

Facilitating ISL (Interactive System-wide Learning)

1. Know the technology

Take the time to learn the ISL and practice using it before using it with students. Switch modes regularly (speaker head, powerpoint, document camera). The Information Technology Division (ITD) can help with training and support. Also know who to call if you encounter a problem. When you have built up confidence, you might like to use other media such as YouTube, but practice with it to see how it transmits across the network.

2. Use simple visuals

If you need to use visual aids or diagrams, keep them simple. No flashy animation. Clear and concise will work best. Speak to your audience and not the visuals. The visuals should enhance your spoken communication.

3. Dress appropriately

Try to wear neutral, solid colours and avoid white which can overload the contrast. Also avoid checks, stripes and busy patterns, which may distort and create distracting interference.

4. Remember your body language

Look at the camera when you speak and don't only focus on the students at your site. Avoid rapid or repetitious movements which can look jerky. Try to stay in shot and remember to smile.

5. Be prepared

In advance of your ISL, prepare questions and/or tasks for each site. Create smaller groups if necessary. It is important that you regularly engage with other sites to ensure that they feel part of the lesson. When seeking feedback, ask off-sites first.

6. Be enthusiastic and lively

Be animated without over doing it. Students often relate to stories, analogies and even suitable jokes. Speak in your normal volume, however, use different pitch and rhythm in your voice to emphasize and strengthen your message.

7. Use groups

In advance, create both small and large size groups for your ISL. Provide students with a 'to do' guide to group work based on your expectations of the students and what you want to achieve. Arrange for someone on each site to assist with facilitation, or assign different group roles and allow students to take it in turns to facilitate a session. When you commence group work, don't forget to mute microphones.

8. Allow sufficient time

Allow sufficient time for discussion and debate across all your ISL sites. Encourage students to talk in pairs or small groups before providing feedback to you.

9. Consider recording your ISL

Consider recording your ISL as part of a multimodal strategy. Provide powerpoint slides in advance so that students can take notes related to your presentation. Always add a reference list. A recorded ISL caters for different learning styles as well as provides the opportunity for students to review the recording at their point of need.

10. Be self aware

Using ISL can highlight your teaching weaknesses. Be confident, honest and use some of the above tips. Above all, practice, practice, practice.

Facilitating Discussions Online

1. Engage, Engage, Engage!

Engage with your students. Make time to engage in the discussions regularly. If students feel you couldn't be bothered to participate in the online discussion, why should they?

2. Wait before answering students' questions

While you may feel compelled to give immediate responses to student questions, it is often worthwhile to hold back, and provide an opportunity for other students to respond. Guide the discussion, correct any misunderstandings, but allow students to learn from one-another. Not only does this benefit the student asking the question, but also the students who respond.

3. You don't always need to 'give' the answer. Promote self-discovery

Online discussion forums need not always be a Q&A. Answering a question with a question or providing hints to a solution helps to promote self-sufficiency in learners, and a sense of achievement when they figure something out for themselves. Of course use judgement and gauge your students' emotional state. Someone who is really struggling will not respond well to a question answered with question.

4. Communicate expectations of yourself and your students

Be clear about what students can expect from you in terms of engagement in the online discussion. Communicate when and how often you will respond to student posts. Be open about some of the techniques you plan to use in facilitating discussions online (such as tips 2 & 3). Communicate your expectations, including adherence to the University's online code of conduct (<http://tinyurl.com/66zbcpt>).

5. Ensure a safe and open environment for discussion

Students will have altercations from time-to-time in online spaces, just as they do in physical spaces. Be there to interject when necessary and counsel students on expected behaviours in line with the University's online code of conduct.

6. Stimulate discussion

If the online discussion has stagnated, consider ways to stimulate discussion by posting links to articles in the media on relevant events to your topic; presenting a problem and asking students to solve it; or make a controversial statement to engage students in a debate.

