

# **WVU Interactive Video Network**

## **Student Guide to Videoconferencing**

---

### **Welcome to the Distance Learning Environment**

Courses delivered via technologies are becoming more common throughout West Virginia. Interactive compressed video offers expanded opportunities to extend programs throughout the state. Interactive video makes it possible to connect to several sites simultaneously that may be miles apart to create one classroom environment. The video and audio are high quality, but motion can be slightly delayed. We have found that students and faculty quickly become accustomed to it, but you should be aware that slower and less motion is inherent with the technology.

### **The Interactive Video Network Classroom**

Our classrooms have fully interactive video and audio. The system is voice-activated, which permits all locations to hear the other sites, as well as see whichever site has the dominant speaker. This allows the distance locations to see the faculty member and/or lecture materials when lecturing, or see a student at a particular site when he or she asks questions.

The classrooms are equipped with “push-to-talk” microphones; you will need to press and hold down the button labeled “Touch” the entire time you are speaking. Speak directly into the microphone; talk normally. The “student camera” at the front of the room will reposition and focus on the student who is speaking. Please don’t place books, papers, or other articles over the microphones, as it will cause the microphone to remain open which will create feedback at all sites.

The monitor in the back of the classroom permits the faculty member to observe students at the other locations. It will show the site with the dominant speaker. There is a camera located above this monitor that captures video of the faculty member to be delivered to the distance sites.

The monitors and/or screen in front of the classroom are for the students. One shows the visual materials presented by the faculty and the other monitor displays the distance classrooms. The technicians ensure that the monitor shows the appropriate video.

## **Tips for a Successful Distance Learning Course**

### ***Be On Time***

Each class is scheduled to begin and end at specific times. If the class doesn't end on time, technicians may terminate the class in order to prepare the system for the next class. We recommend that you arrive early for your class. If the technical set-up is trouble free, you may have time before class to talk with the instructor or students at the distant sites.

### ***Be Assertive***

We recommend that your instructor establish protocol that allows you to interrupt and get his or her attention. Feel free to interrupt the instructor if you can't hear or see what is happening. If more than two sites are connected the instructor may not be able to see you to know that you have a question. When you do ask a question or interrupt the instructor, it is best to state your name and site location. Inform the instructor if he or she is talking to fast or if the font on the graphics are too small or hard to see.

The instructor can control several features of the system, but technicians will have to adjust other features. Some classrooms may have a facilitator/technician to assist the instructor in managing the system, so if a problem occurs with the audio or video, tell the instructor or facilitator/technician.

### ***Student Participation***

The distance learning system is called "interactive" because you are expected to participate in the experience.

In order to make your participation easier, be aware that there is a slight delay between the time you ask or answer a question and the time that the next person will speak. This delay is a characteristic of the interactive system, the time it takes to code and compress video information and send it back and forth between sites. Usually we expect a delay of two or three seconds so don't worry if the response is a little slower than you expect.

### ***Assisting the Instructor***

As in a traditional classroom, you may be asked to help the instructor by collecting assignments at your site or distributing materials. Your help will be appreciated.

### ***Instructor Contact***

If your question has to do with individual grading, topics for your paper, or other individual matters, please contact your instructor outside of class time. Office hours and method of communication with the instructor is available in the course syllabus.

Providing feedback and input will improve your experience.

## **Student Presentations**

### ***Presenting Visual Material***

Every classroom is equipped with a document camera to present written material. The document camera image on the monitor in the front of the classroom is transmitted to the distant sites. There is also a monitor built into the instructor console to show you the outgoing image. The document camera can be used to present written notes as well. Plain paper and markers work the best to produce the best image for video transmission.

If you plan to present pre-prepared written material, there are several issues to consider when preparing them. Video images are wider than they are tall. They use a 4 x 3 aspect ratio. Therefore, when preparing written materials or word-processed documents, the paper should be in the landscape orientation instead of the standard letter orientation. When using word-processing software, we recommend using a font size no smaller than 36 point, preferably larger. Any font size smaller will be difficult for students at distance sites to read on the video monitors.

Transparencies are not ideal for use on the document camera. In most cases they are in portrait orientation and glare from the lights in the classroom can obscure the writing. Using the plain paper master of the transparencies is preferable.

The document camera is also a good way to show small objects. It is the best way to show the object to the distance students and generally better for local students than passing an object around the room.

### **Computer Presentations**

All Interactive Video Network classrooms have Internet accessible instructor computers with basic office software. There is also a VGA adapter, which enables a laptop to be connected to the system.

### **Videotape**

All rooms have the capability to show videotapes. Tape viewing is for educational purposes only. Tape should be "cued-up" prior to presentation.

### **Conclusion**

Please be sure to follow the information provided in this study guide. Remember the key to success in Distance Education lies with you. Make the best use of all the resources available to you for your course and/or program.

We welcome your comments and suggestions by telephone and e-mail. If we can provide any assistance to you during the semester, please let us know.

We wish you luck and great success in your educational endeavors.

## Technical Assistance

If you encounter technical difficulties during class, please utilize the e-mail address and/or phone numbers listed below to contact WVU Televisions Productions engineer on duty.

[ivinhelp@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:ivinhelp@mail.wvu.edu)

Control Room Phone: 293-0570

Cell Phone: 216-3428

Pager: 987-4425

During regular business hours (Monday-Friday 8:15-4:45 p.m.), you can contact:

Cindy Hart

Coordinator of Distance Learning

WVU Extended Learning

[Lkhart@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:Lkhart@mail.wvu.edu)

293-3852

Spencer Graham

Media Specialist

WVU Extended Learning

[Spencer.graham@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:Spencer.graham@mail.wvu.edu)

293-1305 ext. 3

Carl Hughes

Communications Engineer

WVU Television Productions

[Chughes@wvu.edu](mailto:Chughes@wvu.edu)

293-1305 ext. 6