**CENTER FOR THE STUDY
OF GLOBAL CHANGE**

INDIANA UNIVERSITY
School of Global and International Studies
College of Arts and Sciences

Pedagogy of Videoconferencing
Tips for Instructors
Developed for Digital Pathways: International Conversations Across the Curriculum

Integrating Videoconferencing into the Curriculum

The best way to use videoconferencing in a classroom setting is to integrate it into the existing curriculum such that it is fluidly incorporated into course objectives. It is best when it is not simply an "add-on" but rather assimilated in such a way that it complements, enhances, and furthers the stated learning goals. Ideally videoconferences should not be used to only provide content but should be preceded and followed by discussion, reflection, and activities that engage and build on the information and skills gained through the interactive experience.

- Courses that integrate videoconferencing, like general instruction, should have specific learning objectives. The videoconference itself, with its complementing activities and assignments, should be set up to meet those course objectives. Instructors should share these learning objectives with students and make it explicit that the videoconference is considered part of the general instruction such that students are responsible for participating and learning from the videoconference as they would from other aspects of the class. Of course, evaluating what is learned from the videoconference should be included in other forms of course-based assessment.

- Videoconferences should fit within the established sequence of a class. For instance, if the only time participants are available to meet is at the beginning of the semester, then students in an integrated classroom can teach some of the basic concepts of the course to one another and discuss some of the reasons why they took the course and are interested in the subject. On the other hand, if it is at the end of the semester, an expert presenter can quiz students on what they've learned, engage questions on a particular topic, or provide feedback for final presentations.

- If the course is designed so that the videoconference technology is an integral part of the class—whether it is a semester-long integrated class with a distant classroom or a course led by a distant instructor—consider how the technology and experience is unique from traditional classroom formats and use this uniqueness to its best advantage. For instance, as the technology becomes more and more portable, distant instructors can lead a language class on a virtual tour of a local market place for vocabulary and conversation practice. This provides information and skills that enrich the overall educational experience of students.

- Reflection is key for videoconferencing as it is for many other learning situations. This is particularly important because global learning objectives involve more than content about international issues. Global learning and globally responsible citizenship relies on intercultural skills, attitudes of engagement of empathy, commitment, and a vital ability to see oneself and see the world through others' eyes. These skills and attitudes necessitate that instructors facilitate student reflection not only on the content provided but on the international experience itself, i.e, why there was disagreement, the history of a unique perspective, the cultural knowledge that was behind a specific practice discussed, or why there may have been a cross-cultural communication gaps. This will put more of a burden on the instructor who will have to guide these discussions, but these reflection sessions will no doubt deepen knowledge, expand perspectives, and ensure that global learning goals are achieved.

Consider using a program planning guide or form to help with integration.

Cultivating the Videoconference Experience

Structured Platforms for Engagement

In order to integrate interactive technologies, such as videoconferecing with course and learning objectives, organizing platforms for engagement in and beyond the classroom experience are invaluable. These platforms encourage students to engage and put into practice the skills, knowledge and attitudes indicated by course and learning objectives during an interactive experience. Types of these platforms include:

- Single visit or series of visits within a class
- Visits with experts, politicians, activists, etc.
- Semester-long collaborative courses with one partner institution
- Student-led discussion(s) and presentations
- Study abroad (pre- and post-departure orientation, involvement in course discussions)
- International research (for faculty and students), including joint student assignments

The videoconference, with its complementing activities and assignments, should be set up to meet learning objectives. Instructors need to share these learning objectives with students and make it explicit that the videoconference is considered part of the general instruction such that students are responsible for participating and learning from the experience as they would from other aspects of the class. Thus, evaluating what is learned from the experience should be included in other forms of course-based assessments.

Types of Engagement

Activities and assignments that support learning and course objectives in an interactive technology setting include:

Prior to the videoconference experience
- Prepared reading material(s)
- Prepared questions for a speaker or lecturer
- Ice breakers, i.e. have students prepare introductions, or plan an activity to acclimate students to what might be a new learning environment

During the videoconference experience
- Planned discussion and facilitated Q&A, facilitated by either the instructor(s) or student(s)
- Student-led activities and presentations

Post-interactive videoconference experience
- Reflection writing assignments
- Use the experience to discuss intercultural issues that may arise in the planning phase, during the experience, and during assignments.

Collaborative Platforms

Collaborative platforms work to enhance videoconference experiences. They are not limited to the classroom; in fact, they encourage students to engage in interactive technology outside of the traditional classroom. They also aid instructors and students to understand how interactive programs enrich international learning.

Much like a videoconference, collaborative platforms work is best when they are not simply "add-ons" but rather assimilated in a way which complements, enhances, and furthers stated course and learning objectives. Ideally they should not be used to only provide content but should be utilized to facilitate discussion, reflection, and activities that engage and build on the information and skills gained through the videoconference experience.

Examples

Wikis
Wikis are websites created collaboratively. Students and instructors can their share work and create content, including pictures, videos and other media. Many institutions provide a space for wikis (see *Institution-sponsored sites* below), however an instructor can create their own with websites like Wikispaces.

Online discussion forums
Forums can be used to promote structured discussion outside of the time and physical constraints of a traditional classroom. The instructor may choose and moderate topics, or allow students to generate their own. Many institutions provide a space for discussion forums online (see *Institution-sponsored sites* below), however an instructor can also create their own for free with sites like ProBoards.

