Best Practices for Teaching via Videoconferencing at Penn State

Delivered by ITS Training Services for Penn State
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VIDEOCONFERENCING

Videoconferencing is a method of extending your classroom to participants at different locations. This can be accomplished through personal computer-based videoconferencing systems and also through room-based systems where participants must physically go to a location where specialized videoconferencing equipment has been installed.

Many instructors believe that preparing for and implementing effective videoconferencing is “no different” than preparing for and implementing a traditional class. However, in the teaching and learning process there are some methods and techniques specific to videoconferencing which research has shown to be effective. Awareness of these approaches will assist you in preparing for and delivering educationally sound videoconferencing. This document introduces the best approaches for before, during, and after a videoconference.

Is Videoconferencing the Best Choice?

Below is a list of pros and cons to consider when contemplating videoconferencing as a delivery method.

Pros

• Instructors and students from multiple campuses may participate in the same course at the same time.
• Videoconferencing provides a good way of showing instructionally relevant motion and video.
• It can bring local and distant participants together in real-time and provide human interaction.
• It may have built-in tools such as whiteboard, screen sharing, and chat to enhance the learning environment.
• Recording options are available so others can view the session at a later time.

Cons

• The video portion of a videoconference is instructionally irrelevant if all you are showing is a talking head.
• The quality of the experience may vary from site to site.
• Videoconferencing can require significant technological resources and training for both the instructor and participants.
• The process may require additional support staff.
Choose the Videoconferencing Technology that Best Meets Your Needs

Penn State supports the following systems:

**Computer-Based Systems:**

- **Adobe Connect** – See https://meeting.psu.edu. Available to all. See also the Adobe Connect ITS Knowledgebase article (see http://kb.its.psu.edu/meeting).
- **Blackboard Collaborate** – Available only to World Campus instructors. See https://courses.worldcampus.psu.edu/public/elive/scheduler/eliveintro.html.

**Room-Based Systems:**

- **Polycom** – Available in dedicated, schedulable videoconferencing rooms only. See http://www.tns.its.psu.edu/ServiceCatalog/Video/Interactive/roomDesign.html.
- **MediaSite Live** – Primarily a lecture-capture technology. Available in specific rooms at University Park. May be available in other rooms/locations if requested. See http://www.libraries.psu.edu/psul/mtss/mediasitelive.html.

Which System is Right for You?

The College of Agricultural Sciences has a matrix that compares Adobe Connect and Polycom. See http://agsci.psu.edu/it/training-consulting/technologies/conference/which-to-use---polycom-or-adobe-connect/view/.

It is recommended you try each available system to determine which one best meets your needs.

The most important question to ask is, “Does the videoconferencing system support my learning objectives?” If not, can you modify or improvise to make it support them?

Before the Videoconferencing Session

This is a recommended list of activities to follow before the live videoconferencing session:

- Choose the technology that best fits your needs and instructional goals.
- Meet with your technical support staff.
  - Common questions to ask include:
    - How do I access the equipment?
    - How do my participants access the equipment?
    - How do I receive emergency assistance?
    - May I do a practice run with you?
- If you are running the video conferencing technology yourself, know how to operate the systems.
  - See a list of videoconferencing rooms at Penn State. Available at http://www.tns.its.psu.edu/ServiceCatalog/Video/Interactive/videoConfRoomsContactList.asp/.
  - For Adobe Connect, see http://meeting.psu.edu for more information.
• Complete a practice run at least 24 hours before the live session.
• Prepare and distribute all relevant materials, including a videoconferencing etiquette summary (see Appendix E for an example), to your participants. This may be done via email or some other method.
• If you plan to share a recording of the session with others not directly participating in the session, it is recommended that you obtain signed release forms from all session participants. Penn State Media Commons has release forms. See http://mediacommons.psu.edu/students/release-forms/.
• Ensure your remote participants are prepared to participate, access, and utilize the equipment (e.g., activate their microphones, utilize the chat tool, etc.).
• Have a backup plan in case the technology fails.
• Arrive 15-20 minutes before the session to test the equipment.

