# The Sense of "Being There" in Higher Indonesian Distance Learning
## Students' Perspectives

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**ABSTRACT**

As distance learning has emerged as the imperative new mode of teaching and learning following the abrupt closure of schools and universities, the research on this area has significantly thrived. And in the case of Indonesia, numerous research on online learning has been documented since then. However, little attention has been paid to researching "teaching presence" (TP), one of the aspects of distance learning pedagogy that is empirically the main predictor of the success of online learning. Therefore, this research was aimed at investigating students' perspectives on their lecturers' TP brought into distance learning. The participants were 88 university students from four batches of English Language and Literature, and English Education study programs. The data were gathered through questionnaires and virtual interviews. The questionnaires were analyzed quantitatively using SPSS 25, conversely, the interviews were qualitatively analyzed with Nvivo 12 Plus. The study revealed that, to some degree, lectures were able to bring TP into distance learning. The research also confirmed that TP-relevant activities were highly appreciated as they contributed to students' better learning and sense of presence. Implications for teachers/lecturers and recommendations for future research are also presented.

*Keywords: Distance learning, Distance learning pedagogy, Sense of presence, Students' perspectives, Teaching presence.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Technology has made teaching and learning possible regardless of spatial and temporal boundaries. It saves time and energy and risks of traveling from home to school. In fact, distance instruction in Indonesia was not widely practiced until the pandemic forced educational institutions to shut down. This abrupt closure has sparked manifold problems that hinder the enactment of distance instruction like technological inequity, geographical complications, affordability, and digital literacy (Azzahra, 2020; Anugrahana, 2020; Asmuni, 2020; Rigianti, 2020; Sukiman, 2022).

Albeit multiple measures were taken to address its obstacles, the confusion remained as the quality of distance instruction was far ***lagging*** that of face-to-face. Distance instruction is not merely technology and digital literacy as they may not lead to the success of distance education when they fail to bring "being there", or socially present with one another in a virtual learning environment (VLE) (Lehman, 2010). Research had, so far, centered around the use of technology and digital literacy, with only a little attention paid to online learning pedagogy. This fact was the trigger to conduct research on TP with the aim was to disclose students' perspectives on their lecturers' TP in their distance teaching and learning.

The obviously basic difference between learning in a traditional and virtual classroom is the separation of the instructor from the students and the students from each other. This separation often results in lack of retention and the feeling of isolation, particularly among students. This feeling is the main source of students' dissatisfaction in VLE (Lane, Richard & Richard, 2019).

Technology has been the panacea during school closure, yet from an educational perspective, teaching and learning require more than space and time. In distance learning, both students and teachers necessitate to be "present" psychologically, emotionally, and behaviorally when they interact with one another in a VLE (Rocca, 2020). This sense of "being there" (Lehman, 2010) or "present" with one another in a virtual world often

happens informally and spontaneously as part of our everyday lives. However, in formal educational settings, we need a different way of thinking, feeling, and behaving from both organizational and instructional viewpoints to achieve this sense of "being there". From a pedagogical perspective, it includes planning, intent, and design to ensure effective learning results and to comply with quality standards.

Another reason for the research on TP is that distance instruction has gained rise to be one of the "future" modes in education. The integration of information technology into education will continue to accelerate, and online education will eventually become an important part of education. A survey by (Superville, 2020) reveals that online learning will remain a strong foothold even after the pandemic. Furthermore, Gemma (2020) mentions flexibility, accessibility, wide selection of programs, customizability, and cost-effectiveness as five reasons why distance learning is the future of education. Research showed that e-learning will potentially become the future of instruction in Indonesian tertiary education (Rukmini & Inderawati, 2020).

