

50 Web-conferencing Best Practices for Instructors- By Jim Rich

Fundamentals: Course Development, Teaching & Technology

- Establish that there is a reason for teaching on-line, such as cost saving or convenience, etc.
- Design the learning environment to be challenging and collaborative.
- On-line instructors often use a student-centered (Constructivist) teaching approach.
- During course development, think as though you are in the audience.

- Ensure that training provides some form of student interaction every 3 to 5 minutes.
- Experience the on-line learning environment before you facilitate.
- The teacher's role often involves being a facilitator who guides the students.
- Be familiar with class content.

- Learn how to use the Web-conferencing tools in a low-risk situation.
- Have prospective students test the on-line delivery system beforehand.
- Record student questions that are asked in the session's chat function.
- Practice, practice, practice course delivery to get comfortable with Web-conference tools.

Presentation Strategies

- Slide presentations do not need to say everything. Use slides to HELP tell the story.
- Avoid reading your presentation word-for-word.
- Include an "Any Questions?" slide in your presentation after each major section.
- Use interactive tools such as Polling features to keep students engaged.

- Encourage text messaging to keep students engaged and interacting during the session.
- Use two computers: one to monitor the class; the other to see how the class comes across.

Slide Development

- Organize course content, specifically for the session, before starting to create a slide show.
- Do not expect the first draft of a presentation to be the final slide presentation.
- Use a slide that presents the learning/meeting objectives.
- Include a slide that provides an overview or outline of your presentation.

- Summary slides need to align with course objectives.
- Avoid text heavy slides. Using appropriate images can be more effective than a slide with text.
- Use an easy-to-read font typeface at a suitable size, such as Helvetica or Ariel fonts.
- Make use of bold, italics and underlines sparingly to highlight key ideas.

- Use the Contrast, Repetition, Alignment, and Proximity approach (CRAP) to slide creation.
- Select color backgrounds, fonts and images that create good visual contrast.
- Avoid difficult to see and read color schemes, fonts and images.
- Web-conferencing systems can have presentation file size limits. Check before a the class.

Course Delivery Strategies

- Upload a current photo of yourself to make the on-line session more personal.
 - Make sure that everyone knows the *Ground Rules* for the Web-conference before the session.
 - At the start of the class, review *ground rules* and let the students experiment with features.
 - Keep tuned into the participants during the session and don't be passive.
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- Students cannot see you, so think out loud during the session to keep them engaged.
 - Do not attempt to use *all* of the Web-conferencing tools in your first class.
 - Prepare, load and test course content (slides etc.) before the session begins.
 - Run through the course content by using a live on-line pilot session.
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- Work with an assistant who can provide instructor support and help students.
 - Get feedback from an experienced instructor who has observed your class.
 - Log-in 15 minutes early to greet students and address any technical issues.
 - Establish problem solving plans for dealing with problems and stick to them.
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- Technology can fail so don't panic, use your back-up plan.
 - Let students know that, if technology does not work, there is no penalty.
 - Record the class, so people who were unable to participate can review it later.
 - Make sure you have a system in place for student-to-student and student-to-teacher feedback.
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- Prepare thought provoking questions before the session and pace the delivery of those questions.
 - Ensure students are engaged every couple of minutes using various interactive methods.
 - During the Web-conference, close content items when you are done with them.
 - Schedule breaks if the class is longer than an hour.

Source:

<http://www.parsecinfo.nl/support/whitepapers/best-practice.htm>

Graphic Arts Training Essentials: Best Practices for Student Success. By Jim Rich

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