

NON PEER REVIED PAPER/GUIDE

Synchronous Distance Learning (SDL); an integrated course design using video conferencing in student-centered learning

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INTRODUCTION

This article is the result of a collaboration between the course leader of a faculty development course on use of IT in education and a lecturer in nursing challenging her skills to be up-to-date on modern pedagogics and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in the field of education. Based on the learning goals of the faculty development course (Edu-IT), the personal task for the nursing lecturer was to set up a PhD course. The subject was teaching PhD students how to read challenging literature by the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur. The course was initiated due to an expressed need among PhD students for support in reading texts of high complexity in relation to their studies. Discovering challenges and benefits along the process of setting up a virtual education course for PhD students inspired to share our knowledge and make a manual for others to follow.

BACKGROUND

Education is an important and time-consuming task at universities. In the last decade (2007-2017), the number of students between 25 and 34 years of age attending a university level education program has increased (OECD indicators). The technological development, globalization and general focus on digitization have demanded more from both lecturers and students and increased the need for addressing different pedagogical approaches (Becker et al, 2017, Biggs and Tang, 2007). Therefore, emphasis is on how to ensure that learning designs provide students with the

necessary support and simultaneously meet the demands of research-based university education programs. Research and teaching are the two major tasks of universities, but the time for teaching often take up the majority of time, because it must be developed continuously. At universities, knowledge production is the legitimate foundation for teaching and the necessary time must thus be allocated. This may be challenged because teaching can be developed continually and the technological development provides endless opportunities, which may take up all resources.

It is attempted to achieve effectiveness by increasing the number of students and implementing different technologies in the classroom. Also, the amount of time for self-studies increases when face to face sessions are reduced to save teaching resources. Lack of support may result in a poorer learning outcome, though self-studies are considered very important in the learning process (Biggs and Tang, 2007), and imply that the students engage in and feel responsible for their studies. Therefore, students call for available lecturer resources. Especially, students at PhD level call for more advanced courses. Thus, availability of and students' trust in lecturers is considered to have the highest value in the learning process together with opportunity to get feedback (Abruzzo, 2019). However, the so-called master classes where PhD students are trained by the best are limited due to the geographic distances between the master class lectures and the students with the specific needs. This makes planning difficult and increases the costs resulting in few or no courses. Thus, the PhD students do not achieve the levels of excellence they could have achieved. Unfortunately, this means that the PhD education program is not as effective as it could be. The societal consequences are that knowledge could have been developed further.

Information and communication technology (ICT) provide possibilities for development. The dilemma of availability of expert lecturers, allocated time, and geographic distance between potential participants inspired the implementation of Synchronous Distance Learning (SDL). In line with the general development in the field of education and acquisition of skills, new possibilities are

created by ICT. These call for lecturers' knowledge about the different ICT options and support to choose the suitable technology and related pedagogics. Furthermore, teaching activities should be developed based on knowledge of the individual student's capacity and learning goals. This demanded an ICT platform that supported student access to the lecturer and enabled the lecturer to align the knowledge dissemination to the individual student and give feedback (Galusha, 1998). This cannot be done with recorded video lectures knowing that no matter how well produced technically and pedagogically, a video cannot overcome the didactic lack of engagement (Neutzsky-Wulff, 2010). However, the SDL design implied a mutual willingness and ability to accept and respect the rules and conduct of both lecturers and students. In addition, the learning design should be tested more than once to ensure that the design and the acquired skills are solid.

It is important to recognize that ICT implementation is challenging and puts an extra pressure on the academic staff, who are already under high pressure working many hours to develop new knowledge, make successful applications for funding and perform excellent teaching (Tam, 2000). Not least the self-image of delivering excellent teaching challenges the willingness to be a novice in relation to technology. The barrier for lecturers to engage with technology can be multifactorial, individual and it may change over time making long term planning difficult (Muilenburg, 2001).

These challenges in ICT may be conquered. This was among the reasons for the implementation of an ICT competence course with an educational focus for senior lecturers (Edu-IT) as a part of faculty development and to qualify senior lecturers in the usage of modern pedagogics and ICT. The overall objective of the Edu-IT course at Aarhus University, Faculty of Health was to support experienced educators in implementing useful and relevant technologies for teaching activities, as well as in identifying teaching elements which may be supplemented or converted into digital processes. This rethinking of teaching practicing should result in several developments. First of all, the course should support the individual lecturer in a modernization of education towards more

contemporary teaching processes and methods. Secondly, the use of modern technology has the potential to create flexible and measurable virtual learning and collaboration opportunities for the students, provide feedback opportunities and a better workflow. Finally, rethinking teaching practice with ICT, alignment, student-centered learning and feedback could give the individual lecturer new vitality. However, lecturers' needs for support have to be accommodate.

