Meeting in real time using web-conferencing

Whether you're using Collaborate Ultra, Zoom, or Skype for Business, many of the same procedures as regular meetings are applicable. For example, not interrupting other participants, and sticking to the meeting agenda as much as possible. There are a few special considers for the virtual environment, and these are listed below.

Planning

- Plan and schedule the meeting in advance. Impromptu communications should occur using other methods, such as phoning an individual, a brief phone conference call, an email, or a chat.
- In the virtual meeting request, be sure to include:
  - A link to the virtual meeting, start time and duration of the meeting.
  - The meeting agenda and any other relevant documents required for participants to prepare in advance.
  - A reminder for first time participants to log in advance to ensure they are technically prepared. Ask that participants using headsets and test them out in advance, and change settings as required. Include links or resources. For example, some tools have built in tutorials that you can recommend users take a few minutes to complete.
- Meeting facilitator should log-in before the meeting to upload any documents that will be shared in order to avoid uploading during the session.
- In larger meetings where multiple participants may be presenting online, it would be helpful to designate a virtual meeting moderator to change the participants "roles" in advance, or to unmute the next speaker so the meeting can proceed seamlessly.

Facilitating the Virtual Meeting

Starting
- Start formal meetings with [a land acknowledgement](). A verbal acknowledgement is fine, or share a screen with a written land acknowledgment.
- Start the meeting with a short ice-breaker to make participants comfortable. One suggestion might be to ask participants to go to the [native-land.ca]() site to figure out the name of the territory they are at and write that in the chat which is available with most virtual meeting tools.
- Provide a brief orientation to the tool features participants can use.
- Remind participants to mute their audio when they are not speaking, and unmute before speaking.

During

- Enabling everyone's camera for smaller team meetings helps to "humanize" the meetings. If the internet connection is poor, or for larger meetings, it's recommended to enable the current speaker's camera only in order to reduce internet bandwidth. Respect the privacy of participants if they choose not to turn their cameras on.
- Use the virtual meeting tool's built-in functionality, such as Blackboard Collaborates' "raise hand" to identify next speaker, or if this is not available, use the participants' list to invite speakers.
- Be comfortable with silence when you raise a question; thinking may take time, just as in in-person conversation.
- Give each participant an opportunity to contribute and resist the urge to respond to everything.
- As the meeting progresses, keep the virtual meeting time and space for decision-making, and subdue the tendency for round-table update type communications as those can be done via email in most cases.
- Take notes or minutes as you would for a face-to-face meeting.

Concluding

- To conclude, thank participants and remind them how to exit the meeting.
- Follow up with an email to share meeting minutes and any other relevant documents or links that were shared during the virtual meeting session.

Additional Resources

- How to lead a virtual team… tips & tricks