

# Virtual Classroom



## **ONLINE CONFERENCE** SM

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# Facilitator Skills— What Skills Do I Need?

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# Virtual Classroom Online Conference: Facilitation Skills

## Virtual Presentation Best Practices

### Planning for Delivery

1. **Don't "wing it"** - *PLAN > PRACTICE > KNOW THE TOOLS > TEST EVERYTHING*
2. **Have contingency plans** - technology will fail you
3. **Know the tool interface** - be creative using the features to interact with participants
4. **Map out ALL presentation features**, activities, and functions.
5. **Don't go it alone** - If feasible have someone act as co-presenter, moderator, virtual coach or event producer to lessen the burden of managing the event.

Final Prep...

- ✓ Find a quiet location
- ✓ Have a comfy chair
- ✓ Have glass of water near by
- ✓ Put on some Lip Balm
- ✓ Turn off the phone ringer
- ✓ Shut down e-mail

### Considerations for Preparation and Delivery

In Physical Classroom	Virtual Classroom	Considerations
Projected PPT	Sharing on screen	Not all tools will allow the upload of files. Be sure all are tested prior to the session.
Participant Workbook	File Transfer	Send the materials prior to the session with specific instructions to download and print out if necessary. Check with participants at the beginning of the session and push the files out if needed.
Nodding, smiling, raising hands, confused	Status Indicators, webcam	Check in with the participants regularly.
Verbal Input	Phone or VOIP	When using VOIP, audio can be one of the biggest challenges. Be prepared with a backup plan.
Whiteboard/flip chart	Annotation Tools	Give clear instruction on when and how to use the tools.
Group discussion	Breakout Rooms or Private Chats	These activities can take longer in a virtual environment. Plan carefully and watch the time.
Video clips	Video Files	Test all files. Some can be uploaded into the room, some may need to reside on a separate server.
Asking questions	Chat; Raise Hands; Polls	Set the expectation of how to ask and respond to questions at the very beginning.

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## Facilitation Best Practices

- Share objectives to set expectations for participants (how & when should they participate)
- Encourage active participation
- Involve participants through creative and fun interactions
- Ask engaging questions, and remind them where and how to answer
- Use your time wisely – activities can take longer to conduct online than live
- Provide source materials before, during, and/or after the event
- Provide visual cues on the screen – use the pointer or annotation tool
- Keep your pace and tone conversational – try not to read from a script and if you do, practice to sound more conversational
- Reference on screen location
- MUTE your mic or telephone whenever you are not talking
- Have a structured close to the event and opportunity to follow up
- ***Have Fun! Don't take yourself too seriously. Mistakes happen, technology fails, make the most of it***

## Verbal Communication Tips

Your verbal and even non-verbal communication skills are critical during an online session. Since there is generally no face-to-face interaction, receiving visual cues from your audience is minimal and vice versa. ***It will be your voice, presentation style and online presence that will represent you.***

1. **Modulate and project your voice:** *Avoid being monotone or mumbling.*
2. **Do not read from the screen:** *Participants can read for themselves. Your voice track should supplement content on the screen.*
3. **Avoid the use of filler words like “uh,” “um,” “like,” “because,” or “you know?”:** *Record yourself during a dry run and determine what your fillers are, then practice them out of you.*
4. **Don't assume the audience is comfortable learning online:** *Provide resources such as Quick Tip Cards before the session. This will make participants feel more at ease and able to focus on content. Set the expectation at the beginning how they are to engage, ask questions, or provide feedback.*
5. **Don't be afraid of the silence:** *Silence does not necessarily mean participants are disengaged; they just might be processing. Allow time for them to answer and react (TIP: Silently count to 10 before moving on). Be careful of moving on before they have had enough time.*
6. **Don't apologize for the tool:** *It's not the same as face-to-face, but you can accomplish the same objectives and do just about all the same activities.*
7. **Don't wait until the end to ask for questions:** *Engage participants early and often.*
8. **Be careful of “rambling”** – *nerves often cause this. If you start going too fast or get off track, just stop, mute your phone, take a deep breath, un-mute the phone and begin again.*
9. **Keep your tone conversational,** *but still sound professional through word choice.*
10. **Give clear and succinct instructions** *when directing activities.*

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### Adapting Physical Classroom to Virtual Classroom Presentation Skills

If you say in the physical classroom	Then you would say in the virtual classroom...	Collaboration Feature to Use
"Let me demonstrate.."	"Please look at my screen as I start my application sharing."	Application Sharing
"Select this or this..."	"Please respond by selecting green check or red X found under your Status Indicators. These are found..."	Status Indicator Icons
"Explore this website on your own"	"Please click the link provided in the Chat area. This will open a new browser window..."	Hypertext link in Chat or Application Share Web Content
"Share an example of your own..."	"Please click the Raise Hand icon to indicate if you would like to share..."  "Please post your example in the Chat area"	VOIP – pass microphone privileges  Status Indicators; Chat
"Draw on the flip chart to.."	"Using your annotation tools, found on the top left corner of your screen, click your Ellipse tool and then click on the screen to ....."	Annotation Tools
"Please fill out the evaluation form..."	"Please complete the assessment now being opened on your screen..."	Testing or Polling
"Take a 10 minute break.."	"We will now take a 10 minute break. Let me know you have returned by giving me a Green check..."	Status Indicator
"I see that you are confused..."	"How did that work for you? Please raise your hand or post in the Chat area"	Status Indicator; Chat
"Turn to the practice unit that begins on page..."	"Download the assignment."	Materials Panel; Share Pod; Push materials to participants
"We will now watch a video..."	"I will now play a video. The video should be displaying and will begin to play..."	Video File; Hypertext Link to a Video
"Let's brainstorm..."	"Type your responses in Chat..." OR "Click your Raise Hand icon if you would like to share..."	Chat Text; Status Indicators; or Whiteboard

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## Developing a “Plan B”

*“Murphy’s Law..if you don’t have a Plan B, your technology is going to fail.”*

Would you know what to do if any of the following happened during your event?

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Audio goes out              | <input type="checkbox"/> Lose the presenter             | <input type="checkbox"/> Video won’t play             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Internet goes out           | <input type="checkbox"/> Electricity goes out           | <input type="checkbox"/> Slides won’t load            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-work wasn’t sent        | <input type="checkbox"/> Producer doesn’t show          | <input type="checkbox"/> Presenter is late            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Participants can’t use Chat | <input type="checkbox"/> Presenter can’t see the screen | <input type="checkbox"/> App Sharing suddenly stops   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Demo site is down           | <input type="checkbox"/> Room crashes                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Dog eats computer cable      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Participants can’t log in   | <input type="checkbox"/> Session didn’t record          | <input type="checkbox"/> Booted out of breakout rooms |

### General contingency plans:

- Have a printed out copy of your slides
- Have a copy of the presenters slide open on your machine
- Have a backup presenter on stand-by (if possible)
- Log on to a second machine
- Have contact information of the presenter/producer
- Have videos available outside of the platform on a separate server
- KNOW THE TOOLS and be flexible to punt during the live session

PLAN,  
PRATICE,  
KNOW THE TOOLS,  
TEST EVERYTHING,  
HAVE A BACKUP PLAN

## CONTACT INFO

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[podcast](#)