Based on the experiences and development during the ICT competence course, we decided to develop a manual. This was to document and disseminate issues related to the learning design. Furthermore, the manual is intended to enable lecturers and students without education in ICT to benefit from this learning design. Therefore, the focus of this paper is to provide knowledge and a manual for potential lecturers and students to enter the classroom at an internet platform and make it work technically and pedagogically. We invite lecturers to imagine having students all over the world. PhD students are invited to imagine being taught by a lecturer who had the knowledge they needed regardless of any geographical distance. The invitation to PhD students is to imagine being thought by the teachers they really need to learn from no matter the geographic location.

The aim was to facilitate the use of ICT in highly specialized PhD courses by providing a manual for university lecturers and students elaborating on pedagogical and technical considerations when using ICT in the facilitation of education.

THE INTEGRATED COURSE DESIGN AS A PEDAGOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The central idea in planning a PhD course online was the need for students to get knowledge on an expert level and specialized course on challenging literature by the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005). Being a PhD student in nursing does not leave space for going through all the works of Ricoeur. This requests a need to identify the works that explain and document the basis for the research, which includes five main areas: the basis for ontology and epistemology, the conduct of

data collection and the analysis and making the findings probable. To help the students' planning and structuring of their studies, it was important to exemplify the learning design and flipped classroom pedagogical concepts.

The integrated course design is aligned with teaching and learning activities on the foundation of accredited university curricula of each education program. Each teaching, learning activities and assessment are expected to be organized by professionals in order to allow students to achieve the required learning outcomes of a particular course of study and incorporate feedback opportunities. Biggs (2003) describes this as *alignment* of teaching, learning activities, and assessment. By having a focus on alignment of teaching and learning activities towards assessment of intended learning outcomes, this learning design promoted a structure. This means that an integrated course design not only requires the lecturer to plan and be responsible for the teaching in the classroom but also to schedule and support activities, assessment and feedback. Thus, online SDL activities require the lecturer to ensure organization, self-explanatory instructions and guided moderation; Furthermore, participants must have minimum ICT skills.

As illustrated by Figure 1., the model of *integrated course design* implies a combination of learning activities in the classroom and the time between these in-class activities; named out-of-class learning activities. In contrast to preparation between lectures in the traditional classroom, the out-of-class teaching and learning activities are more strictly organized and monitored and possibly combined with virtual meetings.

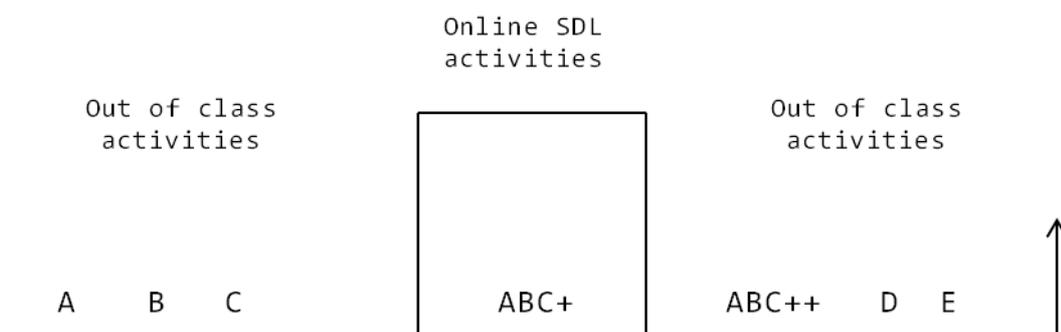


Figure 1. The course had an *integrated course design* (5). The learning goals (ABC) of the course are the foundation for selection of teaching and learning activities (ABC+) and were evaluated by a short report. Using the flipped classroom pedagogics with ICT supported out-of-class activities to optimize the face to face in class/synchronic time. This was followed by a feedback and reflection time out of class (ABC++) and initiation of the next teaching/learning activity (DE).

