of the Teaching Presence Model and not were created by the researcher.

**Table 3.5 Teaching Presence Themes Components and Elements (Q1)**

| Teaching Presence Components/Elements | Frequency |
|---|---|
| **Direct Instruction** | **46** |
| Confirm Understanding | 31 |
| Present Content/Questions | 13 |
| Inject Knowledge from Diverse Sources | 2 |
| Focus the Discussion on Specific Issues | 0 |
| Diagnose Misconceptions | 0 |
| **Discourse Facilitation** | **36** |
| Drawing in Participants, Prompting Discussion | 14 |
| Setting Climate for Learning | 9 |
| Assessing the Efficacy of the Process | 8 |
| Seeking to Reach Consensus | 4 |
| Reinforce Student Contributions | 1 |
| Identifying Areas of Agreement/Disagreement | 0 |
| **Design and Organization** | **19** |
| Designing Methods | 11 |
| Establishing Time Parameters | 5 |
| Establishing Netiquette | 2 |
| Setting Curriculum | 1 |
| Utilizing Medium Effectively | 0 |
| | 101 |

From the 101 total units, the Teaching Presence themes that were found in the student interviews were: 46 units were found for the theme of "Direct Instruction" 36 were found for the theme of "Discourse Facilitation" and 19 units were found for the theme of "Design and Organization". The Teaching Presence Modal component elements with the most prominent number of comments from the student interviews were "Confirm Understanding" within the theme of "Direct Instruction", "Drawing in Participants, Prompting Discussion" within the theme of "Discourse Facilitation" and "Designing Methods" within the theme of "Design and Organization".

### *Research Question 2*

The second research question was designed to gain insight into the components of the Teaching Presence Model. Data was gathered from the student interviews using the interview protocol. The student interviews were analyzed and coded in NVivo 10 using extensive analysis to develop thematic categories. Merriam's process of category construction was used to verify that the most relevant units were identified in the data and coded into appropriate categories for Research Question 2. To address Research Question 2, the researcher identified interview units that specifically addressed Teaching Presence components. The units identified for Research Question 2 were placed into Nodes based on the Teaching Presence components (Design and Organization, Discourse Facilitation, and Direct Instruction). Sub-nodes were created within each Node based on the Teaching Presence Model component elements. The Teaching Presence component elements made up each theme were used to code the student interviews. After the initial analysis, categories were reviewed and revised. It should be noted that there were no outliers for Research Question 2. The interview protocol for this study only addressed the

Teaching Presence components. The analysis process flow for the data coding is shown in Figure 3.3.

**Figure 3.3 Analysis Process for Research Question 2 Data Coding Using NVIVO 10**
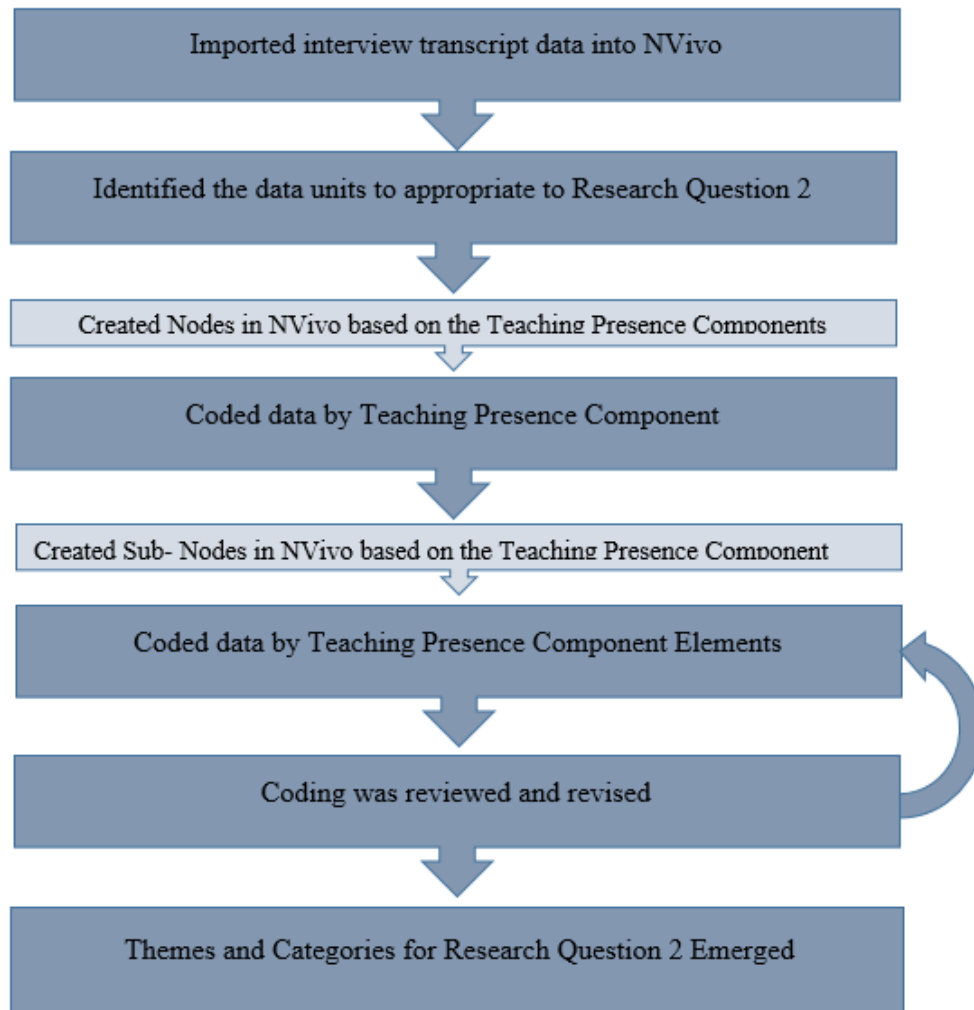


The student interviews resulted in a total of 245 units of information for Research Question 2. Based on the student interviews the following categories had the greatest number of comments: 37 interview comments were coded as "Confirm Understanding," 29 interview comments were coded as "Designing Methods", 29 interview comments were coded as "Setting Climate for Learning", and 28 interview comments were coded as "Establishing Time Parameters".

From 245 units, three themes emerged from the Teaching Presence components: 93 units were found for theme "Design and Organization", 88 units were found for theme "Discourse Facilitation" and 64 units were found for theme "Direct Instruction". See Table 3.6 for the complete Teaching Presence Model list of the themes, categories and the frequency of each theme and category within the student interview data. The components and elements listed in Table 3.6 were part of the Teaching Presence Model and not were created by the researcher.

**Table 3.6 Teaching Presence Themes Components and Elements (Q2)**

| Teaching Presence Components/Elements Frequency | |
|---|---|
| **Design and Organization** | **93** |
| Designing Methods | 29 |
| Establishing Time Parameters | 28 |
| Utilizing Medium Effectively | 14 |
| Setting Curriculum | 12 |
| Establishing Netiquette | 10 |
| **Discourse Facilitation** | **88** |
| Setting Climate for Learning | 29 |
| Drawing in Participants, Prompting Discussion | 22 |
| Assessing the Efficacy of the Process | 18 |
| Reinforce Student Contributions | 9 |
| Seeking to Reach Consensus | 7 |
| Identifying Areas of Agreement/Disagreement | 3 |
| **Direct Instruction** | **64** |
| Confirm Understanding | 37 |
| Present Content/Questions | 9 |
| Focus the Discussion on Specific Issues | 9 |
| Diagnose Misconceptions | 5 |
| Inject Knowledge from Diverse Sources | 4 |
| | 245 |

From the 245 total units, the Teaching Presence themes that were found in the student interviews were: 93 units were found for the theme of "Design and Organization", 88 were found for the theme of "Discourse Facilitation" and 64 units were found for the theme of "Direct Instruction".   The Teaching Presence Modal component elements with the most prominent number of comments from the student interviews were "Designing Methods" and "Establishing Time Parameters" within the theme of "Design and Organization", "Setting Climate for Learning" within the theme of "Discourse Facilitation" and "Confirming Understanding" within the theme of "Direct Instruction".

*Research Question 3*

The third research question was designed to gain understanding regarding how exemplary Teaching Presence is demonstrated.  Data was gathered from the student-nominated faculty interviews using the interview protocol, course documents in the form of content and materials, as well as Teaching Evaluations (student survey responses) provided by the exemplary faculty participants and observations in the form of discussion posts, announcements and recordings provided by the exemplary faculty participants.  The student interviews were analyzed and coded in NVivo 10 using extensive analysis to develop thematic categories.  Merriam's process of category construction was used to verify that the most relevant units were identified in the data and coded into appropriate categories for Research Question 3.  To address Research Question 3, the researcher identified interview units that specifically addressed how exemplary faculty participants demonstrated a high level of Teaching Presence.  The units identified for Research Question 3 were placed into Nodes based on the Teaching Presence components (Design and Organization, Discourse Facilitation, and Direct Instruction).  Sub-nodes were created within each Node based on the Teaching Presence Model component elements.  The Teaching Presence

component elements made up each theme were used to code the student interviews.   After the

initial analysis, categories were reviewed and revised.  The interview protocol only addressed the

Teaching Presence components, therefore there were no outliers for Research Question 3.

All documents and observation data was saved as screenshots in Microsoft Word before

importing the data into NVivo 10 to maintain formatting. Documents and observation data was

uploaded and stored as Memos in NVivo for review.    The use of NVivo 10 assisted the

researcher in examining the course data provided as observations in the research study.  Course

documents provided by the exemplary faculty were used to help further explore the successful

demonstration of Teaching Presence by detailing the activities and actions taken by the identified

exemplary faculty. Additionally, the Teaching Evaluations were provided by the exemplary

faculty were to support the interview data presented. Observation data is used to further

triangulate findings and further support interview findings (Merriam, 2009).  During this study

observational data was used to further illustrate specific behaviors within the online learning

environment and provide context by sharing firsthand accounts of the student-nominated

exemplary courses.  The analysis process flow for the qualitative data is shown in Figure 3.4.

**Figure 3.4 Analysis Process for Research Question 3 Data Using NVIVO 10**

```
┌────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│        Imported interview transcript data into NVivo     │
└────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          ↓
┌────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Identified the data units to appropriate to Research Question 2 │
└────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          ↓
┌────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Created Nodes in NVivo based on the Teaching Presence Components │
└────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          ↓
┌────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│        Coded data by Teaching Presence Component         │
└────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          ↓
┌────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Created Sub- Nodes in NVivo based on the Teaching Presence Component │
└────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          ↓
┌────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│    Coded data by Teaching Presence Component Elements    │
└────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          ↓
┌────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│              Coding was reviewed and revised             │
└────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          ↓
┌────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│    Themes and Categories for Research Question 2 Emerged │
└────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
            ↑                            ↑
┌─────────────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────────────┐
│ Provided Document data  │   │ Provided Observation data│
│ descriptions further    │   │ description further      │
│ support the interview   │   │ support the interview    │
│ data presented          │   │ data presented           │
│                         │   │                          │
│ Teaching Evaluations    │   │ Course Discussion Posts  │
│ Course Content          │   │ Course Announcements     │
│ Course Materials        │   │ Course Recordings        │
└─────────────────────────┘   └─────────────────────────┘
```

Based on the faculty interviews the following categories had the greatest number of comments:  18 interview comments were coded as "Confirm Understanding," 12 interview comments were coded as "Assessing the Efficacy of the Process", 11 interview comments were coded as "Drawing in Participants, Prompting Discussion", 11 interview comments were coded as "Establishing Time Parameters", 9 interview comments were coded as "Utilizing Medium Effectively", and 7 interview comments were coded as "Designing Methods".  See Table 4.6 for the complete list of component elements used as units and the frequency of each unit within the student interview data.

From 81 units, themes and categories were then reorganized to show each theme and the categories that referred to it. The Teaching Presence themes that were found in the faculty interviews were: 30 units for theme "Design and Organization", 26 units for theme "Discourse Facilitation" and 25 units for theme "Direct Instruction".  The data analysis will be discussed in order of the emerging themes: Design and Organization, Discourse Facilitation and Direct Instruction.  See Table 3.7 for the complete list of the themes, categories and the frequency of each theme and category within the faculty interview data. The components and elements listed in Table 3.7 were part of the Teaching Presence Model and not were created by the researcher.

**Table 3.7 Teaching Presence Themes Components and Elements (Q3)**

| Teaching Presence Components/Elements | Frequency |
|---|---|
| **Design and Organization** | **30** |
| Establishing Time Parameters | 11 |
| Utilizing Medium Effectively | 9 |
| Designing Methods | 7 |
| Establishing Netiquette | 2 |
| Setting Curriculum | 1 |
| **Discourse Facilitation** | **26** |
| Assessing the Efficacy of the Process | 12 |
| Drawing in Participants, Prompting Discussion | 11 |
| Setting Climate for Learning | 2 |
| Reinforce Student Contributions | 1 |
| Seeking to Reach Consensus | 0 |
| Identifying Areas of Agreement/Disagreement | 0 |
| **Direct Instruction** | **25** |
| Confirm Understanding | 18 |
| Present Content/Questions | 4 |
| Diagnose Misconceptions | 3 |
| Focus the Discussion on Specific Issues | 0 |
| Inject Knowledge from Diverse Sources | 0 |
| | 81 |

From the 81 total units, the Teaching Presence themes that were found in the faculty interviews were: 30 units were found for the theme of "Design and Organization", 26 were found for the theme of "Discourse Facilitation" and 25 units were found for the theme of "Direct Instruction".   The Teaching Presence Modal component elements with the most prominent number of comments from the student interviews were "Establishing Time Parameters" and "Utilizing the Medium" within the theme of "Design and Organization", "Assessing Efficacy of the Process" and "Drawing in Participants, Prompting Discussion" within the theme of "Discourse Facilitation" and "Confirming Understanding" within the theme of "Direct Instruction".

## Trustworthiness of the Research

Case study research builds on multiple data sources and uses several perspectives to develop an interpretation (Kyburz-Graber, 2004).  Conducting case study research is demanding and requires coordination of several participants to satisfy the triangulation process (Kyburz-Graber, 2004).  Triangulation is an important part of the research process.  By using multiple forms of data collection researchers are able to gain a broader view and utilize a variety of perspectives (Dana and Yendol-Hoppey, 2009).  One of the most important points noted regarding the use of multiple forms of data is that the researcher can remove a level of bias from the research.  Multiple data collection methods provide stronger validation of theory (Eisenhardt, 1989).  Triangulating data from student and student-nominated instructor interviews, course documentation, course observation and Teaching Evaluations determined the reliability of emergent themes.

Yin (2012) stated that "the goal of reliability is to minimize the errors and bias in a study" (p. 37).  Honesty and trustworthiness are the underlining characteristics that researchers need.

Honesty is expected from the reader's standpoint and from the subject's standpoint (Merriam, 2009). Both readers and researchers must be aware of the potential bias presented in case study research and reporting (Merriam, 2009).

It was important to select verification strategies that matched the type of research that was being conducted. The verification procedures that were most appropriate for this research study were thick description and reflexivity. These three procedures enhanced the process of this research project.

### *Thick Description*

"Thick description" is a valuable method of verification in case study research. Thick description allows readers to make develop their own conclusions based on the information presented (Creswell, 2007). While the researcher provided information to the reader, thick description allows the reader to build on the information presented (Creswell, 2007). The goal for this case study was to provide the reader with information regarding the student perspectives and faculty practices as it relates to Teaching Presence in the online classroom.

### *Reflexivity*

Researchers shape the writing that emerges in qualitative studies (Creswell, 2013). Topics are often selected based on the researcher's interest (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006). Reflexivity acknowledges the possible bias, values, and experience brought to the study by the researchers (Creswell, 20013). The benefit of the detailed interview process is that the researcher was able to discuss, question and gain understanding of Teaching Presence through the eyes of online Business students and faculty members. The collaborative sharing of information between the researcher and the interview participants assisted the researcher in understanding the case and exploring the experiences of the study participants.

The three main types of qualitative data included interviews, observations and documentation. Once the qualitative data was collected, verification strategies that matched the type of research being conducted were employed. This case study also used thick description and reflectivity as verification strategies. Additionally, Stake's twenty-point "Critique Checklist for a Case Study Report" (1995) was used to evaluate the quality of the case study report.

How the researcher interprets the data and presents it to the reader requires protocols (Stake, 1995). It is not enough to assume that our common sense will provide the accuracy and exclamation needed to comprehensively describe the case study (Stake, 1995). This is when the need for validation and triangulation becomes important (Stake, 1995). Without these protocols the case study researcher may bring forth only a single view when multiple perspectives need to be represented (Stake, 1995).

The "Critique Checklist for a Case Study Report" developed by Stake (1995) served as an additional resource while evaluating the case study research on Teaching Presence in the areas of thoroughness and purposeful case study development.

- Is the report easy to read?

- Does it fit together, each sentence contributing to the whole?

- Does the report have a conceptual structure (for example, themes or issues?)

- Are its issues developed in a serious and scholarly way?

- Is the case adequately defined?

- Is there a sense of story to the presentation?

- Is the reader provided with some vicarious experience?

- Have quotations been used effectively?

- Are headings, figures, artifacts, appendixes, and indexes used effectively?

- Was it edited well, then again with a last minute polish?

- Has the writer made sound assertions, neither over-nor under-interpreting?

- Has adequate attention being paid to various contexts?

- Were sufficient raw data presented?

- Were the data resources well-chosen and in sufficient number?

- Do observations and interpretations appear to have been triangulated?

- Are the role and point of view of the researcher nicely apparent?

- Is the nature of the intended audience apparent?

- Is empathy shown for all sides?

- Are personal intentions examined?

- Does it appear that individuals were put at risk? (Stake, 1995, p.131)

## *Dependability*

Dependability was established by providing stable data through overlapping methods of collection (Gay et al., 2009). Qualitative data included details provided by the researcher to guide readers through the research findings. The path that the researcher took and the distinctiveness of the study participants impacted the study. Therefore, the researcher described and addressed the stability of the data collected (Gay et al., 2009). Case study protocol and interview protocols were used in this study to establish dependability. The Data Collection and Analysis Methods section was developed to identify and document the data intended to address the research questions. Additionally, the interview protocols were established to develop thoroughness, reliability, and address ethical concerns (See Appendices B and C). Interviews were transcribed by the TranscribeMe transcription service and uploaded into NVivo 10 for coding and analysis. Research records were managed in a NVivo 10.

*Credibility*

In order to establish credibility, the readers must account for all complexities and address problems that are difficult to explain (Gay et al., 2009).   In this study, strategies to address issues of credibility included participant debriefing the semi-structured interviews with Business students and Business faculty.  Additionally, screenshots of faculty course documents, LMS content and communication were collected.   This case study research involved the coordination of several participants and included multiple sources of documentation and observation to satisfy the triangulation process.  This served as a way to demonstrate efficient collection methods and strengthen potential limitations related to a single collection method.

