How to Humanize Your Online Class

What is humanizing?
Humanized learning increases the relevance of content and improves students’ motivation to log-in week after week. When students relate to an online instructor as something more than a subject matter expert and begin to conceive of themselves as part of a larger community, they are more likely to be motivated, be satisfied with their learning, and succeed in achieving the course objectives (Picciano, 2002; Rovai & Barnett, 2003; Richardson & Swan, 2003).

Facilitation

Presence
- Don’t be a robot.
- Create a lively welcome video.
- Provide feedback in audio or video.
- Greet students with a video each week.
- Offer synchronous meetings for those who need them.

Empathy
- Sense when students need extra support.
- Be approachable.
- Check-in with students individually.
- Support students through difficult times.
- Send a supportive video message to a struggling student.

Awareness
- Know your students.
- Survey students in week 1.
- Use a fun, low-risk ice breaker to get students connected.
- Build in formative feedback loops.

Course Design

Choice
- Options increase intrinsic motivation.
- Allow students to express themselves through writing, voice, and video.
- Provide format and topic options for projects.

Challenge
- Encourage students to try new things - and believe in them!
- Assess learning through content creation.

Control
- Involve students in decision-making.
- Allow students to:
  - organize groups
  - create a portion of the class content
  - suggest ideas for assessments

Collaboration
- Have students learn from each other.
- Use social technologies to design connected learning activities.

Constructing meaning
- Use video as a catalyst for discussion.
- Invite students to contribute videos, images, links that demonstrate examples of concepts.

Consequences
- Turn students into content creators.
- Design projects that last longer than your class.
- Have students share work with peers and/or on open websites.
LEARNING DOMAINS

In education, Bloom’s taxonomy is frequently used as a helpful framework to understand how learning occurs and, in turn, design a learning experience that fosters growth and development. The cognitive domain of learning, however, is often the primary domain educators consider. Humanized learning also involves a careful consideration of the role that attitude, motivation, and values play in a student's learning. These are associated with the affective domain of learning.

Affective learning outcomes involve attitudes, motivation, and values. The expression of these often involves statements of commitment, beliefs, or an assessment of relevance (Smith & Ragan, 1999).

Cognitive learning outcomes involve knowledge. The expression of these may involve reproduction of information, demonstration of concepts, and application of principles to different contexts (Garriss, Ahlers, & Driskell, 2002).

COMMUNITY OF INQUIRY (COI)

Community of Inquiry (CoI) is a theoretical framework that educators may leverage to understand how to develop and assess deep, meaningful learning experiences.

The three elements in CoI are:

Social Presence

"The ability of participants to identify with the community, communicate purposefully in a trusting environment, and develop inter-personal relationships by way of projecting their individual personalities." (Garrison, 2009)

Teaching Presence

"The design, facilitation, and direction of cognitive and social processes for the purpose of realizing personally meaningful and educational worthwhile learning outcomes." (Anderson, Rourke, Garrison, & Archer, 2001)

Cognitive Presence

"The extent to which the participants in any particular configuration of a community of inquiry are able to construct meaning through sustained communication." (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2001)

Works Cited


