Video Conferencing Summary

Video conferencing is an audiovisual online meeting strategy that allows teachers and students to meet virtually through platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, and Microsoft Teams. It provides teachers an avenue for supporting virtual lessons with interactive and engaging real-time, synchronous, learning experiences. In blended and online teaching, video conferencing takes the place of in-person classroom social and academic interactions which are important for teaching and learning. Video conferencing can facilitate communication, connection, and engagement through screen sharing, interactive presentations, real-time chat and polling, break-out rooms, and file sharing.

1. Has my prior experience with video conferencing been positive or negative, and why?
2. How can I use video conferencing to enhance student learning?
3. What procedures can I use to make video conferencing effective with my students?

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KEY Elements

Video conferencing tools are widely used in blended and online learning for synchronous activities, when students are involved in learning activities at the same time as classmates, to make it possible for teachers to maintain a connection with students and guide learning from a distance. Using video conferencing to facilitate online synchronous learning simulates live face-to-face classroom learning, in which teachers and students are in the same virtual space at the same time. Popular video conference tools used in K-12 education are Zoom, Google Meet, and Microsoft Teams.

Video conferencing tools can convey instructional content and enhance student learning and engagement. Use synchronous, real-time, communication strategically to make online learning appealing to students and help establish a sense of community. In addition to effectively using the video conferencing tools, establish video conferencing routines and procedures to support desired academic and behavior expectations and learning outcomes. Create procedures for real-time communication that are manageable, clear, and easy for students to understand and follow. Identify the communication features within the video conferencing tool that support effective communication.

When considering student video usage during synchronous video conferencing, identify any predetermined district or school policies. If there are not specific requirements regarding student video usage, consider both the benefits and challenges to student video use before requiring students to turn on their video. In some case, students might be reluctant to turn on their video due to circumstances in the environment.

Consider how students will be engaged during video conferencing sessions, and provide various opportunities for students to engage with their peers and the content. Incorporate different engagement strategies during a video conferencing lesson such as utilizing emoji reactions as means of student self-assessment and teacher informal assessment; utilizing an interactive presentation tool, such as Nearpod or Peardeck, to ensure that each student is viewing the same instructional content at the same time; utilizing screen-sharing or a digital whiteboard tool to show visual content during live question and answer review; and utilizing break-out room features to facilitate small group instruction so students can engage and connect with their peers.

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