*Transferability*

Gay et. al. (2009) asserted that the researcher must include description and context related information in order for the reader to identify with the research setting.  Further, the researcher must, "develop detailed descriptions of the context" (p. 376).   This study included detailed descriptions to allow readers and future researchers the ability to identify with the setting.  This case study focused on undergraduate Business student's perceptions of Teaching Presence in online Business courses, what components of Teaching Presence undergraduate Business students find valuable, and how exemplary faculty demonstrate Teaching Presence in online instruction.  This study was designed to provide readers and future researchers with extensive detail in order to demonstrate trustworthiness of the research and develop transferability of the study for future research.

*Confirmability*

Guba (1981) asserted that confirmability applied to two strategies: triangulation, and reflectivity.  In order to answer the three research questions, this study used semi-structured

interviews, observations, and documents from multiple sources of evidence.  Upon transcription, the researcher requested that all participants review their transcripts and make changes or provide further explanation, if needed. Confirmability addressed the objectivity of the data collected (Guba, 1981).  Data analysis in this research study was provided in a reflective and neutral manner. See Table 3.8 for the criteria, strategies and strategies phases.

**Table 3.8 Trustworthiness of the Research**

| Criteria | Strategies | Phase of Research in Which Strategies Occurs |
|---|---|---|
| Dependability | Use interview protocols | • Thoroughness reliability and addressing ethical concerns and use of interview protocols (See Appendices B and C). |
| Credibility | • Account for complexities<br>• Address problems that are difficult to explain | • Interviews with the Business students enrolled in at least one online course and three student-nominated exemplary online Business course instructors |
| Transferability | Include description and context related information | • Included detailed descriptions to allow readers and future researchers the ability to identify with the setting |
| Confirmability | • Triangulation<br>• Reflectivity | • Triangulation – used multiple sources of data:<br>  o Semi-structured interviews<br>  o Documents (See Appendix R)<br>  o Observations<br>• Data analysis:<br>  o Provided in a reflective and neutral manner |

*Adapted from Gay (2009)*

## Ethical Considerations

Researchers work closely with individuals to capture their stories while maintaining ethical standards, interpretive methods and validity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).  The collaborative sharing of information between the researcher and the interview participants assisted the researcher in understanding Teaching Presence from the perspective undergraduate Business students and the demonstration of Teaching Presence by exemplary faculty.  As part of the overall ethical consideration of the research study, the researcher presented a composite picture

of all individuals represented, rather than an individual picture (Creswell, 2013).  The ethical

standards of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Kansas State University and the

Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Missouri Southern State University were upheld throughout

the research study.

Students and faculty participated in the study in a completely voluntary manner and had

the option to be removed from the study at any time.  Additionally, they had the option to forego

answering questions.  The researcher took caution to maintain confidentiality for the students and

the faculty participants in the study.  All participants were assured that her/his statements would

be confidential.

The researcher took precautions to uphold participant confidentiality by: (1) emphasizing

voluntary participation in the study (2) immediately uploading interview recordings NVivo for

transcription by Transcribe Me (NVivo's partner transcription service).  (3) Housing recordings

and transcripts in NVivo and deleting the audio files from the researcher's phone.  (4) Keeping

the NVivo software on the researcher's computer with secure fingerprint reader login access.

The researcher's fingerprint was the only fingerprint that could log in to the computer that housed

NVivo. (5) After successful defense of the dissertation, the files will be destroyed. These

precautions provided sufficient protection for the research subjects.

## Chapter Summary

For this research study the researcher formed the research questions starting with "how"

and "what".  This manner of questioning lent itself well to qualitative research methodology.  A

rationale was presented for a case study approach, based on consistent online enrollment

increases at the university level and the lack of qualitative research on Teaching Presence.  This

study used the Teaching Presence Model situated within Community of Inquiry Model.  Data

collection and analysis methods were provided.  Stake's approach to the case study was used

along with Miles & Huberman data analysis methods.  The research setting, location, and

number of online courses university-wide and in the School of Business department, were

detailed.  The student and faculty participants were described.  Trustworthiness of the research

methods were addressed in the areas of dependability, credibility, transferability and

conformability. Lastly, ethical considerations for conducting this research study were explained.

# Chapter 4 - FINDINGS

## Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore how undergraduate Business students perceived Teaching Presence in online Business courses, what components of Teaching Presence undergraduate Business students find most valuable, and how exemplary Teaching Presence was demonstrated. This study explored the following research questions:

1. How do undergraduate Business students perceive Teaching Presence in online courses?

2. What Teaching Presence components (Design and Organization, Discourse Facilitation and Direct Instruction) do undergraduate Business students find valuable in online courses?

3. How do exemplary undergraduate online Business course faculty demonstrate Teaching Presence in online instruction?

## Research Question 1

Research question one asked, "How do undergraduate Business students perceive Teaching Presence in online courses?' From the student interviews, a total of 101 units were found for Research Question 1. The focus of this study was to understand how undergraduate Business students perceived Teaching Presence in online courses.

Teaching Presence has three components that include (1) design and organization, (2) discourse facilitation, and (3) direct instruction. Design and organization includes setting curriculum, designing methods, setting course timeframes, defining topics and methods of instruction (Anderson et al., 2001). Discourse facilitation includes encouraging and prompting student participation, setting climate for learning, seeking agreement and understanding, assessing the efficacy of the process, reinforce student contributions, seeking to reach consensus and identifying areas of agreement/disagreement (Anderson et al., 2001). Direct instruction

involves confirming understanding, presenting content and questions, focus the discussion on specific issues, diagnosing misconceptions, along with injecting knowledge from diverse sources (Anderson et al., 2001).

### *Direct Instruction*

The component elements were used as "units".  The first Teaching Presence theme was "Direct Instruction" with 46 total units, which was the greatest number of units from the student interviews when discussing their perceptions of Teaching Presence.  The most prominent number of comments from the student interviews regarding "Direct Instruction" were:  31 interview comments were coded as "Confirm Understanding", 13 interview comments were coded as "Present Content/Questions" and 2 interview comments were coded as "Inject Knowledge from Diverse Sources".

### *Confirming Understanding*

"Confirm Understanding" was found to be a key aspect of the "Direct Instruction" theme with 31 units.  "Confirming Understanding" in the Teaching Presence Model referred to providing explanatory responses in the form of explanation and feedback that assisted student learning.  This included direct feedback and addressing student's questions and concerns in order to confirm their understanding.   Student participants shared a great deal of information regarding the connection between Teaching Presence and answering/addressing questions to confirm student understanding.  Student 6 emphasized interaction and demonstration of availability and how an instructor specifically worked to confirm student understanding by stating that:

> *She checks in with us mid-week every week, encourages that communication with her if*
>
> *we have questions or concerns. She just shows that she's available, and I think that that*

*was the most important thing because other professors don't do that. When you have a*

*professor that just says, "Here's your classes. When you start the term, this is everything*

*you can do," and then you don't hear from them again until your final - it can be*

*discouraging. So, just that the interaction and the checking in and asking about*

*questions, or just showing the availability is important.*

Student 19 shared how confirming understanding can be facilitated:

*Probably the communication, just reaching out, trying to get to know us and talk to us,*

*not that we're just numbers. Because sometimes I feel in this growing age of media,*

*everybody's just a number or a face on the screen. So I think just taking the time to reach*

*out to us and be like, "Hey, I saw you got this on your test. That's an improvement; you're*

*doing a good job." Or, "I noticed that you've been lacking in turning in assignments, is*

*there something going on?"*

Within the "Direct Instruction" theme students voiced how instructor demonstration of

availability and direct communication from the instructor to the student influenced their

perception of Teaching Presence.  They explained how the encouragement of communication

created presence in their online business courses.  The practices of providing reaching out to

students and encouraging communication was coded as "Confirm Understanding" within the

"Direct Instruction" theme because these actions prompted students to ask questions and

demonstrated instructor availability in order to provide explanation and feedback that assisted

student learning.

### *Discourse Facilitation*

The second theme was "Discourse Facilitation" with 36 total units for Question 1. The

component elements were used as "units" and those with the most prominent number of

comments from the student interviews regarding "Discourse Facilitation": 14 interview

comments were coded as "Drawing in Participants, Prompting Discussion", 9 interview

comments were coded as "Setting Climate for Learning", 8 interview comments were coded as

"Assessing the Efficacy of the Process", 4 interview comments were coded as "A Seeking to

Reach Consensus" and 1 interview comment was coded as "Reinforce Student Contributions".

### *Drawing in Participants, Prompting Discussion*

Fourteen units were found as "Drawing in Participants, Prompting Discussion" within the

"Discourse Facilitation" theme.   The unit coded as "Drawing in Participants, Prompting

Discussion" was accomplished through instructor involvement and the prompting of student

involvement to engage in productive dialog.  Through the interview process, it became evident

that direct instructor involvement in course discussions enhanced the student's perception of

Teaching Presence in online Business courses.  Student 1 spoke specifically on how her course

instructors prompted student involving by articulating that:

> *I think one of the best strategies I've seen is instructors that actually join in in the*
>
> *conversations and discussion board. Quite often you feel like discussion board's just out*
>
> *there, they throw a question out, and then it's just the class talking and you never see the*
>
> *instructors get involved in that discussion, or try to move the discussion in a certain way.*
>
> *And I've been seeing more and more of that change here in the last year, and I think*
>
> *that's a great strategy, when the instructor will actually come in and by midweek they've*
>
> *gotten involved, they've made responses to students, I think that's an excellent strategy*
>
> *for instructors to use to help guide. And I've noticed that the classes that do that seem to*
>
> *have a much higher level of participation in the discussion boards than classes that do*
>
> *not.*

Student 11 shared her fondness of discussion boards and how instructors with a high level of Teaching Presence manage them:

> *It allows students to interact because we're not in a classroom, so we can't meet and talk to each other or the professors. The discussion boards are always awesome. Themes are fun and it helps the students stay involved, and lets students know that the teacher is actually engaging in them.*

Student 8 shared her preference in regard to discussions and how it relates to creating a presence in a course:

> *With the discussion courses, there's been a few of my Business classes where-- some of the discussion courses you go in, and they give you a discussion question and you have to answer it and then you have to go back and answer like two or three. It's almost like sitting having a discussion, like a private chat versus, "Well I've got to find the answers to this."*

Within the "Discourse Facilitation" theme students voiced how instructor involvement in course discussion boards influenced their perception of Teaching Presence. They explained how instructor responses guided the discussions and created presence in their online business courses. The practice responsiveness in course discussion boards was coded as "Drawing in Participants, Prompting Discussion" within the "Discourse Facilitation" theme because discussion board participation on the part of the instructor was coincided with the attributes of instructor involvement and the prompting of student involvement to engage in productive dialog.

## *Design and Organization*

The third theme was "Design and Organization" with 19 total units for Question 1. The component elements were used as "units" and those with the most prominent number of

comments from the student interviews regarding "Design and Organization": 11 interview

comments were coded as "Designing Methods", 5 interview comments were coded as

"Establishing Time Parameters", 2 interview comments were coded as "Establishing Netiquette"

and 1 interview comment was coded as "Setting Curriculum".

### Designing Methods

"Designing Methods" was found to be a central part of the "Design and Organization"

theme with 11 units. "Designing Methods" in the Teaching Presence Model referred to

providing clear instructions regarding the completion of course learning activities. Online video

lectures were a clear attribute that influenced student's perception of Teaching Presence as it

related to the "Design and Organization" theme. Student 16 shared how presence is created

through video lectures:

> *The online lectures that some instructors post whether it's a video lecture or an audio*
>
> *lecture, just having that makes you feel like it actually really is a person teaching you and*
>
> *not just a computer.*

Student 20 reiterated these sentiments:

> *That helps having that video because then there's-- I know this may sound a little silly,*
>
> *but when you're not in a classroom there's someone else on the other end that you*
>
> *actually get to hear and it helps personalize the actual professor a little bit by being able*
>
> *to hear, or even see in some cases, the actual professor.*

Student 20 discussed how videos were used and the impact of video recording in regards

to teaching presence:

*You know, the videos, to me, brings a presence. It's almost like that's the lecture, and the*

*convenience of online courses is the big thing that draws me, but I still like the lectures*

*and hearing from the professor.*

Student 9 elaborated on videos that presented instruction, as well:

*I had a class this semester where there are videos posted to help walk you through things,*

*and I didn't personally have questions but I know that there were some questions that*

*came up that were posted in the discussion board and something would be added to make*

*either the video more accessible to them, if they were having problems, or to just go in*

*and change something.*

When discussing Teaching Presence, Student 14 elaborated on how certain courses

provide specific instructions regarding the completion of course learning activities in a beneficial

matter by stating that:

*For the most part, the professor does a good job of listing the instructions of the*

*assignments. "This is what we expect from you." And then having the videos with the*

*lectures is very helpful. Then you have all the assignments that are due and they have all*

*of that. The way they have it, I like it. It works. It's just something that is very important;*

*having good instructions from the professor as to what they expect us to do.*

Within the "Design and Organization" theme students voiced how video lectures

influenced their perception of Teaching Presence. They explained how video lectures provided

an additional layer of explanation and created presence in their online business courses. The

practice of providing video lectures was coded as "Designing Methods" within the "Design and

Organization" theme because video lectures conform to the action of providing clear instructions

regarding the completion of course learning activities.

*Summary*

Research question One asked, "How do undergraduate Business students perceive Teaching Presence in online courses?" Twenty undergraduate Business students and three student-nominated exemplary online Business course instructors were interviewed to offer insight that provided data for Question 1. From the student interviews, a total of 101 units were found for Research Question 1.

The Teaching Presence Model components were used as the themes for Research Question 1 (Design and Organization, Discourse Facilitation, and Direct Instruction). The Teaching Presence themes that were found in the student interviews were: 46 units were found for the theme of "Direct Instruction" 36 were found for the theme of "Discourse Facilitation" and 19 units were found for the theme of "Design and Organization".

The major findings from this research question were that undergraduate Business students perceived online course Teaching Presence through direct instruction, particularly in the form of confirming understanding. At the forefront, accessibility and responsiveness to questions and the demonstration of instructor's desire to confirm student understanding was found to be a key part of instructor presence, as perceived by undergraduate Business students. This theme was demonstrated by offering individualized comments in the form of responses to questions and learning activity feedback. Students expressed the importance of prompting student engagement in discussions and encouraging student participation, demonstrated in the "Discourse Facilitation" theme. Additionally, students detailed how design methods influence their perception of Teaching Presence.

**Research Question 2**

Research question two asked, "What Teaching Presence components (Design and Organization, Discourse Facilitation and Direct Instruction) do undergraduate Business students find valuable in online courses?" The focus of this study was to understand what components of Teaching Presence undergraduate Business students find valuable.

Teaching Presence has three components that include (1) Design and Organization, (2) Discourse Facilitation, and (3) Direct Instruction. Design and Organization includes setting curriculum, designing methods, setting course timeframes, defining topics and methods of instruction (Anderson et al., 2001).

*Design and Organization*

The first Teaching Presence theme was "Design and Organization", which had the greatest number of units from the student interviews with 93 total units. "Designing Methods" and "Establishing Time Parameters" were found to be key aspects of the "Design and Organization" theme.

*Designing Methods*

Within the "Design and Organization" theme, "Designing Methods" had 29 units. The "Design and Organization", "Designing Methods" in the Teaching Presence Model referred to providing clear instructions regarding the completion of and participate in course learning activities. Student participants conveyed their preferences from a designing methods standpoint with consistent viewpoints. Student 1 asserted that:

> *One of the best tools that I've seen used more and more in the last year, year and a half - has been some form of a webcast, or podcast, or an audio lecture where you can actually*

*pull up the instructor and they'll demonstrate what they're expecting for the week, and I*

*found that extremely beneficial as I work through some of the more difficult materials.*

Student 10 further supported this statement:

> *For me it would be like through a video from the professor. That gives us an idea, as a*
> *student, what the teacher is preferring. Because I know most of us, whenever a professor*
> *sends us an email saying like, "Okay, I expect this around the syllabus," but most of us,*
> *we're like, "Okay, what are you trying to expect us?" I think that what Professor X did*
> *this semester, which was a great idea, is that he started posting videos of himself talking.*
> *I feel like we were there face to face on the course, that he was just mentioning every*
> *week about the assignments of what he was expecting and such.*

Student 5 discussed video lectures as a form on Designing Methods by sharing:

> *They have video lectures that they post. Some of those are kind of cool to see, because*
> *you can go back and listen to their explanation, which gives you a little bit better idea of*
> *what they're talking about and how you would utilize the particular point that they're*
> *making in class. I appreciate things like that.*

Beyond video lectures, Student 15 discussed the importance of detailed directions:

> *It's easiest if you have an assignments tab, and each assignment is listed, and it has some*
> *pretty good information on how to complete each assignment.   I've had some classes*
> *where they tell you the assignment in the syllabus, but they don't give you a lot of detail*
> *into it, and then you're kind of on your own, like how am I supposed to do this, and you*
> *just go try to figure it out. I understand that you got to learn how to do things on your*
> *own, but when it comes to certain assignments, I like the assignments tab, and having the*
> *detailed information per assignment, not just all grouped together.*

*Establishing Time Parameters*

Within the "Design and Organization" theme, "Establishing Time Parameters" had 28 units.  The "Design and Organization", "Establishing Time Parameters" in the Teaching Presence Model referred to communicating important due dates, establishing time frames for learning activities that assisted students with keeping pace in a course. Student participants provided great detail regarding their preferences and how certain methods help them keep pace with the course. The act of posting calendars and agenda was a frequent student comment. Student 11 stated that:

*I think it'd be most beneficial if they put up a calendar at the beginning of the year. Just as a way to keep track of-- because sometimes you may not be able to check your Blackboard every single day, but if you put up a calendar and you're able to print the calendar off or copy it down and you can look at it every day, I think that would be super beneficial so that way you know, "Oh, I need to get on today. I have an assignment due soon. Or they're putting up a new assignment today or this is what we're covering".*

Student 17 further supported this statement by indicating that:

*When the instructor breaks it down, week-by-week - that's great. The semester syllabus or class syllabus posted at the very beginning is nice to go back to and reference very quickly to see what's happening. I think that the way that the assignments are laid out-- the weekly-- really broken up week-by-week, makes it extremely user-friendly for the student to be able to just see very quickly, "okay I need to do this, I need to do that, all by this date". It helps me keep me organized.*

Student 7 discussed their personal organization methods based on course calendars being set and presented at the beginning of the course:

*I like courses that are laid out for the whole 16 weeks already. The day we start. I usually*

*carry a planner. I like to go and write in my planner what is due from week 1 to week 16.*

*I like it when an instructor is already posted all from week 1 to week 16. Because I've*

*come across some courses that all of a sudden in the week eight they post due date for*

*something. And it's like, "Oh my gosh, I didn't know that was due. I need to be more*

*proactive about it." If they're going from week to week that's more difficult for me than*

*going from week 1 to week 16. I know what's expected of me, and I know how to complete*

*everything.*

Student 1 discussed improvements that she had recognized throughout her tenure as a Business

student taking online courses:

*One of the things that I really like now is the weekly format with a good agenda for each*

*week, what's due each week. At the beginning they would just throw out a syllabus and*

*you kind of had to pick through the syllabus to figure out what was due this week, and*

*that made it very difficult. And it's gotten much, much better, the classes are much better*

*organized online. There's very set criteria that must be met each week, and I find that*

*much easier. I can sit down on Sunday night or Monday morning and I know exactly*

*where I'm going for the week and where I can fit it into my work schedule.*

Within the "Design and Organization" theme students expressed the importance of video

lectures and upfront calendars/agendas when discussing the Teaching Presence components that

they found valuable in online business courses.  They explained how video lectures provide

added demonstration and explanation.   Additionally, they discussed how complete course

calendars, provided at the beginning of the course were valuable from a personal organization

standpoint.  The practice of providing video lectures was coded as "Designing Methods" within

the "Design and Organization" theme because students expressed that video lectures provided clear instructions regarding the completion of course learning activities. The practice of providing a complete calendar on the first day of the semester was coded as "Establishing Time Parameters" matched the attributes of communicating important due dates and establishing time frames for learning activities that assisted students with keeping pace in a course.