Finally, TP should be mastered by educators for several reasons. First, it is a strong predictor of several variables believed to influence student learning. It has a consistently significant positive correlation with students' perception, motivation, and satisfaction (Akyol & Garrison, 2019) and has been found to be positively correlated with students' feelings of belonging to the learning community and may contribute to a significant difference in student retention (Miller & Ives, 2020). Then Arbaugh (2019) revealed that TP is more predictive of student success in online learning than peer interaction. And finally, Garrison and Cleveland-Innes (2005) confirmed that a strong TP, as demonstrated by a robust course structure and instructor leadership, is crucial to the achievement of deep and meaningful learning outcomes.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

TP, defined as the design, facilitation, and direction of intellectual and social processes for the purpose of realizing personally meaningful and educationally valuable learning outcomes, is a notion originated from Community of Inquiry (COI) framework developed by (Anderson, Rourke, Garrison & Archer, 2019). Based on the framework, TP plays a significant role in distance learning because the concept connects students and instructors who are physically distant. It is the heart of learning and has constantly been found as main factor in students' learning accomplishment and contentment (Witt, Wheeless & Allen 2004). It is a virtual "visibility" of teachers in a VLE (Baker, 2010) representing 'methods' that instructors use to create the quality distance learning experiences that foster and sustain productive COI" (Chen, Sun & Wang, 2022).

Current pedagogical development has involved technology and media in teaching and learning. Educational technology has eased teachers to facilitate learning by storing learning materials, providing links, and setting assessments beforehand. Students can learn independently, and videotaped lectures can transfer knowledge effectively, however, it may not work well in distance learning as it potentially leads to students' isolation and low retention. Distance learning also includes facets of teacher presence in their studies.

Previous research in remote learning revealed that TP had significant roles (Annamalai, 2017; Garrison, 2019; Hung & Chou, 2015; Rourke & Anderson, 2002; Vaughan & Garrison, 2019; Wicks, Craft, Mason, Gritter & Bolding, 2015), therefore, teachers must work to find strategies to create TP through approaches that address distant learning' concerns. Then, what are the notions or principles of creating TP and what strategies can teachers employ?

A sense of presence means to be present through the learning experience with online teachers. It looks like the trainer has put the students at the center of the course development and has designed the course for these students. It also looks and feels that the teacher is opened up to the students and that the learners are open to each other, and also that the technology in the learning process is clear. Through feedback and shaping the online environment, a learner is also involved in the design process.

Establishing TP depends on the teachers' preparedness to engage the students in the learning process (Beltran, Decker, Matzaganian, Walker, & Elzarka, 2020). It takes place in the whole learning process: before the course begins, the teacher as an instructional planner design and prepares the course, and throughout the course encourages discussion and offers direct guidance as required (Anderson et al., 2019). Teachers can create an online TP by developing an online course, promoting online dialogue, and offering direct instruction to their students.

The design or organization (DO) of online materials is the first place where students get a sense of TP. Many of the same course design features apply to online education as they do to face-to-face teaching. According to Masur (2021) a teacher must decide on three key considerations: learning objectives, feedback and assessment, and teaching and learning activities. As a designer and administrator of learning experience, a teacher must design and organize learning course (Arbaugh, 2019). He/she must decide course objectives, schedule, and curricular materials. By doing so, a teacher can provide clear learning objectives and confirm strong link from learning activities to assessments that enable students to navigate a course and construct meaning from instructional content.

The teacher also has the role of facilitating discourse (FD) among students. During the course, a teacher not only facilitates students' interactions with learning materials, with other students, and with the teacher but also provides instructions and feedback on time, as well as observers online social activities (Garrison, 2019). Active participation in collaborative dialogues with classmates and teachers through personalized, challenging, and expanded topics improved learning outcomes. Thus, a teacher has a key role in enhancing fruitful discourse by focusing on class discussion, raising relevant questions, findings consensus, and moderating participation (Shea, Li, Swan, & Pickett 2019).

The last teacher's responsibility of bringing presence is that the teacher provides effective and frequent use of direct instruction (DI). The teacher takes part in DI when providing scholarly leadership, through comprehensible content presentation and the injection of external resources/viewpoints, and conducting evaluative activities, such as providing feedback or evaluating student understanding.

