

## A Resource Guide for ITV Instructors

As a distributed university, UTRGV utilizes Interactive Television (ITV) courses as a tool to reach students at teaching locations on different campuses throughout the Rio Grande Valley. ITV is used as a means to expand course offerings, leverage the university's teaching talent, and afford faculty the chance to interact with students they ordinarily would not encounter. Furthermore, these classes give students the opportunity to experience course offerings and professors to which they normally would not have access.

Becoming familiar with ITV classrooms, equipment and technology is the first step, but to make an ITV class a successful venture, the instructor must consider various logistical issues that can make the class either rewarding or difficult. Some problems that are easily resolved in normal classrooms can become more difficult to deal with in ITV classes due to the distance between the remote and local sites. The following suggestions may help to enhance students' distance learning experience.

### Technology

#### 1. Faculty Training

Prospective ITV instructors are expected to attend three training sessions before teaching their first ITV classes. These sessions focus on the following topics:

- Session 1: *Getting Started* - developing techniques to design engaging ITV classes, including virtual etiquette and virtual learning theories
- Session 2: *Designing & Facilitating* - learning principles of virtual classroom design and facilitation skills for conducting live dual classrooms
- Session 3: *Teach Back* - conducting live, practice teaching sessions with feedback

Training session schedules will be distributed to Directors and Chairs each semester and announced on the UTRGV Messenger. When an unanticipated event requires a last minute change, the instructor will be expected to work with IT on the missed training and to participate in the next available training session.

## **2. Technology Guides**

Information on the usage of all technology deployed in ITV classrooms is available on the IT website. In addition to lists and explanations of equipment, the website includes links to *YouTube* videos covering technical aspects of operating ITV classroom equipment. This information can be found at the following links:

- [Classroom Equipment List](#)
- [Classroom Technology Training](#)

## **3. Video**

Video output can be observed on three different screens:

- a large projection screen for course content
- two flat-panel monitors, front and rear, for classroom/instructor viewing

Video input may come from five different sources:

- instructor's camera (the main video source)
- classroom camera (overview of the classroom)
- document camera
- classroom computer
- Apple TV (wireless video mirroring available in some ITV classrooms)

The document camera can perform several functions in the ITV classroom. It can be used much like a chalkboard, an overhead projector, slide projector, or as another camera. When using it as an electronic chalkboard, the instructor may write on a document beneath the camera, thereby sending a live, moving image as the main video source (instructor audio will not be affected when using this feature). At remote sites students can use the document camera to place their homework and quizzes under the camera to enable the instructor, or other class members, to give feedback or suggestions.

The classroom computer can be projected on the main screen and viewed in both classrooms. Alternatively, instructors may project to both classrooms from their own devices by connecting laptops or tablets to the control panel.

Finally, Apple TV is an option in some ITV classrooms for instructors who wish to project wirelessly from their iPads or iPhones, thereby allowing them to move more freely around the classroom and to more fully engage their students. Entire lessons can be created on these devices using a variety of different apps. Any instructional activity that one performs on a classroom computer, document camera, overhead projector, or chalkboard/whiteboard can be accomplished on an iPad or iPhone and projected onto classroom screens without being tethered to a base station.

#### **4. Audio**

Each ITV classroom has stationary ceiling microphones and a moveable desktop mic. In addition some rooms are equipped with lapel mics. Instructors are encouraged to move around the classroom, but should experiment to find any "dead" spots that might result if they don't have access to lapel mics.

#### **5. Technical Problems**

At some point in the semester, any given ITV class may encounter technical problems. Instructors should be prepared for this possibility. Sources of and solutions to technical issues are much more likely to be found as the problem is manifesting itself. Should a technical issue occur, immediately contact the technician. If the technician is not alerted until after class, the problem may not be resolved. Taking a short break to allow troubleshooting is advised.

