

Presenter Best Practices

You may need to alter your presentation style for videoconferencing. The tips below give you some good practices to use for your videoconference.

Ground Rules

Open each videoconference with an informal "roll call" to make sure all sites are connected and give participants a chance to become accustomed to this communication method. Lay down the "ground rules" at the beginning of a presentation or the start of a semester course. Primary rules include microphones off except with speaking and that the speaker identifies him/herself and location.

Deliver the Presentation in Chunks

Present your material in "chunks" of about 9-10 minutes so there is a change in the method of delivering information. Some examples of different delivery methods include a demonstration; play a video; ask each site to discuss a question; or plan a group activity. Provide a variety of communication systems for feedback and interaction, such as a webpage, e-mail, telephone and FAX. All interaction does not need to occur during the videoconference.

Stand Still

It is best to stand or sit at a desk because walking around is distracting for participants.

Address the Camera

Look directly at the television beside the presenter camera as much as possible for good eye contact with the participants. This practice helps the participants at each site feel more like they are in the same room with you.

Pause

Plan for pauses during a presentation to give participants an opportunity press their microphone to speak or ask a question. "10-Second Rule" - When you ask a question, wait at least 10 seconds before saying anything to give someone a chance to respond. Glance at the clock occasionally to make sure you are on schedule.

Relax

Try not worry about the equipment and rush through your presentation. As you move from one mode of delivery to another just let the participants know what you are doing. For example, "Now I am going to start a video, it is about three minutes long. I will return after we have viewed it."

Practice

Take time to practice your presentation a few days or week in advance. You may find that the PowerPoint slides need to be reformatted to fit the screen. Consider using picture-in-picture to display yourself over the slides in the upper right corner of the screen. Contact the Videoconference Help Desk to have the Distance Learning Classroom opened so you can practice. It is often available during the day.

Get Help

If you need assistance with the equipment or additional training contact the Region 10 Help Desk 972 348-1234.

Videoconferencing Tips

Presenter Considerations

1. **Clothing** - Do not wear bright vibrant colors, solid white or black, or clothing with small patterns. Usually solid muted colors or pastels are best.
2. **Computer** - A Windows computer with Internet access, PowerPoint and other Office 2000 programs is available for use. If you have other programs, you can connect your laptop, but you cannot use both computers at the same time.
3. **Presentation guidelines.** A PowerPoint presentation concerning the design of computer presentations for video is available on the Web at: http://disted.ifas.ufl.edu/ppt/de_ppt_template/. This will give you tips on color combinations, font styles and size, margins and so forth. There is also a template for ensuring that your presentation conforms to a video monitor size ratio. Briefly, you want to use dark backgrounds with white, yellow or cyan text or objects. Use sans serif fonts at a minimum point size of 28 except as noted below.
4. **Overheads** - If you have transparencies, you may have problem with reflection so paper copies are best. Small objects and photos may also be used. There are two buttons on the front marked 'Wide' and 'Tele' that allow you to zoom out and in. There is also a button marked 'Auto' that will focus automatically when pressed.
5. **Audience questions.** If your presentation is being videotaped or you are videoconferencing with remote sites and people in the DE Center are asking questions, you must ask them to press the button on the microphone in front of them marked 'My Turn'. This will activate the microphone and cause the camera to zoom in on them. They must continue to hold down the button as long as they are talking, so that they can be heard on tape or at the remote sites.

Other Considerations

- **Media.** Because of the video compression, the images seen by the remote sites are not as sharp as they appear on monitors in the DE Center. For this reason, graphics must be larger. Computer presentations should have a minimum point size of 32, and 36 is even better. If you are writing on paper or a transparency to be shown with the Elmo visual presenter, you should also write large - no more than six words on a line.
- **Interaction.** To take advantage of the opportunity for interaction, you should allow time for questions. Be sure to specifically ask each remote site if they have questions, because they often defer to people with questions in the DE Center. If you hear a lot of background noise coming from the speaker in the DE Center, you may have to remind the remote sites to mute their microphones when they are not asking questions.
- **Time.** Our videoconferences are scheduled through a BellSouth bridge, and the connection will be terminated at the time scheduled for the end of the conference. Please allow yourself a few minutes at the end to wrap things up. We have a red light in the back of the classroom that we can turn on to give you a visual cue that the conference is about to end.

Videoconference Checklist

Before Event

- Monitor the registration of participants and remove a site from an event or cancel an event without participants not less than 24 hours before the events scheduled start time. Please release a site or sites as early as you know you will not have participants.
- Practice your presentation in the videoconference room or make sure the presenter is familiar with the videoconference room and the operation of the equipment
- Email materials to each participant or deliver materials to each site or request them to download them from the EdNet¹⁰ website
- Arrange for one participant at each site to act as the Event Facilitator for your videoconference event or arrange for a Region 10 staff to assist at a site or sites
- If your event requires a special sign-in sheet, make sure it is delivered to each site
- Arrive at least 30 minutes early to your presentation site
- Take note of the Help Desk telephone number should you need to call for help
- If the system is not powered up call the Help Desk - 972 348-1336
- Load presentation on the computer or connect your laptop computer
- Cue videocassette and test for playback
- Turn on document camera, place materials on it and adjust framing
- Check the microphone and confirm it works
- Check camera presets and change framing and save presets if needed
- If you plan to record you presentation put a videocassette in the VCR for recording

During Event

- Check to see that each site is connected and operating properly
- Start the VCR to record your presentation if you want a copy
- Review the "ground rules," any special instructions with participants
- Glance at the clock occasionally to make sure you are on schedule
- Have a back up plan if a major problem arises so there are options for the participants to 1) take a short break; 2) discuss the topic at their site;

After Event

- Remind Event Facilitators to FAX or return sign-in sheets
- DO NOT turn off any equipment; just leave the room orderly for next user

Glossary

CODEC refers to the COde-DECode or COmpress-DECompress performed by the videoconference system, converting analog signals to digital signals for transmission

ISDN Integrated Services Digital Network. A switched digital service with dial capability using operating at 128 or 384 Kbps

H.320 An umbrella of specifications for using the ISDN protocol for videoconferencing

H.323 An umbrella of specifications for using the Internet protocol for videoconferencing

Kbps Kilobits per second. The transmission speed of video/audio signal through the digital T-1 circuit. Most commonly used is 384 Kbps, and 768 Kbps.

MCU Multipoint control unit or "bridge" connects multiple sites to participate in a videoconference

Picture-in-picture Show the presenter and the presentation at the same time by placing a small rectangular box of the presenter in one corner of the screen

Site Location for a two-way videoconference
Standards Uniform specifications to permit interoperability in videoconferencing

Synchronous Distance learning that is real-time communication between participants like videoconferencing

T-1 A circuit with a DS1 bandwidth of 1.544 megabits

WAN Wide Area Network connecting LANs or single computers that are situated in different geographic areas