



Videoconferencing Classroom Recommendations for Students

Purpose

This document provides you with helpful information intended to ease any concerns you may have about the IVN classroom environment and to help you be successful with your IVN coursework.

Overview

The IVN (*Interactive Video Network*) classroom environment may be new and different to some students. First, when you enter the IVN classroom, you may see cameras, television monitors and microphones – **but not an instructor!** Instead, your instructor is available to interact with you on a big screen TV or on the screen at the front of the classroom. Often, we have 3-4 locations all combined for one IVN class. This means that on your screen you will see each location and when one location is speaking, it should fill your screen. Even though you might not have an instructor in your room, **you are not alone** and you should communicate with your instructor regarding any questions or issues you may have.

Videoconferencing enables everyone in one location to see and hear everyone in the other location (or locations). An increasing number of students are finding that taking a class using the IVN system can help them to **reduce travel costs and save time**. When you take an IVN class you go to the nearest New River CTC campus, rather than to the campus where the instructor may be located. You interact with your instructor and your fellow students, using the IVN system.

The IVN system makes it possible for students to take courses not available on their home campuses. For example, we sometimes have an instructor on one campus and only a small number of students enrolled in the class. Since we typically cancel sections with fewer than 9 students enrolled, using the IVN system allows us to offer these low-enrollment courses by combining the sections of more than one location. The IVN system is also used for administrative meetings and training to save both travel time and expense.

Recommendations for IVN Students

1. Take the initiative.

Locate the LifeSize remote control (somewhere near the instructor station, most likely) and learn to use it. The mute button should be used to mute noise at your location from interfering with the rest of the class (at all sites). Don't forget to un-mute when you need

to ask or answer a question. You can also move the camera to zoom or pan, allowing you to better view your fellow students and your instructor. If you can't hear your instructor, you can increase the volume by using the remote. But before class ends, please return the remote to where you found it and please don't forget to re-adjust any settings you may have changed. Otherwise, the next class may have problems.

2. Become proficient with complimentary technologies.

Often, IVN instructors incorporate additional technologies to enhance communication with IVN students. **Zoom** is the College's official videoconferencing and instant messaging application, but it offers many features. Make sure you have this software on your computer and use it to communicate with your classmates and instructors. Some instructors use Zoom for **online tutoring** and **virtual office hours**. **Blackboard Learn** is the College's course management solution. Instructors often use it to **distribute course information** and every instructor is supposed to use it for **posting the course syllabus**. It is also used for **online assessments**, like quizzes and tests, as well as for **online discussion boards and course-based emails**. Make sure you know how your instructor is using Blackboard Learn and Zoom in your class by reviewing the syllabus and asking questions.

3. Be on time.

The IVN system requires someone at each location (for each class) to join the class meeting and to end the meeting when the class ends. We recommend doing sound and video checks with other sites as class gets started. Some of our IVN classrooms will automatically end when the class is scheduled to end. So, even if the instructor doesn't end on time, the connection among classrooms may end as scheduled. Therefore, be sure to arrive before your class is scheduled to start and check that you can hear the other sites and they can hear you.

4. Sit near a microphone and speak a little louder than normal, remembering to take turns with other speakers.

The microphones in an IVN classroom are voice activated, meaning that they automatically switch on when someone talks. However, they are also activated by ambient noise. Rustling papers, doors closing, and students talking among themselves are all examples of sounds that may be "picked up" by the microphones. So, be careful not to make unnecessary noise and learn to use the LifeSize remote to mute your location when you can to reduce the noise. The mics are typically installed on the ceiling and when they're on they have a blue light. When you mute your site, the mic light turns red.

When speaking in class, face forward and talk a little louder than normal. In a face-to-face conversation, we typically have only brief pauses among the people speaking. But in the IVN environment, all communication is delayed by just a few seconds. With only a little practice, you can learn to pause after you ask or answer a question and you must "take turns" so that you can be heard by all sites.

5. Be Assertive.

If, for any reason, you can't hear your instructor you should gain his or her attention by

raising your hand or verbally asking a question. If your instructor can't hear you, we have a phone in each IVN classroom that you can use to call the instructor. It is located at the front of the classroom near the instructor station. To find the phone number of your instructor's classroom, review this information (you only need to dial four digits):

<https://web.newriver.edu/IVN-Rooms.pdf>

When you ask a question, it is best to state your name and your site location. For instance, "Dr. Wilson, this is Sam Smith in Beaver and I have a question." Also, you need to let the instructor know if he or she is talking too fast, too softly, or if the information on your screen is difficult to see for any reason. If you're having an issue, most likely your classmates are as well.

6. You must participate.

The IVN system is called "interactive" for a reason. You are expected to participate in the experience as if you were in the same room with the instructor. Your instructor relies on your feedback to know how well you can hear, see, and understand the information. So please help. Providing feedback and input will improve your experience and improve the instruction for all students.

7. Communicate with your instructor.

Remember that usually, you will not be able to stay after class to confer with your instructor. If your question pertains to individual grading decisions, approval for a topic for a paper, or other individual matters, you should contact your instructor outside of class time. Usually the hours and method of communication with the instructor are published in the course syllabus. If not, ask the instructor how you should communicate with her or him about these issues.

8. Volunteer.

As in a conventional classroom, you may be asked to help the instructor by collecting assignments at your site or handing out course materials. If you volunteer to help the instructor with these tasks, everyone will benefit. And your help will certainly be appreciated by all.

9. Know how to get technical assistance.

In the event of any technical difficulty, knowing how to get assistance in a timely fashion is imperative. Here is the information you'll need for that:

<https://web.newriver.edu/ivn.html>