Teaching presence can be performed in various modes like written, audio, and video communications, as well as asynchronous meetings or chats. Text communication with the instructor and fellow classmates provides a benefit by allowing time for reflection (Garrison, 2019). The use of audio feedback could result in students' perceptions of instructor caring and involvement, as well as providing tone and inflection to express nuance.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

The study explored students' perceptions of their lecturers teaching exclusively online during the pandemic focusing on the construct of TP. Mixed-method study design was employed to allow an in-depth study of TP from students' perspectives using two data sources, questionnaires and interviews. The focus was on the lecturer's design or organization of the course, facilitating discourse, and direct instructions in the context of distance learning advocated by (Anderson et al., 2019). Quantitative approaches offered descriptive data to aid in the qualitative investigation of students' perceptions and experiences. This method, defined by (Morse, 2009) as simultaneous QUAL + quant, consists of a qualitative core component and a supplementary quantitative component. Incorporating both quantitative and qualitative elements through the (Morse, 2009) distribution of questionnaires that include a set close and open-ended questions would provide further context and meaning to augment the views of the participants regarding TP.

At the end of the semester, the students were anonymously surveyed using Google form with questionnaires consisting of 32 items (see table 1). The scale was 5-point Likert scale: 1- never, 2- rarely, 3- sometimes 4-often, 5- always. The questions were divided

**Table 1.** Teaching Presence (TP) instrument

| No | Statements |
|----|------------|
| 1 | provide clear learning goals |
| 2 | Share course overview and welcome message |
| 3 | Hold an initial face-to-face or synchronous meeting to introduce the lecturer and course. |
| 4 | ensure instructions for completing course activities and using required technology are clear. |
| 5 | set expectations for student participation and activity in the course. |
| 6 | communicate assignment deadlines and give frequent reminders as deadlines approach. |
| 7 | provide engaging, relevant, and appropriate active learning opportunities. |
| 8 | design assessments that are congruent with learning goals. |
| 9 | communicate expectations for lecturer participation (e.g., extent of lecturer involvement in class discussions and email response times) |
| 10 | Present content in conversational rather than academic style. |
| 11 | Begin course with trust building conversation (e.g., introductions and icebreakers) |
| 12 | provide clear discussion participation requirements (length, content, expectations, netiquette, and timeless) |
| 13 | foster fruitful discussions through engaging/open-ended questions. |
| 14 | challenge and test students' ideas (ask for justification/rationale) |
| 15 | monitor discussion to ensure productive dialogue and shape direction as necessary. |
| 16 | model appropriate contributions. |
| 17 | focus on student creating meaning and confirming understanding. |
| 18 | encourage "thinking out loud" and openness for all ideas. |
| 19 | identify areas of agreement/disagreement. |
| 20 | reinforce and encourage participation (draw in fewer active participants and tempers more active posters). |
| 21 | find consensus/agreement/summarize class discussions. |
| 22 | share personal meaning/experiences. |
| 23 | offer specific ideas /share expert and scholarly knowledge. |
| 24 | help students correct misconceptions/diagnose understanding. |
| 25 | suggest new resources/content; inject knowledge from outside resources. |
| 26 | connect ideas (analogies/ related topics) and make abstract concepts concrete. |
| 27 | provide personal anecdotes and commentary on lecturers' own effort to master materials. |
| 28 | provide frequent feedback and evaluative guidance. |
| 29 | present content in effective and focused manner. |
| 30 | raise questions that lead to reflection and cognitive dissonance. |
| 31 | scaffold student understanding as necessary. |
| 32 | annotate/comment on assigned scholarly work to personalize and add interest. |

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into three dimensions of TP: items numbers 1 to 10 design or organization, 11 to 22 facilitating discourse, and 23 to 32 direct instructions. 32 items of the questionnaire are valid with product moment r table 0.207 and significance .05. The questionnaire also has very high consistency or reliability at Cronbach's Alpha (α) 0.948. The questionnaires were then followed with virtual interviews to confirm and enrich the survey data regarding design, facilitating discourse, and direct instruction observed from their lectures. The survey data were then analyzed quantitatively with SPSS 25, while interview data were transcribed, coded, and categorized for analysis using NVivo 12 Plus.

