

General Advice for Online Synchronous Sessions

Before the session

1. **Join early.** Get in the habit of joining your sessions early (15-30 minutes). It starts things off right when you greet participants as they join. It will also give you ample time to load content and test your webcam and video.
2. **Prepare content ahead of time.** Create presentation slides and instructor notes, and include multimedia, application sharing to help reinforce content. Don't just expect interaction to happen. You can design it into your lesson plan. Your instructor notes should include what you want to say and do on each screen. Your notes can also include suggested questions to promote discussion and interaction.

During the Session

1. **Check regularly that no one is having problems,** as you cannot assume students will make you aware if they are.
2. **Smile and your participants will smile with you. Be positive and energetic, and your students will catch your enthusiasm.** Your voice is critical to setting the tone.
3. **Engage participants.** Experts say that there should be interaction every six minutes, so start off with an ice breaker, such as displaying a map on the board and having each participant indicate where they are located. Ask questions that require students to raise their hands or click an emoticon. Be the "guide on the side," encouraging students to think and respond.
4. **Students must keep their microphones off during the session.** Otherwise, you may not be able to conduct a proper session because of the background noise. At the beginning of the session, tell your students to turn on their microphones only when they have something to say.
5. **Only the moderator (you) should have the camera on in order to prevent the internet to slow down.** If the students keep their cameras on throughout the session, the internet will significantly slow down. But this also means that you will be talking to a screen and some students may seem online but they may be having lunch in another room or watching tv. In order to make sure the students do follow the session, keep asking questions and randomly pick students to respond.
6. **Check frequently for understanding.** Use instant polling and publish the results to stimulate discussion.

After the Session

1. **Get feedback** after the event and encourage students to be open with any difficulties they faced.
2. **Provide resources and materials** including links to recordings, transcripts and any files that were used during the session e.g. PowerPoint slides by uploading them on Blackboard Learn. You can do this before the session starts.