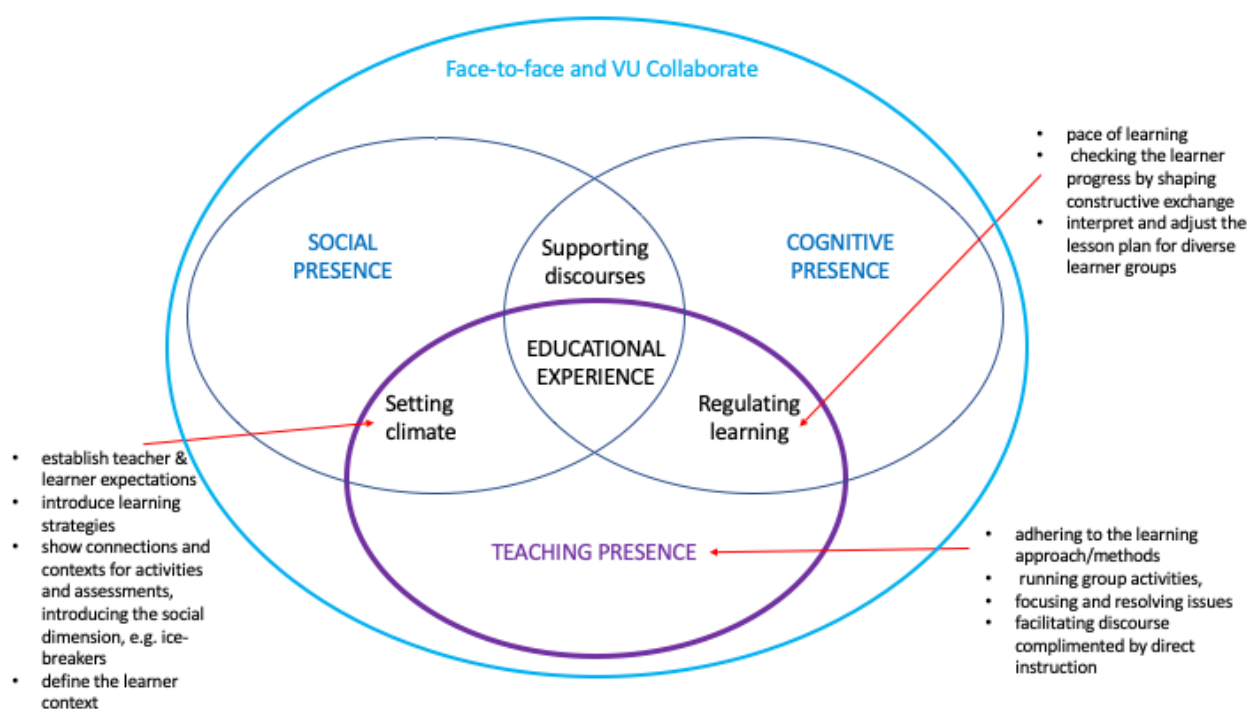


Teacher presence in the Block

The teacher's role in the Block is to facilitate learning in a student-centred, active and collaborative environment. The teacher implements the curriculum through prepared lesson plans and unit spaces, and focuses the learning through the learning activities and assessment tasks. Teacher presence extends across every learning environment, including in-class teaching, before class and after class activities and the VU Collaborate space. This includes:

- **Setting the climate**
establishing teacher and learner expectations, introducing learning strategies, showing connections and contexts for activities and assessments, and introducing the social dimension, e.g. ice-breakers
- **Maintaining teaching presence**
adhering to the learning approach/methods, running group activities, focusing on and resolving issues, facilitating discourse complimented by direct instruction and activities that engage the learner
- **Regulating learning**
maintaining the pace of learning, checking learner progress, interpreting and adjusting lesson plans for diverse learner groups



Adapted from Community of Inquiry framework, Vaughan, Cleveland-Innes, & Garrison (2013, p.14)

Establishing teacher presence in before class activities

Introduce teacher presence using the welcome video, teacher profiles, before class activities, and introductory news items. Other strategies include:

- Explicitly connect before class activities to assessment tasks
- Set expectations for completing before class activities and readings right from the start
- Set conditions for students to take responsibility for their own learning

- Acknowledge student contributions in discussions by consolidating posts
- Monitor and manage student participation with learning analytics