The population of the study was four batches of undergraduate students from two study programs, English Language and Literature and English Education Study Programs of a state education university in Bandung, Indonesia. They took various courses using online learning platforms, mainly Google Classroom, Edmodo, and SPOT (the university's online learning platform). The students were engaged in both synchronous and asynchronous sessions during the semester. Synchronous sessions were more frequently conducted than that of asynchronous probably because the campus facilitate its lectures with free video conference tool, Zoom. In fact, Google Meet was also embedded into Google Classroom and SPOT. 152 students were randomly invited to participate in the survey by sharing the Google Form link in students' WhatsApp group. 88 students responded the survey: 14 batch 2017 (senior), 24 batch 2018 (junior), 21 batch 2019 (sophomore), and 29 batch 2020 (freshman).

There are 26 male (29.5%) and 62 female participants (70.5%) or more females than males in the sample and this proportion is typical in language-based study programs that usually have ratios of 30:70 in terms of gender distribution. This means that the sample is almost equal to the gender distribution of population. Discipline wise, the larger participants come from English Education Study Program (53) than that of English and Literature Study Program (35) or the ratio 60:40.

Eight participants for interviews were randomly selected out of 88 responding to the survey, 1 from each batch of each study program. They were informed of the research being conducted and asked to provide consent to be interviewed with confidentiality. The interviews were at the participants' convenience conducted virtually using Zoom-mediated video conference and lasted approximately 40 to 60 minutes each. Each participant had

a semi-structured interview guided with questions resembling those used in the questionnaires.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the questionnaire data (table 2) shows that students perceive that lecturers have high TP with mean score (X̄) 3.76 and standard deviation 0.85. The standard deviation 0.85 reveals that variation in students' perception is slim. The students' perceptions regarding the lectures' teaching presence are examined in three dimensions, namely DO, FD, and DI. Each dimension of TP is perceived high, with mean score 3.88 for DO, 3.71 for FD, and 3.76 for DI. The highest score of design is simply slightly higher than the second and third place. It means that the students perceive their lecturers to have practically the same performances in the three areas of TP. This finding is confirmed by the standard deviation of each dimension which is almost similar, ranging from 0.81 to 0.88.

### 4.1. Design or Organization

Figure 1 shows that there are 10 items used to examine teachers' first dimension of TP, design, or organization. This dimension of presence focuses on the lecturers' way of designing or organizing their online class during the pandemic that includes clarity of learning goals, welcome message, initial session, clarity of instruction and technology, expectation for student participation, communication regarding assignment, lecturer and student engagement, assessment, expectation of lecturers' participations, and content presentation.

Even though this dimension is perceived highly, the perception of each element ranges from high to very high. Three elements, items numbers 2, 3, and 5, are perceived very highly, however, the mean scores are slightly higher than the limit of "high" rate, one of which is exactly on the boundary. These findings show that the lectures provide a course overview and welcome the students at the beginning of the semester. In fact, this element gets the highest score out of 32 elements examined. Another element that has a very high score in design is element



**Figure 1** Students' rating scores on their perceptions of their lecturers' DO.

**Table 2.** Summary of students' mean rating scores on their perceptions of lecturers' teaching presence and Reliability

| Dimensions of TP | Mean (X̄) | Std. Dev(σ) | Reliability |
|---|---|---|---|
| Design or Organization | 3.88 | 0.81 | 0.84 |
| Facilitating Discourse | 3.71 | 0.88 | 0.88 |
| Direct Instruction | 3.76 | 0.85 | 0.87 |

**Figure 2** Students' rating scores on their perceptions of their lecturers' FD.



**Figure 3** Students' rating scores on their perceptions of their lecturers' DI.

number 3 regarding the initial session. The score 4.19 is slightly above "high" rate. However, this means that more than 80% of the lectures have initial face-to-face synchronous session at the beginning of the semester. And finally, element number 5 is also rated very high with the score 4.10 or exactly on the lowest level of very high rate meaning that around 80% of the lectures set expectations for student participation and activity in the course.

