# An Examination of Teaching Presence in an Accelerated Online Bachelor of Business Administration Course

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**Abstract**

A quantitative content analysis study was conducted to examine teaching presence in an online accelerated Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) course. Analyzing various course materials, this study identifies patterns of teaching presence across three categories—Instructional Design and Organization, Facilitating Learning, and Direct Instruction. The findings demonstrated that Direct Instruction was the most prominent category of teaching presence, closely followed by Facilitating Learning and Instructional Design and Organization. In addition, the findings revealed that in a contemporary online course, teaching presence extends beyond asynchronous discussions, manifesting in various elements of the online learning experience. This study underscored the critical role of teaching presence in meeting the needs of learners, particularly nontraditional learners, in an accelerated online course format. This content analysis study highlighted the patterns of teaching presence in course design, development, and delivery, offering valuable insights for both novice and experienced instructors focused on online teaching.

*Keywords:* Teaching presence; Accelerated online course; Online teaching; Higher education

Krier, K., Ching, Y.H., Ching, Lowenthal, P. (2025). An examination of teaching presence in an accelerated online bachelor of business administration course. *Online Learning, 29*(4), 418-447. https://doi.10.24059/olj.v29i4.4740

# Introduction

Enrollments in online courses and programs in higher education have increased dramatically over the last two decades (Ahmady et al., 2018; Balboni et al., 2018). Business schools, in particular, have seen an increased use of online education (Alsharah & Ghura, 2023). For instance, "between January 2018 and October 2021, U.S.-based online programs in business and management increased from 1,500 to 2,500" (Bisoux, 2022, para. 17). Students enrolled in business programs tend to be nontraditional students who work full-time, juggle family responsibilities while attending courses (Van Doorn & Van Doorn, 2014), and are working professionals that possess "one to ten years of managerial working experiences" (Tseng et al., 2019, p. 181). Engaging these nontraditional students by employing effective design and delivery strategies in online instruction is essential (Ren, 2023), as online education tends to have higher attrition rates than traditional on-campus programs (Ludwig-Hardman & Dunlap, 2003; Ren, 2023).

Universities increasingly offer accelerated online courses to attract nontraditional students (Colclasure et al., 2018). These courses are a shortened version of a typical semester-long course (Kuo, 2014), featuring intensive coursework and compact sessions (Abu-Dawood et al., 2016). For instance, instead of taking 15 weeks to complete a course, a student can complete a course in seven weeks. However, compared to traditional online courses, accelerated online courses may impose greater educational responsibilities on learners, who may already face challenges such as unanticipated work commitments and hectic schedules (Roddy et al., 2017). The condensed time frame necessitates learners to double their weekly study time, potentially causing overload and challenges (Glenn, 2018). Due to the fast pace and demanding workload in accelerated courses, it can be challenging for learners to develop meaningful connections with their peers and instructors (Chicca & Matthias, 2023). Lack of interactions between peers and instructors has been linked to an increased attrition rate among nontraditional online learners (Owens et al., 2009; Park & Choi, 2009; Rovai, 2003).

Studies have explored the role of interaction in accelerated online courses, focusing specifically on aspects such as learner–content interaction, social presence, classroom community, instructional approaches, and peer interactions (Kuo, 2014; Lowenthal, 2016; Lowenthal & Trespalacios, 2022; Soles & Maduli-Williams, 2019; Trekles & Sims, 2013). Among various interactions in online education, instructor interaction is indispensable for online learners to fully engage and succeed in accelerated online courses (Kuo, 2014). Well-structured course design and instructor-student interaction contribute to the success of online courses (Lowenthal & Trespalacios, 2022).

The Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework developed by Garrison et al. (1999) outlines a framework for the research and practice of online learning that can help how course design and interaction contribute to successful online courses. This framework emphasizes three interconnected elements crucial for a meaningful educational experience: social presence, teaching presence, and cognitive presence. Anderson et al. (2001) defined teaching presence "as the design, facilitating, and direction of cognitive and social processes for the purpose of realizing personally meaningful and educationally worthwhile learning outcomes" (p. 5). Teaching presence enhances the online learning community through sharing and understanding,

allowing instructors and learners to collaborate (Wang & Liu, 2019). Teaching presence diminishes the distance between the learner and instructor in online courses (Arbaugh & Hwang, 2006), which mitigates learners from pausing or dropping out of online courses or degree programs (Delaney & Betts, 2022).

However, studies have yet to examine the extent to which teaching presence is manifested in course design, development, and delivery for online accelerated, asynchronous courses in higher education institutions. Particularly, research addressing online accelerated courses in business education, predominantly attended by nontraditional learners, remains notably absent. Given this, we set out to investigate teaching presence in an online accelerated business course. More specifically, we conducted a content analysis to uncover the patterns of teaching presence within instructional design, facilitation, and direct instruction in an accelerated online BBA course. The results of these patterns provide insights enabling instructors to enhance their understanding and implementation of teaching presence in such courses. With this knowledge, instructors can make informed decisions to optimize their teaching approaches, fostering a more engaging and supportive learning environment for nontraditional students.

# Literature Review

### *Teaching Presence*

Teaching presence, as defined within the Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework developed by Garrison et al. (1999), is fundamental to online learning. Initially conceptualized to explain how "teaching" takes place in communities of inquiry, teaching presence focuses on the role design, direct instruction, and discourse play in meaningful educational experiences. This presence is crucial for fostering social and cognitive presences, which are essential for achieving meaningful learning outcomes that address learners' needs (Garrison, 2017; Garrison et al., 2010; Szeto, 2015; Wang, 2022; Wang & Liu, 2020). Research has shown that teaching presence enhances collaboration, trust, and transparent communication, thereby significantly contributing to student satisfaction, community building, and overall learning outcomes (Delaney & Betts, 2022; Dughi et al., 2023; Li, 2022; Szeto, 2015).

### *Three Categories of Teaching Presence*

Three categories of teaching presence are conceptualized—instructional design and organization, facilitating discourse, and direct instruction (Anderson et al., 2001). Within the instructional design and organization category, instructors construct and recontextualize curriculum materials and design group or individual activities. Instructors also model or provide guidelines for conducting discussion postings (Anderson et al., 2001). The instructional design and organization category highlights the importance of planning, developing, and establishing the online course's curriculum, communication and interaction approaches, and evaluation methods (Arbaugh & Hwang, 2006; Shea et al., 2003; Watson et al., 2016). Design and organization aim to devise goals and ways to enhance learning (Stenbom et al., 2016). Effective instructors take control of this process to create online course structure and learning activities (Turk et al., 2021).

