THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA SYSTEM

INTERCAMPUS INTERACTIVE TELECOMMUNICATION SYSTEM (IITS)

How Videoconferencing Works

- As an instructor in a videoconferencing classroom, you will see and hear participants at remote sites via TV monitors, video cameras and microphones. They will also have the ability to see and hear you on TV monitors at their locations.

Preparing to Teach
via Videoconferencing

- ☐ What to do first.
  - ■ Decide what you plan to teach.
  - ■ Determine your goals for student learning.
  - ■ Know your student population.
  - ■ Familiarize yourself with the procedures for offering a course over videoconferencing.
  - ■ Decide how you will assess student learning.

Preparing to Teach
via Videoconferencing (con't)

☐   Prepare an outline of the material you plan to present.

     ■   Number of general topics you plan to discuss.

     ■   Course requirements.

     ■   Resources that need to be reserved or ordered, speakers. (Textbooks, library reserves, reading packets, etc.)

Preparing to Teach
via Videoconferencing (con't)

☐ Prepare your syllabus.

 ■ Include the information you gathered in <u>What to do first</u>.

 ■ Include how you will interact with students during class and after.

 ■ Include alternative plans in the event of any type of connection failure, i.e., equipment failure, power outage, etc.

 ■ Include testing and proctoring procedures.

 ■ Include dates the class will not meet.

Preparing to Teach
via Videoconferencing (con't)

❑ Prepare yourself.

■ Consciously prepare for student interaction. Be aware of student's need for reinforcement, repetition and clarification.

■ Remember to welcome students to each class session and close with a "see you next time" statement.

■ Prepare yourself and students for possible technical problems, i.e., equipment failure, power outages, etc.

■ Allow for breaks, especially if the session is more than 90 minutes. A 10 minute break will give you and students time to refresh.

Distribution of Class Materials

- Distribution of class materials is up to the discretion of each Instructor.

- <u>If you do not utilize or have access to use the internet</u> allow ample time for documents to be copied, collated, and received through the mail.

- Include your course number at the top of each handout distributed to participating sites.

- Students at your distant sites should have all class materials at the same time as on-campus students. This is especially beneficial for keeping your distant students feeling like vital members of the class.

Examinations

- ☐ Include course number and title.

- ☐ Include all necessary instructions for administering test.

- ☐ Verbal instructions should be given over the air to distant students at the same time you are explaining the examination to your on-campus class.

- ☐ Exams should be placed in a sealed inner envelope for confidentiality, with the course number and testing date indicated on the envelope.

- ☐ When you return student papers to a distant site, it is best to place each student's documents in a separate envelope.

Student Participation

❑ With compressed video, it is important to engage the remote students as much as possible.

- Call on distant students by name, ask him/her to share his/her thoughts on an issue, or to answer a discussion question.

- Do a seating chart.

- Have students at distant sites make a name card.

- Demonstrate how you would prefer they ask questions.

- Have on-campus and distant students state their name prior to asking questions and/or making comments.

Videoconferencing Etiquette

- Always remember and remind your students, that if you can see and hear, you can be seen and heard.

Top Ten Horrible Mistakes Easily Made When Teaching via Videoconferencing

- ☐ Failure to acknowledge participants at a remote site.
- ☐ Failure to send materials early enough.
- ☐ Not having contingency plans. (Technical problems, power outage, etc. do occur.)
- ☐ Not addressing audio problems promptly because the audio "sounds okay" at your site.
- ☐ Thinking you can wing-it because you are a great classroom instructor.

Top Ten Horrible Mistakes (con't)

- ☐ Not planning for who will work equipment at the remote site(s) if needed.

- ☐ Using lecture format because you've heard lectures are easy to do by video.

- ☐ Failure to set ground rules and expectations right at the beginning of the class.

- ☐ Not starting or stopping on time. (Repercussions for sites that have multipurpose rooms or videoconference meetings immediately following your class).

- ☐ Not informing the appropriate Site Coordinator of a date or time change in a class. (You are not the only one using a site.)

Tips for Success
in the Distance Learning Classroom

- Know your audience.

- Look into the camera when speaking.

- Allow time for the student to respond - wait at least five seconds.

- Enunciate clearly and carefully.

- Actively engage students at all sites. Call on students by name regularly and design activities that require feedback.

- Pastel clothing works best. Avoid stark contrasts such as black and whites. Stripes and busy patterns do not show well on camera. Avoid bright dangling jewelry.

Tips for Success (con't)

- ☐ Instructional objectives do not necessarily need to be changed because a course is taught via videoconferencing.

- ☐ If it works in a regular classroom. It will probably work in the videoconferencing classroom with some adjustment.

- ☐ Be prepared. Be flexible. Be organized!

- ☐ Expect to spend more time preparing for class.

- ☐ Use all the technology available – emphasize interactivity – don't be a talking head.

- ☐ Emphasize your availability so off campus students don't feel isolated.

Tips for Success (con't)

- Visit remote sites as often as possible.

