



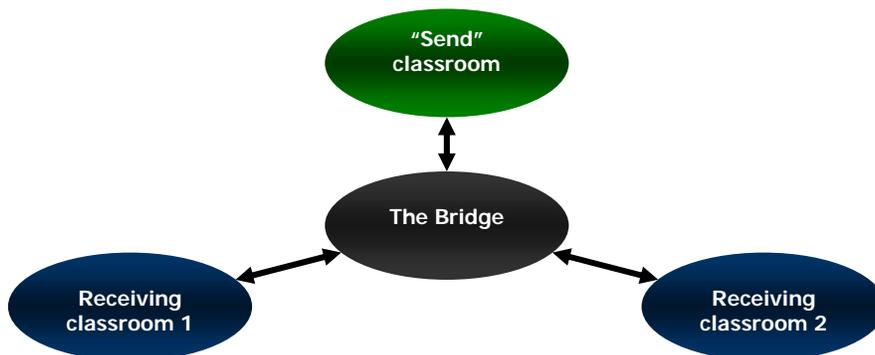
Effective teaching using video-conferencing

Notes prepared to assist video-conferencing instructors

College of Business, Florida Atlantic University

Teaching through video-conferencing (VC) is quite a different experience for most instructors. The most effective pedagogy likely blends those of the traditional, in-person classes with those of online classes.

The VC class originates in the “send” site and is then broadcast to one or more receiving sites. The Bridge manages the communication process, automating the process of enabling communications between the send and receiving classrooms, as scheduled.



Suggestions

1. Be prepared.

- The video-conferencing equipment will differ from classroom to classroom, so it is important to become familiar with the equipment in both the sending location and the receiving location.
- Not only may you be faced with having to direct-dial the remote location if there are problems at the Bridge, but you may have to instruct the students at the distant location how to change the camera position, mute or turn on the microphone, or send an image through the computer.
- Sending a video-conferenced class requires you to stay within a confined area during the entire lecture. Make sure that you design the class presentation so that you do not need to leave the console.
- Make sure that you can locate the contact information for the technical support personnel at your campus and for the Bridge. This should be available on or near the classroom console.

2. Use multimedia as much as possible.

- Students will get bored simply looking at you on the screen. The use of PowerPoint®, the document camera, or other projected software or material will help keep their interest, especially if the class meets for three hours. Be aware that there is a lag when switching media, so try not to switch between media too often during a class session.

- Consider the lighting at both the sending and receiving location. Whether you should use a light or dark background in your PowerPoint®, for example, depends on the lighting in the classrooms.
- Always check at the beginning of the class session to be sure that the remote locations can both see the instructor and any projected media, and hear the instructor.
- Avoid using the classroom's wall-mounted whiteboard or blackboard. The document camera provides a better display for the remote locations than any board in the classroom. You can use the document camera with a small whiteboard, which generally works well if the markers are black.
- The students at the receiving site will see the projected media, but they may also see you in a picture-in-picture box on the same screen (this depends on the particular receiving room). The students at the remote site can move the box to another quadrant or can eliminate the view of you completely. You may wish to specify whether you want the students to keep the "box" of you on the screen. Keep in mind that the box will cover material that you project in these cases, so be aware of this when you use the document camera, PowerPoint, or any other media.

3. Use course management software, such as Blackboard®.

- You can use Blackboard® to provide the syllabus, the schedule, and any other material that you would typically hand out in the traditional classroom. Be sure to announce the location of any material that you post and specify whether you want students to print and bring the item to class.
- You can use Blackboard for testing, either synchronously (with all students using laptops) or asynchronously (a "take at home" exam). If you test using a paper exam, arrange for a proctor in advance and arrange for the exams to be sent to and delivered from the remote site.
- The discussion board in Blackboard® can be used for class and group discussion and activities. Discussion boards, along with the collaboration (a.k.a. chat) tools, will compensate, somewhat, for the lack of office hours at the remote site. Keep in mind that some students are hesitant or shy about participating in a discussion board, so be sure to allow for your accessibility by phone for your remote students during scheduled office hours.

4. Manage the class.

- Encourage or require students to sit in the front rows of the remote classroom. It is very difficult to see students beyond the first few rows of the remote classroom.
- Encourage students to turn off the microphones unless they are asking a question. One of the most common complaints by students relate to excessive microphone static or noise. Another frequent complaint in the remote sites is that some students cannot hear the lecture because of talking by others in the same classroom. Be sure to explain that common courtesy of others is expected.
- If you are using Blackboard®, set up Collaboration so that students can ask questions from the remote sites without interrupting the lecture. If the equipment does not have a two-monitor system (one of the computer projection, one for other), set up a laptop to use for these questions. Encourage the students at the remote locations to log on to the instructional platform's computer or their laptops (if applicable) so that students may submit questions through the chat session.
- Watch the timing of the class. The class ends mercilessly at the scheduled time, so you do not have the opportunity to continue a discussion beyond the class time. Do not continue

your discussion with the live section if the remote section cannot view or hear this discussion. Instead, encourage questions outside of class using tools such as the discussion board in Blackboard®.

- If the class is interrupted because of technology, do not continue with the lecture until all sections are conferenced.
- If it is possible to do so, teach some of the classes from the receiving classrooms during the semester. This will give your remote students a better sense of belonging to the class. If you plan to originate the class from one of receiving sites, you will need to notify the Bridge of this change in advance.
- If your students are making presentations at the remote sites, you will need to notify the Bridge when you need the sending site shifted to the other location.

5. Office hours

- Office hours are often difficult to arrange for students at the remote sites, especially if the remote campus is a significant distance from the instructor's primary campus. Accessibility by phone during specified hours is important. It is also important that you respond to students' emails in a timely manner.
- You may want to explore some alternatives, including online office hours through Collaboration (a.k.a. chat) or video-conferenced office hours, using the smaller conference room video-conferencing facilities available at the campuses.