Facilitating discourse seeks to create understanding through pedagogical knowledge, disciplinary expertise, interpersonal guidance, and organizational direction (Garrison, 2017). Facilitating discourse allows instructors to provide feedback and comments to students, address their questions, offer directions and resources, and keep discussions engaging (Arbaugh & Hwang, 2006; Garrison, 2017; Watson et al., 2016). Facilitating discourse enables instructors to guide and engage learners in dialogues that are meaningful, purposeful, critical, reflective, and productive with their peers (Turk et al., 2022). This approach fosters effective peer-to-peer interactions (Fiock et al., 2021).

With direct instruction, instructors share expert knowledge and experiences with students (Anderson et al., 2001, p. 8). The direct instruction category involves actively sharing knowledge, resources, and feedback (Watson et al., 2016). These activities help learners gain clarification, guidance, and understanding (Turk et al., 2021). Direct instruction entails the exchange of specific subject matter, which occurs not only between instructors and learners but also among learners themselves (Fiock et al., 2021; Stenbom et al., 2016).

### *The Role of Teaching Presence*

Several studies have identified a relationship between teaching presence, students' satisfaction, learning, and community development in online education (Akyol & Garrison, 2008; Caskurlu et al., 2020; Garrison, 2017; Khalid & Quick, 2016). Shea, Fredericksen, et al. (2003) assessed students' perceptions of teaching presence and found a positive correlation between student satisfaction and learning and the three categories of teaching presence. Shea, Pickett, et al. (2003) demonstrated a similar positive correlation in a follow-up study. The results revealed that although student classmates contribute to discourse facilitation and direct instruction, the instructor's role remains integral to student satisfaction and learning outcomes. Through a quantitative content analysis, Shea et al. (2010) suggested a positive correlation between learning outcomes and teaching presence. Szeto (2015) echoed that learning outcomes are influenced by teaching presence. Caskurlu et al. (2020) identified teaching presence as "a good predictor of student outcomes" and emphasized its critical role in course design and implementation (p. 11). Moreover, research has highlighted the critical role of teaching presence in community development. For instance, Shea et al. (2005) and Shea et al. (2006) highlighted the connection between students' perceptions of teaching presence and their sense of learning community. Ke (2010) also found that teaching presence contributes to the development process of an online learning community.

Research has consistently highlighted the pivotal role of teaching presence in fostering learning interaction and engagement, and bridging social and cognitive presence. Wang and Liu (2019) found that the categories of instructional design and organization and facilitating discourse impacted students' interaction positively. Notably, Zhang et al. (2016) indicated a positive impact of teaching presence on learner interaction. In addition, Zhang et al. (2023) discovered that teaching presence contributes to the promotion of "learner affective engagement" (p. 6). Garrison et al. (2010) illustrated that the importance of teaching presence in sustaining and facilitating social and cognitive presence is critical, contributing to developing an online community of inquiry. Morrison and Jacobsen's (2023) findings also resonated with the indispensable role of teaching presence within online courses in relation to social and cognitive presence. Prasad (2009) uncovered that teaching presence is interconnected with students'

critical thinking level. Furthermore, Turk et al. (2022) revealed that teaching presence positively affects students' basic psychological need for autonomy and competence, contributing to motivation and engagement (pp. 8–9).

Previous research has suggested that nontraditional students tend to enroll in accelerated online courses, seeking immediate application of learning that could directly integrate into their professional work (Jiang & Koo, 2020; Lowenthal et al., 2016). These students often prioritize practical, relevant learning experiences that can be readily applied to their current professional roles (Jiang & Koo, 2020). In this context, teaching presence is crucial as it entails designing materials and teaching approaches that meet the needs of these students by tailoring content to address the real-world challenges nontraditional students face in their professional lives. This ensures that the learning experience is engaging and directly applicable (Garrison, 2017, p. 70). Teaching presence also plays an essential role in identifying relevant societal knowledge and fostering reflection and discussion, further enhancing the effectiveness of the learning experience for nontraditional students (Garrison, 2017, p. 70).

Teaching presence, previously studied in the context of graduate business management education (Arbaugh & Hwang, 2006), has seen limited examination in the realm of accelerated online courses, especially those pertaining to online BBA programs (Lowenthal, 2016).

# Methodology

This content analysis study aimed to identify the patterns of teaching presence as manifested in instructional design, facilitation, and direct instruction within an accelerated online BBA course. A content analysis study can shed light on the patterns of teaching presence in course design, development, and delivery, and the results will help new and existing instructors identify ways and contexts to demonstrate teaching presence in their online courses.

The study focused on answering the following research questions:

1. What are the teaching presence patterns in an accelerated online BBA course?

    a. To what extent is teaching presence manifested in the *instructional design and organization* of an accelerated online BBA course?

    b. To what extent is teaching presence manifested in the *facilitation* of an accelerated online BBA course?

    c. To what extent is teaching presence manifested in *direct instruction* in an accelerated online BBA course?

### *Research Design*

This study employed a directed content analysis approach using quantitative analysis methods (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Content analysis is a research methodology that "mak[es] replicable and valid inferences from texts to the contexts of their use" (Krippendorff, 2019, p. 24). Content analysis enables researchers to analyze "unstructured data in view of the meanings,

symbolic qualities, and expressive contents they have any of the communicative roles they play in the lives of the data's sources" (Krippendorff, 2019, p. 51). A directed content analysis aims to "validate or extend conceptually a theoretical framework or theory" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1281), which is applicable to this study to explore the emergence of teaching presence in an accelerated online BBA course.

### *Sample / Context*

This study was conducted in an Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)-accredited online BBA program at a metropolitan university in the northwestern United States. The university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and approved this study before data collection. It involved secondary data analysis of course content and instructional interactions from a previously completed course. No personally identifiable student information was included in the analysis. This program offers accelerated online courses every seven weeks, targeting working adults with prior college experience aiming to enhance their careers or complete their post-secondary education. Most learners are over the age of 25, nontraditional students who have not attended college for an extended period of time. Many learners attend the program part-time and hold positions in or have a background in business.

Purposeful sampling was utilized to "intentionally sample" a course that would "best inform the researcher about the research problem under examination" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 148). The course selection criteria included whether the course used module overview, announcements, discussion forum instructions, text-based feedback, assignment instructions, instructional videos, and whether the instructor used discussion replies to facilitate discourse. A course emphasizing critical management skills and problem-solving skills related to business and economics met the criteria and was selected for this study. This course was redesigned by an adjunct faculty who is an experienced online instructor with the collaborative effort from the university instructional design team. The collaborative effort involved aligning the course with the quality assurance standards (Quality Matters, 2023), streamlining course and module objectives, and ensuring accessibility for the course design. A new full-time lecturer with proficient online teaching experience taught this course.

### *Data Sources and Analysis*

#### Data Sources

As an entry course for the program, learners share the program's characteristics and are primarily working adults identified as nontraditional learners. One unique characteristic of this course was that the instructor received an academic coach to assist with grading because the enrollment was above 40. Thus, this study evaluated data sources from the instructor and academic coach for this foundational course.

