

# 10 TIPS for Virtual Teaching in COVID-19

In the context of COVID-19, safety concerns, PPE shortages, physical distancing constraints, and added responsibilities pose challenges to organizing and hosting traditional face-to-face teaching and learning experiences. This resource is meant to help you continue your faculty development and residency education efforts during the pandemic when feasible by offering best practices for virtual teaching.

## 1. Use a video conferencing platform

that is easy to access and includes the features you need (see below for recommendations). Some universities and hospitals may have firewalls and/or security policies that limit the platform you can use.

## 2. Turn on your webcam

With the ongoing pandemic, it's more important than ever to establish your presence and create a sense of connection among your colleagues. To mimic eye contact, position your webcam so that you can look directly into it when speaking. Consider turning it off when presenting materials, as it can be distracting.

## 3. Ensure a quality listening experience

If possible, test out a few mics to ensure good audio quality (e.g. some webcams have built-in mics, and some platforms offer both "computer audio" and toll-free dial in options). Vary the pitch and tone of your voice to create energy in the group and help keep learners' attention. Ask learners to mute their mics when not speaking to limit distracting background noise.

## 4. Build a sense of community

A sense of community is crucial, especially now in the midst of this pandemic. Invite learners to turn on webcams and mics at the beginning of a session to say hello (this may be more challenging with larger groups of 10+ people). It's always good to incorporate ice breaker exercises into your session. Allow time and space to check in with your learners to see how they're doing, share experiences and offer support.

## 5. It's important to limit lecture time

in an online environment. Flip the classroom and send learners readings/materials to look at prior to the class. Use the online time for activities and discussion.

## 6. Engage learners often

and in different ways. Active learning activities that work well for both smaller and larger groups include poll-taking (if the tool supports that function), and pausing often to ask questions for learners to answer in the chat. If your platform has a "break-out room" feature, you can include small group activities. Some tools allow you to give control to attendees of the presentation to give them a chance to present /teach.

## 7. Use the chat function

Encourage learners to ask questions in the chat and pause often to answer, making sure to address individuals by name (this helps with engagement, community and a sense of presence). If you can't answer all questions during the session, follow-up with answers later.

## 8. Limit online sessions to 60 minutes

Unlike an academic half day or a full day workshop, it's very important that virtual sessions are short, even it means you have to deliver content over multiple sessions.

## 9. Keep your presentation simple

If you are using a slide deck, avoid animations and transitions to keep things simple and limit the amount of text on slides.

## 10. Follow-up with learners after the session

Consider sending a summary post-session to reinforce key messages, and/or a reflective exercise to help consolidate their learning.

# VIDEO CONFERENCING TOOLS

## Which one best meets your needs?

	<a href="#">ZOOM</a>	<a href="#">CISCO WEBEX</a>	<a href="#">GOOGLE HANGOUTS (CLASSIC)</a>	<a href="#">SKYPE MEET NOW</a>	<a href="#">JOIN.ME</a>
<b>FREE</b>	● *Only the "basic" version is free, which has some limitations (including a 40-minute time limit for meetings)	●	●	●	
<b>SCREEN-SHARING</b>	●	●	●	●	●
<b>RECORD SESSION</b>	●	●		●	●
<b>CHAT TOOL</b>	●	●	●	●	●
<b>BREAKOUT ROOMS</b>	●	●			
<b>GIVE CONTROL TO OTHER USERS</b>	●	●			●
<b>NO SIGN-UPS OR DOWNLOADS FOR ATTENDEES</b>	● *If you have an invite to join a zoom meeting, and you can't download the installer, you can still join the meeting using the web app instead. You don't need to install anything using the web app, it launches in your web browser.	● * If you have an invite to join a Webex meeting, and you can't download the installer, you can still join the meeting using the web app instead. You don't need to install anything using the web app, it launches in your web browser.		●	●
<b>CAN HANDLE 50+ PEOPLE</b>	●	●		● *Can handle up to 50 people	●
<b>LIMITATIONS</b>	<a href="#">Security/privacy issues</a>	Generally lower quality video than Zoom	Can only be used if you have a Google account  Can only handle up to 10 people	This is a brand-new tool, so too soon to tell	Not free – different prices for different plans

### Resources:

[9 Icebreakers for Remote Teams, Hybrid Teams, and In-Person Teams](#)

[Teaching Remotely in Response to COVID-19: 10 Tips to Improve your Digital Classroom](#)