

## ***Best Practices for Teleclass Instructors***

### **Preparation Tips**

- Become familiar with operating the equipment with minimum assistance. One-on-one training is available through the Distance Learning Department.
- Prepare and organize materials in advance. Preview videotapes, DVD's, documents, and computer presentations in your specific teleclassroom.
- Design activities where students use the teaching station to make them more comfortable with the technology.
- Adapt your normal classroom techniques into a distance learning style.
- Prepare materials in advance and send to the remote sites ahead of time. You are encouraged to put assignments, handouts, etc., on D2L.
- Encourage correspondence through e-mail, phone, D2L discussions, etc.
- Develop a contingency plan for when technical problems arise.
- Summarize videoconferencing etiquette for your students so they understand how the open microphones work and so they understand how even small noises will be picked up through the microphones and amplified at all the other sites.

### **Student/Faculty Interaction**

- Involve students early in semester to make them at ease; start your class with an icebreaker that encourages students between sites to interact.
- Take class roll to encourage students to interact with the system.
- Learn your students' names and ask them questions directly. Create a seating chart for the first few weeks to accomplish this task if needed.
- Repeat every question or comment a participant makes to ensure all sites have heard the incoming question or comment.
- Determine the protocol for asking questions. Do you want students to interrupt you as you're speaking with a question or raise a hand, or will you allow certain times for questions?
- Because of a slight audio delay in videoconferencing, allow a few extra seconds from the time you make a statement or ask a question for responses from the remote sites.
- Diversify the class period with lecture, group work, games, problem-solving activities, role-playing, etc. Vary the center of focus between presenter, students, remote sites, and media.
- Give prompt feedback to all students; maintain continuity between sites by returning graded assignments/tests simultaneously.
- Videotape and assess your class; observe and share ideas with other teleclass instructors.
- If possible, travel to the remote locations two or more times during a semester and teach from that location, ideally at the beginning of the semester or at critical points in the course.
- Use your sense of humor.

## **Video and Audio Tips**

- Use visuals such as photographs, cartoons, charts, computer graphics, and video clips.
- Be aware of your outgoing video.
- Create eye contact with remote sites by looking into the instructor camera or at the monitor near the camera. Imagine that the video camera is one of your students. However, do not forget to look at your local site.
- Use proper framing when the camera is on you. Your eyes should be above center of the monitor, but give yourself head room.
- Be aware of your body language. Rocking, pacing, nervous habits can appear exaggerated.
- Wear clothing with solid colors or muted patterns, and avoid wearing busy patterns (ex., pinstripes) and highly reflective fabric.
- Wear only subtle jewelry, and avoid large dangling jewelry and beeping watches.
- Project your voice and enunciate clearly. Speak at a comfortable pace, but not too quickly.
- Pause when you expect a response from another site, and wait until the speaker is finished talking before you reply.
- Avoid rattling papers, flipping through books, tapping pencil/pen or strumming fingers on teaching desk.

## **Computer & Document Camera Tips**

- Computer presentations and documents should be simple and clear.
- When writing, use the width of your thumb as a guide for the height of your letters/numbers.
- When using text in presentations and documents, adhere to the “Rule of Seven”: no more than seven words per line and seven lines per page.
- Use bulleted points with only key words and visual aids while you explain the material.
- Always left align bullets. Titles can be left aligned or centered.
- Keep spacing consistent.
- Use a consistent style by keeping the background and text similar throughout the presentation.
- Use 32-point font or larger for presentations. Use sans-serif fonts (which do not have feet) such as Arial. Use no more than 2 to 3 fonts in your presentation.
- Use only 2 to 3 colors in your presentation.
- Underline sparingly.
- ALL-CAPS may be used in a title, but avoid using ALL-CAPS in the text body as it is hard to read.
- Use solid or simple background colors in presentations; busy patterns can be distracting.
- Avoid hot colors as backgrounds (red, orange, yellow) as they tend to vibrate and glow on the screen. Use cool colors (blue, purple, and green) as they are more soothing to the eye.
- Contrast color of text and the background. Darker backgrounds and lighter text is best for television monitors.
- Avoid black letters on white backgrounds, red letters on bright backgrounds, and bright letters on red backgrounds.

*Adapted from Horry-Georgetown Technical College (Teaching by Teleclass: A Best Practices Guide for Instructors).*