Previous studies that examined teaching presence using content analysis largely focused on asynchronous discussions (Anderson et al., 2001; Nami et al., 2018; Prasad, 2009; Rodriguez, 2014; Rourke & Anderson, 2002). This study intended to broaden the range of data sources to understand better how teaching presence is manifested across course materials and interactions. The study sampled two modules of the course, incorporating a variety of data

sources: two module announcements and overview pages, which the instructor frequently used to convey course material, guidelines, and expectations; two instructional videos, instructions for two discussion forums, named Management in Action, two sets of instructor replies in discussions, two sets of discussion feedback, two project-based assignment instructions, and two sets of assignment feedback. These modules corresponded to weeks two and three in this seven-week accelerated course. Week two focused on routine development, at which point learners became acquainted with the course structure and sequence. Week three highlighted the importance of management, introducing learners to various organizational concepts. All data sources helped understand the categories of teaching presence: instructional design and organization, facilitating discourse, and direct instruction. Table 1 presents a summary of the aforementioned course elements that are collected and analyzed for this study.

**Table 1**

*Summary of Data Sources Collected and Analyzed*

| | |
|---|---|
| Course Element | Module 2 and Module 3 Overview Pages |
| | Module 2 and Module 3 Course Announcements |
| | Module 2 and Module 3 Instructional Videos |
| | Module 2 and Module 3 Discussion Instructions |
| | Module 2 and Module 3 Discussion Instructor Replies |
| | Module 2 and Module 3 Discussion Instructor Feedback |
| | Module 2 and Module 3 Assignment Instructions |
| | Module 2 and Module 3 Assignment Feedback |

Data Analysis

This study used the following revised steps of content analysis based on the research of Hsieh and Shannon (2005), Rourke et al. (2000), and White and Marsh (2006). The researchers first formulated the research questions and selected the data sample to be analyzed. The researcher drew the sample and determined the unit of analysis to be the sentence. Choosing sentence types of analysis allowed the researcher to "focus on the text, including the context in the form of the structural elements provided in the conferencing format" (Fahy et al., 2001, p. 5). Each unit was only coded into one indicator based on the coding scheme. To test out the original coding scheme developed by Wang and Liu (2019), which was adapted from Shea et al.'s (2010) study based on Anderson et al.'s (2001) research, the lead researcher conducted the initial coding on a subset of data from Module 2. The lead researcher and the second coder, another researcher on the team, underwent a coding training session to discuss the codes and revise the coding scheme (Krippendorff, 2019). During the training session, the researcher and the second coder determined that one of the indicators, Utilizing Medium Effectively, should be eliminated because it was not the instructor's or academic coach's responsibility to assist students in using LMS features for learning activities and resolving technical problems. The online BBA program has a designated online course technologist who assists in the live courses.

After the training session, the researcher and second coder independently coded a subset of data from Module 3 using the revised coding scheme, yielding a Cohen's kappa of 0.40, indicating fair inter-rater reliability (Anderson et al., 2001; Landis & Koch, 1977; Rourke et al.,

2001). During this process, coders encountered discrepancies in classifying evolving forms of instructional communication found in accelerated, asynchronous online courses. One notable challenge involved coding the instructor's welcoming language and introductory comments embedded in course announcements or instructional videos. These utterances were initially difficult to align with existing indicators, leading to inconsistencies in coding. Given the frequent presence of these types of communications, and the absence of a suitable existing indicator, the researcher and the second coder, after discussion, created a new indicator, Providing Instructional Greeting, to capture these relational, presence-establishing interactions.

Another recurring point of disagreement was how to code feedback or commentary from instructors that explained student performance or clarified alignment with grading expectations. These did not align well with the Offering Useful Illustrations indicator. Through discussion, the coders agreed to create a new indicator, Explaining Learning Activities, to better capture these forms of instructional engagement. These examples reflect the difficulties of applying earlier frameworks to multi-modal, fast-paced instructional environments designed for nontraditional learners.

Through negotiation and discussion to refine the coding scheme and resolve discrepancies (Garrison et al., 2006), the researcher and the second coder reached a complete agreement. The revised coding scheme, with added codes and modified definitions (see Table 2), aimed to better capture teaching presence as reflected in the course materials and instructional activities, including both text-based communication and videos, in contemporary online courses. The lead researcher then analyzed the entire dataset using this revised coding scheme. In this study, NVivo was used to assist with coding the data.

**Table 2**

*Revised Coding Scheme for Teaching Presence (Applied to the Entire Dataset for Analysis)*

| Indicators of Teaching Presence | Added/ Changed /Removed | Description (New, Modified, Remains the Same, or Removed) |
|---|---|---|
| **Instructional Design and Organization (category)** | | |
| Establishing etiquette | | Remains the same: Helps students understand the behaviors that are acceptable in online learning, e.g., providing documentation on polite forms of online interaction. |
| Establishing time parameters | | Remains the same: Communicates important due dates/time frames for learning activities to help students keep pace with the course e.g., accurate course schedule. |
| Utilizing medium effectively | Removed | Removed: Assists students to take advantage of the online environment to enhance learning, e.g., using |

| Indicators of Teaching Presence | Added/ Changed /Removed | Description (New, Modified, Remains the Same, or Removed) |
|---|---|---|
| | | LMS features for learning activities and resolving technical problems. |
| **Explaining LearningActivities** | Added | New: Provides clear instructions on how to participate in course learning activities, e.g., clear explanation of how to complete course assessments successfully, rubrics, and instructor expectations (excluding time parameters and etiquette). |
| Making macrolevel comments | | Remains the same: Provides rationale for assignment/topic (for example, the purpose of the assignment). |
| Setting curriculum | Changed (from Setting curriculum and communicating assessment methods to be used in the course) | Modified: Communicates important course objectives, e.g., documentation, goals, topics, and assignment/task titles. |
| **Facilitating Learning (category)** | Changed (from Facilitating Discourse) | |
| Assess the efficacy of learning performance | Changed (from Assess the efficacy of the process) | Modified: Helps students know more about the overall state of learning and performance including giving a score, e.g., rubric, grading criteria. |
| Drawing in participants and promoting discussion | | Remains the same: Helps students engaged and participate in a productive dialogue |
| Encouraging, acknowledging, or reinforcing student contributions | | Remains the same: Acknowledge student participation in the course, e.g., relied in a positive encouraging manner to student submissions (without referring to any rubric or grading criteria). |

