FACILITATING A VIRTUAL SESSION

TECHNOLOGY

Make sure everyone has appropriate equipment and software to meet virtually

- Webcam (external or built in)
- Stable internet connection
- Headset (any headphones with a built in microphone, e.g., ear buds)
- Make sure everyone has adequate instructions to access the virtual space
- Use technology that is most accessible to everyone on the team (see Technology to Connect Virtually Guide)
- Require everyone to be virtual making it a level playing field. It’s easy to forget virtual people and hard for them to have the same presence when attendees are both face to face and virtual.
- Test your technology before the meeting and resolve any technical issues

PRESENTER TIPS

Since you cannot use your body language and gestures to present content in a virtual environment, you must develop other skills and techniques for keeping your delivery lively and your learners’ attention from wandering.

- Consider using a moderator to monitor chat activity, questions and trouble shooting
- Use introductions at the beginning of meetings if applicable
- Use an icebreaker
- Follow an organized line-up or agenda to ensure each person has a chance to respond
  - Use interactive techniques to engage the group, e.g., Skype polling, whiteboard, file sharing and screen sharing
- For department meetings, consider minimizing presentation length. Background information can be provided beforehand. If someone needs to present, use screen sharing to guide the conversation, so attendees can literally “be on the same page.”
- For meetings, consider following up with a recap
- Try to have everyone be virtual, hybrid meetings have opportunity to go awry. If not possible make sure people aren’t left out in web conferencing sessions, your voice becomes your key delivery mechanism
- Keep the flow between tools smooth and explain what you are doing (i.e., "I am switching from application sharing back to the presentation. Give me a few seconds to bring it up.")., in order to avoid any “dead air” or long pauses.
- Use silence to allow learners to process questions. If no responds, repeat and/or rephrase the question during this time, in case someone misunderstood or did not hear the question the first time.
- Getting everyone to participate is one of the more challenging aspects of running a virtual meeting. Ask for volunteers to speak.
- For engaged groups, ask participants to raise hands (if software allows)
- Decide and share how you would like the group to communicate (e.g., microphone, chat, whiteboard, etc.). Otherwise, they may tend not to respond for fear of embarrassment by using the wrong method.

How to have a productive online meeting [https://youtu.be/21GxgHyjHKM](https://youtu.be/21GxgHyjHKM)
PARTICIPATING

- Find a quiet space to participate
- Test your technology before the meeting and resolve any technical issues
- Use the webcam when appropriate and be camera-ready
- Use equipment with audio clarity and stability
- Do not multi-task and do other work during the session
- When in large groups, use the mute button when not speaking to prevent transmitting background noise
- If software allows, raise your hand when you have something to say
- Customize the personal settings so your personal photo is visible

I ALREADY USE VIRTUAL TOOLS, AND AM READY TO ENHANCE MY STRATEGY

Every course is unique and the opportunities to create an amazing and engaging virtual experience are vast. If you are at this stage and are looking to further enhance your strategy, please reach out to the Learning Solutions Center. We would love to discuss your specific course, possibilities and help you achieve online course excellence.