Video Conferencing Checklist

Plan Ahead

➢ Know how to use the equipment:
   □ Have your username and password to log into your account
   □ Set up/test your audio and video (using the Set Up Wizard if available)
     ❖ You will need a webcam and a headset with a microphone or a conference
       speakerphone if you plan to use all the video conferencing features.
   □ Ensure the webcam is angled properly to capture the participant(s) and the lighting is
     appropriate so the image is bright and sharp (avoid back lighting, such as a window)
     ❖ An activity/session can be done as a whole class using one camera, or by having
       individuals/small groups accessing the activity/session from their own computer.
   □ The audio should be loud and clear, but not distorted
   □ Set up an activity and send the invitation to all participants/guests; include a reminder email
     ❖ Record the session if you’d like to access it for future discussion; ensure everyone is
       aware of this in advance

Pre-Activity: Prepare your Guest(s)

□ Ensure all guests know how to access the activity/session
□ Outline what you would like accomplished during the activity, the types of questions that
  might be asked and any additional information that may be pertinent to the activity/session
□ Check your connection with all participants/guest(s) prior to the day of the activity and review
  the functions of the video conferencing system you will be using
□ Conduct a dry run of the activity and make any adjustments as necessary; all necessary
  documents/resources should be uploaded to the system first

Pre-Activity: Prepare your Students

□ Review/practice clearly enunciating and projecting one’s voice; speaking slower and slightly
  louder than normal will be required
  ❖ Using the record feature is a great way to provide constructive feedback to students
□ Decide on a protocol for asking questions and ensure everyone, including guests, have been
  made aware of the process
  ❖ For some activities, using the “hand” tool in the video conferencing platform could be a
    useful way to manage questions.
□ Provide an overview of behaviours expected during the activity/session
□ Prepare questions to ask of the guest(s)
### Student Roles

- **Engage your students by providing them with roles during the activity/session.** Some examples may include:

  - **Calendar** | Responsible for adding date & time of planned videoconferencing session.
  - **Greeter** | Greets all guests. Makes initial introduction. Talks about geographic location.
  - **Share** | Shares something special about the class, school, city, province or country.
  - **Q&A** | Asks specific questions for data collection.
  - **Photographer** | Responsible for documenting video conference with still images.
  - **Backchannel Writers** | Documenting conversation, questions, answers and classroom happenings during the video conference on a backchannel chat (ex. Today’s Meet)
  - **Backchannel Cleanup** | Responsible to save backchannel as a document and cleaning up duplicate comments and mark questionable statements to be verified.
  - **Google Earth** | Finds location of guests and measures distance in miles & kilometers.
  - **Info Station** | Responsible to search for any data questions on the spot. Verifies any questionable information as well.
  - **Elapsed Time** | Responsible for noting the time the video conference started and ended, as well as calculating elapsed time.

(Adapted from original by [Silvia Rosenthal Tolisano](#))

### During the Activity

- **Arrive early to ensure everything is ready to go**
- **Have each participant/guest do a sound check at the beginning of the session**
- **Allow time for introductions and instructions**
- **Mute the classroom microphone or individual microphones when someone else is speaking** (the “Leader” of an activity has the ability to mute all microphones if necessary)
- **Minimize background noise** (i.e. shuffling papers, side conversations, etc.)
- **Monitor the pace of the activity/session and stop to ask questions or provide feedback**
- **Allow extra time for responses as there may be a slight delay**

  - As you become more familiar with the technology, you may want to start incorporating some of the interactive features available in the video conferencing system, such as:
    - chat, surveys, sharing web links, using the whiteboard, annotations, breakout rooms, screen sharing and more.
### Post-Activity

- Debrief as a group
- Have students do a reflection of the activity/session
- Share the activity with others (if recorded)
- Thank all guests
- Curriculum extension activities

### Ideas

- Speak with content experts (authors, producers, artists, historians, scientists, etc.)
- Connect with classrooms around the world (or close by); compare everyday lives and learn about communities
- Practice interview skills (record for instant feedback)
- Conduct a virtual fieldtrip:
  - Tour a museum - many distinguished museums around the world digitally open up their collections
  - Conference with a doctor performing a medical procedure
- Invite guest speakers
- Learn about a remote environment

### Via (https://talk.ednet.ns.ca)

- Via is currently the video conferencing platform available provincially to the public education system in Nova Scotia.
- Contact your school board technology representative to have an account created.
- To access Via, go to the link above and enter your username and password.
- For more information about Via watch the Via Basics videos or once logged in to Via, download the User Guide from the Home page under “Downloads”.
- For technical support, contact the Help Desk during weekdays between 8:30am - 4:30pm at 902.424.2450.

“...videoconferencing can and does expand the walls of the classroom to transform learning opportunities for students…”

*Wesley Fryer, Moving at the Speed of Creativity*