Copyright Concerns

Ensure you have the right to show any video, images, etc. that you plan to use during the videoconference. Refer to the ITS Copyright Policies Web Site (see http://its.psu.edu/about/policies/copyright) and the TLT Teach Act Web Site (see http://tlt.its.psu.edu/teach-act/) for more information.

It is recommended that all self-created videos and related materials should have a copyright statement to show Penn State ownership. Check with your development group or department head to see if this is required. Prepare and distribute all relevant materials prior to the videoconference. Example of a Penn State copyright: The Pennsylvania State University © [Year]. All rights reserved

Accessibility

When you are distributing University information electronically, including pre-recorded video, you should include the accommodation (ADA and Nondiscrimination) statements. Because video may easily be circulated outside of the University community, it should include the appropriate accommodation statements (even though it is not a printed publication). Additional information can be found at the Penn State Accessibility Web Site. See http://accessibility.psu.edu.
Meet With Your Technical Support Staff

If you have access to support personnel, meet with them to discuss your needs well in advance of the live session.

Make sure you also have their contact information and a way to contact them during the live session if equipment malfunctions. Ask them to train you on how to use the equipment. Ideally, you want to be able to run the equipment without assistance, but if they are available to facilitate the session, this frees you from the responsibility of running the technology.

For a list of contacts for videoconferencing rooms at Penn State, visit the Penn State Interactive Video Rooms & Contact List. See http://www.tns.its.psu.edu/ServiceCatalog/Video/Interactive/videoConfRoomsContactList.asp.

Know Your Equipment and Systems

Ideally your technical support staff will train you. If you do not have a dedicated technical staff, consider contacting the department that hosts the system for initial support.

- ITS Training Services runs training sessions on Adobe Connect and Videoconferencing. Visit the ITS Training Services Training Catalog for more information. See http://ittraining.psu.edu/workshops/.
- Lynda.com (available to Penn State faculty, staff, and students at http://lynda.psu.edu) hosts Adobe Connect training videos. See the video titled: “Adobe Connect Essential Training.”
- If not in a dedicated room, determine your Internet connection speed. Will it support video if you need it?
  Note: If you are using Adobe Connect, you can test your system to ensure it will work. See http://admin.adobeconnect.com/common/help/en/support/meeting_test.htm.
- If you have cameras, consider using several camera presets for different areas of the room. Some systems allow you to point the camera to a specific (local or remote) location and save that “pose” for later recall via a button push. This greatly facilitates conversations during the live session; when someone is talking you can push a button and the camera will focus on that individual. Always focus on people, not objects.
- If you set a preset on yourself, follow the elbows and wrists rule. When you stretch out your arms, the edge of the screen should fall between your elbows and wrists. Ten percent of the picture area should be left above the head.
- Note the microphone placement in the room.
  - Are there multiple microphones, or is there only one that must be shared? If so, can it be shared? If it is fixed in place, you should plan on repeating any statements or questions from participants into the microphone so remote participants can hear the statement or question.
  - A common problem with audio when using Adobe Connect is feedback or echoing. This happens when an open microphone is too close to a speaker – the sound loops from the speaker to the microphone, from the microphone back to the speaker, etc. Thus, microphones should not be active unless one is speaking,
and even so you may need to recommend the use of headsets with microphones for participants to eliminate this problem.

- Check the room lighting and see if you can adjust it so that the video is not washed out or too dark. Most cameras work better with more light.
- If possible, adjust the camera so ceiling lights are not directly in the video.
- Ideally, the wall behind you should be darker than your face to avoid backlighting, which would put your face in a shadow.
- Does your system support session recordings? If it does and if you want to utilize that feature to record your live session, learn how to do so prior to the live session.

