

Planning Your Video Call

Specify the time zone when you suggest or confirm a scheduled video call. (i.e. PT/MT/CT/ET/AT/NT) Remember that Saskatchewan doesn't turn clocks forward for Daylight Savings!

Tell the expert about your students and your goals/expectations. What academic/grade level are they? What do they already know? What do you hope to discuss? How long do you want the expert to speak for and how much time should be devoted to Q&A?

Ask the expert to present for no more than 30-50% of the time you've set aside for your video call. Students might be shy at first, but once the questions start coming, there are usually quite a few!

Schedule a 5- to 10-minute test call using your agreed upon video conferencing platform (Zoom, Skype, etc.) and the same device, network, and physical location that you plan to use for your real call. (Changes in network, device or location can impact your call quality.) This test call is also an opportunity to meet one another and ask any additional questions you may have.

Use a hard-wired Internet connection whenever possible as this is usually faster and more stable than a wireless connection.

Plan for having more or less time after the video call. Even though you may have planned for a 30-minute video call, the discussion may move more quickly than anticipated or unexpected interruptions may occur. If you notice that the video call is running behind, discreetly remind the expert about how much time you have available.

Plan for the Technology to Fail. Video calls can be interrupted or slowed down as a result of a poor connection, weather or other complications. If you lose the call, don't panic. You can always reconnect. Make sure you discuss this ahead

of time so you have a plan in place (i.e. who will place the reconnection call if there should be a failure).

Know who to contact if you have technical issues. Many questions about Zoom can be answered 24/7 by visiting <http://support.zoom.us> or calling 1-888-799-9666. Additional contact information for Partners In Research staff can be found at <http://www.pirweb.org>.

Preparing the Students

Make sure the students know what to expect during the video call. Set rules, expectations and/or guidelines as necessary.

Use pre-connection study questions and/or activities to encourage critical thinking and informed participation. When in doubt, Google the expert together!

Brainstorm questions with the students before the video call. To combat shyness, you can pre-arrange which students will ask which questions on behalf of the whole class at the start of the Q&A. (You can also send these questions to the expert by email if you want them to have extra time to consider their answers.)

During the Video Call

Position the webcam so the students are visible. It's very difficult for experts to be engaging if they can't see their audience!

Close the blinds/curtains if there is a window behind the students. This helps to avoid appearing in silhouette.

Introduce the expert and class to one another. Invite the expert to briefly describe his/her background and expertise before moving on to what you previously agreed to discuss.

Be prepared to facilitate by encouraging or calling on students yourself during the video call. Students are sometimes initially shy about responding to questions posed by an expert. Explain to students that this is an interactive medium and encourage them to ask questions.

Have the students introduce themselves before asking their questions.

Many experts like to refer to the students by name and the students often feel validated.

Consider using a question chair/location if the microphone can't pick up questions from the students at the back of the class.

Ask a question yourself! Whether you just want to know the answer or you want to steer the discussion a bit to achieve your goals, this can also help to break the ice.

Consider having students share something with the expert to receive feedback. (i.e. a project or proposal, experimental results, a theory based on their observations)

Don't be afraid to politely interrupt the expert if you need to address a classroom management / behaviour issue. The expert may not be able to see the issue over the video call or may not feel it is their place to address it.

At the end of your video call, consider having a student thank the expert for connecting with your class. Our experts volunteer their time for these video calls and it's always nice to be appreciated.

All connections are teacher facilitated – Partners In Research, the teacher, the students, and the expert do not share contact information that would support interactions with students outside of the facilitated classroom context.