The integrate course design was divided into five phases:

1. Planning of the course
2. Preparing for the in-class meeting
3. Joining the in-class meeting
4. Out-of-class activities
5. Finalizing the course.

1. Planning of the course

New at the IT platform

Stepping into a world lacking skills may threaten the lecturer's role as an expert. Being a lecturer at a university makes expectations to the expert role even higher. This may result in refraining from even trying to make an integrated course. Support from an IT expert may not be enough to encourage the lecturer, if these experts do not have a pedagogical attitude and patience. However, the opportunities of teaching using IT platforms turn out to be fascinating when taking a closer look. Engaging and empowering IT expert supporters increase the likelihood of succeeding with the integrated course design. This highlights the need for facilitation in form of access to, education, continuously IT-support from skilled people with a pedagogical attitude, if teaching on an IT-platform is going to succeed. Moreover, well-functioning hardware and software are needed.

The choice of SDL platform

Adobe Connect was chosen as the IT platform due the amount of functions and the overall pedagogics after testing the present (2018) versions of Google Hangout and Skype. The Adobe Connect platform was more sophisticated and diverse in usage when working with more than a few

people. This platform has the options for three different course roles: host, presenter and participant - each with a predefined set of administrative opportunities for control of the online activities. The variety of settings and options could be adjusted to support the specific course and keep an online workspace customized over time offering storage of learning materials for participants' asynchronous access. Further, the Adobe Connect system provides a meeting room facility where the materials uploaded are stored even after the sessions so participants can revisit to download and upload materials. Furthermore, the course meetings at the Adobe Connect system can be recorded and stored by the service provider. This recording has some valuable interactive features such as playback and index of PowerPoint slides for navigation. Also, listening to the discussions at meetings again can be very helpful.

Student-centered learning and active teaching

According to Biggs (2003), students that work are students that learn. Therefore, the sessions were planned in a manner to allow all students present twice. The second presentation was important because it allowed the students to improve by integrating the experience from the first presentation. All students were supposed to achieve knowledge at a high level by each presentation, which requires careful preparation. In addition, they had to be able to follow and understand the presentation. Therefore, the presenting student had to adjust the pace to ensure that the other students could follow and had to check this regularly. This was important because it would disturb the presenting student if the other students interrupted and their questions may not be noticed when concentrating on presenting. Also, the technology played an important role. Images of eight participants could appear on the screen and were all visible for all participants at the same time.

Clarifying the Synchronous Distance Learning design in an integrated course design

Based on the course description, the starting point for the students was to inform the lecturer in writing about personal knowledge level and learning goals. The lecturer accordingly allocated the

tasks to the students, and it was important to schedule the time needed to prepare and encourage the students to schedule preparation in their personal calendar. Motivated by the opportunity of the learning outcome, all students committed to the majority of working hours to be out-of-class activities. The planning time for the preparation for the students was assessed. This was a more time-consuming task than in traditional teaching. However, being able to outline preparation time increased clarity in expectations, which again increased the quality of the online meeting. This would probably have the same value in a traditional classroom setting. A syllabus served to engage the students, explained the necessary attitude and conduct and showed the benefit of their participation and work effort. This implied letters, literature list, reading plan.

Matching expectations

Often students do not find that they benefit from listening to other students and they may prefer listening to the lecturer, despite the fact that they learn more by presenting. Therefore, for this type of course to succeed, the lecturer must ensure that the students are able to make a presentation at a high level. Thus, an important issue before the online meeting was to ensure that the students were prepared and knew what was expected. They had to accept to play an active role both as the presenter and as the receiver; they had to engage actively and confirm that they were able to follow the presentation. Furthermore, the course ended with an assignment; in this case covering the epistemological approach and ontological understanding in their thesis. The participants were expected to work with the end goal to apply what they had learned about Ricoeur's theory into their thesis. Thus, the students were expected to work hard, and they could expect to learn a lot. However, this would only happen if the lecturer was engaged and supporting. This meant that also the lecturer would have to put in hard work.

Having the needed equipment and skills to use the equipment

The participants had to have the needed technology and skills to use the technology. Having satisfactory and tested equipment was crucial for the successful conduction of SDL sessions. This may imply investments and expenses for the participants. In some cases, participants may not take this seriously and fail to obtain the necessary equipment to ensure a successful experience for everybody. Somehow, neglect of recommendation and testing in relation to IT can be socially inexcusable. If the course description does not include a list of equipment needed to enroll, this type of interruption will be dominant. This indicates a need to put a lot of emphasis on the requests.