Seven elements of DO are rated high with various rates ranging from 3.49 to 4.1. The highest score of rated "high" is provision of learning goals (4.0) that means many lectures tell students clear learning goals at the beginning of the semester, but 20% don't.

The other elements rated "high" and performed by around 75% of the lectures are items 4, 7, and 8. These findings refer to the lecturers that ensure instructions for completing course activities and using required technology are clear; provide engaging, relevant, and appropriate active learning opportunities; and design assessments that are congruent with learning goals. Items 6, 9, and 10 are rated "high" by the students, but just slightly above the average (3.41). However, these data mean that communicating assignment deadlines and give frequent reminders as deadlines approach; communicating expectations for lecturer participation; and present content in conversational rather than academic style are perceived high.

### 4.2. Facilitating Discourse

Elements of TP focusing on the dimension of FD are examined in items 11 to 22. The mean scores of the items range from 3.55 to 3.91 which means that the students have high perceptions toward FD. Interestingly however, compared to the elements of design, there are no elements of FD perceived "very high". This means that the lecturers have enough room for improvement around FD to enhance a sense of presence (see Figure 2).

The elements of the FD that are slightly above the average are items no 11 and 12 (3.55 and 3.57) regarding trust building conversation and clear requirements for discussion participation during introductory session. Trust building conversation can be achieved, for instance,

through introduction and icebreaking activities. On the other hand, clear requirements for participation in discussions refers to the length, content, expectation, netiquette, and time.

A little higher mean score than items 11 and 12 are items 20 (3.60), 15 (3.63), 19 (3.65), 22 (3.68). This finding indicates that there are quite wide gap for lectures to improve their TP in the dimension in regard to reinforcing and encouraging participation to actively participate during the class session by, for instance, drawing in less active participants and tempers more active posters (item 20); monitoring discussion to ensure productive dialogue and shape direction as necessary(item 15); identifying areas of agreement/disagreement (item 19); and sharing personal meaning/experiences (item 22). One of the most desired improvements related to FD is lecturers' timely response to questions to facilitate fruitful sharing or discussion. Martin, Wang and Sadaf (2020) mentioned that instructor's timely response to questions is the most helpful for instructor presence, engagement, and learning.

Items 14 about challenging and testing students' ideas, for example, by asking for justification/rationale; 16, modeling appropriate contributions.; 17, focusing on students creating meaning and confirming understanding; 18 encouraging "thinking out loud" and openness for all ideas.; and 21 finding consensus/agreement/summarize class discussions have mean scores around the middle of "high" rate (3.41-4.10). This finding indicates that the lecturers need to work on that areas examined above to bring better sense of presence in the dimension of FD.

### 4.3. Direct Instruction

Figure 3 represents elements of dimension of DI examined in items 23-32. Like the second dimension, all items of this dimension are rated "high" with the mean scores are distributed above the limit of "moderately high" to around the middle of the continuum of "moderately high" to "very high". Items 26, 27, 28, 31, and 32 are perceived "high", just slightly higher above the margin of moderately high while the rest of 5 items are distributed

around the middle of moderately high to "very high". This finding necessitates lectures to develop sense of presence in the dimension of DI. The elements to enhance this TP in this area are offer specific ideas /share expert and scholarly knowledge; help students correct misconceptions/diagnose understanding; suggest new resources/content; inject knowledge from outside resources; connect ideas (analogies/ related topics) and make abstract concepts concrete; provide personal anecdotes and commentary on lecturers' own effort to master materials; provide frequent feedback and evaluative guidance; present content in effective and focused manner; raise questions that lead to reflection and cognitive dissonance; scaffold student understanding as necessary; and annotate/comment on assigned scholarly work to personalize and add interest. Through class observation at the beginning or the course, the lecturer's role/involvement was clearly seen. He began the course by initiating community building activities through establishing relationships and making social connections. The lecturer also pushed his students to engage in critical analyses and higher-order thinking in the online environment. He helped his students express their thoughts and ideas for engaging and growing social presence.

