

# INCREASING CONNECTEDNESS

# ITV/ZOOM CLASSES



Fostering feelings of connectedness between faculty and distant students as well as between face-to-face and distant students is critical in ITV courses. Of course, each faculty may approach this task differently. Here are some practices that have proven helpful during ITV classes:

- **Establish norms for whether cameras should be on or off and when.** Most ITV faculty note that they always begin class by showing their face to students and asking students to show theirs. Depending on class size, some even greet students individually as each logs on or ask non-coursework-related questions of students during the time before class begins.
- **Establish a protocol for what you and/or the distant students will do if technical issues arise during class.**
- If you are teaching a course in which you have a room of face-to-face students and distant students, **begin each class session by greeting both face-to-face students and the distant students.**
- **Establish norms for how students will ask questions, and stick to them.** Literature shows that students on the far side are often reticent to ask questions for fear of interrupting the flow of class. It is helpful to address how you want students to ask questions during the first class (and in repeated classes). Many faculty opt for asking students to use the raise hand feature of Zoom, but doing so means that you need to monitor this feature continuously. Others encourage students to simply speak up when they have questions. Others build brief breaks into lectures or between lecture topics to provide one or two minutes of reflection and ask students to reserve questions for that downtime.
- In classes with face-to-face and distant students, **repeat questions asked so that distant students are sure to hear them.**
- When you are demonstrating something on the desktop, **move your mouse pointer slowly and intentionally** so students can see what you are doing.
- **When concluding class, it is helpful to say goodbye to distant students.** If an incoming class requires that you conclude the class quickly, mention to distant students how they should contact you with additional questions.
- **When concluding class, it is helpful to verbally confirm the end of the class period.** Doing so lets students on the far side know it is okay to log off, for instance, in cases where follow-up conversation extends beyond the class period's end time.
- Additionally, consider these best practices:
  - Many faculty note that they find it very helpful to **offer an orientation to Zoom or some sort of orientation video for distant students in advance of the start of classes.** Creating this video not only affords the opportunity to talk students through the most-used features of Zoom but also to establish norms (e.g. always start class with cameras on, leave microphones muted during lectures, etc.)
  - **Provide timely feedback on assignments and timely answers to emails.** Particularly, when distance prevents chatting after class or stopping by during office hours, knowing that one will receive a timely reply to questions is helpful.
  - **Consider holding virtual office hours.** Depending on the class schedule, this may make sense before or after class.
  - **Supplement opportunities to ask questions in class with opportunities to ask questions outside of class,** perhaps via a discussion board in Brightspace or (if you're comfortable doing so) via a messaging app such as WhatsApp.
  - As an instructor, you do not always have access to students' nonverbal cues as you would in a face-to-face class, so be sure to **communicate accurately and confirm your students understand.**