Implementing teacher presence in class

- Explicitly connect before class tasks as springboards for in-class tasks
- Appropriately scaffold students who have not completed before class activities while reinforcing expectations of completion of subsequent before class tasks
- Reinforce expectations for class participation expectations, e.g. open contribution and discussion of alternative perspectives; undertaking equal responsibility in group work;
- Engage students to learn and develop concepts, knowledge and skills
- Monitor learner progress during activities to gain insight into progress
- Acknowledge student participation, ask relevant questions and promote discussion to help students make meaning of the concepts to connect and build upon current knowledge and experience
- Encourage relevant peer interaction
- Facilitate opportunities to practise skills required in the discipline area, e.g. ethical judgement
- Encourage students to take responsibility for own learning
- Reiterate relevance of activities to assessments and later units, including professional context
- Wrap up progress made with debriefing questions (refer to Table 1 for a model for suitable questions), including:
 - Asking questions focused on the required learning
 - Asking questions to connect concepts with experiences, how they think about what they have done and how this impacts the learning goals
 - Finishing with a summary of key learnings to maximise the learning experience, create links to feed-forward to future learning and clear up misconceptions or misunderstandings.

Table 1. The 'What, So What and Now What' model of asking questions.

The What?	So What?	Now What?
Students describe the events that transpired during the activity.	Students explain what they learned from the experience.	Students explain how they can apply what they learned from the activity in different situations.
Teacher probes further understanding.	Teacher clarifies misconceptions and confirms learning.	Teacher uses information to feed forward to future learning.
<i>What happened? And then...?</i>	<i>What did you notice?</i>	<i>Have you experienced this type of situation before? If so, when?</i>
<i>What did you do?</i>	<i>Why was that important?</i>	<i>What did you learn?</i>
<i>What did you observe?</i>	<i>What was the main point of the activity?</i>	<i>What would you do differently?</i>
<i>What did you expect?</i>	<i>How did you work with your team?</i>	<i>How does this relate to outside the classroom?</i>
<i>How did you feel or think when ...?</i>	<i>When were you really effective or at your best? Why do you think that?</i>	<i>How will you use/apply what you have learned in this activity?</i>
<i>How are you feeling about it now?</i>		
<i>What was different?</i>		
<i>Who else had that experience?</i>		
<i>Who didn't? Were there any surprises?</i>		

Adapted from [Support real teachers](#)

Teacher presence after class

- Maintain a visible presence in VU Collaborate to promote active learning, e.g. acknowledge and summarise discussion posts and Padlet contributions, making connections to upcoming concepts
- Actively promote revision and consolidation of learning and make links with past and future learning
- Connect current activities to the next stage or future learning/ career
- Progress learning through feedback and feed-forward opportunities

Tips

- Observe students in activities and, if necessary, encourage students who appear distracted or are not participating. Acknowledge that, for some students, active learning can be difficult, but stress its importance for gaining communication skills in the discipline area.
- Debrief and facilitate reflection through activities and carefully targeted questions to encourage deeper learning and future contributions to subsequent discussion/activities.

Want to know more?

Websites

- Faculty Focus, 'Four tips for dealing with difficult students', 26 March 2010, <<https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/effective-classroom-management/four-tips-for-dealing-with-difficult-students/>>, accessed 29 July 2020.
- iBiology, Think-Pair-Share, < <https://www.ibiology.org/professional-development/think-pair-share/>>, accessed 29 July 2020.
This website includes a video showing examples of think-pair-share in action.
- Jump foundation, 'What is Debriefing and how is it done?', <<http://experience.jumpfoundation.org/what-is-debriefing-and-why-should-we-debrief/>>, accessed 29 July 2020.
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- Support real teachers, 'Facilitating Discussions and Debriefs', <<https://www.supportrealteachers.org/strategies-for-asking-questions.html>>, accessed 29 July 2020.
- University of Technology Sydney, 'Planning and preparing for teaching', <<https://www.uts.edu.au/research-and-teaching/learning-and-teaching/enhancing/planning-and-preparing-teaching>>, accessed 29 July 2020.
- Vanderbilt University, Just-in-time teaching (JiTT), <<https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/just-in-time-teaching-jitt/>>, accessed 29 July 2020.

References

- Vaughan, Cleveland-Innes, & Garrison, 2013, Teaching in blended learning environments: creating and sustaining communities of inquiry, AU Press, p.14.
- Support real teachers, 'Debriefing overview', < <https://www.supportrealteachers.org/strategies-for-asking-questions.html> >, accessed 29 July 2020.