### Discourse Facilitation

The second theme was "Discourse Facilitation" with 88 total units for Question 2. The component elements were used as "units" and those with the most prominent number of comments from the student interviews regarding "Discourse Facilitation": 29 interview comments were coded as "Setting Climate for Learning", 22 interview comments were coded as "Drawing in Participants, Prompting Discussion", 18 interview comments were coded as "Assessing the Efficacy of the Process", 9 interview comments were coded as "Reinforce Student Contributions", 7 interview comments were coded as "Seeking to Reach Consensus" and 3 interview comments were coded as "Identifying Areas of Agreement/Disagreement".

### Setting A Climate for Learning

Twenty-nine units were found as "Setting A Climate for Learning" The unit coded as "Setting A Climate for Learning" referred to the encouragement of exploration of new ideas. Through the interview process, it became evident that setting a climate for learning is achieved in a variety of ways. Additionally, there is a variance among instructors from the standpoint communicating the exploration of new ideas. Student 8 stated that:

> A couple of teachers do put in-- I'm not saying they're better than our teachers, but there
> are a couples of teachers that put a little of more time, to explain things. Then even if the
> student asks the question a million times they'll still answer it but then send a link to like

*that video and say, "Look this is where you can find this, but let me explain it in different*

*in terms."*

Additionally, Student 14 discussed email messages and instructor's willingness to communicate with students:

*We get an email or a note letting us know, "Don't give up," especially after the first six*

*weeks or something. We're in the middle of the semester and they send email. "Don't give*

*up. This is the part where a lot of you think you're getting tired," they remind us, "you*

*can do this. We're almost there."*

Student 5 shared how instructor participation in course discussions furthers the exploration

process:

*I have had some professors that are really good at being interactive with the Blackboard*

*discussions they ask you to post. They'll come in, and they'll read your post, and they'll*

*put questions behind it. To make you think a little bit differently, or they may add what*

*about this, or what about in this type of case, so that really make you kind of shift gears*

*and not just use your opinion. It makes you really think about how to apply that, and*

*really what would I do if I was in that situation.*

Within the "Discourse Facilitation" theme students discussed the importance of encouraging emails, probing questions in the discussion boards and providing alternative resources for explanation when discussing the Teaching Presence components that they found valuable in online business courses.  They discussed how these methods of communication were valuable from a discovery and application standpoint.  These practices were coded as "Setting Climate for Learning" within the "Discourse Facilitation" theme because they encouraged the exploration of new ideas.

*Direct Instruction*

The third theme was "Direct Instruction" with 64 total units. The component elements were used as "units" and those with the most prominent number of comments from the student interviews regarding "Direct Instruction": 37 interview comments were coded as "Confirm Understanding", 9 interview comments were coded as "Present Content/Questions", 9 interview comments were coded as "Focus the Discussion on Specific Issues", 5 interview comments were coded as "Diagnose Misconceptions" and 4 interview comments were coded as "Inject Knowledge from Diverse Sources".

*Confirming Understanding*

"Confirm Understanding" was found to be a central part of the "Direct Instruction" theme with 37 units. "Confirm Understanding" refers providing explanatory responses in form of explanation and feedback that assisted student learning. Student 6 stated that:

*I think that personal interaction. I know that with the chat room that I had with the economics-- I actually had to take that class twice, and the first time, we didn't have that interaction and that chat room, and the second time I took it, we did. I was able to get that feedback. Where you think you understand it in the book and you think that you understand what the professors wanting you to hit on, but then you don't know, because you don't have that professor in front of you. Then when you take the exam, you're completely off-base on everything. Having that chat room where you do have the chance to have that personal interaction with them, then-- or even the recorded lectures, so you're really getting a feel for what that professor is wanting you to get out of that chapter.*

Student 4 discussed ways in which instructor feedback assists them as they move forward in their courses:

> *Just any comments on exams, quizzes, or what have you. I know some instructors, once you take an exam or what have you, they post your grade and we move on, but I like those instructors that provide some feedback that say, "You know, work on this, or in order to grasp this concept, you probably need to work on that." Or something like that, feedback on some of the exams or quizzes or whatever, just something to make a mental note and know this is something I probably need to focus on a little bit more before I get to finals or what have you.*

Furthermore, Student 20 discussed the lack of communication regarding exams and how that impacted his learning:

> *All of the tests I have never known what I got wrong, and I understand the reasoning's for that because of people trying to cheat and share answers and et cetera, et cetera, but that really does hurt especially when it comes to final time when I'm not exactly sure which ones I got wrong, so that might be a communication problem that could be helped somehow, is to at least know where I'm hurting, or where my problems are.*

Within the "Direct Instruction" theme students voiced how interaction and personal feedback influenced their perception of Teaching Presence. They explained how specific feedback on exams and the availability of direct interaction with their instructed created presence in their online business courses. The practices of providing specific feedback and devising a chat room to address questions and providing feedback was coded as "Confirm Understanding" within the "Direct Instruction" theme because these actions provided students with explanatory responses in form of explanation and feedback that assisted student learning.

*Summary*

Research question two asked, "What Teaching Presence components (Design and Organization, Discourse Facilitation and Direct Instruction) do undergraduate Business students find valuable in online courses?"  Twenty undergraduate Business students were interviewed to offer insight that provide data for Question 2.  The Teaching Presence themes that were found in the student interviews were: 93 units were found for theme "Design and Organization", 88 units for theme "Discourse Facilitation" and 64 units were found for theme "Direct Instruction".

The major findings from this research question were that the "Design and Organization" theme was found to be most valuable to undergraduate Business students in online Business courses in the form of designing methods and establishing time parameters.  Student voices expressed that this was demonstrated through detailed learning activity instruction, the implementation of videos to detail directions and the availability of a full course calendar provided at the beginning of the course.  Within the "Discourse Facilitation" theme students discussed the importance of encouraging emails, probing questions in the discussion boards and providing alternative resources for explanation when discussing the Teaching Presence components that they found valuable in online business courses.  Additionally, "Confirming Understanding" within the "Direct Instruction" theme was important to students when discussing what Teaching Presence components they found valuable in online Business courses.

## Research Question 3

Research Question 3 asked, "How do exemplary undergraduate online Business course faculty demonstrate Teaching Presence in online instruction?"  This study sought to identify how exemplary online Business course faculty demonstrate Teaching Presence. The exemplary faculty interviews resulted in a total of 81 units of information for Research Question 3.

*Design and Organization*

The Teaching Presence theme "Design and Organization" was found to have the greatest number of units, with 30 total units, as indicated during the faculty interviews. When discussing the demonstration of Teaching Presence in online Business courses, 11 interview comments were coded as "Establishing Time Parameters", 9 interview comments were coded as "Utilizing Medium Effectively", 7 interview comments were coded as "Designing Methods", 2 interview comments were coded as "Establishing Netiquette", and 1 interview comment was coded as "Setting Curriculum".

The Teaching Presence component, "Design and Organization", had greatest number of comments during the student-nominated instructor interviews when discussing their experiences with and attitudes towards Teaching Presence components in online Business courses. When speaking specifically about an instructor that demonstrated Teaching Presence, Instructor 3 was adamant about the importance of organization within the online classroom:

> *I think the key to running a successful online classroom environment has everything to do with the organization and consistency from week to week. I also think the success of the course site has to do with outlining a schedule of events, required readings, assignments, exams, any expectation you have of the student to be in one document that they can access from the beginning of the semester and use it as their checklist to work their way through the course site, throughout the course of this semester. Basically, they know from day one what the expectations of the course are going to be, and they can plan their life accordingly.*

*Establishing Time Parameters*

      "Establishing Time Parameters" was a frequent interview topic when discussing the demonstration Teaching Presence in online Business courses with 11 units.  When discussing the establishment of time parameters as it related to Teaching Presence, Instructor 1 shared information regarding upfront scheduling:

> *I like an upfront schedule. These are your due dates from day one. You can plan your life*
>
> *and your schedule according to these due dates. I also send out weekly reminders of,*
>
> *"This is what's due this week and what's coming up for the next week." That way in case*
>
> *they've forgotten, they get another reminder. And then they always get reminders when*
>
> *exams come live and when they're due as well, an additional reminder.*

Instructor 2 further supported this method by sharing specific comments about establishing time parameters by indicating that:

> *I have a weekly announcement, and every week I post what week we're in because I think*
>
> *that's really important because you have a 16-week semester and, on my week tabs, it'll*
>
> *just say week 8. Well, by week seven or eight, they may not remember what week they're*
>
> *in necessarily so I always post an announcement that says, "It's week eight. You're*
>
> *halfway through the semester. Please check for your assignments under the week eight*
>
> *tab." I always refer them to the appropriate tab just to make sure that it's clearly*
>
> *communicated where they need to go to get those assignments.*

Instructors provided a great deal of information regarding their specific methods. Instructor 3 stated that:

> *Intermittently, with the announcements in week two, week five, I will say, "And if you*
>
> *haven't considered thinking about your paper, you should probably start doing that now,*

*you know, please check the week ten folder, it's been open all semester," so that they can*

*access that information from week one. Any big assignment, I will open from the*

*beginning of the semester so that they can work on it.*

Instructor 2 also provided specific information regarding communication of due dates by indicating that:

*I do post a schedule at the beginning of the semester, and it's tentative, but it's laid out*

*for the entire semester as well under the course home, so they'll know what to be looking*

*for as well and how to plan their semester time-wise.*

Additionally, Instructor 1 mentioned the importance of reminders:

*Again, the constant reminders; the, "Hey, homework is due. I've noticed a lot of people*

*haven't submitted it yet. I just wanted to make sure you remembered that it's due today, or*

*tomorrow," or whenever it might be.*

Instructor 3 discussed strategies that she uses to establish time parameters by stating that:

*My course sites go up on Sunday morning at 7 AM for all my online classes, and they are*

*up for almost eight complete days. It doesn't not go down until the next Sunday night at*

*11:59 PM. Every Sunday, there are two weeks' worth of modules up. There is the module*

*that should be completed that Sunday, and the module that will be completed the very*

*next Sunday. Most of our students have learned over time to really utilize the weekends,*

*because most of them work full time. The weekends are sort of their time to sit down and*

*really hammer through the material. I've found that giving them nearly eight complete*

*days, to complete that weeks' worth of assignments, I think, has given students enough*

*flexibility that I really don't have a lot of issue with helping them meet the time frame. I*

*think that, coupled with my course schedule, allows them to plan adequately. I don't get a*

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*lot of students-- I don't have a lot of students missing assignments, and I don't get a lot of students saying, "Oops, I didn't do the assignment".*

There was consistency in the methods used to establish time parameters by all three instructors. Data in the form of documentation further supported these methods. Instructor 1 posted a Course Calendar in an Excel spreadsheet under Course Home. The calendar started on the first day of the course and ended four days after the Final Exam due date. A Key Dates table was also provided below the calendar. Within the Announcements section of the course, a Weekly Schedule was provided at 11:59pm on the Saturday prior to the Week start date.

Instructor 2 posted a Course Schedule in an Excel spreadsheet under Course Home. The breakdown of the schedule was as follows: Week, Dates, Tasks/Lectures/Readings, Assignments/Exams, Points and Total Weekly Points. Within the Announcements section of the course, a weekly "Check In" announcement was posted with due date reminders.

Instructor 3 provided a stand-alone Schedule tab on the course homepage. The Course Schedule was provided on the main page of the Schedule tab and in a Word under. The breakdown of the schedule was as follows: Week, Date, Tasks/Lectures/Readings. Assignments/Exams. Within the Announcements section of the course, a weekly reminder announcement outlined the required coursework for the week.

### Utilizing the Medium

Nine units were found as "Utilizing Medium Effectively". The unit coded as "Utilizing Medium Effectively" was accomplished through the effective use of Blackboard Learn as a medium for instruction and facilitation of the online environment resources to assist student learning. Instructor 3 spoke specifically on how consistency is important when utilizing Blackboard:

*I think students appreciate, knowing from day one, what is going to be expected of them each and every week and having that as a checklist, to make sure that they're staying on task and plan their life outside of school accordingly, so that they can get everything accomplished in the weeks where they may have more due than other weeks.*

One discrepancy among the student-nominated instructors was their feelings toward the structure within Blackboard. Instructor 2 and Instructor 3 highly favored a weekly structure, whereas Instructor 1 favored an alternative structure. Instructor 1 stated that:

*I've seen many templates that's like, week one, week two, week three, week four, and you have a thousand buttons in your learning management system, and I don't think the students work well with that. I think, "This is a button for where your homework is. This is a button for where you access all of your materials or course material, and this is where you go if you have questions," and leave it simple as possible.*

To the contrary, Instructor 2 shared that:

*I use the week-to-week tab, and I typically will open the weeks up, but I will not open the assignments up until those are specific to that week. If I have PowerPoints, those are open. Any objectives are open for the weeks ahead, so they can view that and work ahead if they want, just in preparing their selves for that material, but I typically open the assignments in the week. I make sure and identify what the assignments are specifically for that week, and then I typically have an assignment tab that's separate than that. So that way, it's available twice. It's dated two different times as to what the expectations are as far as turning something in.*

Similar to Instructor 2, Instructor 3 shared that:

*The weekly modules are really beneficial because they see it's the same expectation.*

*When they click on week one, versus week two, week three, week four, the very first*

*they're going to see is the exact same thing they saw the week before. The contents of that*

*post within that week are different, depending on which chapters we're going to cover.*

*Everything in my course site, from the very first day to the very last day, is very*

*consistent. In appearance, it's very consistent. Wording is very consistent. What order*

*things appear in, for instance, if they have some assignment and a quiz, the quiz always*

*come before the assignment. It's just every single week, they know what the expectation,*

*or they know what to expect when they click on the link.*

Data in the form of documentation further supported this contrast. Instructor 1 structured her courses in the following manner: Announcements, Course Home, Course Documents, Homework, Discussion Board, Student Resources, My Grades, and Tool. The Course Document section was divided into 5 units, including the Final Exam. Each Unit included materials for the Chapters. For examples, Unit 1 was titled Unit 1 – Chapters 1, 2, and 3. Within each Unit, a Chapter folder was included with a PowerPoint, Study Guide and Chapter Video. All Homework assignments were provided within the Homework section.

Instructor 2 structured her courses in the following manner: Announcements, Course Home, Meet Your Instructor, Discussion Board, Student Resources, My Grades, Tools, and then weekly folders (Week 1 through Week 16). Each Week was available on the course main page. Within each Week, the instructor included Weekly Objectives, Weekly Readings/Videos, Chapter PowerPoints, Agendas and Assignments.

Instructor 3 structured her courses in the following manner: Announcements, Faculty Information, Syllabus, Schedule, Weekly Modules, Groups, My Grades, Tools. The Weekly

Modules section was divided into 16 Weeks, plus the Final Exam. For example, Week 1 was titled Week 1 – Chapter 1. Below the title, the instructor included a sub header titles What you need to know… that included the outcomes for each Week. Within each Week, the instructor included Chapter Study Material, Assignments and Quizzes.

*Faculty Teaching Evaluations*

Within this study, exemplary faculty Teaching Evaluations were used to further support the interview data presented (Merriam, 2009). Documentation was provided in the form of faculty Teaching Evaluations from the Spring 2015 semester. Each faculty participant provided the researcher with two Faculty Teaching Evaluations, one from each online business course that they taught during the Spring 2015 semester. Faculty Teaching Evaluations were used to further substantiate specific behaviors within the online learning environment and provided additional context by sharing supplementary student information as it related to the exemplary instructor's courses and methods, by disclosing anonymous student data that further supported the interview data that was collected.

The faculty participants were asked to share their Teaching Evaluation scores for the following three questions that related the Teaching Presence Model component of Design and Organization:

- Question 1 - The instructor is well prepared and organized.

  *Design and Organization Component Elements:*

  - *Establishing Time Parameters*

  - *Setting Curriculum*

  - *Designing Methods*

- Question 2 - The instructor clearly states and follows course objectives.

*Design and Organization Component Element:*

- *Setting Curriculum*

- *Designing Methods*

- Question 6 - <u>Assignments are valuable and related to course objectives.</u>

  *Design and Organization Component Elements:*

  - *Designing Methods*

  - *Setting Curriculum*

Results were based on a 4-point Likert items (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree).  See Appendix R for the Teaching Evaluation (Course Survey).  The Likert scale data was provided by question, along with the response rate, for each Business course that the faculty participants taught online during the Spring 2015 semester.  The Design and Organization Teaching Evaluation Results and Response Rates are provided below, since they were related to Teaching Presence.  Each result is based on a 4-point scale, based on the number of students that completed the survey.  For example, Faculty 1, Course 1, Question 1 was 3.62 on a 4-point scale with 13 student responses. See Table 4.1 for the complete Design and Organization teaching evaluation results and response rates for each faculty course from the Spring 2015 semester.

