

Best Practices When Teaching via Video Conference

Prepare your students

- Send a welcome message to let students know video conferencing will be used.
- Post any handouts to Blackboard prior to class so have them ready when class begins.
- Let students know the best way to communicate between classes such as email or phone.

Prepare yourself

- Become familiar with the equipment before the session.
- Do a test to see what the sound and lighting is like.
- Have ready your contact information and alternative plan.

During class

- Set up communication ground rules such as raising hands for turn taking. You might begin the first session with a light discussion topic to get everyone used to turn taking.
- Let students know sounds such as pencil tapping and paper shuffling can be distracting.
- Don't put things on top of the mic.
- The camera is your audience (not the screen). When you look at the camera, to the students at the far site you are looking at them.
- Interaction
 - Speak a little slower than normal
 - Try to use people's names
 - Pause at regular intervals and check that everyone is understanding what is happening
 - Explain that there is a small time lag between one person speaking and the others becoming aware of it.
 - Remind students that chatting from other sites can be easily picked up by the microphone and be heard by the other sites.
- Remote location considerations
 - Take special care to include the remote participants
 - They might not pick up on body language as easily
 - There might be a lag with sound
 - You might say: That's a great idea. Let's hear from St. Louis
- To avoid the remote students feeling isolated
 - Check in with them outside of class (email)
 - Partner up the remote participants with the on-site participants
 - Use discussion boards to summarize classroom discussions and encourage interaction between sites
- Ask for student feedback about using video conferencing, especially after the first session.

Designing your session

- Lecture in 10-15 minute chunks. In between consider using discussions, small groups, case studies, or student presentations.
- Consider using an instructional script to plan your session.