**Encouraging Communication and Interaction**

The following are questions and statements to consider when planning for communication and interaction in a videoconference course:

- Consider listing or describing the session communication methods at the start of the session. Some systems allow for virtual raised hands that appear as small icons on the screen. These icons may appear when you are not looking or may otherwise be difficult to notice, so you may want to encourage participants to hold up something brightly colored to gain your attention instead. Other systems allow for chat communication, so you will have to frequently monitor that space and respond to these text-based communications.
- What type of interaction will occur?
  - How will the interaction occur? (Email? Videoconference session? Website?)
  - Does the interaction support your learning objectives and goals?
- Are support materials available for class activities?
- Are activities individual or group based?
- Will groups be local (all in the same physical room) or will they be a mix of some in the same physical room and some remote via the videoconferencing system? Local groups are easier to manage, as they do not need to rely on the videoconferencing equipment to converse.
  
  **Note:** Keep in mind that you may have several physically distant sites that each consist of a single group that shares the same physical room.
- Will individuals or groups share the results of their activities with others?
- Create a contact list for each location. Use name tents so participants learn the names of everyone regardless of their location. Make sure the name tents are readable from all locations.
- If you have several remote locations, select a moderator at each location to submit questions. A moderator at your location can alert you to a question that comes up so you can give time to that remote group of participants. The moderator role should be rotated among participants so one participant doesn’t become the “gatekeeper” for his or her group.
Plan Your Interactive Activities

Interactions during the session may be participant-to-participant, group-to-group, participant-to-materials, or participant-to-instructor. Interactions may be local, remote, or a combination of local and remote. The following activities can foster interaction in during a videoconference:

- Projects
- Demonstrations
- Discussions and debates
- Experiments and investigations
- Skits
- Role-plays
- Presentations
- Brainstorming
- Story boards, organizational charts, or outlines
- Games

Also, see the Incorporating Questioning Strategies section for additional suggestions on fostering interaction.

Interactive Activities Guidelines

- Keep the interactions simple.
- Send any needed materials to all participants in advance of the videoconference session.
- Prior to the live session, give participants involved in a demonstration, experiment, or presentations a chance to practice their activities while using the videoconferencing equipment.

Distributing Materials Prior to the Live Session

As in any good meeting practice, send relevant materials to the participants well in advance of the live session. Some systems like Adobe Connect allow you to post materials inside the session; if this is available do this as well. Participants giving presentations should do the same kind of materials preparation that the instructors do, such as sending handouts and presentations to all locations ahead of time.

Send a videoconferencing etiquette summary (see Appendix E for an example), to your participants.

Backup Plan

Here are some questions to ask yourself when creating your backup plan in case the equipment fails or malfunctions:

- Is the problem with the system or with something specific to the room? Is there another room I can use?
- Can I use another videoconferencing system?
- Can I use the telephone?
- Can I use an online chat room?
• How can I ensure participants have access to the needed materials in place of the session?
As part of your backup plan, consider campus closings due to weather or other reasons. If the broadcast site goes down or is unavailable, then you need to think about the above questions. However, if only one of the receiving sites is down the class can still occur as scheduled. In this case, you should consider recording the session and mailing the recording’s URL out to the participants who could not attend the live session due to their site’s closing.

JUST PRIOR TO THE SESSION

• Appropriate clothing is important.
  o Solid colors are best. Stripes and patterns may cause poor video camera performance.
  o Avoid wearing shirts with words written on them. Words can be distracting to the participants.
  o Do not wear jewelry that reflects light or makes noise, such as bangles or loose chains.
• Reduce environmental noise. Turn off fans, close windows and doors, mute cell phones and beepers, lower volume on office telephones and computer alert sounds for incoming mail and instant messages. Microphones can intensify these normal sounds.
• If you are using a computer to run the videoconferencing session.
  o Turn off all unnecessary programs to save bandwidth and to reduce the chance of a system crash.
  o Check your microphone and speakers/headset to make sure they are operating properly.
  o If possible, wear a headset instead of using external speakers to avoid audio feedback
• Play some music prior to the start of the session to let participants know that the audio is working and to set a relaxed mood.
• If appropriate, have participants introduce themselves and/or their sites and locations.
• If you are using a room-based system:
  o Visit the room where you will be conducting the session. Note the areas of the room where you will be teaching to make sure that the camera is set to view those areas. If your camera supports presets and you have not yet set them, now is the time to do so.
  o Try to show the entire room so remote participants have an idea of the size and layout of the local participants’ room.
  o Note the microphone locations in the room so you can adjust participant placement and microphone use appropriately.
DURING THE SESSION

- Allow time for introductions, and introduce people that may not appear on camera.
- Have the camera pan around the room (if possible) to capture any off-camera participants when they are speaking.

