

Tips and Tricks for an Effective Instructional Web Conference

Before Session

1. Consider scheduling the session during a time when technical help is available (e.g., institution's help desk for instructors and students, web conferencing software support).
2. Find a location with a reliable internet connection. For best results, ensure you are wired directly into a network; be prepared for potential technical issues if using wi-fi.
3. To avoid audio feedback loops, use a headset rather than your computer's built in mic and speakers.
4. Test internet connectivity prior to the session with the equipment that will be used during the session.
5. Upload and test any documents or presentation slides.
6. Test the "Record" option if planning to record the session, and playback to make certain it is working properly.
7. Hold a test/practice session with students or colleagues to assess potential troubleshooting issues and ensure the scheduled session will function as smoothly as possible.
8. Attention needs to be paid to lighting, backdrop, and background noise in the location where you will be presenting.
9. Dress in professional, solid-colored clothing. Consider your background when choosing the color of your attire. Ensure there is a clear contrast between the two.
10. Prepare and send an agenda to all participants to ensure they will understand the purpose and expected goals of the session. Preliminary information may also be sent at this time, as well as "netiquette" expectations.
11. Plan how you will manage the chat area (e.g., answer questions throughout, answer questions at the end). Consider assigning a participant to monitor the chat and take notes/questions, if needed.
12. Provide instructions, a demo video, or a website link/resource about the web conferencing tool to students and encourage them to explore the tool prior to meeting.
13. Have a backup plan, should any technical issues occur during the session; for example, if a link is provided for students to connect to the meeting, also provide additional contact methods such as a phone number or email address.

During Session

1. Log in to the session early (15-30 mins.) to ensure an optimal session experience. This will allow you to test audio and video, and review any files.
2. If applicable, set status to "In Meeting" or "Do not disturb." This will help limit outside distractions.
3. Hit "Record" if planning to archive the meeting.
4. Start on time with an icebreaker activity to get the dialogue moving and put everyone at ease. Participation needs to be encouraged from the beginning and facilitated frequently by asking specific



questions rather than open-ended questions. If possible, greet entering students by name.

5. Go over the agenda and objectives for the session.
6. Review protocols/netiquette; inform students that non-adherence to protocols could result in their removal from the session.
7. If this is the first session for students, allow them a few minutes to get familiar with the conference tools. Guide them to areas such as chat and communication icons.
8. Remember to speak clearly and at pace that may be understood by all attendees. Keep in mind that there may be a delay on the viewer's side. Participants may need extra time to respond as they may need to unmute, type in the chat, etc.
9. Ensure the chat area is monitored throughout the session (by you or an assigned participant).
10. When addressing a student's comment, state their name so they know their input is acknowledged.
11. End on time, allowing a few minutes for session wrap-up, summary, and next steps.
12. Thank participants for attending.

After Session

1. Follow up with meeting notes, reiterate the key points discussed, and outline next steps.
2. Solicit feedback from attendees to identify what is or isn't working and collect suggestions for future virtual meetings.
3. Post or send out a link to the recorded session for those who were not able to attend the live session. Extract any links and documents from the session and post them for download/viewing alongside the recording.

Other Considerations

Accommodations:

If you have a student who requires accommodations, consult with your institution's Accessibility Services department to ensure that appropriate student accommodations can be met.

Legal Concerns:

Verify that web conferencing does not violate privacy (FERPA) or other institutional requirements.

Technical Help:

Your institution may have many resources available to support web conferencing, from software installation to technical support. Be sure to inquire about the resources available for both you and your students.