7. Don't let the technology drive you.

Let the pedagogy drive technology choice. Consider technology to suit the context of your course, and your students. Use [this chart](http://tinyurl.com/2vgtjjk) (<http://tinyurl.com/2vgtjjk>) to help align your pedagogical purposes with the tools available in Moodle. Of course Moodle isn't the be-all and end-all of learning (see next tip).

8. Experiment with technology - is there a more effective way to discuss online?

Consider what is beyond the four walls of Moodle. Be open to new technologies and consider alternate approaches to engage your students in online discussion. Online social web services are abundant. Try one, but take heed of tip 7. Contact the [Education Development Team](mailto:ed-dev@cqu.edu.au) (ed-dev@cqu.edu.au) for advice.

9. Chatroom/Web-Ex/Elluminate (synchronous) vs. Moodle Forums/Email (asynchronous)

Synchronous interactions are real-time and allow for spontaneous discussion and quick turn-around of feedback. Asynchronous interactions are more flexible and provide time for reflection before engaging in discussion. Consider which approach best suits the purpose of the discussion, the course and your students. Familiarise yourself with the technology before introducing it to your students.

10. Engage all cohorts in online discussion, not just distance students

Embrace student diversity at CQUni. Encourage all your students to engage in online discussion, not just distance students. Exposing students to diverse thinking can enrich their learning experiences, and further develop their cross-cultural awareness.

Teaching Distance Students Online

1. Be there.

Distance students often feel isolated. Use the available communication tools such as announcements, welcome messages, discussion board postings and forums to communicate to the student that you care about their questions and concerns. Challenge, mentor, interact with and engage your distance student to help reduce the sense of isolation which accompanies distance learning.

2. Clearly convey expectations for students and yourself.

Explain how you expect your students to communicate online and how they should communicate with you. Let the students know when, where and how often you will respond to their questions and concerns.

3. Respond quickly and expect quick responses in return.

Give your students due dates for assessment submission along with the due dates for assessment return, whether online or via the postal service. Good feedback is frequent and timely. If you are finding this difficult, perhaps a different approach to assessment or feedback is required. Be sure to give some feedback straight away. One approach is to post online a page or two of generic comments about common problems with the assignments they are submitting. An FAQ on assessment is one approach you might consider.

4. Establish a tone of excellence.

Model pieces of work and behaviours that are exemplary. One approach is to provide students with online examples from previous offerings that were excellent or, more simply, point out discussion forum posts or replies that exemplify excellent insights.

5. Feedback and feed-forward.

Feedback is a key aspect of how you can enable your students to improve. Help the distance student value and use your feedback by spending time and energy explaining the importance of feedback. Link the feedback directly to the learning outcomes so the student can interpret the context of the feedback and encourage the students to give you feedback. Feed-forward by demonstrating how their feedback is highly valued in course improvement.

6. Consider assessment as learning.

Give your students more detailed feedback more often. How does student who has received only a mark improve? Remember that failing is not a single event but a series of hesitations and more frequent feedback on their efforts will drive their improvement. Formative assessment methods such as quizzes or Q&A forums can facilitate this, especially with your distance students.

7. Open and wrap.

Introduce each week's learning outcomes and activities at the start and wrap-up the previous week's activities. Clear structure helps reduce confusion, improves their time-management and sense of isolation.

8. Drive the technology.

Don't let the technology drive you. Keep it simple and use only as much technology as is required to achieve your purpose. Use the following online chart to help align your educational purposes with the tools available in Moodle. <http://tinyurl.com/eToolGuide>

9. You are not alone.

Peer evaluation of your teaching can be a great way for testing new ideas and teaching approaches. So don't be afraid to 'phone a friend'. The Educational Development Unit and Library staff are there to help you with your teaching and course.

10. Be efficient and effective, not busy and overloaded.

Use appropriate existing resources when you can and make use of online resources such as online journal articles where you can. Using existing online resources that are copyright compliant, can save time and effort by reducing the need to develop similar resources.