Presentation Tips

- Carefully choose where you will stand or sit. If the camera is to focus on you or a podium, then you need to be within the camera’s viewing range most of the time. If you walk around frequently, the camera will show an empty space most of the time!
- Some instructors choose to sit in the audience with the participants to encourage more participation. This also allows participants at remote sites to see the local participants most of the time.
- Speak slowly and clearly, in a strong voice.
- Don’t forget the remote sites - include them in your presentation, your discussions, your questions, etc.
- Call on participants by name.
- Know that most subtle facial expressions will either be lost or exaggerated.
- If you are using a room-based system:
  - Maintain eye contact, alternating between making eye contact with the camera and with the local participants, if any.
  - If your camera does not automatically follow you when you move, stay within the camera’s view.
  - Use a document camera or electronic whiteboard for on-the-fly writing with a nice sized marker to make the writing as readable as possible for remote participants. Do not use a physical chalkboard or whiteboard.
- For on-screen presentations:
  - Use large text.
  - Use colors in the middle of the color spectrum. Avoid reds and purples – they may “bleed” on the remote end.
  - Use solid color backgrounds.
  - Use a high contrast between the foreground and background colors. For videoconferencing, a light (but not white) background with dark print works best. A purely white background will produce too much of a glare.
  - Don’t just read your slides! Invite participants to comment on what they read.

Pacing

- It is a good idea to change presentation formats and activities several times during a single session. Some people cannot concentrate for more than six minutes at a time! Do not talk at participants for more than ten minutes at a time. After you lecture, plan for an activity or time for interaction.
- Frequently encourage participant questions and interactions. In addition to voice communication, participants can also use text chat (if available) to indicate that they have a comment or question that they would like to be called on to express.
• When asking questions, call on a specific site or participant. Rotate the order in which sites or participants are called. This eliminates the problems of no one speaking or everyone speaking at once when a question is asked.
• Ask specific sites to respond to comments made by another site in order to enhance discussion.
• If someone responds via text chat, be sure to read the response aloud so all can hear it.

**Incorporating Questioning Strategies**

There are key moments in any session that can benefit from the addition of a questioning strategy:

**Near the Beginning of the Session**

• Determine participants’ existing knowledge of a topic
• Determine participants’ learning goals/needs
• Make connections to participants’ lives and experiences

**During Transitions Between Topics Within the Session**

• Check participants’ understanding
• Elicit questions from participants

**Near the End of the Session**

• Help participants apply new information
• Help participants retain and process knowledge

Questioning is a form of engagement and will benefit all participants. Please see Appendix F for a complete listing of questioning types and strategies.

**Other Factors to Consider When Using Room-Based Systems**

If you are using a room-based system to teach a class, you can help bridge the distance between yourself and the remote participants by traveling to and teaching from each remote location at least once during the course if at all possible. If you are able to do this, you should plan your first visit(s) to the remote location(s) close to the beginning of the course to give participants a chance to meet with you in person and discuss any concerns they have. Your other visits should be centered on critical points in the course, such as exam preparation or project presentations.

Likewise, see if your remote participants can come to your main location at least once during the course. You should encourage participants who are able to visit to schedule their first visits toward the beginning of the course. Subsequent visits can be planned around proctored exams or participant project presentations. If participants make the trip, give them time before or after class to meet with you and socialize with the other participants.
AFTER THE SESSION

Immediately After the Session

Don’t close the videoconference connection immediately. Allow for an informal "warm down" period during which any participant can interact with you in an informal setting. Let participants know prior to the end of the official session that you will be doing this.