**Table 4.1 Design and Organization Teaching Evaluation Results and Response Rate**

| Design and Organization Teaching Evaluation Questions | Faculty 1 | | Faculty 2 | | Faculty 3 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Course 1** | **Course 2** | **Course 1** | **Course 2** | **Course 1** | **Course 2** |
| Response Rate | 41% (13/32) | 64% (25/39) | 33% (8/24) | 77% (20/36) | 50% (12/24) | 57% (13/23) |
| Question 1 - The instructor is well prepared and organized. *Results – 4.0 Scale* | 3.62 | 3.80 | 3.74 | 3.74 | 3.58 | 3.62 |
| Question 2 - The instructor clearly states and follows course objectives. *Results – 4.0 Scale* | 3.46 | 3.80 | 3.63 | 3.70 | 3.58 | 3.85 |
| Question 6 - Assignments are valuable and related to course objectives. *Results – 4.0 Scale* | 3.38 | 3.80 | 3.75 | 3.85 | 3.67 | 3.69 |

The average response score from the six faculty courses for Question 1 was 3.68. The average result for Question 2 was 3.67 and the average result for Question 3 was 3.69. The results of the three questions related to Design and Organization were similar.  Of the three questions, no one question stood out as having higher or lower results than the other questions.

All faculty participants demonstrated strength in the area of Design and Organization based on the Teaching Evaluation results provided for each of their courses during the Spring 2015 semester.  Any result over 3.50 indicated that half or more students responded with

Strongly Agree for a question.  As a benchmark example, a score of 3.50 on the 4-point scale with 12 student responses would have a distribution of 6 student responses of Strongly Agree and 6 student responses of Agree.  Of the eighteen response results provided for Design and Organization, only two fell slightly below 3.50.

The comments provided by students that related to Design and Organization on the teaching evaluations were positive and focused heavily on organization.  Student comments provided on the Teaching Evaluations voiced satisfaction by making remarks such as:

- *The class information was reinforced with instruction videos, outlines provided and schedules.*

- *I really like how she gives a calendar at the beginning of the semester, as it proved to be very helpful.*

- *Video are a great help with managing the course material.*

- *The lecture and instruction videos are very helpful.*

- *I believe this is the most organized course I have ever taken.  It is nice to have a simple schedule for the entire semester and a list of what I need to do each week for the course.*

- *I LOVE LOVE LOVE this course.  Since it was online and setup the way it was, I feel like I was able to understand it better than just reading a book like some of the other online. classes.  It made it easier to learn and actually retain the material, which is a big deal to me.*

- *I really enjoyed the format of the semester.  Knowing exactly what was expected and due each week made it very easy to stay on track.*

- *The professor is very organized and clear about assignment expectation.*

- *I learned a lot in the class and it's been really easy to follow along because everything is organized so well. Thank you!*

- *Everything was well organized and fair.*

Suggestions for improvement comments that related to Design and Organization were limited but included:

- *In some assignment instructions there has been too much cut and paste. Instructor may need to review these pages a bit closer.*

- *For some reason, I had a hard time following the PowerPoint presentations at times. Some slides she stays on for long periods and others she skips right past. I typically have to rewind and/or pause to get everything.*

When discussing the demonstration of Teaching Presence in online Business courses faculty participants discussed the importance of establishing time parameters and using Blackboard Learn effectively for instruction and facilitation in the online environment. These practices were coded as "*"Establishing Time Parameters"* and "Utilizing Medium Effectively" within the "Design and Organization" theme. Data in the form of documentation supported a contrast among instructors in regard to their structure and organization preferences within Blackboard Learn. Faculty Teaching Evaluations were used to further support the interview data presented by providing anonymous student data. This information substantiated specific faculty behaviors and attributes related to Design and Organization.

## *Discourse Facilitation*

The second theme was "Discourse Facilitation" with 26 total units. When discussing experiences with and methods of demonstrating of Teaching Presence in online Business courses, 12 interview comments were coded as "Assessing the Efficacy of the Process", 11

interview comments were coded as "Drawing in Participants, Prompting Discussion", 2 interview comments were coded as "Setting Climate for Learning" and 1 interview comment was coded as "Reinforce Student Contributions".

 *Assessing the Efficacy of the Process*

When discussing perception of Teaching Presence, faculty participants directed a great deal of attention to "Assessing the Efficacy of the Process".  "Assessing the Efficacy of the Process" in the Teaching Presence Model referred to course instructor's assistance in regard to keeping participants on task in a way that assisted student learning.  Instructor 2 shared her methods of assisting and directing students in a way that keeps them on task:

*I ask them to fill out an introduction assignment, and I ask them to actually provide a way to communicate with them that's not strictly email - a phone number or something that I can text them or call them. Because, sometimes I feel like things get lost in translation via email, and so there are times I will just call that person directly.*

When discussing Teaching Presence, Instructor 3 reiterated the important of effectively keeping students focused:

*I would say that, from a facilitation standpoint, is consistently communicating with them about the expectations of the course, consistently letting them know that if they have any questions they can email me, and checking in on them on a regular basis. If there's something that needs to be done or an issue that needs to be addressed, or somebody that's asked me a question, if I've gotten a question more than one, sending that out to the entire class, I think, has helped in the facilitation process for a lot of students.*

Instructor 1 discussed connection and how some students need a little extra push to stay on task:

*I think some people I probably annoy with emails. There's some people that probably I*

*email too much, and there are other people that I don't enough. I think it depends on the*

*subject matter. So, the folks that need just that tiny little bit of push, me sending a weekly*

*schedule about what's due isn't going to do it. But me sending them an email saying,*

*"Hey, you're so close. Hang in there. We're almost done, you got this," I think that does*

*more.*

### Drawing in Participants, Prompting Discussion

"Drawing in Participants, Prompting Discussion" was found to be an essential method of

discourse facilitation as it related to the demonstration of level of Teaching Presence with 11

units. All three instructors discussed how their involvement was essential within online Business

courses. Instructor 1 spoke specifically on how she modeled facilitation in her courses:

*I go through and I read all the comments on the discussion board, and I reply to*

*everybody, even if it's a, "That's great," or, "Glad you got it figured out," or, "That's a*

*good point," or something. That way they know that I'm there, I'm active, I'm not just*

*somebody browsing once a week about what's being done. I am actively involved as*

*much as they are. It's kind of a monkey see monkey do. When they see me do is, I think*

*they do as well.*

Instructor 2's comments regarding student participation as it related to facilitation:

*I think students really can visualize themselves in a situation because they've encountered*

*it, and they can articulate it in a way that clarifies to their peers what they did, and it*

*makes it interesting and engaging.*

Instructor 3 was candid in discussing a change that she plans to make in her courses that relates

to prompting discussion participation:

*One thing I will tell you, I think, is a weakness of my course - and I never really realized*

*that until this semester - is that I do not require students to post an original anything by a*

*certain date. I think I'm going to change that moving forward, because I think for some*

*students, it has discouraged their early participation and engagement because they know*

*nobody's going to post until Sunday. By then, I'll just get online and fill out whatever I*

*have to do to get by and then move on.*

There was consistency in the methods used to prompt discussion by all three instructors. Data in the form of observation further supported these methods.  Instructor 1 provided a discussion forum for each chapter assigned in her courses under Discussions. Additionally, she provided discussion forums regarding miscellaneous questions, exam and quiz questions and Cengage questions. Instructor 1 replied to all student discussion threads in the courses observed by the researcher.

Instructor 2 posted a discussion forum for every Week in her 400-level course.  Her 300-level course provided one open forum from students to introduce themselves.  Additionally, she provided an Ask Your Instructor forum for student questions. Instructor 2 was very active in the Ask Your Instructor forum.

Instructor 3 provided discussion forums for each Case Study Assignment provided in her courses. Students were required to make an original post before gaining access to the posts made by their classmates. At the time of observation, no initial post deadline requirement was in place.

### *Faculty Teaching Evaluations*

Additional documentation was provided in the form of exemplary faculty Teaching Evaluations from the Spring 2015 semester. The faculty participants were asked to share their

Teaching Evaluation score for the following three questions that related the Teaching Presence Model component of Discourse Facilitation:

-     Question 4 - The instructor displays respect for the student.

  *Teaching Presence Model Component Elements:*

  - *Reinforce Student Contributions*

  - *Setting Climate for Learning*

-     Question 7 – The instructor manages the course effectively.

  *Teaching Presence Model Component Elements:*

  - *Assessing the Efficacy of the Process*

  - *Drawing in Participants, Prompting Discussion*

  - *Seeking to Reach Consensus*

  - *Identifying Areas of Agreement/Disagreement*

-     Question 10 – Overall, the instructor is effective in teaching this class.

  *Teaching Presence Model Component Elements:*

  - *Assessing the Efficacy of the Process*

  - *Setting Climate for Learning*

The Discourse Facilitation teaching evaluation results and response rates are provided below. Each result is based on a 4-point scale, based on the number of students that completed the survey. For example, Faculty 1, Course 1, Question 1 was 3.58 on a 4-point scale with 13 student responses. See Table 4.2 for the complete Discourse Facilitation teaching evaluation results and response rates for each faculty course from the Spring 2015 semester.

**Table 4.2 Discourse Facilitation Teaching Evaluation Results and Response Rate**

| Discourse Facilitation Teaching Evaluation Questions | Faculty 1 | | Faculty 2 | | Faculty 3 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Course 1** | **Course 2** | **Course 1** | **Course 2** | **Course 1** | **Course 2** |
| Response Rate | 41% (13/32) | 64% (25/39) | 33% (8/24) | 77% (20/36) | 50% (12/24) | 57% (13/23) |
| Question 4 - The instructor displays respect for the student.<br><br>*Results – 4.0 Scale* | 3.58 | 3.84 | 3.75 | 3.75 | 3.50 | 3.46 |
| Question 7 – The instructor manages the course effectively.<br><br>*Results – 4.0 Scale* | 3.46 | 3.84 | 3.88 | 3.80 | 3.67 | 3.85 |
| Question 10 – Overall, the instructor is effective in teaching this class.<br><br>*Results – 4.0 Scale* | 3.54 | 3.84 | 3.75 | 3.80 | 3.50 | 3.69 |

The average response score from the six faculty courses for Question 4 was 3.65. The average result for Question 7 was 3.75 and the average result for Question 10 was 3.69. The results of the three questions related to Discourse Facilitations were similar, although Question 7 stood out as having higher results than the other two questions.

All faculty participants demonstrated strength in the area of Discourse Facilitation, based on the Teaching Evaluation results provided for each of their courses during the Spring 2015 semester. Any result over 3.50 indicated that half or more students responded with Strongly

Agree for a question.  Of the eighteen response results provided for Discourse Facilitation, only two fell slightly below 3.50.

The comments provided by students that related to Discourse Facilitation on the teaching evaluations were positive and focused heavily on engagement and conduct.  Student comments provided on the Teaching Evaluations voiced satisfaction by making remarks such as:

- (Instructor 3) *is a phenomenal professor!  She knows the material and is great at explaining information!! I love how* (Instructor 3) *expects the class to participate and interact with one another!  She is definitely one of my all-time favorite teachers.*

- *I really enjoyed this class.  I felt like all the assignments went well with the chapter we were discussing and they were really interesting to do.*

- *Extremely friendly and professional. Very knowledgeable in the material and how it relates to everyday use.*

- *The professor is very professional and conducts her course very well.*

There were no suggestions for improvement comments that related to Discourse Facilitation provided on any of the Teaching Evaluations provided.

When discussing the demonstration of Teaching Presence in online Business courses faculty participants reflected on the importance of keeping students on task, drawing in participants and prompting discussion in online Business courses.  These practices were coded as "Assessing the Efficacy of the Process" and "Drawing in Participants, Prompting Discussion" within the "Discourse Facilitation" theme.   Data in the form of observation further detailed the exemplary faculty's specific approach to individual discussion board approaches.  Faculty Teaching Evaluations were used to further support the interview data presented by providing anonymous student data that revealed a demonstrated strength in the area of Discourse Facilitation.

Additionally, this information highlighted distinctive faculty behaviors and attributes related to Discourse Facilitation.

### *Direct Instruction*

The third theme was "Direct Instruction" with 25 total units. When discussing demonstration of high Teaching Presence in online Business courses, 18 interview comments were coded as "Confirm Understanding", 4 interview comments were coded as "Present Content/Questions" and 3 interview comments were coded as "Diagnose Misconceptions".

### *Confirming Understanding*

"Confirm Understanding" was found to be a key aspect of the "Direct Instruction" theme with 18 units. When discussing the demonstration of high Teaching Presence in online Business courses, Instructor 2 spoke specifically on how she prompts student understanding by saying that:

> *A lot of it is feedback and connecting with students. Particularly if they have questions or if you're doing lectures, that's an aspect of direct instruction as well.*

Instructor 3 shared information regarding specific methods that she uses to confirm student understanding:

> *Well, as far as the assignments are concerned, students will ask you questions and want you to give them a finite answer. Some of these assignments, they require some critical thinking, and so I will lead them in the right direction without giving them the answer, and hope that they're persistent enough to figure it out and to check the resources. Sometimes, there's back and forth dialogue, two or three times, but my goal is to help them learn how to answer their own questions, give them the resources to do that, the*

*guidance to do that, and the confidence to do that, but to help them figure it out*

*themselves.*

All three instructors provided details regarding their personal approach toward feedback.

Instructor 1 shared her various methods of confirming understanding:

*Most of the time, I provide the feedback through email. I have plenty of times that*

*students would call or just stop by. But with online courses, it's a little bit different. I have*

*Skype if I need to. Just whatever it is that's going to help them the most. If they don't get it*

*during email, I'll recommend them call or stop by. And usually, after one of those two,*

*then we get it, but if you need to see hands-on, I've sat down and recorded extra videos*

*just for specific topics and specific people, and sent them off.*

Instructor 2 stated that:

*Any time they have a case study, I always markup-- I write on there what I think this*

*should be or this could have been changed. I have a rubric so I also assign point values*

*based off of the rubric, but I always make sure I actually write what my thoughts are*

*throughout the paper. I don't just scan a paper and grade it. I actually mark it and give*

*my thoughts. The same thing with discussion posts. I try to make a comment that shows I*

*read it [chuckles] so they don't think I just gave them points, but I also try to have some*

*feedback for them in response to it - "Hey, that was a great thought. I really enjoyed*

*that," or "Did you think about this part of it?"*

Additionally, Instructor 3 detailed her thoughts on feedback and guiding students to a

place of understanding:

*The rubrics are, to me, just-- you just can't place a value on them. In my opinion, they*

*have just been so helpful for me because what I would normally spend 15 minutes typing*

*out, just by clicking the box, a student knows where they stand. The rubric is outlined*

*such that the explanation of why their points were deducted is very clear. I'll also provide*

*comments about, "Thank you for your submission, however you didn't address these parts*

*of the rubric," and so that the student also gets a little bit of hand-written, typed feedback*

*as well that they can see. So, it's not just clicking the box.*

Data in the form of documentation further supported the statements that Instructor 3 made regarding grading rubrics.  Between her two courses, she provided 15 assignment rubrics to her students.  The rubrics were provided with the assignment for the student to view prior to the completion and submission of the assignment.

Instructor 2 provided grading rubrics for the Case Study assignments presented in one of her courses.  The rubrics were presented along with the Case Study assignments.  The top of the document provided the assignment guidelines with the rubric provided below the guidelines.

The nature of the courses that Instructor 1 taught did not lend itself well to the use of rubrics.  The assignments in the courses that Instructor 1 taught were far more test based.  When Instructor 1 discussed feedback, she frequently mentioned leaving comments within quizzes and exams, as well as reaching out to specific students that struggled with exams and quizzes.

### *Faculty Teaching Evaluations*

Additional documentation was provided in the form of exemplary faculty Teaching Evaluations from the Spring 2015 semester. The faculty participants were asked to share their Teaching Evaluation score for the following three questions that related the Teaching Presence Model component of Direct Instruction:

- Question 3 - The instructor is willing and able to provide assistance.

    *Teaching Presence Model Component Elements:*

    - *Confirm Understanding*

    - *Diagnose Misconceptions*

- Question 5 - The instructor displays mastery of course content.

    *Teaching Presence Model Component Elements:*

    - *Confirm Understanding*

    - *Present Content/Questions*

    - *Diagnose Misconceptions*

    - *Focus the Discussion on Specific Issues*

    - *Inject Knowledge from Diverse Sources*

- Question 8 – The instructor returns work promptly.

    *Teaching Presence Model Component Element:*

    - *Confirm Understanding*

- Question 9 – The instructor evaluates students fairly.

    *Teaching Presence Model Component Elements:*

    - *Confirm Understanding*

    - *Diagnose Misconceptions*

The Direct Instruction teaching evaluation results and response rates are provided below. Each result is based on a 4-point scale, based on the number of students that completed the survey. For example, Faculty 1, Course 1, Question 1 was 3.69 on a 4-point scale with 13 student responses. See Table 4.3 for the complete Discourse Facilitation teaching evaluation results and response rates for each faculty course from the Spring 2015 semester.

**Table 4.3 Direct Instruction Teaching Evaluation Results and Response Rate**

| Direct Instruction Teaching Evaluation Questions | Faculty 1 | | Faculty 2 | | Faculty 3 | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | **Course 1** | **Course 2** | **Course 1** | **Course 2** | **Course 1** | **Course 2** |
| Response Rate | 41% (13/32) | 64% (25/39) | 33% (8/24) | 77% (20/36) | 50% (12/24) | 57% (13/23) |
| Question 3 - The instructor is willing and able to provide assistance. *Results – 4.0 Scale* | 3.69 | 3.84 | 3.63 | 3.63 | 3.33 | 3.69 |
| Question 5 - The instructor displays mastery of course content. *Results – 4.0 Scale* | 3.62 | 3.84 | 3.63 | 3.63 | 3.67 | 3.77 |
| Question 8 – The instructor returns work promptly. *Results – 4.0 Scale* | 3.54 | 3.72 | 3.75 | 3.75 | 3.42 | 3.62 |
| Question 9 – The instructor evaluates students fairly. *Results – 4.0 Scale* | 3.46 | 3.84 | 3.75 | 3.75 | 3.42 | 3.69 |

The average response score from the six faculty courses for Question 3 was 3.645. The average result for Question 5 was 3.69.  The average result for Question 8 was 3.63. and the average result for Question 9 was 3.65. The results of the three questions related to Discourse Facilitations were similar, although Question 5 stood out as having slightly higher results than the other three questions.

All faculty participants demonstrated strength in the area of Direct Instruction based on the Teaching Evaluation results provided for each of their courses during the Spring 2015 semester. Any result over 3.50 indicated that half or more students responded with Strongly Agree for a question. Of the twenty-four response results provided for Direct Instruction, only three fell slightly below 3.50.

