10 Tips from Alison,  
A Teacher of Video Streaming Students

BEFORE THE COURSE:

1) **Build a learning community using an Introduction Space.** As you build your Blackboard site, include an Introduction Space, using a discussion board. Open it before the class even begins, and ask the students, in your first Bb announcement, to go to the space to introduce themselves to their classmates by answering specific questions that you have listed. Answer them yourself, to show them the format. Ask things like “Where are you? What is your major? What is your career aspiration? Anything else you’d like us to know?” and then leave that compendium of information up all semester. It will become a valuable resource for you and a good source of community-building for your students.

2) **Plan for inclusion.** As you are building your course, leave room to customize things, to make quick and tiny changes that will USE the information that you have learned about your students. Leave space to use their names (or their site’s names) as the names of a sample companies that you are discussing (ex. “McGillicuddy Motors” or “Germanna, Lord Fairfax, and J. Sergeant Reynolds, Attorneys at Law”). Leave room so that you can use their chosen fields of work in your examples (ex. “I think that Sarah, at Olympic College in Washington State, told us that she has some knowledge of that. Sarah?”). As you learn more about your students, you can include them in every way that you can.

3) **Syllabus.** Because some of the policies are slightly different for distance students than for VS students, please include the following information on your published syllabus:

**VIDEO STREAMING STUDENTS:**

**PREPARING FOR VIDEO STREAMING:** Prior to the first day of class, students must complete initial online orientation and training to include viewing the online orientation video and successfully completing the online system checks/requirements utility 48 hours prior to their participation in their first video streamed course on each computer that will be used. [http://dl.odu.edu/tools/vstream/index.shtml](http://dl.odu.edu/tools/vstream/index.shtml)

**PROCTORING OF TESTS AND EXAMS:** Students who are taking a video streamed course and are also associated with a DL affiliated site will take tests/exams at that site location at the time announced by the course instructor. Students who are enrolled in a video streamed course and who are NOT associated with a DL affiliated site must follow the proctoring procedures outlined on the Distance Learning. [http://dl.odu.edu/sresources/exams.shtml](http://dl.odu.edu/sresources/exams.shtml)

Authorized proctors include faculty members; academic, corporate, or military education and training staff members; or officers, senior non-commissioned officers, or civilian supervisors/administrators who are qualified to proctor tests and examinations. Proctors cannot be related to the student, nor can they be current students themselves, either at ODU or at any other college.

**TECHNICAL SUPPORT:** Technical Support for video streaming will be available through the Technical Support Center. Prior to requesting Technical Support, students must have completed the orientation to video streaming and verified they have met the system requirements and completed the browser configuration check.

DURING THE COURSE:

4) **Ping!** When you ask a question, your students will answer in a fairly predictable rhythm. First, you’ll hear from those students right in the classroom with you. (Remind them to press the “My Turn” button to talk, so that the students watching on VS and on TV will be able to hear them.) Then, after a brief delay, you will hear from your students at sites. Finally (and, often, out of sequence), you’ll hear a PING! from your video streaming students. There they are with their answer (or their question) – but you may have moved on to a new topic.

5) **Counter the delay.** It is important to answer ALL students’ questions, but sometimes, those of your video streaming students will not arrive in a timely fashion. I tell my students, during the very first class, that I will address all of their questions, and that they should write me if I fail to address them. I tell the video streamers that I will look at all of their responses during our break, and will begin the second half of the class answering any questions that didn’t get answered during the first half.
6) **Acquaint all of your students with the archive.** They can access this very valuable tool if they haven’t understood something (or if their minds wandered during a critical portion of a class).

7) **Group work.** If you intend to do in-class group work, the VS students can easily form a group. They can use “the back channel” to have their discussion, and then, as the other groups present their responses, their chosen scribe can write you and you can read the VS group’s responses to the rest of the class.

8) **Be flexible.** Distance students (and sometimes, particularly, video streaming students) have hectic schedules. (More than half of the students responding in my Spring evaluations reported working a full-time job; only 22% didn’t work.) If you are going to test outside of class time, consider leaving the test up for a longer period than just the hour it takes to take it.

9) **Use the VIA resources.** You can easily go into the VIA to see who has attended a class, who has watched a class in the archive. You can also e-mail yourself all of the responses from your VS students sent during a class, and you can (and I encourage you to) read the students’ back-channel chat, as well.

10) **Communicate expectations very clearly.** Distance students like to know what’s next. Use the Announcements section of your Blackboard site to be very clear and specific about what’s expected before the next course. (This will help all of your students -- and will cut down the number of their e-mails to you, as well!)

Overall, I encourage you to get to know your distance and video streaming students and to customize your class for them. Try to find out as much as you can about them, and bridge the gap caused by distance by including them, personally, in every way that you can. (I have learned that, even though they can’t BE seen, they can FEEL that they are, if you are attentive and inclusive. This helps them to feel as if they are a vital part of the learning community in your course.)

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