- Take class breaks frequently to reduce unnecessary entering and leaving class. Remember half the class is watching TV.

- Develop a TV personality.

- Provide advance notice of interaction.

- Allow students to lead discussions.

- Establish a response protocol.

- Have a student from one site answer the question of a student from another site.

Tips for Success (con't)

- Limit the amount of time that a camera stays on any one object. Ask the facilitator to use the video mixer to allow a mixture of the students seeing you and your slides.

- Limit distracting body and camera movements.

- Practice lessons and new technology in the videoconferencing classroom.

- Introduce participants to videoconferencing.

- Wait until the speaker at the remote has stopped speaking before responding or adding comments.

Tips for Success (con't)

- Advise students to "speak up."

- Do a roll call at the beginning of class and after breaks.

- Prepare a seating chart for you and each videoconferencing student.

- Avoid the temptation of focus on only one site.

- Do not pace back and forth in the room, or rock back and forth in place.

- Work with your facilitators at all sites to make the system work to your advantage. <u>Brief them before class – Debrief them after class.</u>

Tips for Success (con't)

- ☐ Your facilitator is your greatest resource. Make sure you establish a good working relationship with him/her and let IITS know if you are having problems.

- ☐ Video streaming is replacing videotapes as the method of getting lectures to students who might have missed them. Your lecture can be put on the Internet for any student to view with the use of the Starbak Streaming Server. Call IITS if you require this service.

Tips for Success (con't)

- If you plan on canceling a class meeting or need to extend your connection time to the remote site, simply call IITS as well as send an email to iitscal@uasystem.ua.edu and we'll be glad to take care of you. This will not be done until written notice is received!

- Having trouble with any equipment or want to learn how to use something new? Simply call the IITS office, and we'll be glad to assist you.

Graphics/Transparencies

- ☐ Drawings, graphics and transparency materials should be clear, large, and drawn with a broad pen. If electronically generated, a **bold** printout is advisable.

- ☐ Plastic overhead transparencies do not work well as they produce glare.

- ☐ Hard copy (printed) versions of your materials printed on light blue, light gray or ivory paper work best. White paper can be used, however, some white paper can glare on the screen.

Graphics (con't)

- A sharp pointer works well to draw students' attention to specific areas on your graphic.

- Handwritten materials are discouraged.

- Graphics/transparencies should be prepared in advance, or if necessary, generated during class discussions. They should be large, with no more than 35 characters to a line. Use large font when printing or writing, such as:**24 point size in bold.**

Graphics (con't)

- ☐ Color felt marking pens display very well and will add variety to diagrams.
- ☐ Avoid using all uppercase letters except for titles. It tends to be easier to read text when only the first letter is capitalized.
- ☐ Limit the use of different types of fonts to three: one for the title, one for the copy and one if needed for stressing important items.
- ☐ Limit highlighting to no more than 10% of the words using techniques such as boxing, underlining, color or shading.

Videotaping Your Class

- Video taping of your videoconferencing class at the host site is recommended.

- If requested in advance, the hub can schedule the Starbak for video streaming purposes.

- If you plan to show a complete video, please obtain copyright clearance to do so if necessary.

Clothing

- Colors that tend to look best on camera are medium hues of blue, brown and gray. Pastels look especially nice.

- Colors that do not look good on camera are shades of bright red, which look over saturated, dark solid colors, and extremely bright colors.

- Herringbone, tweed, small plaids, and busy patterns may appear distorted on camera and should be avoided.

- Dark suit and white shirt, are not the best for broadcast due to the extreme contrast.

Audio Tips

- No need to yell. Speak as you would in a traditional classroom. The microphone will carry your voice.

- Adjust your tone or volume to emphasize major points just as you would in the traditional classroom.

- Remember to allow for questions and comments from students.

- Remind students to introduce themselves before they ask their question. This allows the camera time to track to them.

- Also remind students to avoid shuffling papers, covering microphones and side conversations. Microphones are very sensitive and will pick-up even the faintest noise.

Video Tips

- Always address the camera with both eyes and your responses to the camera as though it is a student.

- A good tip for letting students at all sites think you are looking at them is to look between the top of the students' heads and the instructor camera.

- Some video movements may appear jerky and be distracting to students. Try not to sway or pace. If you are sitting, try not to rock back-and-forth or from side-to-side.

- However, you also want to avoid the "talking head" syndrome of no movement at all.

Special Points to Remember

- The instructor can take a few specific actions to prevent problems with the broadcast of a course.

Potential Problems of Videoconference Programs

- Bright white shirts.
- Typewritten vertical visuals on 8½x11" paper, rather than horizontally oriented.
- Small handwriting.
- Do not delay delivering copies of the syllabus for your videoconferencing class.
- Do not forget to prepare handouts in time for delivery to off-campus students prior to the pertinent lecture.

Potential Problems (con't)

- Examinations should be delivered to the distant campus site coordinator, with a sufficient number of copies for the off-campus students.

- Last minute surprises.