Part of the preparation for the *use of IT* was the need for everyone *to know the software program*.

This is optimally ensured by recommending good YouTube videos and claim that it is mandatory to be acquainted with these videos. It is necessary for participants to test these software programs and ensure that they are able to participate because it is no guarantee that it works just because it did in the last session. However, people are often in a situation with lack of time and work pressure and they do not allocate sufficient time for IT skills to be learned, to practice, and to prepare.

2. Preparing for the in-class meeting

Failing to find the “classroom”

All lecturers and students have experienced going to a class suddenly realizing not knowing which auditorium, showing up in the wrong auditorium or showing up at the wrong time. There is no doubt who to blame for missing the meeting or class - you! Ashamed we admit not having done a proper job, we remind ourselves that this will not happen again. The same type of problem is also relevant in a virtual classroom. Finding the right location/URL, logon codes, local time and web access when meeting online may become a challenge if not anticipated. Our patience with ourselves and self-confidence is often too high, and we tend to blame technology for our failure to comply with instructions. Thus, we do not feel responsible ourselves if technology does not work. This is

accepted in general because most of us have similar experiences and earn forgiveness next time this happens to us. Therefore, lecturers must be very clear on the formalities and expected digital literacy of students, co-lecturers and themselves.

Finding the “classroom”

Finding the right online classroom requires a computer and a stable internet connection, which means that participants should preferably be at their institutions during the meeting to have the best available equipment and connection. The classroom differs from the traditional classroom by being a merger of several locations in the same virtual space. A teaching session in a virtual classroom such as Zoom.us or Adobe Connect is in many ways like a physical meeting. Thus, it is not the single participant’s problem if she/he does not find the classroom; it will be the problem of all participants, because they are all signed up and expected to be there. Then, the meeting might not start on time with one participant missing unless this scenario is anticipated, and the consequences are well-known to everybody.

Starting the meeting on time

As the leader of the meeting or class, the lecturer must schedule time for participants to connect to the meeting agenda. One way of starting the meeting on time is to instruct participants to attend the online class 15 minutes before the lecture starts. This check-in time should be explicitly scheduled for the participants in a virtual classroom and should include the instruction to “log on and make a routine check” of sound (speaker), voice (microphone), visuals and role to ensure a smooth start of the SDL session. When connected and checked-in, the participant may have a cup of coffee settling for the lesson. If a participant has any technical problems, there will thus be 15 minutes to sort out any problems and be ready to start the class on time.

Obstacles for participation

It is very frustrating when the computer needs to be updated, the internet connection is unstable or when sound issues make communication impossible. Then the meeting does not work and the technology is often seen as complicated and dominant. Control of the virtual classroom as a serious learning environment can be influenced and jeopardized by a range of factors and unintended actions. At the classical physical meeting at the university, lecturers may lock the door to teach students a lesson if being late too many times. But they may unlock the door and let the poor student in. In the virtual classroom there are more options and reasons for not getting access to the SDL environment. The virtual classroom has a unique URL, can be password protected or acceptance may be required for participation. It may require support from an IT expert to make it work. Likewise, the mobile phone may ring, incoming mails or messages may appear on screen, and people can come into the room not being aware that there is an ongoing live SDL session. All these incidences should be addressed, anticipated and prevented by all participants.

The main obstacles were often a lack of simple preparation and compliance with the fundamental rules of the SDL concept. These problems can be minimized by acceptance of the rules of conduct (see appendix 1) and by getting several SDL session iterations. Thus, it can be a good investment to use the code of conduct and plan shorter and more frequent sessions in the beginning of the course as part of the integrated course design framework:

3. Joining the in-class meeting

Being an active participant

Seeing your own image on the screen can be slightly intimidating, but it is also a way of ensuring that you appear in the way that you intended. Serving as a kind of feedback, this self-awareness may help you to be a better participant. This helps the participants notice their own behavior such as absence or interruptions, which affect the flow and disturb everyone. The participants were very

self-conscience of distinguishing between interruptions related to not meeting the demands for e.g. proper equipment and “interruptions” related to asking questions to the content of the course, in contrast to if it had been a question raised from lacking understanding. Thus, questions due to lack of understanding were acceptable, but not questions due to lack of effort. This supported new manners and conduct, which was a task the lecturer had to handle in a pedagogical manner. Over time, this was incorporated in the meeting culture.