The comments provided by students that related to Direct Instruction on the teaching evaluations were positive and focused heavily on content and responsiveness. Student comments provided on the Teaching Evaluations voiced satisfaction by making remarks such as:

- *You are always available when we need help.*

- *She responds quickly.*

- *I feel like you are very caring.*

- *Anytime I asked questions, she responded in a very timely manner.*

- *Well prepared and available to answer questions.*

- *She always answers emails in a timely manner.*

- *Even though this was an online class, (*Instructor 2*) would always be there to help.*

- *Responds to email in a timely manner.*

- *Communicates with students in a great timeline. Always willing to help, instruct and answer questions.*

- *She always got back almost immediately to every email I sent. Not very many instructors get back that quick. She was always willing to help.*

- *This is the third class I have taken with this instructor and if given the choice for future classes I will continue to pick her over other professors.*

Suggestions for improvement comments that related to Direct Instruction were scarce but included:

- *I would appreciate more feedback on work submitted.*

When discussing the demonstration of Teaching Presence in online Business courses faculty participants outlined the importance of detailed feedback. This was coded as "Confirming Understanding" within the "Direct Instruction" theme. Data in the form of documents further detailed the exemplary faculty's specific approach to individual feedback. Faculty Teaching Evaluations were used to further support the interview data presented by providing anonymous student data that revealed a demonstrated strength in the area of Direct Instruction. This information also emphasized distinguishing faculty behaviors and attributes related to Direct Instruction.

### *Summary*

Research question three asked, "How do exemplary undergraduate online Business course faculty demonstrate Teaching Presence in online instruction?" Three student-nominated faculty members were identified and interviewed to offer insight and information that provided data for Question 3. The faculty was asked interview questions that would provide detail about how the they demonstrated Teaching Presence in their online courses.

The major findings from this research question were that the "Design and Organization" theme was found to be of the utmost importance to exemplary faculty when discussing the demonstration of Teaching Presence in online Business courses. Faculty voices expressed that this was demonstrated through the effective designing methods. Additionally, Faculty Teaching Evaluations were used to further substantiated specific faculty behaviors and attributes related to Design and Organization. Within the "Discourse Facilitation" theme, faculty emphasized the

importance of drawing in participants and prompting discussion, when discussing the demonstration of Teaching Presence in online Business courses. When discussing an instructor's ability to exhibit Teaching Presence, confirming understanding was found to be an important aspect of the "Direct Instruction" theme. Faculty Teaching Evaluations were also used to highlighted distinctive faculty behaviors and attributes related to Discourse Facilitation and Direct Instruction.

## Chapter Summary

Twenty students and three faculty members were interviewed for this study. Three research questions were addressed. They explored how undergraduate Business students perceived Teaching Presence in online Business courses, what components of Teaching Presence undergraduate Business students found most valuable, and how exemplary instructors demonstrated Teaching Presence in online Business courses.

The student interview data provided 101 units of information for Research Question 1, from which 3 themes emerged: 46 units were found for the theme of "Direct Instruction" 36 were found for the theme of "Discourse Facilitation" and 19 units were found for the theme of "Design and Organization".

The major findings from this research question were that undergraduate Business students perceived Teaching Presence most through direct instruction, particularly in the form of confirming understanding. At the forefront, accessibility and responsiveness to questions and the demonstration of the instructor's desire to confirm student understanding was found to be key in instructor presence, as perceived by undergraduate Business students. This theme was demonstrated by offering individualized comments in the form of responses to questions and learning activity feedback. Students expressed the importance of prompting student engagement

in discussions and encouraging student participation, demonstrated in the "Discourse Facilitation" theme.  Additionally, students detailed how design methods influence their perception of Teaching Presence.

For Research Question 2, twenty students were interviewed.  The Teaching Presence theme "Design and Organization" had greatest number of comments during the student interviews.  Within the themes, "Designing Methods" and "Established Time Parameters" were found to be key aspects of the "Design and Organization" theme.  Additionally, "Setting Climate for Learning" was found to be a vital characteristic of the "Discourse Facilitation" theme and "Confirm Understanding" was found to be a central part of the "Direct Instruction" theme.

The "Design and Organization" theme was found to be most valuable to undergraduate Business students in online Business courses in the form of designing methods and establishing time parameters.  Student voices expressed that this was demonstrated through detailed learning activity instruction, the implementation of videos to detail directions and the availability of a full course calendar provided at the beginning of the course.  Additionally, the element of confirming understanding within the "Direct Instruction" theme was important to students when discussing what Teaching Presence components that they found valuable.

Three exemplary faculty members were interviewed to offer insight that provided data for Question 3.  From the faculty interviews, 81 units were found for Research Question 3.  The Teaching Presence theme "Design and Organization" had greatest number of comments during the faculty interviews with 30 total units.  Within the themes, "Establishing Time Parameters" and "Utilizing the Medium" were found to be key aspects of the "Design and Organization" theme.  Additionally, "Assessing the Efficacy of the Process" and "Drawing in Participants, Prompting Discussion" were found to be vital characteristics of the "Discourse Facilitation"

theme and "Confirm Understanding" was found to be a central part of the "Direct Instruction" theme.

The major findings from the themes were that the "Design and Organization" theme was found to be most valuable to exemplary faculty when discussing the demonstration of high Teaching Presence in online Business courses.  Faculty voices expressed that this was demonstrated through the effective designing methods.  Additionally, Faculty Teaching Evaluations were used to further substantiated specific faculty behaviors and attributes related to Design and Organization.  When discussing an instructor's ability to exhibit Teaching Presence, confirming understanding was found to be an important aspect of the "Direct Instruction" theme. Within the "Discourse Facilitation" theme, faculty emphasized the importance of assessing efficacy of the process, as well as drawing in participants and prompting discussion, when discussing the demonstration of Teaching Presence.  Faculty Teaching Evaluations were also used to highlighted distinctive faculty behaviors and attributes related to Discourse Facilitation and Direct Instruction.

# Chapter 5 - CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore how undergraduate Business students perceived Teaching Presence in online Business courses, what components of Teaching Presence undergraduate Business students find most valuable, and how exemplary Teaching Presence was demonstrated. This study explored the following research questions:

1.     How do undergraduate Business students perceive Teaching Presence in online courses?

2.     What Teaching Presence components (design and organization, discourse facilitation and direct instruction) do undergraduate Business students find valuable in online courses?

3.     How do exemplary undergraduate online Business course faculty demonstrate Teaching Presence in online instruction?

This chapter includes researcher observations, comments, and conclusions that developed from the data analysis from each research question. These are intended to elucidate implications from the findings of this research pertinent to online Business student's perceptions of Teaching Presence, what Teaching Presence components students found valuable, and how exemplary faculty demonstrated Teaching Presence in online Business courses.

## Research Question 1

Research question one asked, "How do undergraduate Business students perceive Teaching Presence in online courses?" Three themes were identified for Research Question 1, based on the evidence gathered in this study. The findings were influenced by the Teaching Presence Model, though the findings were not limited to that model. At the time of this study,

none of the online Business courses were required to use the Teaching Presence Model in any form.

### *Direct Instruction*

"Confirm Understanding" was by far the most important element of the "Direct Instruction" theme for students when discussing their perceptions of Teaching Presence. The "Confirm Understanding" element referred to providing explanatory responses in the form of explanation and feedback that assisted student learning. This included direct feedback and addressing student's questions and concerns in order to confirm their understanding. It was found that the confirmation of student understanding was an important aspect of student's perceptions of Teaching Presence for four reasons:

(1) Students needed to know that their instructor was present and available to answer questions and explain expectations. Students expressed concern and discouragement regarding certain instructors who simply provided course details on the first day of the semester and then only provided limited communication until the final week of the course. There was a clear contrast in instructor availability when discussing student's perceptions of Teaching Presence and the way that instructors accomplished the confirmation of student understanding. With the increasingly interactive and multiple communication channels available in current Learning Management Systems, students have an expectation that instructors will provide more than limited communication during the semester and serve as active leaders in the online course environment.

(2) Instructor reassurance through interaction influenced student perceptions of Teaching Presence. Through student-initiated question responsiveness and student-specific feedback, students felt a greater connection to their instructor. The act of responsiveness

reassured students that they were more than a student number in class.  Additionally, it

demonstrated that their instructor was active in the educational experience.

(3) Instructor-driven communication prompted Teaching Presence. Instructors that

encouraged questions and willingly sought out opportunities to reinforce student

understanding were frequently mentioned as being exemplary when discussing Teaching

Presence.  Students mentioned that they appreciated instructors who took the time to

reach out to them.   Students valued instructors who demonstrated their availability to

address questions by reaching out to students, rather than passively communicating with

students in a reactive manner.

(4) Students valued specific assignment feedback.   Assignment feedback was a vital

aspect of student's perceptions Teaching Presence.  Authentic learning experiences were

fostered through individualized student feedback.  Student-nominated exemplary online

Business course instructors stressed the importance of consistency in student feedback, as

well as provided pinpointed areas that students needed to review or correct.  Additionally,

both students and student-nominated exemplary online Business course instructors

mentioned the use of affirming statements within the assignment feedback to guide

students as they moved forward in the course.

### *Discourse Facilitation*

"Drawing in Participants, Prompting Discussion" was the most important component of

the "Discourse Facilitation" theme for Research Questions 1.  "Drawing in Participants,

Prompting Discussion" was accomplished through instructor involvement and the prompting of

student involvement for the purpose of engaging in productive dialog.  It was found that

"Drawing in Participants, Prompting Discussion" was important for two key reasons:

(1) Teaching Presence was apparent through instructor participation in course discussions and assisted in establishing a positive learning environment. Previous research suggested that effective online facilitation through regular interactions with their instructors was very important in students' overall success in a course (Tabar-Gaul, 2008). Again, students wanted to feel that they were not alone in the online environment. They desire authentic learning experiences in the online environment. Typically, in a traditional classroom the course instructor sets the tone for discussions and actively participates. This should be consistently replicated in online Business courses. All three of the student-nominated exemplary online Business course instructors were active participants in the discussions provided in their online courses. This further demonstrated the level of importance to online Business students.

(2) Extra support and guidance was provided by instructors in discussion forums. Students expressed that discussion forums served as an additional opportunity to connect with their course instructors and verify understanding. It was mentioned that instructor involvement in online course discussions assisted in providing student guidance. One instructor discussed her method of replying to every student's discussion post as a way to provide engagement, but also to verify understanding and provide support.

## *Design and Organization*

"Designing Methods" was the most important component of the "Design and Organization" theme when discussing online Business student's perceptions of teaching presence. "Designing Methods" referred to providing clear instructions regarding the completion of course learning activities. It was found that "Designing Methods" was important for two key reasons:

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(1) <u>Student perceptions of Teaching Presence were influenced by the level of detail and</u>

<u>effectiveness of communication provided by online Business course instructors.</u>

Designing Methods are based around the delivery of instructions for the completion of

course learning activities.  Methods of designing course materials was considered to be a

form of instructor communication.  One student noted that the instructions tell them what

the instructor expects of them.  Therefore, adequate detail demonstrated varying levels of

instructor presence in online Business courses.

(2) <u>The availability of online video lectures personalized the instruction process and</u>

<u>created presence from the student's perspective.</u>  Students greatly favored courses that

provided a clear demonstration of what the instructor expected through the use of online

video lectures. This was of particular importance when students were working through

complex or difficult Business materials. Students stressed their appreciation of video

lectures. All three of the student-nominated exemplary online Business course instructors

provided a varying amount of video lectures in their online courses.  This further

demonstrated the level of importance of video lectures to online Business students.

Spiro's findings (2011) stressed the importance of multiple channels for student-

instructor communication.  The addition of online video lectures was a valued

enhancement in online Business courses.

## Research Question 2

Research question two asked, "What Teaching Presence components (design and

organization, discourse facilitation and direct instruction) do undergraduate Business students

find valuable in online courses?"   The focus of this study was to understand what components of

Teaching Presence undergraduate Business students find most valuable.  Teaching Presence has

three components that include (1) Design and Organization, (2) Discourse Facilitation, and (3) Direct Instruction.  Design and Organization included setting curriculum, designing methods, setting course timeframes, defining topics and methods of instruction (Anderson et al., 2001). The student interviews were analyzed using the Teaching Presence Model components to determine what Teaching Presence components undergraduate Business students found valuable in online courses. The interview focused specifically on the Teaching Presence Model and the Teaching Presence Model components to answer the research question because this was the focus the research question.

From the student interviews, a total of 245 units were found for the Research Question 2. The three components of Teaching Presence and all 16 of the component elements were discussed in regard to online Business courses.  A total of three themes were found to emerge: 93 units were found for theme "Design and Organization", 88 units for theme "Discourse Facilitation" and 64 units were found for theme "Direct Instruction".   The component elements were used as "units" and those with the most prominent number of comments from the student interviews:  37 interview comments were coded as "Confirm Understanding," 29 interview comments were coded as "Designing Methods", 29 interview comments were coded as "Setting Climate for Learning", and 28 interview comments were coded as "Establishing Time Parameters". Based on interview findings from both online Business students the conclusions and discussion will be presented in the following order: Design and Organization, Discourse Facilitation and Direct Instruction, based on their order of importance to students.

### Design and Organization

"Designing Methods" and "Establishing Time Parameters" were the most important components of the "Design and Organization" theme for students when discussing what

components of Teaching Presence that they found most valuable.  "Designing Methods" referred

to providing clear instructions regarding the completion of course learning activities.

"Establishing Time Parameters" referred to communicating important due dates and establishing

time frames for learning activities that assisted students with keeping pace in a course.

*Designing Methods*

It was found that "Designing Methods" was important for three key reasons:

(1) Students needed specific learning activity requirement information.  Clear and

detailed expectations mattered a great deal to students when discussing Teaching

Presence.  Some students expressed displeasure at the lack of course requirement

information provided in the course syllabus.  They favored detailed requirement

directions within the course units in the location that the assignments were submitted.

Students expressed understanding at the need for responsibility in guiding their own

learning through assignment completion. However, they stressed the need for very clear

explanations regarding the requirement expectations through detailed information.

(2) Video lectures were a valued aspect of "Design and Organization".  Again, students

indicated that online video lectures that provided a clear demonstration of what the

instructor expected were an important attribute of Design and Organization.  Video

lectures provided students with clear direction regarding what the instructor expected of

the student.

(3)  Clear expectations stated at the course outset were valued by students.  Students

valued consistency in learning activity expectations and the clear location of items within

their online courses. The act of providing detailed explanation in written directions and

video lectures, coupled with consistent course learning activity arrangement throughout

the semester, set exemplary courses apart when discussing design and organization. This was further supported by Catron's study (2012), which found that clear communication of course topics and communication of course goals was a highly rated element of quality online teaching and learning.

## *Establishing Parameters*

It was found that "Establishing Time Parameters" was important for two key reasons: (1) <u>A full course schedule was desired on the first day of the course.</u> Students utilized course calendars as part of their total organizational strategy. Students noted that they referred to the course schedules when they were not logged in to their course in Blackboard Learn.  Course schedules served as a valuable supplemental item that students used when they were away from the course, as well.

(2) <u>Instructor reminders and announcements further established time parameters.</u> Instructors discussed how reminders and announcements played a role in student time management. Reminders and announcements also played a role in providing consistency when establishing student assignment time parameters. The use of reminders and announcements, coupled with the information provided in the course schedule, provided an extra layer of consistency and notification for time management purposes.

## *Discourse Facilitation*

"Setting Climate for Learning" was the most important component of the "Discourse Facilitation" for Teaching Presence for undergraduate Business students.  "Setting Climate for Learning" referred to the encouragement of the exploration of new ideas.  It was found that "Setting Climate for Learning" was important for one key reason:

Students valued facilitation in the form of instructor encouragement and prompting of exploration. This was accomplished by explaining course materials in a new way, by providing supplemental materials to students, and by asking students follow-up questions to direct their personal examination of a topic. Students noted that being asked to dig deeper and share more than just their opinion allowed for greater content application. Additionally, instructor encouragement prompted students to move forward more readily in the course.

*Direct Instruction*

"Confirm Understanding" was the most important element of the "Direct Instruction" theme for students when discussing what components of Teaching Presence. The "Confirm Understanding" element referred to explanation and feedback that assisted student learning. This included direct feedback and addressing student's questions and concerns in order to confirm their understanding. It was found that the confirmation of student understanding was an important aspect of the "Direct Instruction" theme for two reasons:

(1) Students wanted a "lifeline" in the form of instructor reassurance in order to know if they were on the right track or not and in order to be able to meet the expectations of the required learning activities. Students wanted to feel that they were not alone in the online environment. Particularly with complex Business topics, students searched for reassurance and validation of their academic knowledge. Through question responsiveness and information provided by the instructor that pointed students in the right direction, students felt reassured that their instructor was active in their learning experience and that they were valued for who they were as learners.

(2) <u>Feedback fostered student understanding</u>.  Student-nominated exemplary online

Business course instructors detailed how the feedback process can empower students to

build confidence in order to figure out answers themselves.  Feedback was more than

simply telling a student the answer.  It was about guiding them to understanding of a

topic.  Additionally, students voiced the need to know how and why they did not fulfill

assignment requirements. Productive feedback enhanced understanding, while a lack of

feedback caused confusion and discouragement.

## Research Question 3

Research question three asked, "How do exemplary undergraduate online Business

course faculty demonstrate Teaching Presence in online instruction?"  This study sought to

identify how exemplary online Business course faculty demonstrated Teaching Presence. At the

time of this study, faculty members were not required to use the Teaching Presence Model in any

form.

From the faculty interviews, a total of 81 units were found for the Research Question 3.

A total of three themes were found to emerge: 30 units were found for theme "Design and

Organization", 26 units were found for theme "Discourse Facilitation" and 25 units for theme

"Direct Instruction.  The component elements were used as "units" and those with the most

prominent number of comments from the student interviews:  18 interview comments were

coded as "Confirm Understanding," 12 interview comments were coded as "Assessing the

Efficacy of the Process", 11 interview comments were coded as "Drawing in Participants,

Prompting Discussion", 11 interview comments were coded as "Establishing Time Parameters",

9 interview comments were coded as "Utilizing Medium Effectively", and 7 interview comments

were coded as "Designing Methods".    Based on interview findings, the conclusions and

discussion are in the following order: Design and Organization, Discourse Facilitation and Direct Instruction.

### *Design and Organization*

"Establishing Time Parameters" and "Utilizing the Medium Effectively" were the most important components of the "Design and Organization" theme for faculty interviews when discussing how they demonstrated Teaching Presence. "Establishing Time Parameters" referred to communicating important due dates and establishing time frames for learning activities that assisted students with keeping pace in a course. "Utilizing Medium Effectively" was accomplished through the effective use of Blackboard Learn as a medium for instruction and facilitation of the online environment resources to assist student learning. It was found that "Establishing Time Parameters" was important for one key reason:

(1) Exemplary instructors communicated time parameter information frequently and early. The faculty interviewed discussed their continued persistence in assisting students with adequate planning for course deadlines. This was demonstrated through the extensive communication provided to students. Student-nominated exemplary online Business course instructors provided ample notice of course requirement due dates in order to assist students with time management.

