Video Conferencing at Jefferson State

What is Video Conferencing?

- Video conferencing is a telephone conference call with pictures (using a television type unit that connects through an IP address/network). During a video conferencing session, audio and video are captured and transmitted in a video conference. Key features include the following: network-able, compatible, and portable.

- Video conferencing is used on campus for simultaneously broadcasting lectures, meetings, and/or presentations from different site locations. Video conferencing also provides equal educational opportunities for learning in a diverse manner.

- Additional information is available online at the following web page: http://www.jeffstateonline.com/its/training/video conferencing_seminar/default.htm.

Video Conferencing supports the seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education (Chickering & Gamson, 1987)

- Encourages Student-Faculty Contact
- Encourages Cooperation Among Students
- Encourages Active Learning
- Gives Prompt Feedback
- Emphasizes Time on Task
- Communicates High Expectations
- Respects Diverse Talents and Ways of Learning

Video Conferencing supports best practices for distance education

- Goals and Expectations of Course effectively communicated.
- Instructional design of course content encourages active learning and other types of learning.
- Encourages student-to-faculty and student-to-student interaction and communication.
- Encourages course competencies through completion of work assignments, group activities, presentations, skills inventory, quizzes, tests, and evaluations.

Best Practices and Recommendations for Video conferencing

1) Video conferencing equipment is available and in working order.

   o Follow procedures and/or contact the Instructional Technology Services
     (205-856-6060) group to make sure video conferencing equipment is available
     and in working order.
   o Be familiar with operation procedures and test the system prior to scheduled time
     (minimal of 15 minutes prior to session).
     Note: The unit has a microphone located at the top of system. The camera
     unit is set to follow presenter.
   o Perform a test and check volume settings, quality, background noise
     and/or feedback noise.
   o Perform a test and check the video resolution and/or use of other documents/materials.
   o *Note:* Check the focus for sharpness, contrast, brightness, and/or color saturation.
     Use the self-view window to check visual appearance and make sure there are not
     any distractions in the background.
   o Perform a test and make sure there are not any excessive delays, bandwidth,
     and/or synchronization issues.
   o *Note:* High traffic networks or bottlenecks will affect the quality of the signal. As a rule
     it is generally better to sacrifice the video signal for better audio quality.
   o *Note:* In a lecture or when one party does most of the talking, delays of up to several
     seconds are not a problem. Typical frame rates should average
     15 - 30 fps.
   o *Note:* Synchronization is referred to as the transmitting video movements (may include
     documents) and sound simultaneously. The video conferencing unit handles the sound
     and picture separately but are transmitted simultaneously.

2) Tips on hosting a videoconference:

   o Technical Issues
     • Avoid trying to troubleshoot technology and connectivity problems on the air
       during class; have a backup plan in case the videoconferencing technology
       fails.

   o Establish "eye contact."
     • Once your camera and incoming view window have been correctly positioned
       so that "eye contact" has been established between you and the remote site,
       you should remain focused in that direction.
     • When engaging with remote site participant, position the video window of the
       other party near your camera. This simulates eye-contact, which helps
       participants feel engaged with each other.
     • Avoid shifts in attention such as looking down at the computer screen.
       "Multi-tasking" has the same effect as not looking someone in the eye when
       talking to them in person.
     • Remember video conferencing is a personal exchange - body language
       and facial expression count.

2) Tips on hosting a videoconference (continued):

- o Body Movement
  - Move and gesture carefully. Avoid fast, quick movements or pacing.
  - *Note*: Video encoding is based on movement. The more movement in front of the camera the higher the data rate that can affect bandwidth transmission. Try to avoid "talking with your hands" - may increase bandwith transmission due to excessive motion to the remote site.

- o Speak audibly (project voice).
  - When using a speakerphone, sit close to it and remind other participants to do so as well. This will help everyone hear each other better.
  - Mute your own audio when you are not speaking. Side conversations and other room noises are picked up by the microphones.
  - In a point-to-point conversation, have receiving end turned off until ready to ask or answer a comment or question. This will also reduce any side noise or feedback.

- o Select your clothing appropriately.
  - Wear solid, dark, neutral, or blue clothing.
  - Avoid wearing white, red, pastels, plaid, stripes, and/or busy patterns
  - Avoid wearing clothing or accessories that dangle, sparkle or flash.