Assessment

You should assess your videoconferencing class with the goal to continually improve each of these areas:

- learning outcomes
- participant satisfaction
- instructor effectiveness
- technology performance

Send out a brief survey to your participants asking for feedback to incorporate into your next session. Please see Appendix C for a sample you may use.
CASE STUDY – A CLASS WITH BOTH LOCAL AND DISTRIBUTED PARTICIPANTS

Scenario
Part of your course includes a series of “roundtable discussions” about hot topics in your professional area. You generally conduct these roundtables by first presenting the topic via a PowerPoint presentation and then encouraging open discussion. Your department head wants to expand your course to reach remote students, using more than a telephone conference.

Solution
Your department created an Adobe Connect meeting space to host your videoconferencing sessions. Your department head will supply a moderator for several initial sessions with the expectation that you will eventually be able to run these sessions on your own.

Before the First Session
As you have never used Adobe Connect before, you decide to attend an ITS Training Services session (see http://ittraining.psu.edu/workshops/) on Adobe Connect: The Basics.

After meeting with your local technology support staff, you decide to use two wireless microphones during your class sessions. One is for you and the other is for the moderator. You will be presenting the content. The moderator will monitor the Adobe Connect chat pod to field questions, reply if he or she can, and pose questions from remote participants to you and the local participants.

You decide that you will use the following Adobe Connect Pods: Camera and Voice, Share, File Share, Chat, Question and Answer, Poll.

Any material that you will use during the course of the presentation, whether it is a PowerPoint presentation or a web-based presentation, should be shared electronically prior to the start of the session. This ensures that everyone have access to these materials. This is also part of your backup plan.

The rest of your backup plan is to encourage participants to place questions in an emergency online forum to which you will respond should the live session fail.

You do a dry run several days before the first session and work out all of the kinks in the technology. You have to move one camera and make a note to pull the blinds in the room so the remote participants’ views are not washed out due to excessive lighting.

Just Prior to the Session
You dress in plain clothing. You double-check all the technology, close the window curtains, and ask the moderator to pan the camera around the room so remote participants have a feel for
the local site. You play some soft background music. You ask everyone (local and remote) to introduce him or herself.

**During the Session**

You ensure you are in the camera’s view at all times and make sure you glance into the camera periodically. You speak slowly and in a clear voice. You make sure you call on participants by name.

Since you have a microphone, you can assume that everyone in the room and at the distributed locations can hear you. If a question or comment comes from a participant at the live site, the moderator will restate the question to ensure remote participants can hear it, and you will then answer the question.

During the presentation, you may want to periodically pose questions to participants, in order to tailor or focus a part of the presentation. By using various the Adobe Connect poll pod, remote participants can replay anonymously to certain questions to give you an idea of what conceptions or misconceptions they may have.

During the open discussion part of the session, you ensure communication between local and remote participants is working well.

**After the Session**

At the conclusion of the presentation, you use the poll pod(s) to determine future topics, future dates, or any other information that relates to this session or future sessions.

You remind everyone that this is a good time to talk to you one-on-one.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to thank the following individuals at Penn State for providing reference materials that were instrumental in the development of this document:


In particular, the Faculty Guide to Teaching through Videoconferencing prepared by Allan Gyorke in 2006 was heavily referenced, and he in turn built that guide by referencing the writings and efforts of many others at Penn State.

Ann H. Taylor provided us with many relevant documents she has used to teach videoconferencing skills at Penn State.

ONLINE RESOURCES


Video Tips from Instructional Designers. Last accessed on September 30, 2013 at https://docs.google.com/document/d/170aiUgMThfl4qmiX2l91lfT2TvgZXsMlf-BFfNn584/edit?authkey=CO7WxbAK&hl=en_US&authkey=CO7WxbAK&pli=1#heading=h.vy4mcplc4bf
Appendix A: Videoconferencing Quick Tech Checklist

Before the Session

- Meet with your technical support staff.
- Know your equipment and systems.
- Do a dry run at least 24 hours before the live session.
- Ensure remote participants can access and utilize the equipment.
- Develop and send your videoconferencing participant guidelines to the participants.
- Have a backup plan in case the technology fails.
- Arrive 15-20 minutes before the session to test the equipment.

Just Prior to the Session

- Make sure the camera is set to view you. Set presets if available.
- Note microphone locations.
- Reduce environmental noise.
- Close all unnecessary computer programs.
- Have the camera pan around the room (if possible).