It was found that "Utilizing Medium Effectively" was important for one key reason: Teaching presence can be demonstrated through effective use of the medium. In the case of this research study, the medium was Blackboard Learn. Faculty noted that consistency in delivery mattered to students. The consistency of the course layout played a vital role in demonstrating that the course instructor was deliberate and engaged in the course design and was thoughtful about the student experience.

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*Discourse Facilitation*

"Assessing the Efficacy of the Process" and "Drawing in Participants, Prompting Discussion" were the most important components of the "Discourse Facilitation" theme in the demonstration of Teaching Presence. "Assessing the Efficacy of the Process" in the Teaching Presence Model refers to the course instructor's assistance in keeping participants on-task in a way that assisted student learning. "Drawing in Participants, Prompting Discussion" was accomplished through instructor involvement and the prompting of student involvement to engage in productive dialog. "Assessing the Efficacy of the Process" was important for one key reason:

> Presenting information in an effective manner assisted students with task management. Instructors are charged with establishing the overall climate for learning within their course (Catron, 2012). All three of the student-nominated exemplary online Business course instructors focused on developing effective communication processes in order to keep students on-task. Students did not see the behind-the-scenes work that happened in order to achieve efficiency in an online course. However, the student-nominated exemplary online Business course instructors understood that they were solely tasked with this action and that their approach prompted or dissuaded students in task completion.

It was found that "Drawing in Participants, Prompting Discussion" was important for three key reasons:

> (1) Exemplary course instructors understood that some students needed specific directives in order to actively participate. The demonstration of a high level of Teaching Presence involved course engagement. Part of course engagement by the instructor is

evaluating what prompts or dissuades participation.  In the case of discussions in online

Business courses, the act of setting specific date requirements for initial discussion posts

was viewed as a participation prompt.  One instructor mentioned this as a weakness of

her course.  She felt that the lack of an initial post requirement discouraged early

participation and caused some students to wait until the end of the unit to participate.

(2) Instructors that demonstrated a high level of teaching presence were thoughtful about

discussion development in an effort to prompt engagement.  The faculty members that

were interviewed placed a great deal of emphasis on the process of crafting worthwhile

discussion questions. One instructor stressed the need to make discussions relatable in

order to promote participation and prompt engagement.  Examples included the use of

real-life experience or situations, case study scenarios and discussions that paralleled the

material being addressed in the course assignments.  The 2016 New Media Consortium's

Horizon Report discussed the importance of personalized learning.  A large part of

personalized learning is empowering students to own their learning experiences (Johnson,

Adams, Estrada, & Freeman, 2016).  Providing students with opportunities to share

meaning within their online courses is part of the empowerment process.

(3) Instructors that demonstrated a high level of Teaching Presence were deliberate about

their own engagement in course discussions.  One instructor used the "monkey-see-

monkey-do" idiom to describe her stance on participation in course discussion.

Additionally, she stressed the importance of showing students that she was active in the

course.  Student feedback provided on the student-nominated exemplary online Business

course instructor's Teaching Evaluations focused heavily on instructor interaction and the

instructor's expectation of the Business students to participant and interact.

*Direct Instruction*

"Confirm Understanding" was by far the most important element of the "Direct Instruction" theme for faculty when discussing the demonstration of Teaching Presence in online Business courses. The "Confirm Understanding" element referred to providing explanatory responses in the form of explanation and feedback that assisted student learning. This included direct feedback and addressing student questions and concerns in order to confirm their understanding. It was found that the confirmation of student understanding was important for one key reason:

(1) <u>Instructors that demonstrated a high level of Teaching Presence in online Business courses provided very specific feedback</u>. Students valued feedback that was developed to confirm their understanding and provided detail that enabled students to move forward in a successful manner. One instructor discussed the use of rubrics to provide extra explanation, along with typed feedback. Student-specific feedback was a vital element of Teaching Presence for online Business courses that demonstrated high Teaching Presence.

## Additional Lessons Learned

Based on the findings of this study, the following additional lessons learned were identified in the areas of Design and Organization, Direct Instruction and Discourse Facilitation based on student and faculty participant information.

*Design and Organization*

*Student Perception*

<u>Clear and upfront expectations were valued by students</u>. Students valued consistency in learning activity expectations and the location of items in their online courses. The act of

providing detailed explanation in written directions and video lectures, coupled with

consistent course learning activity arrangement throughout the semester set certain

courses apart when discussing design and organization. This was further supported by

Catron (2012) who found that clear communication of course topics and communication

of course goals to be a highly rated item when researching quality of online teaching and

learning.

### *Faculty Attributes*

Instructor reminders and announcements further established of time parameters.
Instructors discussed how reminders and announcements play a role in student time

management. Reminders and announcements also played a role in providing consistency

when establishing time parameters. The use of reminders and announcements coupled

with the information provided in the course schedule provided an extra layer of

consistency and notification.

## *Direct Instruction*

### *Student Perceptions*

The identification of specific student comprehension struggles set certain instructors apart
when discussing Teaching Presence in online Business courses.  Students needed to know

that their instructor was paying attention to their progress.  One student discussed a

personal email from an instructor to ask if she needed extra help when the instructor

identified a comprehension issue.  Another student shared how tenacious one instructor

was about confirming understanding and meeting the needs of her students.  Additionally,

on the faculty Teaching Evaluations student emphasized that their instructor

demonstrated great willingness to help and provide detail.

Students appreciated instructor prompted communication. Students mentioned their appreciation of instructors that encouraged questions and willingly sought out opportunities to reinforce student understanding. Again, this provided students with reassurance that their course instructor was present and available. Students wanted instructors to show them that they were available to address questions by reaching out to students, rather than waiting for student contact or assuming that students were comfortable reaching out to their instructor without being prompted. Many students expressed concerns regarding student initiated communication. Students were more likely to reach out to instructors that actively prompted student-instructor interaction.

## Discourse Facilitation

### Student Perception

Students valued the acknowledgement of their contributions. The reinforcement of student contributions in the form of assignment feedback comments and discussion comments encouraged and motivated students. Students discussed how some courses demonstrated exemplary Teaching Presence based on the way that the instructor provided extra encouragement and attention to the student as an individual.

### Faculty Attributes

Discussion facilitation prompted shared meaning among students. This was, by far, the most mentioned faculty attribute contributing to Teaching Presence. Online course discussions become tedious to students if they do not feel engaged in and empowered by the process. The best possible outcome is that students feel that their discussions and course work are personally meaningful, both individually and in terms of group consensus. One student-nominated exemplary online business course instructor stressed

the need to make discussions relatable to students in order to promote participation and prompt engagement.   This is another aspect of the need for shared meaning.   The 2016 NMC Horizon Report discussed the importance of personalized learning.  A large part of personalized learning is empowering students to "own" their learning experiences (Johnson, Adams, Estrada, & Freeman, 2016).  Providing students with opportunities to share meaning within their online courses is part of the empowerment process.

## Teaching Presence Model Online Business Course Guidelines

Based on the findings of this study, the following guidelines were developed for online Business course instructors.

### *Design and Organization*

Recommendation 1:  Provide students with clear learning activity instructions that use consistent course learning activity arrangement throughout the semester.  The level of detail and effectiveness of communication provided for course learning activities provided by online Business course instructors influenced student's perceptions of Teaching Presence.  Hayden (2014) indicated to the need to consider and emphasize course composition when evaluating effective Design and Organization attributes. Therefore, instructors should evaluate their learning activity instruction frequently through the eyes of the students enrolled in their course.  This can be accomplished through accessing ad-hoc student feedback and end-of-semester Teaching Evaluations. Additionally, instructors should partner with other faculty members and instructional designers to verify the clarity of the learning activity instructions provided in their course. Recommendation 2:  Provide students with integrated video lectures that describe course unit requirements and learning activity instructions. Students held courses with video

lectures in high regard.  Students favored video lectures that addressed and explained

course concepts that outlined important course requirements.  Lazarevic (2011) noted that

the use of video-based communication prompted greater reception to the instructor's

facilitation efforts throughout the course.  As a result, video lectures can bring about a

stronger impression of instructor Teaching Presence within online Business courses.

Recommendation 3:  Provide students with a clear, detailed course calendar on the first

day of the course.  The calendar should be downloadable and can be printed by the

student to use as a supplemental resource when away from the course. Instructors should

also use the course calendar as a guide for announcement communication. Students

favored this multi-layered approach in communication when discussing their perceptions

of Teaching Presence.  The act of providing a detailed course calendar and coupling this

resource with reminders and announcements provides students with another form of

interaction with the course instructor and establishes known time parameters.

## *Discourse Facilitation*

Recommendation 1:  Serve as an active facilitator in online course discussions. Research

conducted by Archibald (2011) concluded that the facilitator was essential in the progress

of the discussion forums by presenting questions, providing guidance and answers, as

well as providing additional resources.  Provide students with direct discussion responses

and acknowledge the comments that they make in the discussion forum.  Instructors must

find ways to let students know that they are active participants by asking questions that

drive deeper learning and greater shared meaning that adds value to course discussions.

Recommendation 2:  Provide students with well-crafted discussion questions that are

based on real-life examples, case study scenarios and discussions that parallel the

material being addressed in the course assignments. Offer opportunities and avenues for students to discover shared meaning in discussions in order to create an authentic exchange. Hall (2013) examined perceived levels of Teaching Presence in conjunction with periodic learning-reflection activities presented throughout the span of the course. He discovered that the perceived levels of an instructor's Teaching Presence were significantly higher in courses with reflective learning activities (Hall, 2013). Reflective learning activities are an example of sharing meaning through facilitation (Hall, 2013).

Recommendation 3: Provide students with a supplementary discussion forum to address questions and seek guidance. Let this discussion forum serve as an additional resource for connection. Respond to all students that post in the additional discussion forum. This creates an increased focus on personalized learning and further addresses students' individual needs (Johnson et al., 2016).

Recommendation 4: Provide students with specific directives regarding how to participate in course discussions in order to prompt engagement and keep students on task. Catron (2012) found that timely feedback, clear communication of course topics and communication of course goals to be the highest rated items when researching quality of online teaching and learning. Setting specific date requirements for initial discussion posts and discussion conclusion dates. The act of proving specific guidelines can serve as a participation prompt, a method to establish time parameters and a way to communicate course goals.

### *Direct Instruction*

Recommendation 1: Provide a responsive, multifaceted approach to instructor-student interaction. It was important that course instructors were responsive to student

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communication. Instructor responsiveness to student communication reassured students that their instructor was active in their learning experience. Additionally, students expressed frustration when they did not feel that their instructor was engaged in the course. It is important to have multiple channels for student-instructor communication (Spiro, 2011). Examples of instructor-student interaction mediums include instructor-led synchronous chat sessions, specific and detailed assignment feedback, email, LMS messaging and other texting forums and apps, as well as discussion forums (Spiro, 2010; Laves, 2010, Johnson et al., 2016). It is important to note that a considerable amount of direct instruction is done within course discussion threads (Antonacci, 2011).

Recommendation 2: Actively prompt student-instructor interaction. Students voiced their gratefulness to instructors that sought out opportunities to reinforce student understanding and encouraged questions to confirm understanding. Bouras (2009) pointed out that instructor approachability increased the perception of student learning and course satisfaction. For example, student-nominated exemplary online Business course instructors frequently reached out to the students in the form of announcements, discussion posts, and "check-in" emails throughout the semester.

Recommendation 3: Identify and address student comprehension struggles. Misconceptions are identified and understanding is confirmed through direct instruction (Bartruff) 2009. This enhances Teaching Presence by demonstrating that the instructor has a desire to help students and is paying attention to their progress. According to the 2016 Horizon Report, deeper learning approaches are of growing emphasis in higher education. This has prompted a pedagogical shift allowing instructors to serve as "flexible guides and coaches" (Johnson et al., 2016). For example, instructors can use

course analytical tools to identify misconceptions and subsequently address misconceptions at the individual level or course level.

Recommendation 4:  Provide students with feedback that guides student understanding of a topic and enables students to move forward in a successful manner. Feelers (2012) found that "students perceive themselves as more capable of becoming active and self-directed learners in an environment with strong instructor presence" (p. 168).  Providing detailed feedback was an attribute of Teaching Presence, therefore instructor commitment to specific feedback is important.  It is also important to note that feedback can come in the form of encouragement.  For example, both students and student-nominated exemplary online Business course instructors made note of affirming statements within assignment feedback.  Additionally, the use of rubrics directed students to learning activity expectations before the assignment was submitted, along with specific feedback when the assignment was returned were considered important to student understanding of the instructor's course expectations and the student's ability to understand and demonstrate them.

## Recommendations for the Research Setting

This study expanded the knowledge of Teaching Presence in online Business courses.  As the research location continues its efforts and ongoing commitment to providing quality distance education offerings to students, results and recommendations of this study can be used by instructors and administrators to improve teaching pedagogy, facilitate enhanced online instruction and serve as a guide for developing online Business courses.

The following section discusses recommended strategies for the research setting:

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Recommendation 1:  Initiate a departmental Continuous Course Quality Development

Plan that focuses specifically on learning activity instructions and discussion question

development. Instructors should be encouraged to develop course improvements based on

end of semester Teaching Evaluations. Additionally, a course peer-review process should

be established to verify the clarity of the learning activity instructions provided in their

course.

Recommendation 2:  Provide instructors with additional training in order to increase the

amount of integrated video lectures within online Business courses.  Allow instructors

that have video lectures provided in their courses to showcase their initiatives and

provide technical best practices to other instructors.

Recommendation 3:  Promote the use of discussion forums to enrich student-instructor

interaction.   Stress the need for a multi-faceted approach to interaction and the

importance of instructor responsiveness.  Additionally, encourage the use of

supplementary discussion forums for student questions and guidance.  Provide directives

on the importance of this tool as a resource to address students' distinct needs.

Recommendation 4:  Provide instructors with additional training on Blackboard Learn,

particularly in the areas of analytics/data management in order to identify and address

student comprehension struggles and feedback features.

## Recommendations for Future Studies

Recommendation 1: It would be interesting to conduct another qualitative study at the

same research location to examine how online students in different academic disciplines

perceive Teaching Presence.  Students in the School of Education, School of Health

Sciences and School of Arts and Sciences taking online courses might view Teaching Presence differently than students in the School of Business.

Recommendation 2: It would be interesting to conduct another qualitative study at a different research location, such as a private or for-profit university, to examine how online students in a different environment perceive Teaching Presence. Many for-profit universities set very strict guideline for interaction, feedback requirements, and grading timeframes. Additionally, much of the course material is pre-determined by a course designer or course lead. Courses are tailored to be similar throughout the student's program of study. In many cases, the instructor has little control of designing methods and setting the curriculum. It would be interesting to know how students perceive Teaching Presence when instructors have less control over their courses.

Recommendation 3: A study focusing specifically on how the use of technology, such as videos, podcasts, blogs, Google Docs etc., can enhance Teaching Presence and the components of Teaching Presence. Such a study could be used to highlight ways in which technology can be used to increase Teaching Presence.

Recommendation 4: A longitudinal study of how online Business students perceive Teaching Presence as the student progress from the beginning of their program to the end. The study could include current Freshman and Sophomore Business students taking online course. It would be interesting in terms of perception changes as they complete additional online Business courses.

Recommendation 5: Future research is needed to examine how instructor attributes, such as prior online teaching experience, technical background and communication styles influence Teaching Presence. Knowledge of this attributes could help instructors provide

an enhanced online course experience and drive additional instructor training in these

areas.

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# Appendix A - Teaching Presence Scale

| | | strongly disagree | disagree | neutral | agree | strongly agree | I choose not to answer this question. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Instructional design and organization | 1. Overall, the instructor for this course clearly communicated important course goals (for example, provided documentation on course learning objectives). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 0 |
| Instructional design and organization | 2. Overall, the instructor for this course clearly communicated important course topics (for example, provided a clear and accurate course overview). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 0 |
| Instructional design and organization | 3. Overall, the instructor for this provided clear instructions on how to participate in course learning activities (e.g. provided clear instructions on how to complete course assignments successfully). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 0 |
| Instructional design and organization | 4. Overall, the instructor for this course clearly communicated important due dates/time frames for learning activities that helped me keep pace with this course (for example, provided a clear and accurate course schedule, due dates, etc.). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 0 |
| Instructional design and organization | 5. Overall, the instructor for this course helped me take advantage of the online environment to assist my learning (for example, provided clear instructions on how to participate in online discussion forums). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 0 |
| Instructional design and organization | 6. Overall, the instructor for this course helped students to understand and practice the kinds of behaviors acceptable in online learning environments (for example, provided documentation on "netiquette" i.e. polite forms of online interaction). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 0 |

| | | strongly disagree | disagree | neutral | agree | strongly agree | I choose not to answer this question. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Facilitating discourse | 1. Overall, the instructor for this course was helpful in identifying areas of agreement and disagreement on course topics that assisted me to learn. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 0 |
| Facilitating discourse | 2. Overall, the instructor for this course was helpful in guiding the class towards understanding course topics in a way that assisted me to learn. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 0 |
| Facilitating discourse | 3. Overall, the instructor in this course acknowledged student participation in the course (for example replied in a positive, encouraging manner to student submissions). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 0 |
| Facilitating discourse | 4. Overall, the instructor for this course encouraged students to explore new concepts in this course (for example, encouraged "thinking out loud" or the exploration of new ideas). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 0 |
| Facilitating discourse | 5. Overall, the instructor for this course helped to keep students engaged and participating in productive dialog. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 0 |
| Facilitating discourse | 6. Overall, the instructor for this course helped keep the participants on task in a way that assisted me to learn. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 0 |
| Direct instruction | 1. Overall, the instructor for this course presented content or questions that helped me to learn. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 0 |
| Direct instruction | 2. Overall, the instructor for this course helped to focus discussion on relevant issues in a way that assisted me to learn. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 0 |
| Direct instruction | 3. Overall, the instructor for this course provided explanatory feedback that assisted me to learn (for example, responded helpfully to discussion comments or course assignments). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 0 |
| Direct instruction | 4. Overall, the instructor for this course helped me to revise my thinking (for example, correct misunderstandings) in a way that helped me to learn. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 0 |
| Direct instruction | 5. Overall, the instructor for this course provided useful information from a variety of sources that assisted me to learn (for example, references to articles, textbooks, personal experiences or links to relevant external websites). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 0 |

# Appendix B - Teaching Presence Scale Permission

**From:** Shea, Peter J <pshea@albany.edu>
**Sent:** Monday, September 28, 2015 2:10 PM
**To:** Swan, Karen; Lacey Finley
**Subject:** RE: Permission to Use Your Survey Instrument
Dear Lacey

Feel free to use the scale with attribution.   You may also be able to find useful resources for your work
here:  http://www.sunyresearch.net/hplo/?page_id=13
 Best,
 Peter
Peter Shea
Associate Provost for Online Learning &
Associate Professor, Educational Theory and Practice &
College of Computing and Information
University at Albany, State University of New York
1400 Washington Ave.
Albany, NY 12222
518-442-4009
http://www.albany.edu/academics/online_teaching/


**From:** Swan, Karen [mailto:kswan4@uis.edu]
**Sent:** Monday, September 28, 2015 4:08 PM
**To:** 'Lacey Finley'
**Cc:** Shea, Peter J
**Subject:** RE: Permission to Use Your Survey Instrument

I am afraid, Lacy, you will need to ask Peter Shea for permission to use the Teaching Presence scale.

