INSTRUCTOR AND LEARNER PRESENCE EFFECTS ON STUDENT
PERCEPTIONS OF SATISFACTION AND LEARNING
IN THE UNIVERSITY ONLINE CLASSROOM

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The study evaluates the effect that instructor presence and learner presence have on learning and student satisfaction using the Distance Education Learning Environment Survey (DELES). The overall research question addressed in this study is as follows: Does the degree of instructor presence and learner presence relate to student satisfaction and perceived learning in the online university classroom? The study is a correlation research design. Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient was calculated to show the magnitude of relationship between the variables. Overall correlations calculated to examine relationships between instructor presence and learning showed a moderately strong relationship, \( r_s = 0.52 \). The DELES subscales that support perceived learning, Personal Relevance, Authentic Learning, and Active Learning, also showed moderate relationships, \( r_s = 0.41 \), \( r_s = 0.49 \), and \( r_s = 0.48 \), respectively. The correlations calculated to examine relationships between learner presence and learning showed a moderately strong positive relationship, \( r_s = 0.46 \). DELES subscales that support perceived learning, Personal Relevance, Authentic Learning, and Active Learning, also showed moderately strong relationships, \( r_s = 0.45 \), \( r_s = 0.36 \), and \( r_s = 0.32 \), respectively. The DELES Enjoyment scale related to perceived participant satisfaction showed a moderately strong positive relationship to instructor presence, \( r_s = 0.45 \), and a slightly weaker relationship to learner presence, \( r_s = 0.34 \).

Overall these results show that there is a positive relationship between instructor and learner presence and perceived learning and satisfaction. Other correlations examined in the study include categories of university online learners based upon degree sought, gender, age group, and online course experience.