Also, instructors should let the technicians know in advance when they will be teaching from the remote location, so that the technicians will know to change the source of the video projection from the home classroom to the remote classroom.

Technician contact information: [videoconferencing@utrgv.edu](mailto:videoconferencing@utrgv.edu)

# Classroom Management

## 1. Scheduling

Classes should be scheduled so that the instructor is available to travel to teach regularly at the remote campus location (*i.e.*, sufficient time before and after an ITV class should be blocked to allow for faculty travel).

ITV classroom requests must be submitted under the original schedule timeline. This will allow the classroom scheduling software to assign companion rooms first before classrooms are assigned to other classes. Requests to add ITV courses after classrooms are assigned are on an “as available” basis.

## 2. Class Size

Classes on each campus should be capped so that the total number of students will not exceed the class size of the corresponding single-campus class. For example, if one normally teaches a class with a research component that is limited to 30 students, then the two combined ITV classes should be capped at a *total* of 30 students. Deans/directors/chairs should set caps for each location that balance the anticipated total student demand between the campuses.

## 3. Syllabus

The syllabus should include student guidelines for the ITV classroom, including attendance, student responsibilities, and a plan of action for technical difficulties or severe weather conditions.

## 4. Class Material Distribution

Getting classroom materials to remote sites is a critical facet of successful distance learning. It is recommended to consider using Blackboard for posting and collecting assignments and materials. Here are some options to make the most of Blackboard:

- posting of course syllabus
- collecting assignments in “Assignments” section
- creating course discussion board

- posting class announcements in "Announcement" section
- posting course materials such as presentation slide shows, course documents, scanned articles, etc.

When physical materials, such as exams or quizzes, must be transported to the remote site, they should be sent in envelopes clearly marked "secure items inside." This alerts the remote site contact that sensitive material is enclosed and should be handled accordingly. The instructor also should inform the site that these materials are *in route*.

Contacts at remote sites need to know in advance when special attention is needed for exams, quizzes, recordings of classes, class projects, and also when the instructor plans to teach at the remote site. If a visit to the remote site is canceled, the instructor should let the school/department know and have a message posted on the classroom door. Additionally, instructors should post a message in the announcement section in Blackboard.

## **5. Exam Proctoring**

Arrangements should be made in collaboration with the director/chair for a proctor to be present in remote classrooms when exams are given for ITV classes.

An alternate solution to exam proctoring might include engaging a graduate teaching assistant to work with the instructor, either throughout the course, or only during exam situations. Or, an instructor might consider the use of *Respondus*, or another such examination app, that features electronic proctoring for digital exams.

## **6. Student Orientation**

The instructor should include student guidelines for the ITV course in the syllabus. During the first class meeting, a minimum of fifteen minutes should be used to familiarize students with the equipment, and to offer other information and tips that will make the ITV class successful.

If the instructor would like to have office consultations via ITV before or after the scheduled class time, this can be arranged in advance by contacting [videoconferencing@utrgv.edu](mailto:videoconferencing@utrgv.edu).

## **Student/Instructor Access**

### **1. Travel Expectations**

Instructors will be expected to be available to students at all campus locations during the semester. Faculty will be required to travel to the remote campus regularly throughout the semester to deliver the course and to hold office hours.

### **2. Office Hours**

Instructors should make themselves available to students on both campuses during their office hours and should regularly hold office hours on each campus. One of various modes of technology should be made available to engage students during office hours, such as *Skype*, *FaceTime*, *Zoom*, etc. Information on virtual office hours should be included in the course syllabus. Office hours, including virtual office hours, should be clearly stated on the course syllabus.

### **3. Flexibility**

Often, students involved with ITV are non-traditional students. Many work full-time and have difficulty reaching the instructor during daily office hours. We ask instructors to provide flexible office hours in order to make themselves available to their students. An e-mail address will also allow students to leave messages and ask questions of the instructor. Another option is to create a "course questions" discussion in Blackboard.