Teaching in real time using web-conferencing

Real time virtual environments give a new meaning to teaching face-to-face. While you are still able to see and talk to your students through your computer screen, interaction dynamics do change considerably.

Planning to teach real live using web-conferencing does not mean that you have to replicate everything you do in a face-to-face classroom. Consider the possibility of splitting a 3-hour lecture into asynchronous activities (such as uploading slide content in Canvas or creating reading discussion activities) and a synchronous session. Be mindful of the fact that due to connectivity issues and technical constraints all students may not be able to join a virtual-live session and a few may drop-out from the session. You may need to provide alternative ways of learning for them.

Think student **Presence**, **Participation**, and **Engagement** as you plan and facilitate.

Planning

- Prepare PowerPoint slides with images and text but do not clutter the slides. Make sure to include the agenda, learning objectives and summary.
- Plan short activities after each sub-topic (every 5-7 minutes). Type of activities could include:
  - Questions for students to answer verbally or via chat
  - Polls for anonymous responses
  - Whiteboard activity for brainstorming, drawing, or sharing
- Consider group activities, if you have a large number of students. Most web-conferencing tools have the provision to create breakout rooms.
- Identify web resources and videos to share but do not embed them in the PowerPoint slides. Keep all external links handy to share through the chat tool.
- Think of an interesting and relevant ice breaker activity to initiate the session. Depending on class size, make this an opportunity for everyone in the room to speak and share.
- Consider recording and sharing the session. Inform students in advance and give them the option to turn off their video if they have privacy concerns.
- Prepare housekeeping slides and ask students to:
  - Mute audio when not speaking
  - Raise hands to ask questions
  - Use the emoticons to provide feedback
  - Use chat to post questions and comments

- Share lecture resources including slides through Canvas. Encourage students to communicate through Canvas discussions.

Facilitating

- Open the virtual room at least 15 minutes in advance.
- Post a chat message to welcome students and remind them of the official start time.
- Encourage students to say hi and use chat and be social.
- Do a quick technical check to ensure students can hear and see you. This means testing your audio, video, and microphone.
- Confirm that students can see your slides when you share them.
- From time to time, check the chat for unanswered questions.
- Allow time for Q&A before ending the session.
- Summarize follow up tasks for students and remind them of the next steps, if any before making your closing remarks.

It is a good practice to create a storyboard and write a script (optional) to sequence and time your session. You can also add notes to your PowerPoint slides and print them out in advance.