Empowering the student by turning the lecturer-student position

Showing all the participants’ faces and shoulders on the screen made power relations more equal between lecturer and students and in this way students were empowered. In contrast to the physical classroom, you could not tell who the lecturer was. The lecturer and students appearing as equals enabled new roles and responsibilities in the learning environment. This made it straightforward to let the students be the presenters. Turning the lecturer-student position is in line with the pedagogical principle that those who work are those who learn. This may only be possible with mature students who are skilled, disciplined, responsible and able to concentrate, listening, hanging on, and working hard. In line with the image of being a ‘good’ PhD student, they did exactly as asked. Furthermore, students had enrolled into the program because they needed the skills and the knowledge. However, taking the position as the presenter demanded a safe milieu. This implies that the lecturer participates together with the student to know what the student is able to and to support the student. The presentation will be at the student’s level, and the lecturer’s task is to ensure the appropriate level by commenting and questioning.

The lecturer’s role

Teaching implies being able to present the course content in a structured and well-organised way in addition to skills in leading a class (Selwyn, 2007). Although the students made their presentations, the lecturer had to ensure that their interpretation of the text was correct and the students presented

in a way that was understandable for everybody. This demanded that the presentation was made in a speed that enabled everyone to grasp the spoken word. Synchronising the “dance” among participants and the presenter, the lecturer had to ensure that the student presenting made frequent and regular pauses asking if everyone could follow and the lecturer also had to comment. This was the only way to make it work, because interruptions would disturb the presentation, not only for the presenter but for the whole class. This turned out to be remarkably respectful not only to the presenter, but also to the participants. It was experienced as rather self-restricting, but in a way that focused awareness on the presenter. This was possible because the participants knew that they would have a chance to speak in a short while.

The need for breaks

A class session using Zoom.us or Adobe Connect is very focused, demanding everyone’s concentration and that the meeting is short with regular breaks called upon by the lecturer. The 30-minute Ricoeur Master-Class sessions were run with five-minute breaks and these had high value. When taking a break, it became obvious how much more focused the class became. The time schedule for the class was two hours, but one extra hour was added to the last session because more time was requested. However, we learned that two-hour sessions were more appropriate.

4. Out-of-class activities

Working in between the class meetings

From the syllabus and the time schedule, the participants knew what to prepare for the class meeting. Knowing the importance of the preparation, the participants made time for this. Furthermore, being responsible for all learning and eager to make the best of it, the students also worked after the in-class sessions. This was supported by the lecturer’s expectations that notes from the presenter were uploaded and that the course was ended with an assignment related to the PhD-student’s thesis.

Interaction between the class meetings

The success of the course depends mainly on the pedagogical planning and implementation of the learning activities and learning design. Alongside the SDL technology used (in this case Adobe Connect), the lecturer should make it possible for participants to interact, share, and discuss the learning activities. Between SDL sessions, the participants should have a clear understanding of the activities and tasks before them. The lecturer's facilitation and recommendation of participant interaction may lower the barrier of making contact to peers and in this way increase learning outcome. By facilitating the interaction between SDL meetings, the lecturer strengthened and created a learning community. Furthermore, a creative and respectful collaboration in between class meetings will positively affect the SDL session. Interaction could be on social media, Google docs, MS teams or others appropriate to the particular pedagogical strategy.

5. Finalizing the course

Finalization of a course is often a neglected part. The last lesson ends and everybody leaves. Often the institution is mostly interested in measuring the quality of their conduct (teaching). This leaves out maybe the most valuable learning activity - reflection on own achievement. This can be done in more ways, but acknowledging that the pressure on PhD students to deliver high level research, it is beneficial to link the learning outcome to this task. The goal for PhD students to achieve the levels of excellence was ensured by ending the course with a mandatory assignment. Here, the outcome from the course was related to their study and was a usable part of their thesis. Adding to the PhD-student's outcome of the course, the lecturer gave feedback on the assignment. Thus, ending a course with a written assignment connected to the PhD thesis combined the learning activities in-class with out-of-class learning activities after the course.