Qualitative virtual interview data reveals that, to some degree, lecturers can bring TP into their distance instruction. They design online classes before the semester begins by building learning materials like integrating lecturers and reading in LMS, designing individual and group activities, establishing deadlines, and providing guide for technology use. They can facilitate discourse activities by maintaining learners' interest, motivation, and engagement through regular responses to students' learning activities and reinforcement of students' contributions. They are also able to perform intellectual and scholarly leadership in the content area and provide encouragement for students' and exploration. However, lecturers should be able to improve their performance to present a better TP to eliminate students' dissatisfaction in their distance learning.

In general, students perceive positively lecturers' capacity in designing or organizing their courses. They can provide clear learning goals (Arbaugh, 2019), share course overview, hold initial face-to-face synchronous session, provide guidance for completion of course activities and technology use, and set expectation for students' participations and activities in the courses. This finding confirms what was posited by Honebein and Honebein (2015) that effective designs provide evidence of learning outcome mastery, and appealing designs are liked by the learners. Lecturers also communicate with students in regard with assignment, provide supportive active learning, design assessment, and present contents in students' preferred styles. To fittingly adapt with distance learning, nonetheless, lecturers should develop each aspect of the design.

At the beginning of the semester most lecturers are ready with course outline. They have prepared for it before the semester begins and acknowledged to the students at initial session of the semester. Through the outline, students have clear picture of what knowledge and skills are expected to be acquired upon the completion of the semester. Students also get information of the assignments to do, examinations to take, course policy to conform, resources to explore, and learning platform (LMS) to use. Nevertheless, TP necessitates that not only to design but also deliver the outline to the students prior to initial session. The interviews reveal that nearly all lecturers deliver the syllabus at the first session when the course begins. Lecturers can post the syllabus on the institution website to make it "visible" to the students anytime they need it.

Besides the course outline, prior to the first session, lecturers should also deliver course overview and provide welcome message. They can convey course overview and welcome message through video, audio, or written texts posted on learning platforms or websites. However, only one lecturer out of many who meet the students provides this course overview and welcome message prior to the commencement of the semester. The rest of them talk about course overview and welcome the students at the first session.

The study also reveals that almost all lecturers hold initial face-to-face synchronous meeting in which they introduce themselves and the courses. At the same time, they also provide guidelines how to complete students' activities like quizzes, assignments, and examination and to what platform they must submit them. The guidelines are contained in RPS, but this meeting usually confirms what the students can see in RPS. This meeting is also used to motivate students to actively participate in the course.

All lecturers communicate assignment deadlines and provide reminders through learning Platforms used like Google Classroom, Edmodo, Schoology, or SPOT (integrated online learning system belonging to the university). Some lecturers preferred WhatsApp group instead educational platforms for the reason of practicality. The study discloses that most lecturers do not provide frequent reminder as required to bring teaching presence, except once now when the assignments are delivered. Reminders can be scheduled on the platforms to be delivered frequently when the assignments are launched.

TP requires lecturers to provide engaging, relevant, and appropriate active learning opportunities. The study discovers that lecturers engage with the students during the course and give opportunities to students to be active though discussion and questioning. Lecturers also draw fewer active students to be active by requesting them to activate the camera and asking them questions. At the previous semester when universities began with distant

learning, lecturers had difficulty engaging with the students probably because the closure was too abrupt, thus the teachers and the students were not ready. At the second semester (when the interviews were conducted), students perceive that lecturer-student engagement is much better. However, lecturers need to improve their creativity to try out innovative techniques to draw students' interest. As education is disrupted by pandemic, there are a lot of techniques exposed on various websites that worth trying.

Lecturers provide assessments that can be in the forms of assignments, quizzes, mid-semester, and final semester exams. The participants have very good perception toward the assessments. All lecturers design assessments which are congruent to the learning goals delivered through RPS. As the courses are fully online, all forms of assessments are also administered online.

