



TIPS FOR A  
*SUCCESSFUL*  
VIDEOCONFERENCE

**Contact North | Contact Nord**

Ontario's Distance Education & Training Network  
Le réseau d'éducation et de formation à distance de l'Ontario

# VIDEOCONFERENCING TEACHING ACTIVITIES

A successful videoconference requires advance planning and coordination, as well as some special considerations of the technology. These guidelines are presented to assist you in preparation and delivery of your videoconferences.

---

## Before Your Videoconference...

- Create a detailed plan
- Structure your presentation into small chunks
- Become familiar with the room
- Produce visuals well ahead of time
- Provide all sites with copies of visual materials
- Familiarize yourself with the use of peripheral equipment
- Have a contingency plan to insure participants know what to do if they or you are disconnected

## During Your Videoconference...

- Encourage participation by calling on specific sites for comments
- Include a variety of interaction opportunities
- Look at the camera when talking
- Use tent cards with names in large, bold characters
- Plan frequent question and answer periods
- Make use of camera presets to increase visual variety
- Minimize movement

**Your on camera appearance is also important!**

## Guidelines for What to Wear...

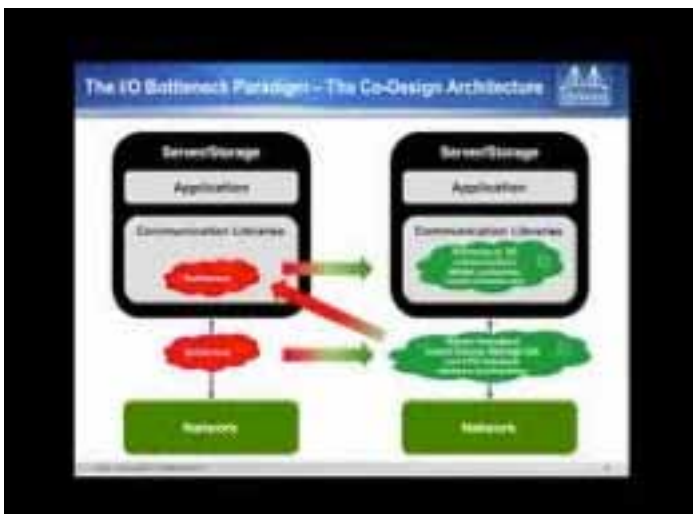
- White reflects light and causes things around you to appear darker
  - Black will make everything else look too light
  - Avoid flashy, dangly, and reflective jewelry
  - Busy patterns (polka dots, stripes, plaids) will degrade video quality
  - **Solid pastels/muted colours** result in better video images
- 

## Tips for Better Visuals...

- Use larger than normal font size (sans serif)
- Print horizontally on page
- Keep the design simple
- Limit wording per page
- Choose colour schemes with high contrast

## Tips for Better Audio...

- Address participants by name
- Clearly announce
- Speak slower than normal but with a natural volume
- Limit verbal interruptions (use non verbal feedback – nod/shake head)
- Position microphones properly
- Avoid rustling papers, side conversations, fingers or pens tapping
- Mute microphone when not talking



## Basic Terminology

### Camera Presets

Allows pre-defined camera angles to be programmed into a videoconferencing system.

### Desktop videoconferencing

Most appropriate for small groups or individuals (compare with room-based videoconferencing). Many desktop videoconferencing systems support document sharing and multi-point calling.

### Document Camera

This is a specifically designed camera used for transmitting document images or images of objects into the videoconference. It can also be used as a substitute for a whiteboard, much like an overhead projector.

### Room-based Videoconferencing

Videoconferencing using a sophisticated system. Appropriate for large groups.

### Touchpad/Remote

In most videoconference sites the video-conference equipment is controlled using a touchpad or remote.

### Content Monitor

The Content Monitor is located beside the main monitor. It shows content (images, documents, computer presentations, video) included in the videoconference. (When content is not being shown, it can also display the view from your main camera.)

### Mute/Unmute

This refers to whether your microphone is active or turned off (muted).

### Video bridge

Computerized switching system that allows multipoint videoconferencing.



## Setting Camera Presets

One of the best ways to seamlessly increase visual variety is to make use of the camera preset function. For example, you can set up preset 1 to focus on you, preset 2 on your whiteboard, and additional presets for other visual references you may wish to focus attention on throughout the videoconference.

The camera presets are available using the Preset button on the remote control.

To store a camera preset to the remote control:

1. Use the Arrow Keys and Zoom Button on the remote control to move the camera to the desired position
2. Press the Preset button
3. Press and hold a number to store the preset position
4. Repeat as needed

Presets are deactivated when the camera is moved manually.



## Other Resources

Contact North has prepared the following detailed resources to help you plan and prepare your next videoconference.

- Introduction to Videoconferencing
- Instructional Design Considerations
- Teaching Activities
- Planning and Preparing Visual Materials
- Communication Tips

These and other resources can be found at [www.contactnorth.ca/training](http://www.contactnorth.ca/training).

---

### For more information contact:

#### Contact North | Contact Nord

##### **Sudbury Office**

410 Falconbridge Road

Sudbury, Ontario P3A 4S4

Tel: 705-560-2710

Fax: 705-525-0136

Toll-free: 1-800-561-2222 option 1

##### **Thunder Bay Office**

1139, Alloy Drive, Suite 104

Thunder Bay, Ontario P7B 6M8

Tel: 807-344-1616

Fax: 807-344-2390

Toll-free: 1-800-561-2222 option 2