DISCUSSION

The perfect course design could be the idea of being taught by the master; the most acknowledged expert in the world – face to face - one on one and over time. However, this is not an option for students in modern university settings for developing student skills and education programs. We suggest an additional educational design that can overcome the distance and isolation between the lecturer and the student and provide an educational environment by facilitating that some of the many experts in the world reach relevant students, such as PhD students, in need of knowledge at expert level. There are so many well-educated researchers to draw from. These experts will be able to find interested students and share their knowledge using the SDL integrated course design. Furthermore, this design favors the direct interaction between lecturer and student. This provides opportunities for the student to put into words what they have learned and for the lecturers to give feedback.

The integrated course design combines the SDL design with asynchronous access. This provides flexibility in relation the work planning and simultaneously enable a structure for the student to lean on to due to expectations, deadlines and possibility for individual support. With this design it is possible to plan out-of-class activities that enable and support the student to take in big amounts of literature. The support enables the student to work with texts that they otherwise may give up on. The design may seem costly with one lecturer and between seven and nine students. However, the possibility for student activities increased the number of ECTS points and ensured cost effectiveness.

The aim with this course design was to enable an optimal synchronous learning environment for students unable to meet physically on a regular basis. Meeting virtually cannot fully make it up for a face to face meeting. However, in relation to dissemination of knowledge, virtual learning promotes logistics (geographical location) and promotes students' activity and ownership. This is because the effort and readiness of the performance to make the virtual meeting work is beneficial

in relation to both teaching and learning. Finally, the SDL integrated course design can be a way to save both time and money on travelling to the benefit of the global environment.

PERSPECTIVES

The continuous technological development and its influence on society and expectations to education, students and lecturers is a challenge. The endless combinations of technology, pedagogics, didactics and communities can be a barrier for the implementation of SDL as a teaching practice. Even though this type of practice has been possible for many years, it still needs to be implemented with care and respect for the code of conduct. The information level concerning the rules and guidelines for the needed standard equipment must be explicit and known by all participants to engage in this design. A guideline template can be found in appendix 2 and may be adjusted according to specific course needs (appendix 2).

Otherwise, it is much too easy to blame the technology for the failures and faults. The frustrations and stress over sound issues, low quality uploads, lack of structure and unprepared participants will often lead to resignation and giving up on the course design.

Lecturers and students may abandon this because they do not accept the basic reasons and limits that follow implementation of the technology-rich teaching environment. The perspectives of SDL are obvious with regard to enabling offers of specialized higher education courses in real time.

Compared with massive open online courses (MOOCs) and other types of semi-moderated or self-paced courses, the SDL course supplements and provides a design for small classes and in-depth discussions on a topic. Furthermore, SDL courses could bring participants together in networks for future collaboration.

In a time where global warming cannot be neglected, SDL could be a contribution to reduce the global environmental strain of travelling. This could be an incentive for both lecturers and students to adapt to the code of conduct of SDL and exhibit a personal responsibility for acquiring the right equipment and practice the competences needed.

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Course conduct for SDL integrated courses

Lecturer:

Before the meeting:

1. Be very familiar with the chosen technology
2. Ensure clear instructions for and expectations to participants in advance
3. Prepare a complete time schedule for meetings and expectations to participants
4. Provide a specific and simple list of hardware requirements i.e. a pc, internet connection and a headset with a microphone
5. Provide a 24/7 online test option for participants
6. Plan a few extra sessions as backup
7. Plan frequent shorter sessions which can contribute to facilitate the cultural change.

During the meeting:

8. Conduct a short test session where participants can understand the importance of the course moderation and test the role of presenter and voice contributions
9. Give an initial introduction session where the roles are clarified
10. Expecting the participants to ensure they have a functional and operational set-up ready when the session starts
11. Ensure a mutual agreement on how to proceed if technical issues occur
12. Keep time, moderation and ensure focus on agenda items.

After the meeting:

13. Follow up on the session and facilitate student activities between sessions
14. Negotiate realistic feedback and support expectations
15. Be a role model for the online SDL culture
16. Provide continuous information, evaluations and acknowledgments.

Participants:

Before the meeting:

1. Read the instructions in detail
2. Include time schedule for meetings in calendar
3. Obtain the recommended equipment
4. Become familiar with the chosen technology as soon as possible
5. Make use of test options and solve technical issues before meetings.

