



Interactive videoconferencing

Learning and teaching strategies

Tips for active learning

These guidelines provide an overview of some of the active learning and teaching strategies that you might like to use in the video-conferencing environment. These ideas can be adapted and applied in many different ways as appropriate to the learning objectives of your subject/session and learning needs of students.

Active learning strategies can be used to:

- encourage students to become more involved in learning by 'doing', rather than 'watching';
- create space and time for students to think, clarify their ideas and reflect more critically on their learning;
- identify and build on students' previous experiences;
- check for understanding;
- create opportunities for formal and informal feedback;
- change the pace of activities in the videoconferencing environment (keeping in mind the 15- 20 minute talking/presentation rule);
- vary the 'level' or intensity of active listening and attentiveness;
- create a sense of community, and
- create opportunities for both *student-student* and *teacher-student* interactions.

Reflective questioning and ideas generation

"Think - Pair - Share" and "Cross-site Brainstorm" Activities

Pose a question or short scenario and ask students to turn off the audio (i.e. mute on) and work in pairs/groups for a *specified period of time*.

Give students one minute to reflect on the question/scenario, two minutes to talk about the question/ scenario with a partner and then with the mute off, ask for a response. It is not necessary to ask for feedback from all students/ pairs, but to seek a range of responses from the group across each site.

Minute Paper

Towards the end of the lecture or tutorial session ask students to put the mute on for a specified time and work in small groups or pairs to identify: (1) *The most useful/significant thing they learnt from the session*; and (2) *What was least clear to them*. Then ask for brief responses.

Feedback received can be used to summarise and/or elaborate on key learning points from the session and can also provide useful information for future session planning, e.g. issues that need further clarification; misconceptions etc.

The 'minute paper' questions posed can be varied as needed, but keep questions short (one or two only) and focused.

Critiques

Critiques can be interactive rather than based on individual reflection and analysis. Ask a student or pair of students to review an article, strategy, concept, process, decision or situation and to chair/co-chair a short discussion during the appropriate session.

Note taking

Consider the types of note taking activities students could do to encourage them to really think about lecture/tutorial material.

To be interactive, students must do something with the handout/lecture notes. For example handouts could be prepared as a simple framework of lecture points, where students are required to listen for relevant detail and insert their own points.

Handouts could also be linked to case-based learning exercises and other small group learning activities.

Concept maps

Students could be asked to identify the key ideas and concept/topic relationships discussed during the session as a concept map or mind map. The maps could form the basis of a short feedback session towards the end of the session or used as the basis for group work tasks.

Highlight questions

Using a document camera, PowerPoint slides or prior distribution of handouts to students, provide a list of highlight questions that focus on key points made during the session.

Work through the list and ask students if they are able to answer the questions based on the material presented.

Debating

Debating can create opportunities for students to share ideas and research, articulate, challenge or defend a position and/or clarify their assumptions, beliefs and values related to a particular issue.

The facilitator's role is to identify the 'rules' of the debate (e.g. number of speakers, time allocated to each speaker), pose the issue or question for discussion and provide a summary of remarks. Facilitation roles could also be shared with students at different sites.

Roles plays and simulations

These can create opportunities for students to explore a particular situation and/or take a position on an issue or process. For example, students might become 'players' in a case scenario or event that requires them to research positions and argue for certain actions, decisions or viewpoints.

It is important that you pre-plan and allow sufficient time for students to research and prepare for their assigned role play tasks (eg: assign and clarify role play and case scenario situations in prior-session). Clearly indicate the time limits for the role play activity and keep to time so that other planned topics/content areas are connected, but not overridden. It is also important to allow time for appropriate role play debriefing and discussion.

Case studies

Plan for short case studies to be presented by individual students as part of the video-conferencing session and allow time for focused discussion and feedback.

Useful resources

Flinders University. (n.d.). Teaching for learning . Available online: www.flinders.edu.au/teach/t4l/teaching/practices.htm [4 April 2006]

Knowledge Network Explorer website (2006). Videoconferencing instructional strategies. Available: www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/vidconf/instruct.html Date accessed: 8 May, 2006.

McKinney, Stewart. (2002). *Interactive videoconferencing : A guide for educators*. Available: www.csu.edu.au/division/celt/TOOLKIT/learning/Interactivevid.pdf Date accessed: 8 May, 2006.

University of Tasmania (2005). *Video conferencing resources for staff*. Available: www.utas.edu.au/itr/videoconf/resources.htm Date accessed: 8 May, 2006..