During The Session

- Account for audio delays between sites.
- Stay within the camera’s view.
- Ensure on-screen presentations:
  - Use large text.
  - Use colors in the middle of the color spectrum.
  - Use solid color backgrounds.
  - Use a high contrast between the font and background colors.
- Don’t just read your slides!
Appendix B: Videoconferencing Best Practices Checklist

Before the Session
- Choose the “best fit” technology for your needs and instructional goals.
- Prepare and distribute all relevant materials to your participants.
- Ensure remote participants can access and utilize the equipment.

Just Prior to the Session
- Dress in plain clothing.
- Have participants introduce themselves.
- Play some music.

During The Session
- Speak slowly and clearly in a strong voice.
- Build in interactions. Include remote sites in conversation and activities.
- Maintain eye contact both with the camera and with the local participants.
- Call on participants by name.
- Change presentation formats and activities several times.
- Assign a site spokesperson and rotate this responsibility.
- Read text responses aloud.

After the Session
- Allow for an informal "warm down" period.
- Assess learning outcomes, participant satisfaction, instructor effectiveness, and the performance of the technology.
Appendix C: Videoconferencing Survey

Use this as a template for designing and delivering your own post-session survey to participants.

Please rate the following on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = Poor and 5 = Excellent.
1. How useful were the pre-session documents, handouts, etc.?
2. How well was the content delivered by the presenter?
3. How well did the instructor address both local and remote participant questions, etc.?
4. How well did the instructor respond to participant questions?
5. Were participant questions and interactions encouraged?
6. Rate the quality of the participant activities.
7. How well did the video work?
8. How well did the audio work?
9. How technically effective were the presentation tools?

Please briefly answer the following.
• What was the best part of the videoconference?
• What was the worst part of the videoconference?
• General comments?
Appendix D: Moderator Checklist

Moderators can use and modify this checklist to ensure an optimal videoconferencing experience. If you are an instructor without a moderator, use this checklist in conjunction with the Best Practices checklist. Some items are Adobe Connect (AC) specific.

Before the Session

- Confirm you are in the session as a moderator or host. (AC specific)
- Check any backup plans and ensure they are ready to use.

Just Prior to the Session

- Arrive 20-30 minutes early.
- Open the session and ensure it is working properly.
- Ensure the equipment is working.
- Ensure remote participants can access and utilize the equipment.

During The Session

- If appropriate, start recording the session. (AC specific)
- Monitor any text chats and inform the instructor as appropriate. Read text responses aloud if appropriate. (AC specific)
- Monitor any visible signals (like a raised hand) and inform the instructor as appropriate. (AC has a Raised Hand icon)
- Periodically check with remote participants to ensure they can hear and see the local site.
- As appropriate, ensure the presenter is in the camera’s view.

After the Session

- Stop any recordings. (AC specific)
- If there are any session assessments, remind all participants to complete them.
Appendix E: Participant Etiquette Guide Example

Provide the following information to participants prior to the videoconference:

- Be on time.
- Turn off cell phones. Cell phone signals may affect the conference audio.
- (Virtually) raise your hand to talk. Do not interrupt others when they are talking.
- Speak naturally in the direction of the microphone.
- Avoid coughing into microphones, drumming fingers, or carrying on side conversations. Remember that microphones are very sensitive and may pick up even quiet conversation or comments.
- Mute your microphone when not speaking if possible.
- Identify yourself when speaking for the first time.
- Pause occasionally so others may make comments.
Appendix F: Participant Engagement Questioning Types and Strategies

Question Types

Closed Questions
Closed questions can be answered with a simple word or short phrase and are often designed for yes or no responses; they may be used to gather simple information from learners, to quickly reinforce key points, and to quickly check learner attention or knowledge.

Examples of closed questions:
- Have you done this before?
- Do you agree with that statement?
- Which web browser are you using?

Open Questions
Open questions are designed for more detailed responses; they may be used to solicit learner opinions, encourage learner reflection, and engage learners at a deeper level of understanding.

