



CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF GLOBAL CHANGE

INDIANA UNIVERSITY
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Pedagogy of Videoconferencing Tips for Presenters

Developed for Digital Pathways: International Conversations Across the Curriculum

The following tips are written specifically for individuals presenting to a distant site. However, since all participants in videoconferences will be on camera at some point, the following tips can be useful for guest lecturers, instructors and students.

Logistics of presenting

In many ways, videoconferencing presentations are similar to presentations done in person. However, the technology provides unique opportunities for engaging participants and presents a few difficulties that should be considered when planning a videoconference presentation.

Wear solid colors

Cameras can have trouble transmitting patterns such as checks and stripes. So solid colored clothing is a good idea otherwise students may be distracted by unexpected video effects.

Create an engaging background

Backgrounds should be engaging but not distracting. Avoid using anything with a large amount of text or anything with moving parts that can distract and avoid blank, neutral-colored walls that can bore students. Large maps, book shelves, plants and lab equipment work well as long as they don't distract.

Consider your appearance on camera

Use animated facial expressions and hand gestures that will engage students in conversation. Overly enthusiastic is better than blank expressions; however, be aware that rapid hand movements may not transmit well on camera. Set the angle of the camera so that it is close enough for students to make eye contact, but not so close that you are a large talking head on a screen. Keep an eye on the monitor so you can make sure the students can see you, any gestures you may make and demonstrations clearly.

Speak slowly and clearly

Try speaking slightly slower than you would normally speak, particularly if there is a difference in language between you and the students. Enunciate your words and project your voice toward

the camera. Consider creating some kind of visual aid or glossary that can be passed out to students for technical terms. Periodically check to make sure the audio equipment is working properly.

Use additional equipment effectively

Don't be afraid to incorporate additional technology and equipment into the presentation such as document cameras, lab equipment and computer programs. These can greatly enhance the information being presented, particularly if it is showcasing items that students may not be able to see otherwise or using equipment that isn't widely available. However, remember it is the human interaction that makes the videoconferencing experience unique, so punctuate all demonstrations and equipment use with face-to-face activities. Make sure all necessary equipment is nearby and fully set-up before the presentation.

Tailor presentations for the particular size of the group

Make sure the presentation is tailored to the size of the class (or audience). Demonstrations and short lectures work well for most group sizes; debates and group activities work best with small to medium-sized classes. If more than one class is involved, consider ways to engage classrooms with one another. Also keep the size of the classroom and presentation space in mind. If you are speaking to a large group in a lecture hall, make sure visuals are large enough for everyone to see and demonstrations don't require too many steps or detailed actions.

Encouraging interactivity

Videoconferencing technology provides a unique opportunity for interactive presentations. Unlike videos and one-way communications, presenters can discuss topics with students and engage in activities that supplement the information being presented. First and foremost, presenters should coordinate with the instructor to understand the objectives of the presentation within the planned curriculum.

Work with the instructor to determine the desired level of interactivity

Presenters and instructors should determine how interactive the presentation will be before the presentation and discuss ways to engage the students with the material. Creating a basic plan for the presentation can help everyone know what to expect.

Tailor the presentation for the course objectives

Instructors should let presenters know what kinds of activities and discussions the class has completed leading up to the presentation. Instructors can provide particular talking points for the presenter that touch on class topics. This will help the presenter know what kind of activities the students like and how the presentation fits within the curriculum.

Gather and provide all materials and resources well before the presentation

Presenters should provide all documents and resources to the instructors well before the presentation so that the instructor can have them ready for the class and potentially adapt them to suit the class needs.

Make activities and interaction the focus of the overall presentation

Students should be encouraged to participate in the presentation by including activities that can be completed before, during and/or after the presentation. It may also help to provide the students with a short schedule of activities so they know what to expect.

Break up presentations into segments

Presentations should be broken down into sections so that lectures are punctuated by an interactive activity. There should always be time at the end for final questions for the presenter.

Don't make the technology be the main focus

Presenters shouldn't rely only on the technology to administer information. In other words, videos and PowerPoint slides are good for breaking up a presentation into sections, but should be kept to a minimum. It is the human interaction that makes this experience unique.

Ask for feedback

Some sort of feedback mechanism, such as a brief survey, should be incorporated into the presentation so the presenter can use the information for future presentations either with this class or others.