To certain degree, lecturers can communicate for class participation, for example, by extending their involvement in discussions especially when the classes are synchronous. There are almost no lecturers' involvement in asynchronous discussion forum on learning platforms. Some lecturers, simply monitor the discussions but are not involved in them.

TP necessitates the lecturers to develop friendly and relaxing atmosphere by delivering content in less formal way using conversational style than academic style. The study discloses that at the beginning of pandemic lecturers had difficulty building this comfortable learning room. However, in the middle of the second semester, some lecturers can adjust the style to be a bit informal and use conversational style. Participants admit that they preferred conversational style as it can make them relaxed and comfortable. Besides the style can build closeness between lecturers and students. This situation can eliminate the feeling of isolation and discomfort.

Participants, by and large, positively perceive their lecturers' capacity in FD in their remote instruction. They, to some degree, can build trust, provide clear discussion participation requirements, foster fruitful discussions, challenge, and test students' ideas, monitor discussions, model appropriate contributions, focus on students creating meaning and confirm understanding, encourage "thinking out loud" and openness for all ideas, identify areas of agreement and disagreement, and reinforce and encourage participation. To optimally bring TP into online learning, lecturers should make improvements in the areas mentioned above.

The first session is crucial in distance learning since this session lecturers deliver course outline and course policy but also build trust and provide requirements for discussion participations. The study reveals that most lecturers begin their courses with trust building conversation and provide discussion participation requirements. They introduce themselves, get to know the students, and have fun. They have chit-chat and icebreaking activities to create sense of togetherness and comfort. They also discuss the requirements for discussion like length, content, and netiquette. However, some of them jump straight to the lesson.

The study reveals that, in many ways, as required in teaching presence, lecturers can monitor and support fruitful discussions through open-ended questions and challenge and test students' ideas with justification. They give instruction regarding the content and duration and shape direction to make sure that the discussion stays on track. Some lecturers have students discuss in small groups to give chances to all students to produce language and share ideas. Few lecturers even involve themselves in discussions by visiting breakout rooms and share their ideas. Lecturers ask questions that call for beyond merely yes or no answers but need further explanation. When a student answers a question then the lecturer will ask further question to exercise the answer and foster critical thinking. When a student puts forward an opinion, the lecturer usually asks for clarification and justification. Few lecturers, however, still must improve their performance to bring teaching presence in the aspects. The lecturers ask students to have discussion without ample supervision to ensure productivity and seldom put students in small groups to provide equal opportunities to all students to participate. Besides, students are not challenged for further explanation and justification once they answer questions or put forward opinions.

Some lecturers can build sense of togetherness and fruitful participation by giving examples of appropriate participation, encouraging "thinking out loud" and openness, and reinforcing and encouraging participation. They model appropriate contribution in a discussion, what is good, and what is bad. They cheer students with freedom and openness to ask questions and put forward opinions. They reinforce and encourage participation by drawing fewer active participants to be more active by asking them questions or calling their names one by one. They also have students activate their cameras. However, despite freedom and openness, only few students dare to ask questions and share or express ideas openly. The class turn quite leaving teacher too dominant and the class ends up quiet.

Lecturers focus on students creating meaning and confirming understanding. They work hard to make students understand the learned concepts. When the students do not fully understand or have hesitation about the concepts, lecturers usually re-explain them or confirm their understanding. After the class students are welcome to ask questions through WhatsApp chat. When it comes to difficult concepts that are hard to understand, some lecturers like to share personal meaning and experiences. Students feel that this strategy works and beneficial.

During discussion, to certain degree, participants perceived that their lecturers could identify areas of agreement and disagreement and find consensus or

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summary (Shea et al., 2019). However, they admit that they rarely have disagreements. Regardless of openness and freedom to put forward opinion and share ideas, they seem to avoid disagreements. Students do not have enough courage to be different with the classmates and lecturers. At the end of discussions some lecturers provide summary, and some others give away PPT slides.