Examples of open questions:
- How do you keep focused on your work?
- Why is that idea so important?
- What would you do differently in this situation?

Recall Questions
Recall questions ask learners to respond with a factual statement; they may be used to check whether respondents remember key points, to determine learner’s exposure to basic factual principles, and more.

Examples of recall questions:
- What was the last point I made about using Firefox?
- What is the purpose of the home button?
- Where is the email tab located?

Opinion Questions
Opinion questions ask learners to respond with their individual thoughts or to analyze a given situation in order to form a judgment; they may be used to gather information about learner attitudes, to assess learners’ decision-making processes, to engage learners’ emotions, and more.
Examples of opinion questions:
- What are some advantages and disadvantages of using Firefox as your primary browser?
- Of the three ways to return to the home screen, which do you think is the best or most efficient?

**Question Purposes**

There are seven purposes for questioning:
1. Determine learners’ existing knowledge of a topic
2. Determine learning goals and specific needs
3. Make connections to learners’ lives and experiences
4. Elicit questions from learners
5. Check understanding
6. Help learners apply new information
7. Help learners retain and process knowledge

**Use of Pods for Questioning In Adobe Connect**

**Polls** (Multiple Choice, Multiple Answer, or Short Answer): Asking learners real-time survey questions in a variety of forms; allowing learners to answer anonymously; quickly displaying answers or response statistics to learners.

**Chat Pods**: Asking questions that require brief or direct answers; eliciting questions from learners; keeping a record of important questions that can be referred to at a later time.

**Note Pods**: Typing specific questions in advance in order to display them to learners during a session (pods can be dragged from the presenter space to the main screen so learners can see the text of a question as they type their answers in the chat pod); avoiding the need to repeat a verbal question multiple times.

**Whiteboards**: Getting learners to ask or answer questions in a collaborative space; collecting questions or responses that you will return to later in the session; asking multi-part questions.

**Question Examples**

**Example 1 — Determine Learners’ Existing Knowledge of a Topic**

**Closed Questions**
Are you familiar with X?

**Open Questions**
How have you used X or something similar in the past?
Multiple Choice Poll
How many times have you used X in the past month? (Choose one.)
1. 0-5 times
2. 6-10 times
3. More than 10 times

Multiple Answer Poll
Which of the following tools are you most familiar with? (Select all that apply.)
X
Y
Z

Short Answer Poll
Name the most important thing you need or want to understand by the end of this session.

Whiteboard
In the center column of the whiteboard, please write one specific skill you would like to gain from today’s session.

Example 2 — Determine Participants’ Learning Goals and/or Specific Needs

Closed Questions
Would you like to learn more about A, B, or C during this session?

Open Questions
What are you interested in learning how to do during this session?

Multiple Choice Poll
Which of the objectives I just read seems most relevant to your specific purpose for attending this session?
1. Objective 1
2. Objective 2
3. Objective 3

Multiple Answer Poll
Which of the following options best represents your reason for signing up for this session? (Choose all that apply.)
X
Y
Z

Short Answer Poll
Type the most important thing you need or want to understand by the end of this session.
Whiteboard
In the center column of the whiteboard, please write one specific skill you would like to gain from today’s session.

Example 3 — Make Connections to Learners’ Real Lives and Experiences

Closed Questions
Do you think you would use X in your workplace?

Open Questions
How would you use X in your workplace? What do you think are the benefits of using X instead of Y for [specific work-related or classroom-related purpose]?

Multiple Choice Poll
Which of the use cases I just discussed is most similar to how you would use X in your own work?
1. A
2. B
3. Both
4. Neither

Multiple Answer Poll
Which of the following common workplace problems could be solved with the use of X? (choose all that apply)
X
Y
Z

Short Answer Poll
What ways have you seen others use X?

Chat Pod Question
Do you have any questions about how or why to use X in a classroom environment? If so, please type them in the chat pod now.

Example 4 — Elicit Questions From Learners

Closed Questions
Would you like me to review any information about the three items I just discussed (X, Y, or Z)?