- o Be interactive.
  - Act naturally but use inflection in voice to emphasize topic. Show enthusiasm!
  - Use graphics and content slides/documents for visual learners.

- o Provide orientation, rules, and procedures.
  - Make sure you can see and be seen.
  - Make sure you can hear and be heard.
  - Introduce the sites and roles.
  - Ask participants to introduce themselves.
    - Include an 'ice breaker' activity or 'get to know you' activity.
    - Have students discuss interests, hobbies and goals.
  - Explain participant's roles for participation:
    - Appoint one person at remote site to operate the camera and audio and establish protocols (i.e. how to control the camera angles and mute on/off selection).
    - Facilitate one speaker at a time. Multiple sites speaking at once can cause delays in the switching.
    - Have students identify themselves by name when they speak.
    - Require complete sentences and avoid one-word answers.
  - Discuss online etiquette such as treating others with respect, no harsh language and keeping conversations relevant to the content topic.
    - Encourage students to use open dialog when appropriate.
  - Explain technical requirements/delays:
    - Possible transmission delay in receiving the video from a site after a speaker begins. This is normal.
    - Encourage students to familiarize themselves with the technology.
  - Make participants feel comfortable.
    - Facial expressions and tone of voice communicate a friendly, caring, and confident demeanor.
    - Refer to all students by name.
    - Visit each remote location at least one time.
  - Plan flexible activities and projects so that objectives and time can be adjusted.
  - Provide a summary of session/question and answer wrap up.

3) Tips for preparing and delivering content/presentation:

- Rule of 7 (7 line of text; 35 words per screen)
- Keep text large and legible.
- Use *Italics*, **Bold**, <u>Underline</u>, different colors to draw attention.
- Use PowerPoint slides for key points and main ideas.
- Provide an agenda or goals of session.
- Include statement about technical issues (if equipment not working/loss time) and include a backup plan (flexible schedule/syllabus).
- Allow all sites to complete activities before moving on. Have an extra credit activity or challenge activity for those that may finish early.
- Use a clock on the screen when students are working in class.

4) Tips on providing materials:

- Provide a course syllabus and outline handout for each lecture.
- Send any hard copy materials to all locations ahead of time. If printouts will be made from electronic material presented during the meeting, make sure that all the sites have the capability to print the materials.
- Have a website or use WebCT (online course management system) as an integral part of the instruction and follow up (i.e. communication, email, discussion board, calendar, course materials, quizzes, course evaluation).

5) Tips on incorporating active learning strategies:

- Have participants use outline to develop good note taking practices (encourages students to take notes on what's important–application, synthesis, evaluation–not on simply writing down what appears on the slide.
- Structure presentation/lecture with opportunities to pause and poll students (stop at critical points and evaluate need to change the pace and format of the presentation).
- Include one or several slides which are left intentionally blank with spaces for participants to record their responses to questions posed during presentation.
- Connect sites in a conference and have students from solve a problem collaboratively.
- Encourage student questions and interactions.
- Award points for answering questions and participating in class activities.
- Encourage and assign group work.
- Communicate project expectations before, during, and after instruction.

<u>Video conferencing Facilities</u>

Jefferson	Item
CH212	Equipped for electronic presentations and video conferencing
AL111	Equipped for electronic presentations and video conferencing
AL112	Computer Lab, Equipped for electronic presentations
BDH237	Equipped for electronic presentations
Shelby	Item
RSH306	Equipped for electronic presentations and video conferencing
RSH117B	Equipped for electronic presentations and video conferencing

Additional information is available online at http://www.jeffstateonline.com/its/training/Default.htm.

For troubleshooting and/or additional assistance, contact Instructional Technology Services at 205-856-6060.

References and Resources

http://www.videnet.gatech.edu/cookbook/

http://www.polycom.com/resource_center/1,1454,pw-24,00.html

http://www.uwex.edu/ics/support/video/H323/Lists/h323users.html

http://www.uwex.edu/ics/video/plan.htm

http://www.ag.ndsu.nodak.edu/agcomm/videoconf/video-c/practice.htm

http://www.ucalgary.ca/insite/bestpractices.htm

http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/teachlearn/tutorials/powerpoint/handouts.html

http://ctl.conncoll.edu/pp/

http://www.webaim.org/techniques/powerpoint/

http://www.netc.org/digitalbridges/teachersguide/classroom.html

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