 **From:** Lacey Finley [mailto:lrfinley@ksu.edu]
**Sent:** Monday, September 28, 2015 2:50 PM
**To:** Swan, Karen <kswan4@uis.edu>
**Subject:** Permission to Use Your Survey Instrument
 Dr. Swan,
 My name is Lacey Finley, and I am a Ph.D. candidate at Kansas State University preparing my
doctorate proposal.  For my dissertation, I am exploring how undergraduate Business students
perceive Teaching Presence, what components of Teaching Presence undergraduate Business
students find valuable and how exemplary online instruction is demonstrated in online Business
courses. I am writing you to respectfully request permission to use the Teaching Presence Scale
as a basis for my interview protocol in my study.

Thank you for your work and your time.  I look forward to your response.

Lacey Finley

# Appendix C - Student Recruitment Letter

Dear Students,

I am a Missouri Southern adjunct faculty member in the Robert W. Plaster School of Business and a Ph.D. candidate at Kansas State University. I am writing to invite Business students that have taken at least one online Business course in addition to courses this semester to participate in my research study. Student participants' at all undergraduate academic levels are needed in this research study. Participation would involve a 30 to 60 minute interview conducted over the phone during a time convenient for the participants in the research study.

The purpose of this study is to explore how undergraduate Business students perceive Teaching Presence in online Business courses, what components of Teaching Presence undergraduate Business students find most valuable, and which courses exhibit exemplary online Teaching Presence. I believe that my research will expand our knowledge of Teaching Presence in online Business courses. Additionally, this research study can further support the institution's continued efforts and ongoing commitment to providing quality distance education offerings to students and help instructors better understand and improve teaching pedagogy, successful teaching activities and actions.

Here is how the interview process will work:
- I will contact you during a scheduled time to conduct a phone interview (30-60 minutes).
- Interviews will be conducted as soon as possible, no later than November 18, 2015.
- Your identity will be kept in complete confidence during and after the research process and in all writings that develop from this research.
- Your participation is complete voluntary. You will need to sign a Student Participant Letter of Consent that will be kept confidential.
- At the end of the interview, I will send you a transcript of our interview in order for you to clarify or add information.

Your willingness to participate would be greatly appreciated. If you are willing to participate, please email me back by October 18, 2015 and provide the following information:
- Your current academic level (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior)
- The number of online Business courses you have had
- A phone number that I can reach you at during the interview
- The best days and times to schedule the interview

Sincerely,
Lacey Finley
Adjunct Instructor
Robert W. Plaster School of Business
Missouri Southern State University

# Appendix D - Student Interview Protocol

Thank you for coming to this interview session. You are here today to participate in an interview for a study of Teaching Presence in online Business courses. You have been selected to be interviewed based on your personal experience and knowledge in the online classroom. Any remarks that you make during the interview will remain confidential. The interview will take approximately one hour.

Thank you for signing the informed consent letter. I just want to remind you that this interview will be recorded and transcribed word for word by me. It is also important to note that you are free to terminate this interview at any point in time. You may also decline to answer questions if you feel that you are not able to answer or not comfortable in answering them.

Teaching Presence will be generally discussed in terms of three dimensions: Design and Organization, Discourse Facilitation, and Direct Instruction. Teaching Presence drives personally meaningful and educationally worthwhile learning interactions.

1. Do you have any questions before we begin?

2. Can you please tell me a little bit about yourself, including your degree, employment and online education history?

3. Why did you to take the online course(s) that you have enrolled in?

4. Would you prefer to take Business courses in the classroom or online? Why?

| Topic Domain - 1 | Experiences with (and attitudes towards) Design and Organization |
|---|---|
| Subsumed Themes | 1. Designing Methods<br>2. Establishing Netiquette<br>3. Establishing Time Parameters<br>4. Setting Curriculum<br>5. Utilizing Medium Effectively |
| Lead-Off Question | I am interested in how you feel about online design and organization. Can you describe what methods of design and organization are most beneficial to you as a student in an online Business course? (In case of a response like "Well, I like it when the course is broken into Units," I could qualify the question by saying "OK, tell me a little about how that helps you," or "Tell me about the ideal design and organization within each Unit.")<br><br>Second Lead-Off Question: What ways, if any, can an instructor assist your learning in the online environment through the design and organization of a course? |
| Possible Follow-Up Questions | 1. What is your preferred way to receive communication regarding important online course topics?<br>2. What is your preferred way to receive communication regarding how to complete course learning activities?<br>3. How can a course instructor assist you in keeping pace with the course and meeting due dates/time frames?<br>4. What ways, if any, can an instructor help you understand and practice acceptable behaviors in online learning environments? Do you see a great deal of variance from course to course from a design and organization standpoint?<br>5. Which online Business courses and instructors do you feel successfully demonstrate effective methods of design and organization?<br>6. Can you provide some detail regarding why that course and instructor are exemplary from a design and organization standpoint? |
| Topic Domain - 2 | Experiences with (and attitudes towards) Direct Instruction |
| Subsumed Themes | 1. Present Content/Questions<br>2. Focus the Discussion on Specific Issues<br>3. Confirm Understanding<br>4. Diagnose Misconceptions<br>5. Inject Knowledge from Diverse Sources |
| Lead-Off Question | Tell me about ways, if any, that an instructor has prompted engagement to assist you as an active learner? (In case of a response like "Well, Dr. Smith helped me to be an active learner," I could qualify the question by saying "OK, tell me a little about that course and instructor," or |

| | |
|---|---|
| | "Tell me about attributes and practices that you found most beneficial.")<br>Second Lead-Off Question: Overall do you feel that your interaction with online Business course instructors is timely and substantive? What actions prompt substantive interaction? |
| Possible Follow-Up Questions | 1. What ways, if any, can an instructor provide explanatory feedback that assists your learning?<br>2. What ways, if any, can an instructor help you to revise your thinking that assists your learning?<br>3. Do you see a great deal of variance from course to course from a direct instruction standpoint?<br>4. Which online Business courses and instructors do you feel successfully demonstrate effective methods of direct instruction?<br>5. Can you provide some detail regarding why that course and instructor are exemplary from the standpoint of direct instruction? |
| **Topic Domain - 3** | **Experiences with (and attitudes towards) Discourse Facilitation** |
| Subsumed Themes | 1. Identifying Areas of Agreement/Disagreement<br>2. Reinforce Student Contributions<br>3. Setting Climate for Learning<br>4. Drawing in Participants, Prompting Discussion<br>5. Assessing the Efficacy of the Process<br>6. Seeking to Reach Consensus |
| Lead-Off Question | Can you tell me about specific strategies that instructors have used to demonstrate successful facilitation in online Business courses? (In case of a response like "Well, I like it when instructor is active in the course discussions," I could qualify the question by saying "OK, tell me a little about how that helps you," or "Tell me about the ideal amount of instructor engagement in course discussion forums.").<br><br>Second Lead-Off Question: Can you think of any specific strategies that instructors have used to create a presence in an online course? |

| Possible Follow-Up Questions | 1. What ways, if any, can an instructor help keep the participants on task in a way that assists student learning? |
|---|---|
| | 2. What are the most effective ways for instructors to provide support and guidance in discussion forums? |
| | 3. What ways, if any, can an instructor keep students engaged and participating in productive dialog? |
| | 4. Can you think of any specific strategies that instructors have used to make you feel comfortable participating in the course discussions? |
| | 5. Can you think of any specific strategies that instructors have used to improve the perceived connection between the course instructor and students? |
| | 6. What ways, if any, can an instructor prompt student persistence? |
| | 7. Do you see a great deal of variance from course to course from a facilitation standpoint? |
| | 8. Which online Business courses and instructors do you feel successfully demonstrate effective methods of facilitation? |
| | 9. Can you provide some detail regarding why that course and instructor are exemplary from the standpoint of facilitation? |

# Appendix E - Faculty Interview Protocol

Thank you for coming to this interview session. You are here today to participate in an interview for a study of Teaching Presence in online Business courses. You have been selected to be interviewed based on your personal experience and knowledge regarding in the online classroom. Additionally, the purpose of your participation is for me to gain information and insight regarding your experience in creating and teaching online courses. You will be anonymous and any remarks that you make during the interview will remain confidential. The interview will take approximately one hour.

Thank you for signing the informed consent letter. I just want to remind you that this interview will be recorded and transcribed word for word by me. It is also important to note that you are free to terminate this interview at any point in time. You may also decline to answer questions if you feel that you are not able to answer or not comfortable in answering them.

Teaching Presence will be generally discussed in terms of three dimensions: Design and Organization, Discourse Facilitation, and Direct Instruction. Teaching Presence drives personally meaningful and educationally worthwhile learning interactions.

1. Do you have any questions before we begin?

2. Can you please tell me a little bit about yourself, including your teaching specialization, overall teaching history and online teaching history?

3. How many years have you taught online courses?

4. Do you teach any face-to-face courses in a semester?

5. Why do you teach online courses?

6. Do you prefer to teach Business courses in the classroom or online?

7. How many online courses do you teach each semester?

| Topic Domain - 1 | Experiences with (and attitudes towards) Design and Organization |
|---|---|
| **Subsumed Themes** | 1. Designing Methods<br>2. Establishing Netiquette<br>3. Establishing Time Parameters<br>4. Setting Curriculum<br>5. Utilizing Medium Effectively |
| **Lead-Off Question** | I am interested in how you feel about online design and organization. Can you describe what methods of design and organization are most beneficial to you as an instructor of an online Business course? (In case of a response like "Well, I like it when the course is broken into Units," I could qualify the question by saying "OK, tell me a little about how that helps you as an instructor," or "Tell me about the ideal design and organization within each Unit.")<br><br>Second Lead-Off Question: What ways, if any, do you assist student learning in the online environment through the design and organization of a course? |
| **Possible Follow-Up**<br><br>**Questions** | 1. What is your preferred way to send communication regarding important online course topics?<br>2. What is your preferred way to send communication regarding how to complete course learning activities?<br>3. How do you assist students in keeping pace with the course and meeting due dates/time frames?<br>4. What ways, if any, do you help students understand and practice acceptable behaviors in online learning environments?<br>5. I would like to look at one or two of your courses to observe and document the overall design and organization. Would you be comfortable allowing me access to your course to review your methods from a design and organization standpoint?<br>6. Your courses have been identified as exemplary. I would like to collect anonymous data that further supports the interview data that was previously collected. There are a few questions on our university teaching evaluations that address design and organization. Would you be willing to share your most recent average score for the following questions? If yes, I will email the specific questions to you in order to provide the scores to me.<br>  • Question 1 - The instructor is well prepared and organized.<br>  • Question 2 - The instructor clearly states and follows course objectives.<br>  • Question 6 - Assignments are valuable and related to course objectives.<br>7. Would you be willing to share some of the strengths, suggestions for improvement and additional comments that directly relate to design and organization (if any)? If yes, those comments can be provided with the scores via email. |

| Topic Domain – 2 | Experiences with (and attitudes towards) Direct Instruction |
|---|---|
| **Subsumed Themes** | 1. Present Content/Questions<br>2. Focus the Discussion on Specific Issues<br>3. Confirm Understanding<br>4. Diagnose Misconceptions<br>5. Inject Knowledge from Diverse Sources<br>6. |
| **Lead-Off Question** | Tell me about ways, that you prompt engagement to assist student as active learners? (In case of a response like "Well, I am active in the discussion forums," I could qualify the question by saying "OK, tell me a little about that process," or "Tell me about attributes and practices that feel are the most beneficial to Business students.")<br><br>Second Lead-Off Question: Overall do you feel that your interaction with online Business course students is timely and substantive? What actions prompt substantive interaction? |
| **Possible Follow-Up**<br><br>**Questions** | 1. What ways, if any, can you provide explanatory feedback that assists student learning?<br>2. What ways, if any, do you help to revise student thinking that assists your learning?<br>3. How do you motivate students to become active learners?<br>4. I would like to look at one or two of your courses to observe and document your methods of direct instruction. Would you be comfortable allowing me access to your course to review your methods from the standpoint of direct instruction?<br>5. I would like to collect anonymous data that further supports the interview data that was previously collected. There are a few questions on our university teaching evaluations that address direct instruction. Would you be willing to share your most recent average score for the following questions? If yes, I will email the specific questions to you in order to provide the scores to me.<br>   • Question 3 - The instructor is willing and able to provide assistance.<br>   • Question 5 - The instructor displays mastery of course content.<br>   • Question 8 – The instructor returns work promptly.<br>   • Question 9 – The instructor evaluates students fairly.<br>6. Would you be willing to share some of the strengths, suggestions for improvement and additional comments that directly relate to direct instruction (if any)? If yes, those comments can be provided with the scores via email. |

| Topic Domain - 3 | Experiences with (and attitudes towards) Discourse Facilitation |
|---|---|
| **Subsumed Themes** | 1. Identifying Areas of Agreement/Disagreement<br>2. Reinforce Student Contributions<br>3. Setting Climate for Learning<br>4. Drawing in Participants, Prompting Discussion<br>5. Assessing the Efficacy of the Process<br>6. Seeking to Reach Consensus |
| **Lead-Off Question** | Can you tell me about specific strategies that you use to demonstrate successful facilitation in online Business courses? (In case of a response like "Well, I am active in the course discussions," I could qualify the question by saying "OK, tell me a little about how that helps Business students," or "Tell me about the ideal amount of instructor engagement in course discussion forums.").<br><br>Second Lead-Off Question: Can you think of any specific strategies that you use to create a presence in an online Business courses? |
| **Possible Follow-Up**<br><br>**Questions** | 1. What ways, if any, do you help keep the participants on task in a way that assists student learning?<br>2. What are the most effective ways for instructors to provide support and guidance in discussion forums?<br>3. What ways, if any, do you keep students engaged and participating in productive dialog?<br>4. Can you think of any specific strategies you have used to make students feel comfortable participating in the course discussions?<br>5. Can you think of any specific strategies you have used to improve the perceived connection between yourself (as the course instructor) and students?<br>6. What ways, if any, do you (as the course instructor) prompt student persistence?<br>7. I would like to look at one or two of your courses to observe and document your methods of discourse facilitation. Would you be comfortable allowing me access to your course to review your methods from the standpoint of facilitation?<br>8. I would like to collect anonymous data that further supports the interview data that was previously collected. There are a few questions on our university teaching evaluations that address discourse facilitation. Would you be willing to share your most recent average score for the following questions? If yes, I will email the specific questions to you in order to provide the scores to me.<br>• Question 4 - The instructor displays respect for the student.<br>• Question 7 – The instructor manages the course effectively.<br>• Question 10-Overall, the instructor is effective in teaching this class. |

| | 9. Would you be willing to share some of the strengths, suggestions for improvement and additional comments that directly relate to discourse facilitation (if any)? If yes, those comments can be provided with the scores via email. |
|---|---|

# Appendix F - Student Participant Letter of Consent

Title of Study:  UNDERGRADUATE BUSINESS STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHING PRESENCE IN ONLINE BUSINESS COURSES

Lacey Finley
Robert W. Plaster School of Business
Missouri Southern State University
3950 Newman Road
Joplin, MO 64801
913-488-2995
finley-L@mssu.edu


Dear Participant,

I plan to conduct research regarding Teaching Presence in online Business courses. The purpose of this case study is to explore how undergraduate Business students perceive Teaching Presence in online Business courses.  Teaching Presence will be generally discussed in terms of three dimensions: Design and Organization, Discourse Facilitation, and Direct Instruction. Teaching Presence drives personally meaningful and educationally worthwhile learning interactions.

I am requesting your participation based on your enrollment in an online Business course during the fall 2015 semester.  Your willingness to partake in this study will provide me with information that you are uniquely qualified to share and will potentially benefit teaching practices and learning behaviors. You have been selected to be interviewed based on your personal experience and knowledge within online Business courses.

As an interviewee you have the right to end your participation in the interview at any time, and may decline to answer any of the questions posed to you. Confidentiality will be maintained in regard to this study. Your identity will not be disclosed in the study. The data

procured during the interview process will be kept confidential.  You must be 18 to participate in this interview.

The estimated length of the interview is 45 minutes.  The interview is conducted over the phone and will be recorded and transcribed.  The interviewee is welcomed to view the interview transcript upon completion.

Questions regarding this study should be directed to Lacey Finley at 913-488-2995 or finley-L@mssu.edu. . Since this study is required for a dissertation study, you may contact my Major Professor, Dr. Rosemary Talab, at talab@ksu.edu or by phone at 785-532-5716 for further information or questions.  If you experience problems or difficulties that you are not comfortable addressing with the researchers, or if you have any questions about your rights and responsibilities as a participant, feel free to contact the Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Lacey Finley
Robert W. Plaster School of Business
Missouri Southern State University
3950 Newman Road
Joplin, MO 64801
913-488-2995
finley-L@mssu.edu


If you are interested in participating in this study, please sign the form and return it to me by October 18th, 2015.
I, _____, have read the informed consent and am interested in participating in Lacey Finley's study entitled, Undergraduate Business Students Perceptions of Teaching Presence in Online Business Courses.

Signature                                                                                          Date

# Appendix G - Faculty Participant Letter of Consent

Title of Study:   UNDERGRADUATE BUSINESS STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF
TEACHING PRESENCE IN ONLINE BUSINESS COURSES

Lacey Finley
Robert W. Plaster School of Business
Missouri Southern State University
3950 Newman Road
Joplin, MO 64801
913-488-2995
finley-L@mssu.edu


Dear Participant,

I plan to conduct research regarding Teaching Presence in online Business courses. The purpose of this case study is to explore how undergraduate Business students perceive Teaching Presence in online Business courses.  Teaching Presence will be generally discussed in terms of three dimensions: Design and Organization, Discourse Facilitation, and Direct Instruction. Teaching Presence drives personally meaningful and educationally worthwhile learning interactions.

