

# Virtual Teaching Tips and Tricks

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With the recent unprecedented move to online teaching many are now playing a dual role of teacher and learner; learning how to teach in a new and unfamiliar virtual format. This Med Ed Minute highlights practical tips to prepare for online teaching and how to best engage your learners for an effective virtual learning experience.

## What to consider in advance?

- *Video or audio:* Decide if both you and your learners should have your cameras on or use audio only. If using audio only, best practice is to start with your video on for the introduction, turn off your camera for the teaching session, then turn it back on for Q&A and closing.
- *Pre-post work:* Consider if there is work learners can do (pre or post) away from the virtual classroom to maximize the online time together.
- *Timings:* Be mindful of timings as virtual timing is different than classroom timing (due to the technology element).

## What to do to prepare?

- *Headset:* Have a functional headset that you have tested in advance.
- *Internet:* Ideally, have a wired connection rather than use Wi-Fi, to ensure a quality connection.
- *Practice:* Familiarize yourself with the technology ahead of time.
- *Backup plan:* Prepare for the unexpected! If the technology fails, have a backup plan in place (e.g. teleconference).
- *Build-in breaks:* Build breaks into your teaching plan, especially for sessions beyond 90 minutes.

## How to engage your learners?

- *Be prepared:* This will facilitate a smooth and effective teaching session to maximize the online time together.
- *Set expectations:* Communicate with your learners to let them know the teaching will be interactive and their engagement is key for a successful learning experience.
- *Create a social experience:* Ask questions to prompt discussion, ideally every 4 minutes (see next point).
- *Utilize the built-in videoconferencing features:* To create a social experience utilize the chat, polling, feedback tools (raised hand, thumbs up, checkmark, etc.) and/or breakout rooms features.

## How to best use your webcam?

- *Position:* Place your camera at eye level, centering your face on the screen (rather than looking up or down to it) and situate yourself at a distance where your shoulders and upwards are visible.
- *Lighting:* Place lighting in front of you. Have room lighting facing you rather than beside or behind you to minimize shadows/darkness.
- *Background:* Ensure a tidy, uncluttered background to minimize distraction.

## References

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