Developing Teamwork Skills

1. Be organised

Start early, to prepare and set realistic goals for yourself and for your students. Prepare a document clarifying your expectations of students and have very clear objectives regarding the aims of the teamwork exercise. Be explicit regarding the consequences if members do not contribute to the team exercise.

2. Provide students with practical reasons to encourage them to develop teamworking skills.

Include stories or examples which demonstrate the importance of being a good teamworker in the context of your discipline. Be a “team player role model” yourself. Encourage shy students to participate and discourage extroverts from dominating the group.

3. Introduce students early to the theory associated with teamwork

Set pre-readings and related quizzes so that students are familiar with the theory of teamwork. Relevant theory includes Tuckman’s (1965) Team Stages (Form, Storm, Norm, Perform) and Belbin Team Roles (www.belbin.com). Reinforce that successful teamwork is about planning, communication, equitable delegation of responsibilities and effective conflict resolution.

4. Have students develop their own Team Charter

This document is developed by the team members and can include information about roles, responsibilities, timeframes, means of communication and resolving conflict. As much as the document itself is important, the process of developing the document provides opportunities for students to share their expectations about delegation of responsibilities and timelines. The time and effort invested in this process is well worth it!

5. Be clear about assessment and consider strategies for self and peer assessment

Have assessment items that are manageable for students and which pose authentic problems. Challenges regarding the assessment of teamwork are mostly associated with “freeloaders” and “perfectionists”. Conflict surrounding these challenges can be significantly reduced with the use of a Self and Peer Assessment Tool. Email ed-dev@cqu.edu.au for more information on the Self and Peer Assessment Tool.

6. Act as a facilitator of learning rather than the deliverer of knowledge

Maintain a balance between facilitating learning and delivering knowledge so that students develop problem solving skills and the capacity for lifelong learning. Some lecturers at the end of a session ask students to share what they have learned. These comments are recorded and are made available for students.

7. Encourage the use of technology to communicate

Remind students to use email, forums, live chat rooms and other technologies such as skype and googledocs. Ask students to share what works best for them.

8. Recognise that “storming” will occur and provide appropriate conflict resolution strategies

Be prepared to assist teams that are experiencing conflict or are underperforming. Some lecturers have regular “check-in” sessions where team members provide an update on how the team is functioning. This update can provide the lecturer with an early warning signal to review the composition of some teams.

9. Consider incorporating some fun and team games

Team building exercises can assist in building trust within the team. It can also be fun! These activities are sometimes used as “Icebreakers” and can be as simple as asking students to share their favourite place or movie.

10. Encourage self-reflection and reflection on group processes

Ask students to reflect on their role within the team, and on the processes used to communicate, to make decisions and resolve conflict. Some courses require students to submit a reflective journal as part of the assessment. Remember to include reflection time for yourself.

Producing Your Own Videos

1. A good introduction

Always add a good introduction to your videos that briefly explains what you are going to cover and why. It's also a good idea to list what you are going to cover, and refer to this list as you proceed, so that students know where they are and what they are going to see next.

2. Diversify: offer a range of videos

Rather than producing just lecture videos, explore other types of videos that may be useful for your students. For example, you could work through selected tutorial questions, or you could select a particular topic or example for analysis and discussion, and really explore this, highlight key areas / issues, answer "what if's", and so on. When students email questions, rather than writing a multi-page response, it may be more efficient and effective to reply with a video. Videos can also be a great way to provide feedback on assessment.

3. Invest time learning the tools

Learning your video recording / production tools properly will help you with all stages of production from recording through editing and post-production to generating the final video. Becoming familiar with your video software will save you a lot of time in the long run and will enable you to produce a more polished result that is likely to be a better experience for your students.

4. Limit the recording area

If you record the entire screen, the recording software is going to create massive work files. If you do your presentation in a sub-section of the screen, the work files will be much smaller and more manageable. Also, by limiting the recording area, you can use other parts of the screen for memory joggers, a list of things you want to cover, sample questions to ask, and so on.

