Best Practices for Video Conferences

Video conferencing offers some exciting possibilities for instructors who want to connect their classroom with the world beyond the DKU campus:

- Teach with colleagues from multiple institutions
- Invite a researcher to talk remotely with your students
- Hold class online while out of town

Below are some best practices for video conferences in the classroom.

1. **Web conference with WebEx.** A web conference is a simple way to connect with someone at another location with live online video and/or audio. We recommend WebEx, a web conferencing app \supported by Duke that has a wide range of features. Access WebEx at webex.duke.edu.

2. **Practice, practice, practice.** Do a test run to make sure you know how to use the web conferencing app and its features. Ask your students to practice using the app, too.

3. **Prepare for things that could go wrong.** Share your cell phone number with participants in case the web conferencing doesn't work. Make the time and timezone clear to participants. Have a backup plan: audio instead of video, a new date, a Skype call instead of WebEx.

4. **Speak slowly.** Although video allows everyone to see each other, it does not convey many of the cues that make for engaging conversations. You can overcome this by allowing for more time to ask questions and absorb content.

5. **Display less.** If you are using lecture slides, use large font, bullet points, and visuals to emphasize your content, not distract the listeners.

6. **Pay attention to your surroundings.** Make eye contact with the camera, and don't wander through the room when teaching. Set up the classroom to maximize interaction, e.g. angle desks so all students are visible. If conferencing solo, find a quiet, well-lit location.

7. **Encourage discussion and interaction.** Ask students to pose questions for a guest speaker online in advance of an interview. Consider having students talk in smaller groups online during class to discuss issues or solve problems.

8. **Talk to the experts.** Work with DKU IT to reserve a teleconferencing room. Contact classroom support for technical training of the room equipment. Contact the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) for advice on choosing the appropriate platform for you and to discuss further ideas for video and teaching.

9. **Get training.** Use lynda.com (free for Duke users) to watch teaching videos about the various web conferencing platforms.