Open Questions
What is one question you still have about when to use X instead of Y?
Multiple Choice Poll
I anticipate that you might have this question___; do you want me to review the answer briefly before we move on?
   1. I’m ready to move on.
   2. I would like to review this briefly before moving on.

Multiple Answer Poll
Which of the following actions would you like me to briefly review before we move on:
   X
   Y
   Z

Short Answer Poll
What is one question you have about using X for [specific purpose]?

Chat Pod Question
Please take the next 60 seconds to think about the topics we’ve covered so far and type any questions you have about those items before we move on.

Example 5 — Questions to Check Understanding

Closed Questions
Which is the best way to do X…is it Y or Z?

Open Questions
What is one way you can accomplish X using this tool?

Multiple Choice Poll
Which of the following is not a real application of X tool?
   1. X
   2. Y
   3. Z

Multiple Answer Poll
Please check the boxes next to the actions you now feel comfortable completing using X tool.
   A
   B
   C
   D

Short Answer Poll
Which of the three ways I said you could do X seems most logical to you?
Chat Pod Question
Scenario: I’ve accidently deleted my meeting notes! How can I retrieve them again? Please type your answer in the chat pod.

Example 6 — Questions to Help Learners Apply New Information

Closed Questions
Which of the following seems like a realistic way to use X based on what we’ve discussed? (X, Y, or Z)

Open Questions
I mentioned the ability to use X for several purposes, but what other ways do you think people could use X?

Multiple Choice Poll
Which of the following groups do you think would benefit most from using X?
1. Students
2. Faculty
3. Staff
4. Other

Multiple Answer Poll
Choose all of the accurate statements about X from the options below:
A
B
C
D

Short Answer Poll
What do you think would happen if I did X at this stage instead of Y?

Chat Pod Question
Can you predict any dangers if I used X without checking Y first?

Whiteboard
The features of tool X are listed in the first column; please type some features of tool Y in the second column to help compare and contrast the two.

Example 7 — Questions to Help Learners Retain and Process Knowledge

Closed Questions
Do you feel that you understand more about using X after attending this session?

Open Questions
What is one strategy you learned in this session that you think you will actually use?

Multiple Answer Poll
Which of the items listed below are the three actual uses for X that we have discussed so far?
A
Short Answer Poll
What is one important distinction you can make between X and Y?

Chat Pod Question
What best practice have you heard that you think you will take with you after this session?

Whiteboard
What was the most important or interesting tip you learned from this session?
Technology Training Resources

Through ITS Training Services

Find face-to-face and online training workshops through Penn State ITS Training Services at http://lrn.psu.edu

Request Training On Demand (sessions upon request for groups of five or more) at http://ittraining.psu.edu/workshops/

Explore thousands of free video tutorials that are available for self-paced learning at http://lynda.psu.edu/

Take free Microsoft eLearning courses or find out more about free certification vouchers at http://msitacademy.psu.edu/

Discover training news, fun tips, and session reminders via social media on @psuITTraining (Twitter) http://www.facebook.com/psuitstraining/ (Facebook)

Join one of our news lists to receive monthly email notification of all upcoming technology training opportunities, by sending a blank email to
L-TRAINING-NEWS-SUBSCRIBE-REQUEST@LISTS.PSU.EDU (Training News List)
L-FACULTY-TECHTRAINING-SUBSCRIBE-REQUEST@LISTS.PSU.EDU (Faculty Training List)
L-CAMPUS-TECHTRAINING-SUBSCRIBE-REQUEST@LISTS.PSU.EDU (Campus Training List)

Additional Technology Resources

Contact the IT Service Desk with general technology-related questions by emailing ITServiceDesk@psu.edu or call 814-865-4357 (HELP)

Search for technology-related information in the IT Knowledge Base at http://kb.its.psu.edu/

Purchase discounted software or software licenses through Penn State at http://software.psu.edu/

Access free online books about popular technology topics through the Penn State Libraries at http://proquest.safaribooksonline.com/

ITS Training Services at Penn State

23 Willard Building • University Park, PA • 16802 • Phone: 814-863-9522
Fax: 814-865-3556 • itstraining@psu.edu • http://ittraining.psu.edu