5. Don't be afraid to do another take

You can always edit out mistakes or re-takes in post production. However, if you start off on the wrong foot, this can put you off track for the entire video. If you make a bad start, it might be better to stop, take a short break to catch your breath and re-focus, and then start again.

6. Avoid distractions

Prior to recording your videos, close Outlook and any other software that make sounds (e.g. when emails arrive), because these may distract you or they may distract or confuse viewers of the video. Try and ensure the visible area behind you is tidy, because this can also be distracting.

7. Maximise reusability / minimise maintenance

If you produce long videos and they need updating because the material, slides, order, etc has changed, then this can be a lot of work. A better way to work may be to produce a short video for each topic, and either distribute these to students, or else combine and package them up in the order you want and provide this combined video to students.

8. Do a test run before starting

Make sure everything is working as expected, sound levels are right, camera is working properly, etc by doing a quick test run before recording your actual presentation.

9. Be there during your presentation: remember your students

Videos should be as useful and engaging as possible for students. Don't just read the slides. It is what you add to the presentation that will really bring it to life: your experiences, your advice, correlating presented information with what is happening in industry, and adding background information to explain why things are the way they are. Set aside a quiet time so you can focus and take your time.

10. Keep backups

Keep backups of all of your work, including your video project and work files, because you may want to change part of a video or re-use the files again in other projects in the future.

Using an Online Classroom

1. Explore the system thoroughly

To get the most out of the online classroom, you need to know exactly what features the system offers for facilitating learning and for managing the session and its participants.

2. Ask a more experienced colleague to co-moderate a session or two with you

For extra support, why not ask a more experienced colleague to assist with the technical elements of the session, a 'button buddy' or ask them to participate in a practice session.

3. Prepare a specific session delivery strategy

To capitalise on the opportunities of an online classroom environment, an appropriate delivery strategy needs to be developed. Think about the course content and the features of the system and then build a strategy that is specifically designed for online learning.

4. Start Simple

Flashy bells and whistles do not necessarily improve learning. In fact, if learning objects are too complex or they do not work as expected, students will soon become frustrated and disengaged. Keep it simple and appropriate to the task at hand and build up as your confidence grows.

5. Assist students to succeed

Develop a short 'how to guide' which covers the basics of session access, pre-session preparation, troubleshooting and where students go for help. Display this information in a prominent place, such as the Moodle course page.

6. Allow sufficient preparation time

Allocate time in the first session to familiarise students with the interface, its key features, ground rules for use and most importantly how to engage with session content and with each other.

7. Mix the session up

To increase student engagement, break the session up with activities that require student participation. For example ask students to answer a quiz, complete small group tasks or brainstorm ideas on the interactive whiteboard.

8. See the session as they do

Having a second computer logged in as a participant will allow you to monitor for example, the flow of the session, any issues with content download or transfer and allow you make necessary adjustment to maximise the learning experience.

9. Monitor individual participation

It is important that each student is afforded a voice in the session. Monitor the participant box and chat areas and if necessary draw students into the session.

10. Capture the 'Key Points' of a session

Capturing the key points of a session, for example in the text chat area, can be useful for both monitoring student understanding and for future study purpose. Preface the text with a pre-arranged convention such as 'KP' and ask students to type short succinct messages that summarise discussion.

Writing and Using Effective Learning Outcomes

1. Read the CQUniversity guide to creating and using effective learning outcomes.

This should give you sufficient background and practical advice to enable you to write and use learning outcomes in your teaching and assessments. The CQUni guide also contains additional tips and practical suggestions.

2. Read other texts on learning outcomes, to broaden and deepen your understanding.

For example, the ALTC Learning and Teaching Academic Standards information (<http://www.altc.edu.au/>) and the other sources listed at the end of the CQUni guide. This one-pager is not enough, on its own.