Facebook
Facebook utilizes a streamlined platform to expand the classroom online with forum, blog and note functions. Additionally, Facebook does not require the instructor to purchase any extra domain names or server space. For more information, ideas and resources, see the Facebook in Education site.

Twitter
Twitter is a micro-blogging service that enables students and instructors to send and read real-time, text-based posts of up to 140 characters, known as "tweets". Tweets can include links to websites and media, such as pictures. As an extension of the classroom, Twitter can be used further discussions that can be followed using an assigned hash tag (#). For more information, see the Twitter website.

Class/individual blogs
A blog is a Web publishing tool that allows students and instructors to self-publish text, photos, links to other blogs or Web sites. There are a vast array of free blogging service providers, like Blogger and Wordpress. Additionally, some institution-sponsored sites include blogs as a feature for students and instructors to use.
Regardless of the service provider, blogs have a standard characteristic known as the post. Blog postings are text entries, which include a posting date and may include comments by people other than the author. Examples of how blogs can be used to further classroom interactions:
- Students are required to make individual posts on topics related to the course
- A class blog is created by the instructor, where students take turns posting and commenting on one another's posts
- 'Blog buddy' projects: students pair up with another student from their class, or depending on the circumstance, with a student from a distant site and write a blog together. The project at the end of the term could be to reflect on how individual views changed throughout the semester. Topics for blog entries could be provided by the instructor or could be the student's choice.

Google +
Google + hangouts provide an online space for students and/or the instructor to come together online through video chat. Google + hangouts also include applications that allow users to watch YouTube videos, share documents, screen share and more. Watch a demo here.

Institution-sponsored sites
Many institutions provide an online space for instructors to create a web site for their courses. Using these sites, such as Oncourse or Blackboard, students and instructors can access syllabi and grades; create wikis; communicate via email, chat rooms, and discussion forums; and access online quizzes and surveys. Additionally, most of these sites allow guest access for distant site students and instructors.

Assessment Using Collaborative Platforms

Student's engagement on collaborative platforms can also serve as a means to evaluate progress, assess learning objectives, as well as the overall experience and use of technology. This can

include structured discussions, reflective essays, wiki and blog contributions, exams and quizzes, and a variety of classroom and take-home assessment techniques. Examples include:

- Mini-projects within the class, such as student-led research projects and/or student presentations
- Writing assignments, i.e. a current event compare/contrast essay or an essay reflecting on cultural differences between participating sites
- Interviews between participating site students
- Student-moderated discussions related to course topics

Measuring Results

Whether the presentation is a one-time special event or a part of a semester-long class, it is important to consider the impact of interactive videoconferencing on the curriculum, particularly its effectiveness for enriching the international aspect of the course. Taking the time to evaluate the experience helps instructors and students to understand how interactive programs enrich international learning.

Evaluation should take place to assess student learning and the overall experience and use of technology. While some basic evaluation forms may be used by instructors to assess individual interactive programs, assessment should also be integrated in to authentic means of classroom activities and assignments. This can include structured discussions, reflective essays, wiki and blog contributions, exams and quizzes, and a variety of classroom and take-home assessment techniques.

Coordinating videoconferences

While videoconferencing can become an integral part of any classroom, like any lesson plan, it takes a little organization and consideration to make everything run smoothly. Using the following guidelines can help.

Schedule Appropriately

It is important to schedule times that are appropriate for all locations accounting for time zone differences. If this is a series of presentations, try as best as possible to ensure that times are the same from one meeting to the next to help participants remember meeting times, particularly if these are not scheduled during regular class time.

Discuss Videoconference with Distant Site Coordinators

Come up with a plan of action and exchange all contact information beforehand. A short test run a day or two beforehand is a good idea for ensuring instructors on both sides understand the equipment and PowerPoint presentations and media transmit properly. Make sure all documents

and materials are ready for distribution well before the videoconference. This will help
participants at all locations better prepare for the videoconference.

Familiarize Students with Technology

Take the time to familiarize students with the kind of technology that you will be using. Not
only can students potentially help with facilitating the meeting and troubleshooting any
problems, but this may help ease any nervousness about "being on camera" and facilitate a
quality program.

Introduce All Participants

Introductions are an important part of the videoconferencing process. Spend time with distant
instructors and presenters to discuss the dynamics of your class and spend some class time
introducing students to the work and background of the presenter or fellow instructors.

Discuss Objectives with all Participants

Discuss some of the objectives of the videoconferencing experience with all the participants
before the videoconference and follow-up with students and presenters afterward. Consider using
some kind of assessment in order to evaluate the overall experience of the participants.

Learn and Teach Videoconferencing Etiquette

First time videoconferencing experiences can be unnerving for some participants due to cultural
differences of participants, language difficulties and technology issues. Because of this, it is
important for all participants to be respectful of one another. Remind all participants about some
of the basic etiquette of videoconferencing:

- Talk in a clear voice and speak slightly slower than you would in normal conversation.
- Take turns speaking--it may be a good idea to develop a protocol for signaling one
  another when there is a question or establish a moderator who is in charge of calling on
  others.
- Cut out other sounds as best as you can by closing doors to the conference room and
  pausing conversation and muting microphones if unexpected sounds (i.e. passing sirens,
  construction sounds, etc.) occur.

Know Your Technical Support

If possible, make sure technical support is available during the scheduled
videoconference. Getting to know the technical support and discussing the videoconference
events and necessary equipment with them may be helpful as well.

Make a Contingency Plan

Come up with a contingency plan in case there is trouble connecting or a sudden cancellation.