| Indicators of Teaching Presence | Added/ Changed /Removed | Description (New, Modified, Remains the Same, or Removed) |
|---|---|---|
| Identifying areas of agreement or disagreement | | Remains the same: Helps identify areas of agreement and disagreement on course topics to enhance student learning. |
| Providing instructional greeting | Added | New: Provides instructional greeting in course materials. |
| Providing instructional reminder | Added | New: Providing reminders regarding learning activities, help-seeking, grading policies, and university rules. |
| Setting climate for learning | | Remains the same: Encourages students to explore concepts in the course, e.g., promotes the exploration of new ideas. |
| **Direct Instruction (category)** | | |
| Conducting informative demonstrations | | Remains the same: Attempts to make course content more comprehensible through the exhibition of processes. |
| Elaborating relevant concepts | Added | New: Attempts to elaborate course content with relevant concepts. |
| Making explicit reference to outside materials | | Remains the same: Provides useful information from a variety of sources, e.g., articles, textbooks, personal experiences, or links to external websites. |
| Offering useful illustrations | | Remains the same: Attempts to make course content more comprehensible by providing examples that are substantive and advance understanding. |
| Providing instructor perspectives | Added | New: Attempts to provide instructor's perspectives on course concepts or students' assignments. |
| Providing valuable analogies | | Remains the same: Attempts to rephrase/reformulate course material in ways that highlight similarities between content assumed to be understood and new content with the goal of making the material more comprehensible. |
| Reporting teaching activities | Added | New: Attempts to convey teaching activities through feedback or comments. |

| Indicators of Teaching Presence | Added/ Changed /Removed | Description (New, Modified, Remains the Same, or Removed) |
|---|---|---|
| Supplying clarifying information | | Modified: Attempts to reduce confusion or misconceptions about course content by providing additional explanation (including for assignment, and feedback after assessment–steps for improvement). |

# Results

Data from eight sources were analyzed for both Module 2 and Module 3. Table 3 presents a summary of the tally of units analyzed within each source, aiding in a comprehensive understanding of the study's scope.

**Table 3**

*Data Source and Its Unit of Analysis Occurrence (Unit of Analysis = One Sentence)*

| Data Source | Module 2 | Module 3 |
|---|---|---|
| Announcement | 26 | 23 |
| Module Overview | 20 | 17 |
| Instructional Video | 62 | 68 |
| Discussion Instructions | 25 | 23 |
| Discussion Instructor Replies | 343 | 208 |
| Discussion Feedback | 190 | 113 |
| Assignment Instructions | 27 | 25 |
| Assignment Feedback | 37 | 17 |

The instructor actively participated in the discussions of Module 2 and Module 3, replying to a total of 43 students across both module discussions. In Module 2, the instructor's responses averaged 7.97 sentences per student. In Module 3, the responses averaged 4.84 sentences per student. The instructor's feedback for Module 2 discussion averaged 4.42 sentences for each student. In Module 3 discussion feedback, the instructor's feedback averaged 2.63 sentences for each student.

Regarding assignment feedback, this responsibility centered on the academic coach. In Module 2, out of 40 students who submitted their assignments, only 20 received feedback. The

feedback averaged 1.85 sentences per student. In Module 3, where 42 students submitted assignments, only 10 students received feedback. This feedback averaged just 1.7 sentences per student.

*Research Question (RQ) 1: What are the teaching presence patterns in an accelerated online BBA course?*

Descriptive statistical analysis was used to examine the distribution of the three categories, Instructional Design and Organization, Facilitating Learning, and Direct Instruction, to better comprehend teaching presence in Module 2 and Module 3.

The analysis from Table 4 revealed that Direct Instruction was the predominant category in both modules, accounting for 45.02% of the teaching presence with 551 occurrences. Facilitating Learning followed closely, constituting 37.17% of the teaching presence with 455 occurrences. Lastly, Instructional Design and Organization was represented to a lesser extent, making up 17.81% of the teaching presence with 218 occurrences.

**Table 4**

*Teaching Presence Patterns (Three Categories: Instructional Design and Organization, Facilitating Learning, and Direct Instruction)*

| Teaching Presence | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Total | 1224 | 100.00% |
| Instructional Design and Organization | 218 | 17.81% |
| Facilitating Learning | 455 | 37.17% |
| Direct Instruction | 551 | 45.02% |

*Research Question (RQ) 1a: To what extent is teaching presence manifested in the instructional design and organization in an accelerated online BBA course?*

The analysis delved into the distribution patterns of Instructional Design and Organization indicators across various data sources, as visually detailed in Table 5. This table displays the proportional percentages of each indicator within the category. Explaining Learning Activities dominated with a 71.1% share, equating to the highest frequency of 155 occurrences. Setting Curriculum was next, making up 19.3% of the category with 42 occurrences. Meanwhile, Making Macrolevel Elements and Establishing Time Parameters were less prevalent, comprising 5.0% and 4.6%, with 11 and 10 occurrences respectively. It is noteworthy that Establishing Etiquette did not feature in the data analyzed.

**Table 5**

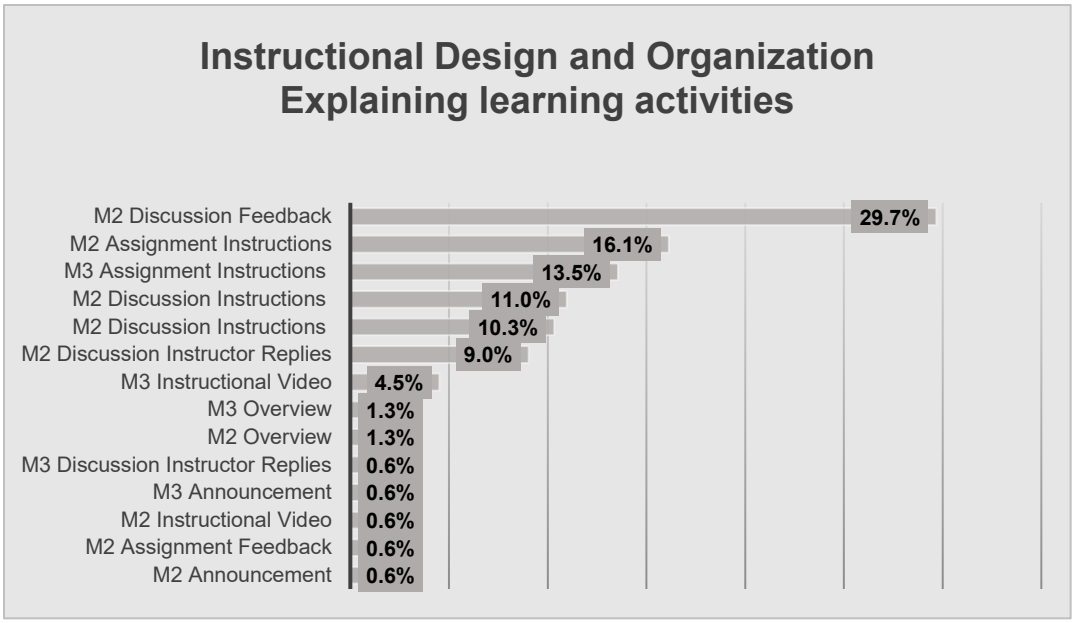
*Instructional Design and Organization Indicator's Percentage*

| Instructional Design and Organization | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Total | 218 | 100.0% |
| Explaining learning activities | 155 | 71.1% |
| Setting curriculum | 42 | 19.3% |
| Making macrolevel elements | 11 | 5.0% |
| Establishing time parameters | 10 | 4.6% |
| Establishing etiquette | 0 | 0.0% |