3. Learn from good practice

Ask your academic colleagues, or an educational developer from the Office of Learning & Teaching for examples of well-constructed learning outcomes relevant to your discipline. Ask them to explain the features of these examples, so that you understand their good points.

4. Don't feel constrained to follow frameworks such as "Bloom's taxonomy".

While such frameworks can help you think about the appropriate 'level' for your learning outcomes, they should not be viewed as prescriptive. It is more important to choose the 'right verb', followed by the 'right phrase' in the context of your course or program.

5. Write simply, that others may simply understand.

Write your learning outcomes so that they can be read and understood by students whose first language may not be English (this applies to over one-third of CQUniversity students). Your learning outcomes should be short, sharp statements of what students will be able to do on completion of the course or program. They should not attempt to combine several different aspects into a single statement. Shorter and straightforward is better than complex and convoluted.

6. Try to have as few learning outcomes as possible.

The aim is to write a set of high-level statements, each of which describes an aspect of what students will learn and will be able to do on successful completion. Fewer is better.

7. Seek feedback from colleagues on your draft learning outcomes.

It is better to get early feedback from senior staff and educational developers than to write poorly structured learning outcomes. It is also worth revisiting current 'approved' learning outcomes for your course, to see if they are still valid, and whether they can be improved. Learning from others is better than struggling alone.

8. Align course learning outcomes and program learning outcomes.

Ideally, there should be a clear relationship between the two, and this is often best shown as a two-dimensional 'map' of course learning outcomes to those of the program.

9. Align course learning outcomes and learning activities.

There should be a clear and explicit relationship between learning outcomes, learning activities (including teaching) and, perhaps most importantly of all, assessments. The greatest clarity in learning and teaching is provided when the relationships between learning outcomes, learning activities and assessments (including assessment criteria and feedback) are explicit and visible to learners and lecturers, through constructive alignment (e.g: http://www.johnbiggs.com.au/constructive_alignment.html).

10. Talk about learning outcomes with your students.

Explain how their learning activities within the course contribute to each learning outcome, and how course learning outcomes contribute to the program learning outcomes. Refer to learning outcomes in assessment feedback, so that students can see clearly how their work contributes to their learning outcomes.

Using PowerPoint for Learning

1. **Use your experience of boring PowerPoint presentations to create your own approach.**
 Make a list of all of the mistakes that you've seen others make, and then avoid making them yourself – it is better to learn from the mistakes of others than to repeat them yourself!
2. **Develop your own presentation style.**
 While there is no single 'magic recipe' it is important to remember that you are the presenter and PowerPoint is a visual aid to support you. Check your 'boredom rating' with your audience – if it works for them then it works for you.
3. **Use PowerPoint for images.**
 PowerPoint is a visual medium, unlike this written list. Images are far more memorable than text. Don't drown your audience in too much text. Use PowerPoint as an 'image processor', not a word processor. Aim for only a few words per slide.
4. **Avoid reading from the screen.**
 Unless your audience cannot read for themselves, you don't need to do it for them. So don't. If you have to use the occasional quote or phrase, let folks read the text for themselves. Aim for key words and phrases, rather than text-heavy sentences.
5. **Forget nothing – use PowerPoint as an aide memoire.**
 Careful selection and use of multiple slides and images, plus any key words/phrases will give you the structure of your presentation, without the need for notes when you present (this is a skill that you can develop with practice).
6. **Think about the learning value of 'bells and whistles'.**
 Learning theory tells us that it is harder to 'process' information that is unnecessarily complicated. Strive for simplicity while avoiding oversimplification, to avoid 'information overload' for your audience. With PowerPoint, less is more. Only use animation and other features where this aids learning.
7. **Think about the learning value of handouts.**
 The conventional PowerPoint handout is not an aid to active learning. If you feel that you must use handouts, then try to use them actively – e.g. leave gaps for students to add notes, based on what you say in your presentation.
8. **Think about the learning value of publisher's PowerPoint slides.**
 While such slides may be provided free of charge by the publisher, you should aim to be highly selective in what you use and how you use it – for example, aim to use slides with figures and images from textbooks, rather than text. Consider point 1 again, in terms of the type of slides used in boring presentations.
9. **Model good practice – always cite the source of images that aren't your own.**
 Some presenters may simply cut-and-paste images from the web, without attribution. This could infringe copyright and is certainly not modelling best practice to your students (what would you do if students did the same in their assignments?) So... (i) avoid using copyright-protected images without permission and (ii) cut-and-paste the URL of any image from the web into your PowerPoint slide, to show the source of the image – you might use smaller font and grey text so that it's present, but not distracting.
10. **Use online resources to improve your approach.**
 For example, YouTube and other websites: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KbSPPFYxx3o> , or <http://michaelhyatt.com/how-not-to-use-powerpoint.html> or <http://l1atnd.wordpress.com/2011/02/01/seven-resources-for-better-powerpoint/>and there are many, many more). Remember that an hour or so of online learning and reflection could save your students a lifetime of boring presentations!

