

# Make the Most of Your Virtual Workshops



## Interactions

Interactions include polling, status icons (raise hand, thumbs up/down), chat, Q&A, annotation, whiteboard, screen sharing, and breakout rooms, among others.

- Maximize engagement by using more than one at a time (eg, post a poll and ask for follow-up in chat)
- Remember, you can screen-share anything, so don't limit yourself to only the virtual platform you're using (eg, use Kahoot)
- Use breakout rooms for organizing participant groups into smaller mini-classrooms and for virtual role-plays
- Be careful with video and animation (Youtube, etc): these add bandwidth and can appear choppy

## Facilitation

### Use a Producer or Co-Facilitator

- To help implement features like breakout rooms and multiple simultaneous interactions
- To conduct software training (facilitators may already be pushing a lot of buttons)
- To help facilitate large groups
- To keep an eye on chat, questions, hand-raising, attention indicators

### If You're a Team of One

- Delegate chat monitoring to 1 or 2 participants
- Keep the workshop design simple

### Rehearsals and Feedback

- Run at least 2 rehearsals (technical and full)
  - › Technical rehearsal - walk through interactions, handoffs, simulate technical glitches
  - › Full rehearsal - focus on delivery and timing
- Recruit volunteers to play the roles of participants; Get feedback on pacing, audio quality, and clarity of instructions
- Use a virtual mirror: Log in as a participant on your phone/iPad and watch your rehearsals while you facilitate on your laptop/desktop

### Check-ins

- Check in more often in virtual sessions than in-person
- Use interaction tools (eg, hand raise/chat)
- Be specific about how you want participants to interact
  - › Don't say: "Any questions?"
  - › Do say: "I'm going to pause here. Please use the hand raise indicator if you have any questions. Then I'll open the mic for 2 people to ask their question."

### Breaks

- Build in more breaks than an in-person workshop to reduce the chances participants will multitask
- Ask participants to NOT close the meeting window during breaks

# Make the Most of Your Virtual Meetings



## Set Expectations

- Create an agenda and send it with the invite so attendees know what to expect and how to prepare
- Assign roles. Ask someone to take notes and ask another person to keep track of time
- Beforehand, let your team members know the technology and tools they will need
  - › Audio only vs webcams
  - › Documents you'll be working on and who should be ready to screen share
  - › External or internal links you'll be accessing
  - › Will you be asking anyone to take virtual control or co-host during the meeting?

## Virtual Workshop Facilitation

### Screen Sharing

- DO NOT share your entire desktop
- DO share individual applications
- Prior to the meeting, open all applications you will use (and close the ones you won't)
  - › Virtual meeting software allows you to quickly switch between open applications

### Collaboration Tools

- Use whiteboards and chat for visual communication
- Allow participants to use annotations and write on whiteboards and shared screens
- Word, Google Docs, and PowerPoint can become great collaboration platforms
  - › Give control of shared screens to team members to allow them to write directly in a document rather than dictate it to the meeting leader
- Use chat for quicker, more robust brainstorming
  - › Many virtual platforms let you save the chat to a text file
    - Some tools will let you generate a word cloud from the chat as a way to identify topics or concepts that come up a lot

### Team Engagement

- Engagement increases when cameras are on and team members can see each other
- Pay attention to your team members
  - › Monitor the chat window and status icons. Better yet, ask a team member to help with this
  - › If using video, pay attention to people's faces and body language for signs of confusion, frustration, or disengagement
- Ensure equal voice. Be deliberate about making space for team members' contributions to be heard
- Check in with team members who are silent and be specific when you do
  - › Don't say, "Emmett, you've been quiet. Anything to add?"
  - › Do say, "Emmett, do you think 1.21 gigawatts is enough to power the flux capacitor, or should we think about going higher?"

# Resources



## Virtual Workshop Resources

**HowSpace: *The Ultimate Guide to Digital Facilitation***

<https://www.howspace.com/digital-facilitation>

**Harvard University: *Best Practices: Online Pedagogy***

<https://teachremotely.harvard.edu/best-practices>

**Emergenetics International: *Best Practices for Creating a Successful Virtual Learning Program***

<https://www.emergenetics.com/blog/best-practices-creating-successful-virtual-learning-program/>

**The Instructor's Face in Video Instruction: Evidence From Two Large-Scale Field Studies**

<https://vhil.stanford.edu/mm/2015/kizilcec-jep-instructors-face.pdf>

**USA.gov (Case Study): *How We Held a Successful All-Virtual Workshop***

<https://blog.usa.gov/how-we-held-a-successful-all-virtual-workshop>

**LTEN Focus Magazine Article: *Instructor-Led Virtual Classrooms***

<https://www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/LtenFocus/2016summer/index.php#/48>

## Virtual Team Meeting (and Remote Working) Resources

**Trello: *How to Embrace Remote Work***

[https://info.trello.com/hubfs/How\\_To\\_Embrace\\_Remote\\_Work\\_Trello\\_Ultimate\\_Guide.pdf](https://info.trello.com/hubfs/How_To_Embrace_Remote_Work_Trello_Ultimate_Guide.pdf)

**NTEN: *9 Best Practices for Engagement in Virtual Meetings***

<https://www.nten.org/article/9-best-practices-engagement-virtual-meetings/>

**Harvard Business Review: *How to Run a Great Virtual Meeting***

<https://hbr.org/2015/03/how-to-run-a-great-virtual-meeting>

**Slack: *The Ultimate Guide to Remote Meetings in 2020***

<https://slackhq.com/ultimate-guide-remote-meetings>

**Fast Company: *How to Have a Virtual Meeting That's Not Painful (and actually productive)***

<https://www.fastcompany.com/90304194/best-practices-for-virtual-meetings>

**Project Management Institute: *Best Practices for Managing and Developing Virtual Project Teams***

<https://www.pmi.org/learning/library/best-practices-virtual-project-teams-6038>