Further analysis revealed the overall application levels of the Explaining Learning Activities indicator in the course elements of Modules 2 and 3. Among the observed total instances of the Explaining Learning Activities indicator, 29.7% of the instances were found in the Module 2 Discussion Feedback, making it the predominant course element demonstrating this indicator. This was followed by Module 2 Assignment Instructions, which comprised 16.1% of the observed instances. Figure 1 provides statistical insights into the usage of the Explaining Learning Activities indicator across various data sources in Modules 2 and 3, presenting the data in a proportional perspective through percentages.

**Figure 1**

*Explaining Learning Activities Percentage by Each Data Source*

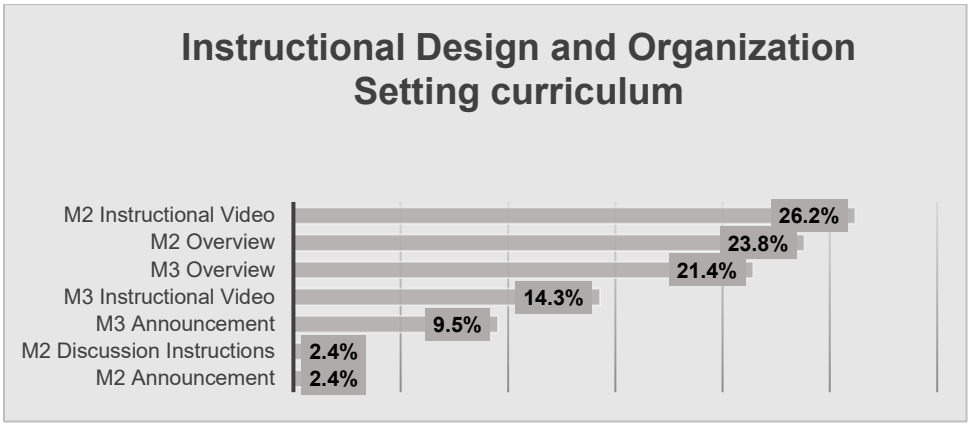



In analyzing the Setting Curriculum indicator among the course elements in Modules 2 and 3, it was discovered that Setting Curriculum was mostly demonstrated in the instructional videos and module overviews. The Module 2 Instructional Video was the primary course

element employing this indicator, with a prevalence of 26.2%. Additionally, the Module 2 Overview also frequently incorporated the Setting Curriculum indicator, accounting for 23.8%. Figure 2 provides a distribution analysis of how the Setting Curriculum indicator is applied across various data sources in Modules 2 and 3.

**Figure 2**

*Setting Curriculum Percentage by Each Data Source*




*Research Question (RQ) 1b: To what extent is teaching presence manifested in the facilitation in an accelerated online BBA course?*

The analysis looked into the percentage of each indicator within the Facilitating Learning category and in each data source to provide an understanding of the patterns of the category. The most prominent indicator, Encouraging, Acknowledging, or Reinforcing Student Contributions, constituted a noticeable 38.2% of the distribution with 174 occurrences. Providing Instructional Reminder ranked second at 24.4% with 111 occurrences. Setting Climate emerged at 13.6% with 62 occurrences and Assess the Efficacy of Learning Performance contributed at 9.0% with 41 occurrences. Drawing in Participants and Promoting Discussion, and Providing Instructional Greeting were found at 6.8% and 6.6%, with 31 and 30 occurrences, respectively. The least represented indicator, Identifying Areas of Agreement or Disagreement, comprised a minimal 1.3% of the total distribution with six occurrences. Table 6 delineates the percentage distribution for each indicator within the facilitating learning category.

**Table 6**

*Facilitating Learning Indicator's Percentage*

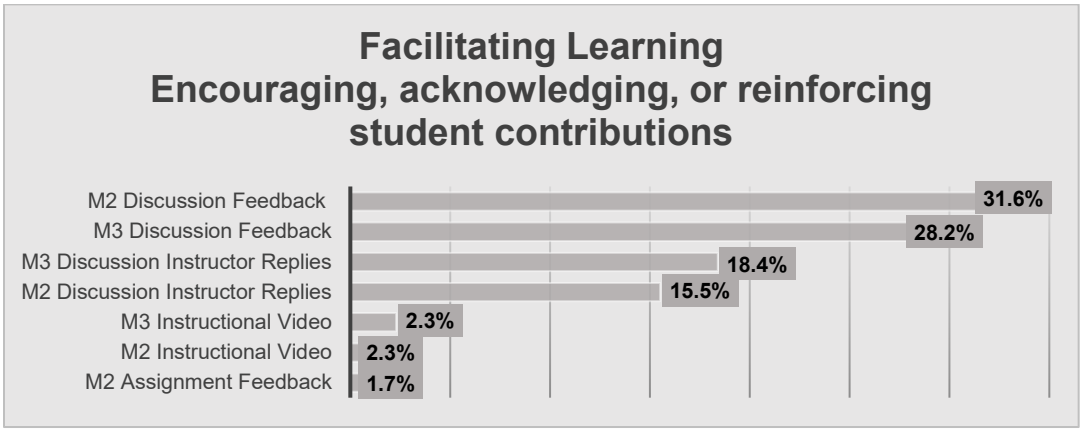
| Facilitating Learning | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Total | 455 | 100.0% |
| Encouraging, acknowledging, or reinforcing student contributions | 174 | 38.2% |
| Provide instructional reminder | 111 | 24.4% |
| Setting climate for learning | 62 | 13.6% |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Assess the efficacy of learning performance | 41 | 9.0% |
| Drawing in participants and promoting discussion | 31 | 6.8% |
| Providing instructional greeting | 30 | 6.6% |
| Identifying areas of agreement or disagreement | 6 | 1.3% |

Further analysis examined the overall application levels of the Encouraging, Acknowledging, or Reinforcing Student Contributions indicator within Module 2 and Module 3 course elements. Among the observed total instances of this indicator, 31.6 % of the instances were found in the Module 2 Discussion Feedback, making it the predominant course element demonstrating this indicator, closely followed by Module 3 Discussion Feedback at 28.2%. Figure 3 depicts the distribution of the indicator across various data sources.