I am requesting your participation based on your experience teaching online Business courses and identification as an instructor that demonstrates the highest level of Teaching Presence.  Your willingness to partake in this study will provide me with information that you are uniquely qualified to share and will potentially benefit teaching practices and learning behaviors. You have been selected to be interviewed based on your personal experience and knowledge within online Business courses.

As an interviewee you have the right to end your participation in the interview at any time, and may decline to answer any of the questions posed to you. Confidentiality will be maintained in regard to this study. Your identity will not be disclosed in the study. The data

procured during the interview process will be kept confidential.  You must be 18 to participate in this interview.

The estimated length of the interview is 45 minutes.  The interview is conducted over the phone and will be recorded and transcribed.  The interviewee is welcomed to view the interview transcript upon completion.

Questions regarding this study should be directed to Lacey Finley at 913-488-2995 or finley-L@mssu.edu. . Since this study is required for a dissertation study, you may contact my Major Professor, Dr. Rosemary Talab, at talab@ksu.edu or by phone at 785-532-5716 for further information or questions.  If you experience problems or difficulties that you are not comfortable addressing with the researchers, or if you have any questions about your rights and responsibilities as a participant, feel free to contact the Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224.  Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lacey Finley
Robert W. Plaster School of Business
Missouri Southern State University
3950 Newman Road
Joplin, MO 64801
913-488-2995
finley-L@mssu.edu

If you are interested in participating in this study, please sign the form and return it to me by October 18th, 2015.
I, _____, have read the informed consent and am interested in participating in Lacey Finley's study entitled, Undergraduate Business Students Perceptions of Teaching Presence in Online Business Courses.
Signature                                                                                     Date

# Appendix H - Kansas State University Institutional Review Board

# Approval

**COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)**
**COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS REPORT***

\* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details.
See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

- **Name:** Lacey Finley (ID: 5124585)
- **Email:** lrfinley@ksu.edu
- **Institution Affiliation:** Kansas State University (ID: 3159)
- **Institution Unit:** Curriculum and Instruction
- **Phone:** 9134882995

- **Curriculum Group:** Human Subjects Research (HSR)
- **Course Learner Group:** IRB Researchers and personnel on IRB protocols
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course

- **Report ID:** 17480844
- **Completion Date:** 09/29/2015
- **Expiration Date:** 09/28/2018
- **Minimum Passing:** 80
- **Reported Score*:** 83

| REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY | DATE COMPLETED | SCORE |
|---|---|---|
| History and Ethical Principles - SBE (ID: 490) | 09/29/15 | 4/5 (80%) |
| Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBE (ID: 491) | 09/29/15 | 4/5 (80%) |
| The Federal Regulations - SBE (ID: 502) | 09/29/15 | 4/5 (80%) |
| Assessing Risk - SBE (ID: 503) | 09/29/15 | 5/5 (100%) |
| Informed Consent - SBE (ID: 504) | 09/29/15 | 4/5 (80%) |
| Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE (ID: 505) | 09/29/15 | 4/5 (80%) |

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution
identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

**CITI Program**
Email: citisupport@miami.edu
Phone: 305-243-7970
Web: https://www.citiprogram.org

# Appendix I - Missouri Southern State University Institutional Review Board Approval

## Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Lacey Finley** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants".

Date of completion: 09/29/2015

Certification Number: 1874695

# Appendix J - MSSU IRB Approval

**MSSU - Human Subjects Review Application**
**Institutional Review Board**

Date Submitted: 10/1/2015    Research Project No: BUS-F-201580-001
(assigned by IRB Manager)

Name of Researcher: Lacey Finley    Student ☐    Faculty ✓

Email: Finley-L@MSSU.edu

| (FOR STUDENT PROJECTS) Faculty Research Supervisor (print): | Brian Nichols |
|---|---|
| Email: | Finley-L@MSSU.edu |
| Campus phone: 625-9599 | Department: Plaster School of Business |

Time frame in which the research will be conducted (begin/end dates): 10/11/2015 to 2/15/2016

Project Title: UNDERGRADUATE BUSINESS STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHING PRESENCE IN ONLINE BUSINESS COURSES

Complete the second page and attach any relevant documentation (surveys, consent forms, etc).

Complete below to determine Research Review Level (See criteria on MSSU IRB webpage).

Participant are vulnerable ☐ non-vulnerable ✓

Risk Level (check one): Less than minimal ✓ Minimal ☐ Greater than minimal ☐

Assessment of Research Level: Exempt ✓ Expedited ☐ Full ☐

Research Supervisor Signature _~~Brian Nich~~_    Date 10/5/15
(For Student Projects)

---

For Official Use Only    -    Action of IRB

(Check one) ☒ APPROVED    ☐ NOT APPROVED    ☐ REVISE AND RESUBMIT

Reasons (if not approved or revise and resubmit):

_____

Exempt Level: _~~Beverly Block~~_
(Signature of Department Reviewer or IRB Representative/Date)

Expedited Level: _____ AND _____
(Signature of Department Reviewer/Date)    (Signature of IRB Representative/Date)

Full Level: _____
(Signature of IRB Chair/Date)

# Appendix K - KSU IRB Approval

**KANSAS STATE** | University Research Compliance Office
UNIVERSITY

TO:     Rosemary Talab                          Proposal Number: 7966
        Curriculum & Instruction
        226 Bluemont

FROM: Rick Scheidt, Chair
        Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects

DATE: 10/29/2015

RE:     Proposal Entitled, "Undergraduate Business Student Perceptions of Teaching Presence in Online
        Business Courses"

The Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects / Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Kansas State
University has reviewed the proposal identified above and has determined that it is EXEMPT from further
IRB review. This exemption applies only to the proposal - as written – and currently on file with the IRB.
Any change potentially affecting human subjects must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation and
may disqualify the proposal from exemption.

Based upon information provided to the IRB, this activity is exempt under the criteria set forth in the
Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, **45 CFR §46.101, paragraph b, category: 2,
subsection: ii.**

Certain research is exempt from the requirements of HHS/OHRP regulations. A determination that
research is exempt does not imply that investigators have no ethical responsibilities to subjects in such
research; it means only that the regulatory requirements related to IRB review, informed consent, and
assurance of compliance do not apply to the research.

Any unanticipated problems involving risk to subjects or to others must be reported immediately to the
Chair of the Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, the University Research Compliance
Office, and if the subjects are KSU students, to the Director of the Student Health Center.

203 Fairchild Hall, Lower Mezzanine, 1601 Vattier St., Manhattan, KS 66506-1103 | 785-532-3224 | fax: 785-532-3278 | k-state.edu/research/comply | comply@ksu.edu

# Appendix L - NVivo 10 Theme Organization

The screenshots below show the Nodes (themes and categories) from NVivo 10 for each research question. The themes are provided with the number of sources that contained information regarding the theme, as well as the number of times the theme was noted by each source.

| Name | Sources | References |
|---|---|---|
| Research Question 1 - Student Perceptions of Teaching Presence | 20 | 101 |
| Course Design and Organization | 12 | 19 |
| Designing methods | 8 | 11 |
| Establishing netiquette | 2 | 2 |
| Establishing time parameters | 4 | 5 |
| Setting curriculum | 0 | 0 |
| Utilizing medium effectively | 0 | 0 |
| Direct Instruction | 18 | 46 |
| Confirm understanding | 15 | 31 |
| Diagnose misconceptions | 0 | 0 |
| Focus the discussion on specific issues | 0 | 0 |
| Inject knowledge from diverse sources | 2 | 2 |
| Present content - questions | 8 | 13 |
| Discourse Facilitation | 18 | 36 |
| Assessing the efficacy of the process | 8 | 8 |
| Drawing in participants, prompting discussion | 8 | 14 |
| Identifying areas of agreement-disagreement | 0 | 0 |
| Reinforce student contributions | 1 | 1 |
| Seeking to reach consensus | 3 | 4 |
| Setting climate for learning | 7 | 9 |

| Name | Sources | References |
|---|---|---|
| Research Question 1 - Student Perceptions of Teaching Presence | 20 | 101 |
| Research Question 2 - Teaching Presence Components (Course Design and Organization, Discourse Facilitation and Direct Instr | 20 | 245 |
| Course Design and Organization | 20 | 93 |
| Designing methods | 16 | 29 |
| Establishing netiquette | 9 | 10 |
| Establishing time parameters | 15 | 28 |
| Setting curriculum | 8 | 12 |
| Utilizing medium effectively | 11 | 14 |
| Direct Instruction | 20 | 64 |
| Confirm understanding | 17 | 37 |
| Diagnose misconceptions | 4 | 5 |
| Focus the discussion on specific issues | 6 | 9 |
| Inject knowledge from diverse sources | 4 | 4 |
| Present content - questions | 9 | 9 |
| Discourse Facilitation | 20 | 88 |
| Assessing the efficacy of the process | 13 | 18 |
| Drawing in participants, prompting discussion | 14 | 22 |
| Identifying areas of agreement-disagreement | 2 | 3 |
| Reinforce student contributions | 7 | 9 |
| Seeking to reach consensus | 5 | 7 |
| Setting climate for learning | 15 | 29 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Course Design and Organization | 3 | 30 |
| Designing methods | 3 | 7 |
| Establishing netiquette | 2 | 2 |
| Establishing time parameters | 3 | 11 |
| Setting curriculum | 1 | 1 |
| Utilizing medium effectively | 3 | 9 |
| Direct Instruction | 3 | 25 |
| Confirm understanding | 3 | 18 |
| Diagnose misconceptions | 2 | 3 |
| Focus the discussion on specific issues | 0 | 0 |
| Inject knowledge from diverse sources | 0 | 0 |
| Present content questions | 2 | 4 |
| Discourse Faciliation | 3 | 26 |
| Assessing the efficacy of the process | 3 | 12 |
| Drawing in participants, prompting discussion | 3 | 11 |
| Identifying areas of agreement disagreement | 0 | 0 |
| Reinforce student contributions | 1 | 1 |
| Seeking to reach consensus | 0 | 0 |
| Setting climate for learning | 2 | 2 |

# Appendix M - NVivo 10 Document Data and Organization

The screenshots below show the Memo organization within NVivo 10 for each all

documents and observational data.
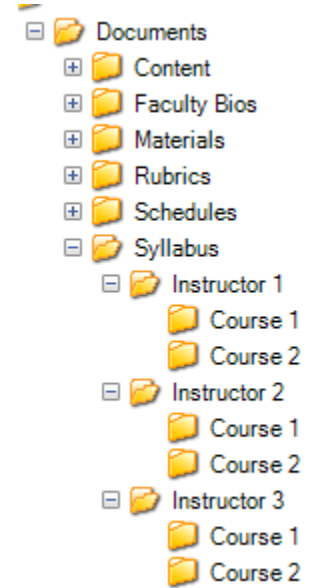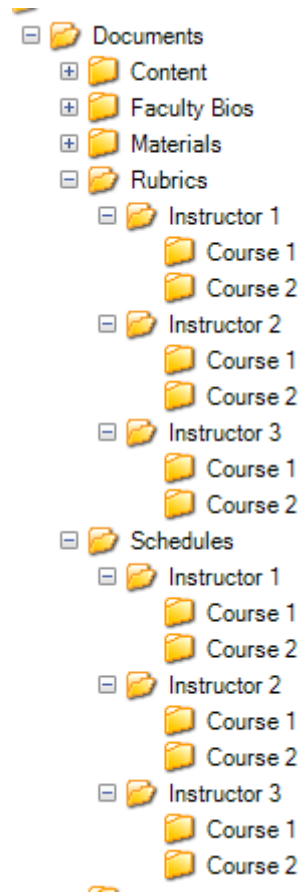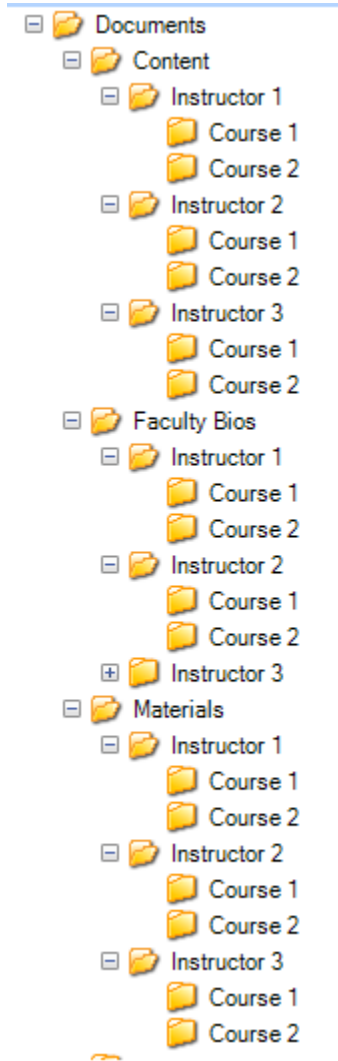
# Appendix N - NVivo 10 Observation Data and Organization
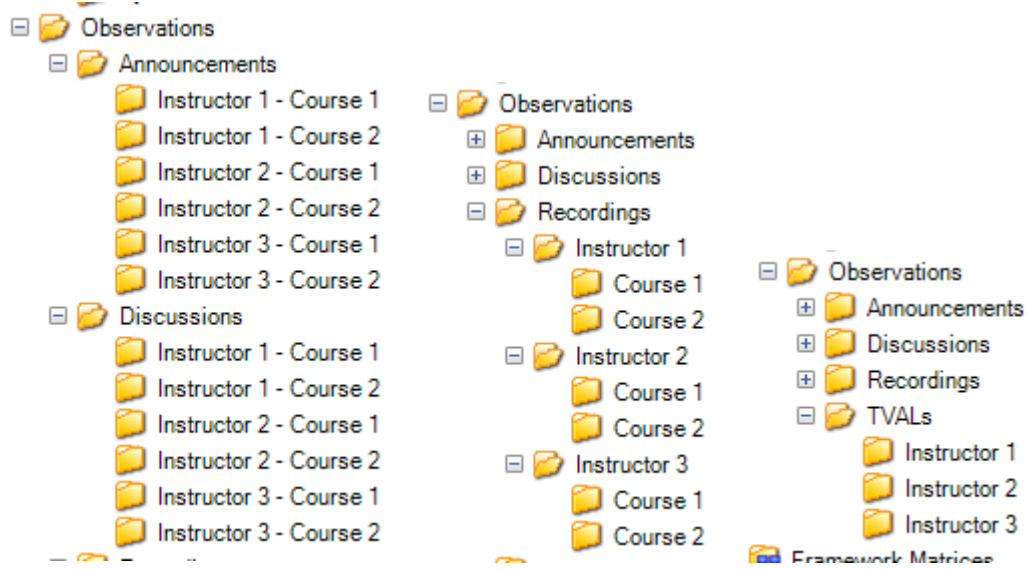
# Appendix O - Research Question 1 Component Elements and Frequency

*Student Teaching Presence Model Component Elements and Frequency*

| Units | Frequency |
|---|---|
| Confirm Understanding | 31 |
| Drawing in Participants, Prompting Discussion | 14 |
| Present Content/Questions | 13 |
| Designing Methods | 11 |
| Setting Climate for Learning | 9 |
| Assessing the Efficacy of the Process | 8 |
| Establishing Time Parameters | 5 |
| Seeking to Reach Consensus | 4 |
| Establishing Netiquette | 2 |
| Inject Knowledge from Diverse Sources | 2 |
| Setting Curriculum | 1 |
| Reinforce Student Contributions | 1 |
| Utilizing Medium Effectively | 0 |
| Identifying Areas of Agreement/Disagreement | 0 |
| Focus the Discussion on Specific Issues | 0 |
| Diagnose Misconceptions | 0 |
| | 101 |

# Appendix P - Research Question 2 Component Elements and Frequency

*Student Teaching Presence Model Categories/Elements*

| Units | Frequency |
|---|---|
| Confirm Understanding | 37 |
| Designing Methods | 29 |
| Setting Climate for Learning | 29 |
| Establishing Time Parameters | 28 |
| Drawing in Participants, Prompting Discussion | 22 |
| Assessing the Efficacy of the Process | 18 |
| Utilizing Medium Effectively | 14 |
| Setting Curriculum | 12 |
| Establishing Netiquette | 10 |
| Reinforce Student Contributions | 9 |
| Present Content/Questions | 9 |
| Focus the Discussion on Specific Issues | 9 |
| Seeking to Reach Consensus | 7 |
| Diagnose Misconceptions | 5 |
| Inject Knowledge from Diverse Sources | 4 |
| Identifying Areas of Agreement/Disagreement | 3 |
| | 245 |

# Appendix Q - Research Question 3 Component Elements and Frequency

Faculty Teaching Presence Model Themes/Components and Frequencies

| Units | Frequency |
|---|---|
| Confirm Understanding | 18 |
| Assessing the Efficacy of the Process | 12 |
| Drawing in Participants, Prompting Discussion | 11 |
| Establishing Time Parameters | 11 |
| Utilizing Medium Effectively | 9 |
| Designing Methods | 7 |
| Present Content/Questions | 4 |
| Diagnose Misconceptions | 3 |
| Establishing Netiquette | 2 |
| Setting Climate for Learning | 2 |
| Setting Curriculum | 1 |
| Reinforce Student Contributions | 1 |
| Seeking to Reach Consensus | 0 |
| Identifying Areas of Agreement/Disagreement | 0 |
| Focus the Discussion on Specific Issues | 0 |
| Inject Knowledge from Diverse Sources | 0 |
| | 81 |

# Appendix R - Sample Teaching Evaluation (Course Survey)

Question 1 - The instructor is well prepared and organized.

| o Strongly agree | o Agree | o Disagree | o Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|

Question 2 - The instructor clearly states and follows course objectives.

| o Strongly agree | o Agree | o Disagree | o Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|

Question 3 - The instructor is willing and able to provide assistance.

| o Strongly agree | o Agree | o Disagree | o Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|

Question 4 - The instructor displays respect for the student.

| o Strongly agree | o Agree | o Disagree | o Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|

Question 5 - The instructor displays mastery of course content.

| o Strongly agree | o Agree | o Disagree | o Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|

Question 6 - Assignments are valuable and related to course objectives.

| o Strongly agree | o Agree | o Disagree | o Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|

Question 7 – The instructor manages the course effectively.

| o Strongly agree | o Agree | o Disagree | o Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|

Question 8 – The instructor returns work promptly.

| o Strongly agree | o Agree | o Disagree | o Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|

Question 9 – The instructor evaluates students fairly.

| o Strongly agree | o Agree | o Disagree | o Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|

Question 10 – Overall, the instructor is effective in teaching this class.

| o Strongly agree | o Agree | o Disagree | o Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|