During the meeting:

1. Make good use of the test log in session
2. Create a calm and professional SDL session environment at your location
3. Note down your SDL experience and set-up
4. Try to solve technical problems yourself using tutorials and Youtube videos
5. Pose questions timely to the lecturer
6. Acknowledge the need for an SDL culture
7. Respect other participants and contribute with a positive attitude
8. Help out and follow the agenda and time schedule.

After the meeting:

9. Make notes on agreements made
10. Plan the tasks and activities for the next session
11. Interact in-between the class meetings
12. Reflect on how you may contribute to the learning environment
13. Reach out to other participants and the lecturer.

A guide for Synchronous Distance learning (SDL) for attending online meetings

Prior to attending

1. Set-up a computer with a stable internet connection, a web cam placed in your eye height, a headset with microphone and the SLD application (i.e. Zoom.us or Adobe Connect) or a browser with Flash Player
2. Test the set-up running a pre-meeting diagnostic test
3. If you pass the first three tests (Flash Player, connection, and connection speed), you are ready to join a meeting as a basic participant otherwise follow instructions
4. Troubleshooting Tips Quick checklist. Check the following to help resolve meeting access issues:
 - Are you connected to the Internet?
 - Disable the pop-up blocker software
 - Clear browser cache
 - Try connecting from another computer
 - Are you accessing the correct URL?
 - Have you registered for the event or seminar?
 - Try accessing the meeting as a registered user or guest
 - Did you change your password recently?
5. Installing the SDL application on the local drive may enhance your meeting experience and is required for anyone who will need to use screen sharing and present materials online
6. You have likely received an email invitation with meeting access information from the course leader. Save this information and link at a logical place for you. When the meeting time arrives, click on the link or enter the URL in your web browser
7. Read and recognize the agenda and meeting instructions.

Attending and entering a meeting

1. Find an optimal location with minimum interruptions and noise for the online meeting
2. Test your set-up and use a headset with a microphone
3. Set your camera horizontal to your face and check for disturbing visuals
4. Access the online meeting room and await the host
5. Be calm, look available and ready for the meeting
6. Think of the meeting room as a semi-public space with respect to the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

During a meeting

1. Let the meeting moderator/leader start and set the stage for the meeting
2. Assume the responsibilities of your meeting role and make notes of events that counteract the agenda or meeting flow
3. Contribute and show a positive attitude
4. Act professionally
5. Help keeping time and focus on agenda.

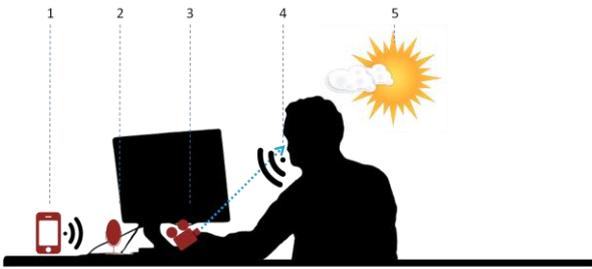
Ending of the meeting

1. Leave out personal comments and relationships
2. Finalize the meeting with a summary, a decision report and a pre agenda for the next meeting
3. Close the browser or connect application and ensure you are off.

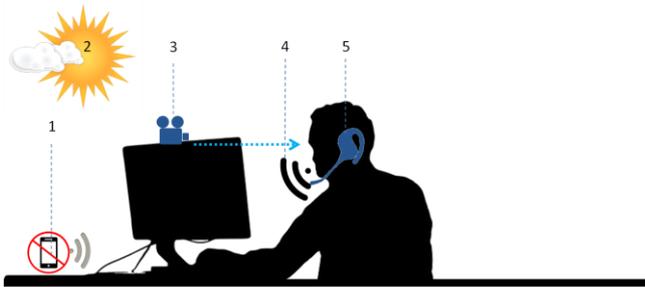
After a meeting

1. Save documents and notes in a dedicated folder
2. Check calendar updates and insert tasks
3. Evaluate your own role and impact on the meeting and consider improvements for next meeting.

Location and situation consideration



The wrong location set-up: 1. mobile phone NOT on mute, 2. Room or laptop microphone used, 3. Camera angle in frog perspective, 4. Audio/speak into the room, 5. Sun and strong light from behind.



The correct location set-up: 1. Mobile phone on mute, 2. Strong light from the front, 3. Camera angle horizontal, 4. Speak into headset, 5. Audio from headset.