**Figure 3**

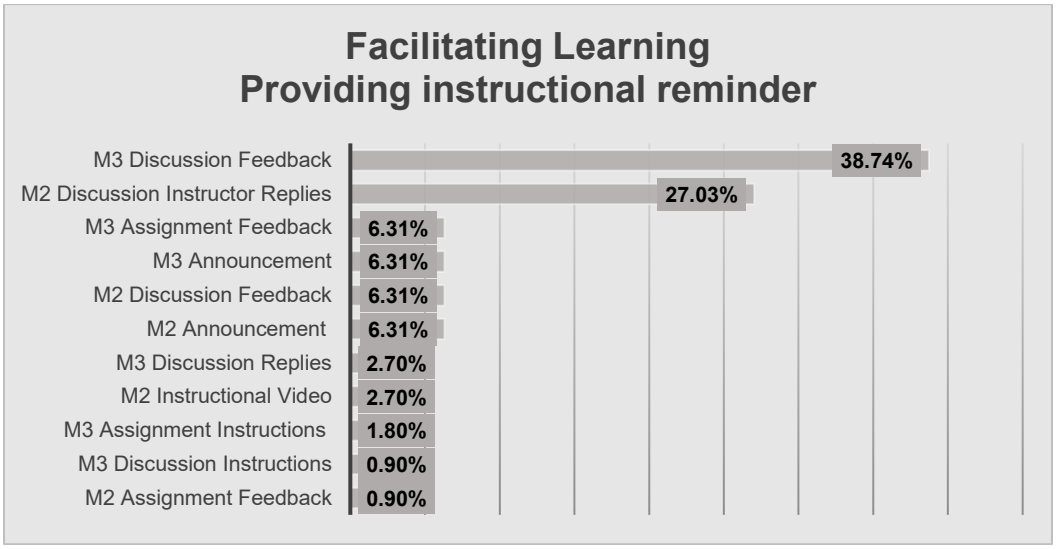
*Encouraging, Acknowledging, or Reinforcing Student Contributions Percentage by Each Data Source*




An examination of the Providing Instructional Reminder indicator across Modules 2 and 3 revealed a utilization pattern within the observed course elements. Specifically, the Module 3 Discussion Feedback emerged as the leading context for applying this indicator, accounting for 38.74% of its usage. This was followed by Module 2 Discussion Instructor Replies, which held the second-highest application rate at 27.03%. Figure 4 represents the distribution of the Providing Instructional Reminder indicator across various data sources within Modules 2 and 3.

**Figure 4**

*Providing Instructional Reminder Percentage by Each Data Source*




*Research Question (RQ) 1c: To what extent is teaching presence manifested in the direct instruction in an accelerated online BBA course?*

Analyzing the Direct Instruction category, the leading indicator, Providing Instructor Perspectives, dominated this category with a substantial 47.9% contribution at 264 occurrences, followed by Supplying Clarifying Information, which accounted for 22.0% with 121 occurrences. Notably, Making Explicit Reference to Outside Materials ranked third, constituting 16.9% of the distribution with 93 occurrences. In the lower spectrum, Offering Useful Illustrations, Elaborating Relevant Concepts, and Reporting Teaching Activities were represented with respective percentages of 7.6%, 2.9%, and 2.7%, with 42, 16, and 15 occurrences. Conducting Informative Demonstrations and Providing Valuable Analogies were absent in the observed data sources. Table 7 showcases the percentage distribution of each indicator in the category of direct instruction.

**Table 7**

*Direct Instruction Indicators' Percentage*

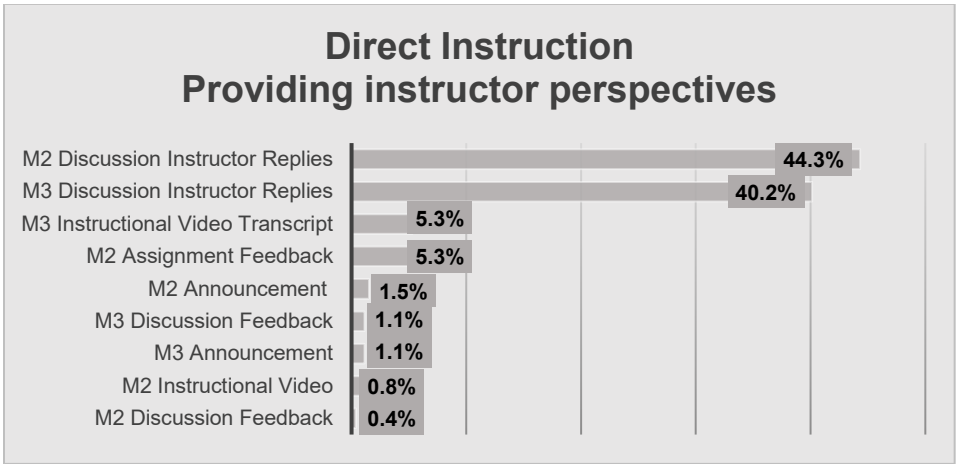
| Direct Instruction | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Total | 551 | 100.0% |
| Providing instructor perspectives | 264 | 47.9% |
| Supplying clarifying information | 121 | 22.0% |
| Making explicit reference to outside materials | 93 | 16.9% |
| Offering useful illustrations | 42 | 7.6% |
| Elaborating relevant concepts | 16 | 2.9% |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Reporting teaching activities | 15 | 2.7% |
| Conducting informative demonstrations | 0 | 0.0% |
| Providing valuable analogies | 0 | 0.0% |

The examination of the Providing Instructor Perspectives indicator in Module 2 and Module 3 course elements uncovered that it was mostly demonstrated in the Module Discussion Instructor Replies. The most instances were found in Module 2 Discussion Instructor Replies, which accounted for 44.3% of its usage. This was closely followed by Module 3 Discussion Instructor Replies at 40.2%. Figure 5 illustrates the Providing Instructor Perspectives percentage of occurrences through various data sources in Modules 2 and 3.