In the dimension of Direct Instruction (DI), students perceive that, in general, lecturers can bring teaching presence into distant learning with varying levels in each element. The participants have very good perception toward their lecturers' capacity in offering specific ideas and expertise, suggesting resources, connecting ideas to clarify abstract concepts, providing personal anecdotes and commentary, presenting content, and raising questions. Meanwhile the perception of students about lecturers' correcting misconceptions, providing feedback, scaffolding understanding, and annotating assignments is not so good.

Students perceive that most lecturers like to offer specific ideas or share expertise and scholarly knowledge. They tell us what they know and discuss with students what is relevant or irrelevant. They have the expertise to explain the teaching materials comprehensively and efficiently. When students have problems most lecturers can clarify the problems well.

Lecturers like to connect ideas, provide personal anecdote and commentary, and suggest various resources to help students master learning materials and make abstract concepts concrete. They explain something in fun ways like making jokes and commentary. They use analogies to clarify abstract concepts; provides examples related to students' lives. When students still have difficulty or insufficient understanding of learned concepts, they suggest resources from internet like websites and YouTube.

Students perceive that most lecturers present content effectively and in focused manner and some lecturers raise questions that lead to reflection and cognitive dissonance. Most lecturers explain the lesson in a way that is easy to understand. When they play a video, for instance, they will pause at certain important parts and are followed with explanations of those parts. Students see that lecturers are not easily distracted. At the end of the sessions lecturers ask students what they have learned and how far they have mastered the lesson. They encourage students to reflect.

Students perceive that some lecturers like to correct misconceptions, diagnose, and scaffold understanding. Lecturers provide further explanation to clarify and straighten out misconceptions, however, students feels that it doesn't help as oftentimes the confusion lingers. Fortunately, some lecturers like to provide activities to scaffold and strengthen learning, for example, before the lesson they assign us to read this and that, and after the

lesson they also ask us to read something to improve understanding.

TP necessitates lecturers to give frequent customized feedback after every assignment and give annotations or comments on assigned scholarly work. Individualized feedback results in learners' better performance and satisfaction (Crisp & Bonk, 2018). The study discloses that some lecturers give feedback mostly once at the end of the semester. Rarely do they provide feedback after every assignment. The feedback is general, not customized, not suited to the problems and interests of each student. Students admit that they wish that they had feedback after each assignment, and the feedback is written right on the paper (annotation). This is in line with Conrad and Dabbagh (2018) that helpful feedback should be personalized, specific, and timely. They feel they can learn a lot from the feedback. At the beginning of pandemic, students admit did a lot of assignments but got very little feedback, probably lecturers were not ready at the first time they taught completely online.

## 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

To a certain degree, students perceive that their lecturers can bring TP into their distance learning with slightly varying levels in each dimension. Each dimension of TP is perceived high by students, however, there are several areas of each dimension that call for improvement. In the first place, all ten elements of the dimensions of design and organization are performed in accordance with TP however, the result of the design must be communicated to the students before the semester begins. Lecturers need to bridge social gap through lecturers' better involvement in discussions and the use of conversational rather than academic style. Secondly, regarding facilitating discourse, lecturers should provide frequent reminders regarding deadlines, and engagement with students through discussions and questioning. Besides, lecturers should build trust and openness, provide reinforcement and confirmation toward students' understanding. And finally, in the dimensions of direct instruction essential improvements were needed especially in the elements of offering specific ideas or sharing expertise and scholarly knowledge, suggesting new resources or content, connecting ideas, and making abstract concepts concrete. Frequent and timely feedback, annotation, and scaffolding were also the elements well-liked by students that necessitated enhancement to better bring TP.

The quality of distance learning will not be much different from face-to-face if the lecturers can present TP in their distance classes, therefore it is very important that they are equipped with knowledge related to this teaching presence. Trainings related to TP are also required in addition to digital literacy. Similarly, prospective teachers and lecturers must be prepared to be able to face the

challenges of distance instruction that will become a trend in future learning. Along with advances in technological innovation in education, it is necessary to further examine how and how much it contributes to presenting TP. Research is also important to uncover how to present TP in different subjects.

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