Great Teaching at CQUniversity

1. Teach with enthusiasm

None of us need to review our enthusiasm – right? But enthusiasm is contagious; your job is to communicate more than course content. Your obvious interest and enthusiasm can have a very positive effect on learning. A dull and unenthusiastic delivery style can switch students off in seconds.

2. Maximise Clarity and simplicity

How does a concept sound to the student or someone who knows nothing about the material? Extremely complex material can be taught when the concepts are clear and less relevant material is removed. This idea also applies to communications with students.

3. Structure is important

Develop a logical structure to your course. This point follows on from point 2 above. If any communication or lesson is logically sequenced it will improve students' ability to mentally "process" the material. Keep in mind that our students are from a highly diverse demographic and background. Logical structure will help everyone involved, particularly international students. Research shows that students prefer structure and it increases their engagement.

4. Organisation and Communication

You need to do things on or before the time promised and you're in control of these times, so over-state times and deliver early! Couple this with clear communication surrounding what students can expect from you and how things are going. Stick to the timetable. Doing so will circumvent most problems and additionally increase student satisfaction. Increased communication drastically reduces the physical distance and sense of isolation students can "feel" when studying at a distance.

5. Know what you are teaching

Know your topic. Prepare for questions but don't be afraid of, or get flustered by, questions you can't answer. Be honest - if you don't know something don't dodge it by changing the subject – students can tell. Tell them you will find out and get back to them, or throw the question open for class discussion. Students will quickly disengage if they suspect you are a phony. This will affect their desire to learn, their quality of learning as well as feedback in your course.

6. Give a bit of yourself

Inject some of your personality into the course – but remain professional. Let students see you as a person, be open and honest. This works either online or face-to-face. Students engage more if they know a bit about their mentor's background. Some spontaneous humor can be very effective, but beware the ponderous jokes and dated stories.

7. Relate concepts to the real world

You need to show students how their learning links to the real world. These links can be "big" world-changing examples, simple links to everyday events or anything between. Students need to see the practicalities and applications of what they are learning.

8. Know your support systems

There are many different systems used in teaching and learning, theatres, video links, Moodle, exams, academic support services to name a few. Know who to ask and where to go for help in the daily operations of the university.

9. Vary strategies and technologies

It's quite likely that you'll identify and regularly use your favourite strategies and technologies, but mix it up and throw in something new occasionally. Don't just read off PowerPoint's or handouts all the time. Explore ways to actively engage the students rather than have them just be passive observers to the learning whether online or face-to-face.

10. Professional Development

Get involved in regular, at least yearly professional development both with your discipline and also teaching and learning. Learning environments at university are constantly evolving it pays off for both you and the students when your skills are up to date. Don't assume that the 3 day seminar you attended 8 years ago is sufficient to span a whole career of teaching practice.