**Figure 5**

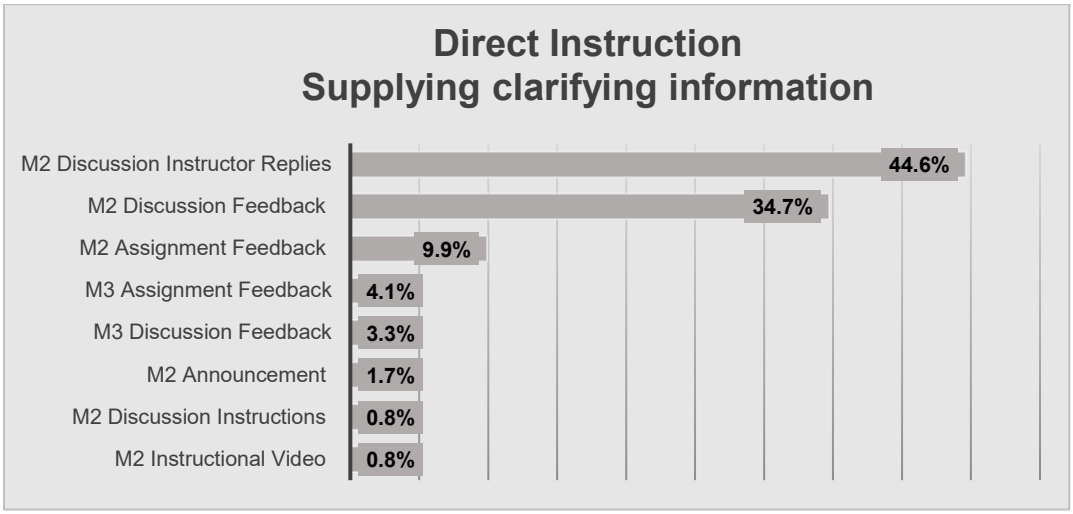
*Providing Instructional Perspectives Percentage by Each Data Source*




An examination of the Supplying Clarifying Information indicator revealed a noticeable pattern in its application across the observed course elements within Modules 2 and 3. The primary context for its utilization was found to be the Module 2 Discussion Instructor Replies, constituting 44.6% of the indicator's application. Following this, Module 2 Discussion Feedback accounted for 34.7% of its usage. Figure 6 displays the distribution of the Supplying Clarifying Information indicator across various data sources in Modules 2 and 3.

**Figure 6**

*Supplying Clarifying Information Percentage by Each Data Source*




# Discussion

### *Revised Coding Scheme to Capture Teaching Presence in Various Data Sources*

This study explored teaching presence in an online accelerated BBA course, focusing on three categories: instructional design and organization, facilitating discourse, and direct instruction (Anderson et al., 2001). Prior studies on teaching presence using content analysis have primarily focused on asynchronous discussions (Anderson et al., 2001; Nami et al., 2018; Prasad, 2009; Rodriguez, 2014; Rourke & Anderson, 2002). In contrast, this study explored multiple data sources that capture teaching presence beyond discussion board activities (Fiock et al., 2021; Shea et al., 2010), offering a more comprehensive view of how teaching presence can be demonstrated through various course elements, including module overview pages, course announcements, instructional videos, discussion instruction, replies, feedback, and assignment instruction and feedback. This broader perspective is valuable for instructors and instructional designers, as it highlights that teaching presence is not confined to just one aspect of the course but is distributed across multiple forms of communication and interaction.

Previous research has indicated that the applicability of the teaching presence coding scheme may differ across various academic disciplines (Arbaugh, 2010; Annand, 2019, as cited in Baker et al., 2022). This study employed a revised teaching presence coding scheme developed through an iterative process involving coding training, independent coding, and discussions to resolve discrepancies. After data analysis, one teaching presence category was redefined, six new indicators were introduced, and two existing ones were modified. The revised coding scheme was intended to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of teaching presence as represented in today's online courses' course materials and instructional activities, encompassing both text-based communication and video content.

### *The Identified Teaching Presence Patterns in an Accelerated Online BBA Course*

The content analysis of the two modules in the accelerated online BBA course revealed that Direct Instruction was the predominant category of teaching presence, with Facilitating Learning and Instructional Design and Organization following closely. This finding is consistent with Anderson et al.'s (2001) research, where Direct Instruction was identified as the primary category, succeeded by Facilitating Discourse and Instructional Design and Organization. However, this pattern differs significantly from the results of Wang and Liu's (2019) study, which highlighted Instructional Design and Organization as the leading category, followed by Facilitating Discourse and Direct Instruction. Such revelation indicated the role of using different data sources for the analysis, which could influence the patterns of teaching presence. For instance, in Anderson et al.'s (2001) study, computer conference transcripts were the data sources; Wang and Liu (2019) utilized transcripts of the course syllabus, discussion postings, learning reports, and final modules of the three courses as the data sources. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, research has shown that the relevance of the teaching presence coding scheme can vary across different academic fields (Arbaugh, 2010; Annand, 2019, as cited in Baker et al., 2022). Consequently, the observed patterns of teaching presence may differ in each analysis depending on the discipline and the teaching practice of the specific instructor.

### *Patterns in the Instructional Design and Organization Category*

Examining the patterns of teaching presence in the Instructional Design and Organization category, Explaining Learning Activities and Setting Curriculum were the most frequent indicators, primarily employed in Module 2 Discussion Feedback, Module 2 Assignment Instructions, Module 2 Instructional Video, and Module 2 Overview. These patterns highlight the vital role of instructors in crafting the course structure and content, underscoring the importance of developing course materials, designing course activities, producing video mini-lectures, and providing guidelines for effective online learning (Arbaugh & Hwang, 2006; Caskurlu et al., 2020; Turk et al., 2022). The Explaining Learning Activities indicator suggests the instructor provides clear instructions to students on how to participate in course learning activities, e.g., a clear explanation of how to complete course assessments successfully, rubrics, and instructor expectations (excluding time parameters and etiquette). The Setting Curriculum indicator signifies the instructor communicates important course objectives, e.g., documentation, goals, topics, and assignment/task titles. Both indicators underscore the necessity of clear communication in setting course goals and the clarity of assignments, which are instrumental for student success (Sheridan et al., 2013). This clarity is particularly crucial in this online accelerated course format, where most students are nontraditional and may not have prior online learning experiences. Clear guidelines serve as a scaffold, helping students orient themselves with course expectations and establish routines that contribute to their success in subsequent modules. Moreover, Modules 2 and 3 serve as the beginning stage of the course, making it essential to provide such clear communication and guidelines early on. Both indicators are vital to online teaching and learning, motivating students toward task completion, and cultivating students' learning (Johnson et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2021).

### *Patterns in the Facilitating Learning Category*

Examining the patterns of teaching presence within the category of Facilitating Learning, Encouraging, Acknowledging, or Reinforcing Student Contributions and Providing Instructional Reminders are ranked as the top indicators, mainly utilized in Module 2 and 3 Discussion Feedback and Module 2 Discussion Instructor Replies. These findings demonstrate the critical role of instructor feedback in teaching presence. Prior studies found that instructor feedback directly impacted student motivation, satisfaction, and engagement (Cole et al., 2017; Dolan et al., 2017; Khalid & Quick, 2016). Facilitating learning focused on individualized feedback between instructors and learners (Arbaugh & Hwang, 2006). Under the Encouraging, Acknowledging, or Reinforcing Student Contributions indicator, the instructor recognized student involvement, fostering engagement, motivation, and interest in the course material (Dughi et al., 2023). The Providing Instructional Reminder indicator shows the instructor's practices of reminding students about learning activities, seeking assistance, grading policies, and university rules. This strategy provides a roadmap for success in the course and refocuses student attention, positioning the instructor as a collaborative partner rather than a mere director of learning (Waston et al., 2016). Given that this is the first graded course in the online BBA program, catering to a majority of nontraditional students, the role of facilitating learning is imperative in this accelerated online environment. Instructor feedback is essential in motivating and engaging students (Morrison & Jacobsen, 2023) and providing the support they need to succeed in this fast-paced online learning environment.

