

EDITORIAL

Online education has assumed great significance during the COVID-19 pandemic. Though it has offered great opportunities, the challenges too are galore. Besides technological perspective, it is highly pertinent to analyze the behavioural dimensions to understand as well as maneuver smooth transitioning of faculty and students from face-to-face classroom teaching to online virtual teaching and learning systems. It is important to focus upon capacity building of teachers for effective online teaching. According to research findings three factors are critical in online teaching, which include cognitive presence, teaching presence, and social presence. The cognitive presence highlights how to integrate concepts and theories into learning and discussions. The instructional design, discourse facilitation, structuring and planning of courses relate to teaching presence. The third important element is social presence which reflects the abilities of learners to project themselves socially. How they are able to bond with other members of the group as well as the instructor in order to have free discussions and exchange of ideas. The online teacher has to facilitate to foster development of community of inquiry where there is enhanced social interactions for better learning and greater satisfaction. A faculty should keep a beginner's mindset to be open for new learning of tools for online teaching; keep themselves upgraded in skill educational technology; promote active engagement of students through various means like discussion forums; and facilitate and utilize group communications to make online teaching effective.

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