Engaging Online Students and Enhancing Learning via Web Conferencing Tools

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Engagement and Learning

“Effective engagement strategies can increase student focus, motivation, and higher-level critical thinking, and can encourage community in the virtual environment, as well as promote greater, more meaningful learning experiences” (Kelly, 2015).
The Criticality of Successful Online Interactions Between Instructor and Student

Interaction is a vital aspect of any learning environment, and meaningful, instructional interactions can promote higher engagement between students and teachers.

Web conferencing, when purposefully structured and managed, is a powerful online, interactive learning and teaching tool that can promote higher student engagement, thereby influencing greater student success.

This session presents recommended best practices for teaching via a web conferencing tool.
The Web Conference Instructor

During a web conference, the leadership role of the virtual instructor is powerful, from encouraging community among students via purposeful discussions, to facilitating high levels of thinking and knowledge construction.

The online web-conferencing instructor must consider two things:

• How to engage the students with a purposeful, structured lesson
• How to facilitate the instruction by managing the web conferencing tool itself
What Students Say About Web Conferencing...

Benefits:
● Immediate interaction and feedback
● Forged connection, virtual cohesiveness
● Increased student comfort
● Convenient (no travel)
● Reduced time and money expenses
● Felt that the teacher “cared”
● Instructor is engaged in conversation
● Variety of helpful tools (chat, emoticons, microphone, video, screenshare)
● Accessible (logging in and participating)

Areas for improvement:
● Software problems
● Unsure how to navigate
● Screen too small
● Layout of screens
● Tone of others in chat box
● Instructor unprepared
● Time not used well
● Background noise distracting
Engaging Strategies to Enhance Learning

Before Session:
- Send clear, concise announcement prior to conference, include:
  - Agenda overview (i.e., a few points on what will be covered, may mention that first few minutes will include “troubleshooting” time)
  - Instructions about the web conferencing tool (i.e., link to tool’s website)
  - Protocols and netiquette reminder
- Hold “test” session

During Session:
- Welcome/acknowledge students, provide agenda, reminder of “netiquette”
- Share screen, microphone, or webcam when appropriate
- Provide structured lesson, stay on target with time, lesson, and discussion
- Watch chat area, answer questions, recognize students by name

After Session:
- Follow up
- Solicit feedback

Note: See accompanying ”Tips & Tricks” handout for additional suggestions
Conferencing Tools

Adobe Connect
Canvas Conferences Tool (Big Blue Button)
Lync Skype for Business
Google Hangouts
Zoom
BlueJeans
WebEx
Facebook Live
Considerations

- University Policy on Third Party Tools
- Accessibility
- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
- UCF’s Syllabus Statement
UCF Syllabus Statement

Third-Party Software and FERPA

During this course you might have the opportunity to use public online services and/or software applications sometimes called third-party software such as a blog or wiki. While some of these could be required assignments, you need **not** make any personally identifying information on a public site. Do not post or provide any private information about yourself or your classmates. Where appropriate you may use a pseudonym or nickname. Some written assignments posted publicly may require personal reflection/comments, but the assignments will not require you to disclose any personally identity-sensitive information. If you have any concerns about this, please contact your instructor.
Resources

• Presentation Handouts
  • Tips and Tricks for an Effective Instructional Web Conference
  • Instructional Web Conference Communication Samples and Resources
• UCF’s Skype for Business (Lync)
• UCF’s Office of Instructional Resources’ Adobe Connect support videos
• NYU’s Best Practices for Teaching with Web Conferencing
• Neil Jarrett Using Facebook ‘Live’ in the Classroom is a New, Exciting Learning Tool
• W. Howard, Ed.D. Internationalize your Curriculum with Web Conferencing
• G2 Crowd Review of Web Conferencing Software
Thank you for attending!

Feel free to contact us:

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