### *Patterns in the Direct Instruction Category*

A deeper analysis of the Direct Instruction category revealed that the most widely utilized indicators are Providing Instructor Perspectives and Supplying Clarifying Information, primarily found in Module 2 and Module 3 Discussion Instructor Replies and Module 2 Discussion Feedback. Such findings highlight the role of direct instruction by "providing subject matter expertise to support students' learning" (Caskurlu et al., 2020, p. 3) when instructors interact with students through online discussions and feedback activities. Through providing instructor perspectives, the instructor showcases points of view on course concepts and students' assignments (Dughi et al., 2023). Supplying clarifying information improves understanding of the course content and provides feedback that reduces confusion and leads to clear comprehension (Arbaugh & Hwang, 2006). Direct instruction serves as a quintessential instructional component that offers detailed feedback to learners and clarifies or shares resources (Watson et al., 2016). In understanding the patterns of teaching presence within the category of direct instruction, the Module 2 and Module 3 Discussion Instructor Replies and Module 2 Discussion Feedback are notable contexts for this category, indicating the instructors utilized discussions to guide learning. The inclusion of instructor interaction in these discussion replies is instrumental in "promot[ing] deep learning and provid[ing] clarification" for student inquiries (Garrison, 2017; Hoey, 2017, p. 268). Such findings echo that instructors' active participation in discussions helps cultivate a positive online learning environment (Mandernach et al., 2006).

### *Instructional Feedback from the Instructor and Academic Coach*

Due to the large enrollment of this course, an academic coach assisted the course instructor in teaching this accelerated online course. One of the responsibilities of the academic coach was to provide assignment feedback. The findings of this study demonstrated a distinct contrast in the instructor's engagement with students in discussions compared to the academic coach's involvement in assignment feedback across both modules, revealing inconsistencies between the instructional practice of the instructor and the academic coach. The expectation may need to be clearly communicated to the academic coach, or training needs to be provided so that the practice is consistent with the instructor's instructional approach. However, not everyone does what this specific instructor does. As an experienced instructor, the amount of interaction the instructor provided in these two modules examined was exemplary. The academic coach may not perceive the need and immediacy to provide so many interactions as the instructor has already done . Previous studies have established the importance of "timely, relevant, and adequate feedback" (York & Richardson, 2012, p. 88), particularly in situations where immediate feedback is lacking in online courses, as this can lead to increased dissatisfaction among learners (Khalid & Quick, 2016). Therefore, consistent feedback is essential for effective online learning (Morrison & Jacobsen, 2023). Academic coaches need to receive instructional training to improve the practice of providing timely and individualized feedback.

Overall, exploring this online accelerated BBA course offers a unique lens for unveiling the patterns of teaching presence through the instructional approach of an experienced instructor with a proficient online teaching background. Upon examination, as the first non-pass/fail course in the online BBA program, the retention rate for this course is 90.9%, with 40 out of 44 students succeeding in moving on to the next course within the online BBA program; four students did not successfully complete the course. Although this study did not explore the relationship between teaching presence and student retention, the patterns of teaching presence in this study showcased the practices of an experienced instructor who provided an exemplary level of interaction. This study revealed that teaching presence can be demonstrated in various course materials and interactions, such as module overview pages, course announcements, instructional videos, discussion instructions, discussion instructor replies, discussion instructor feedback, assignment instructions, and assignment feedback. For instance, module overview pages and course announcements provide a clear roadmap and expectations for students in their learning process; instructional videos and instructions for discussions and assignments offer guidance and clarity on course content and engagement. Discussion instructor feedback and assignment feedback are instrumental in facilitating learning and providing personalized support and direction to students (Hosler & Arend, 2012). By analyzing these diverse data sources, the study revealed that teaching presence is not confined to asynchronous discussions but is manifested throughout various aspects of the online course.

## Conclusion

This study used content analysis to examine teaching presence in various materials and activities of an accelerated online BBA course. However, it did not analyze all course elements, so some aspects of teaching presence were not considered. The focus was on a single foundational course, which may not represent all courses in the program. Data were sourced

from the instructor and academic coach, potentially showing varied levels of teaching presence. Garrison et al. (1999) intentionally labeled it teaching rather than teacher presence because they believed any member of an online course (i.e., both the instructor and students) could provide teaching presence (Akyol et al., 2009; Watson et al., 2016). This study, however, only highlighted the teaching presence of the instructor and academic coach, excluding the perspectives of other members of the course.

Future research should include complete data from all course modules to gain a comprehensive understanding of how teaching presence is demonstrated across modules and how it impacts student learning and engagement in online courses. Future studies could also collect instructor and learner perspectives to complement the content analysis for a comprehensive understanding of the role of teaching presence.

Given the close link between teaching presence and key factors such as student learning outcomes, satisfaction, community development, learning interaction and engagement, and retention, it is imperative for instructors and instructional designers to recognize its importance. Teaching presence can be demonstrated through instructional design and organization, facilitating learning, and direct instruction. This study, through content analysis, uncovers patterns of teaching presence in various instructional materials, showcasing how an experienced online instructor demonstrated teaching presence across diverse course materials, especially in an accelerated course format serving mostly nontraditional students.

Although this study focused on an accelerated online BBA course, its findings have broader relevance for programs that utilize accelerated formats to meet the needs of today's diverse learners. As Mowreader (2024) notes, shortened and condensed courses are increasingly adopted in higher education to enhance flexibility, support timely degree completion, improve retention, and optimize institutional resources. Despite the growing prevalence of these accelerated online courses, few studies have examined their specific instructional dynamics. This research addresses that gap by identifying and analyzing how teaching presence is conveyed through course materials and activities in an intensive, asynchronous format. The findings offer practical insights that can inform course design and instructional strategies across disciplines and help online instructors enhance their presence and better support student learning in fast-paced learning environments.

Few studies have explored the unique dynamics of accelerated online BBA courses. Therefore, this research offers valuable insights for online instructors, enhancing their understanding of how to demonstrate teaching presence in online course materials and activities. This enhanced understanding equips educators to better support and facilitate teaching and learning in this context.

## Declarations

The authors declare no conflicts of interest related to the research, authorship, or publication of this study.

Ethical approval was obtained from the Boise State University Institutional Review Board (IRB), Protocol Number: IRB23-445. The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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