Your planning work is done. The time for your virtual session has been established and, if necessary, you have passed on relevant documents and information to your students. This document provides some simple tips to consider when facilitating your virtual session.

**Entering your virtual space before your students**
- First, settle into an **appropriate physical location** where you will be comfortable for the duration of your virtual session. Avoid noisy places or places with distractions that could affect your concentration.
- Make sure you that have enough time (depending on your comfort level, 15 to 30 minutes) to get all the technical components of your virtual session up and running (computer, internet connection, microphone and webcam, necessary software).
- If you plan to use your webcam, make the necessary adjustments and wear neutral clothing (avoid bright colours, stripes or intricate patterns that can give a strobe-like and glowing effect to people watching you on screen).

**Providing a welcoming remarks**
- As you would do in class, use the first few minutes of your session to **greet and welcome the students**.
- **Be authentic.** If this is your first distance education experience, say so and ask for the students’ support if some transitions are a bit slow or if technical problems arise.
- Also, take advantage of these first few minutes to **specify which technological tools** you will or will not be using (webcam, chat, virtual work groups, etc.) and how they can be accessed throughout the session.
- Introduce the **outline of the session**, including any activities you expect students to participate in as well as an idea of the timing of transitions throughout your session.

**Drawing on principles of effective communication**
- During your virtual session, **speak slowly** and **articulate clearly**.
- If you use your webcam, **be careful with your non-verbal cues**. Do not move around too much, avoid unnecessary gestures, abrupt movements (which can be interpreted as nervousness or impatience) or wandering glances (which can be interpreted as a second task that you are trying to accomplish during the virtual session).
- **Let students speak.** Make sure that students can interact with you during your virtual session. Use tools that can easily enhance these interactions (such as a chat room, a live survey or polling tool, access to a
microphone or webcam). Remember that interactions with students are essential and the main reason for having a synchronous virtual session. If your lecture is unidirectional (without providing students the opportunity to speak), the production of a video might have been a more appropriate format for the content presented during your virtual session.

- Depending on the number of students, the use of a moderator (e.g., to monitor a chat space or polling results) could be a strategy to consider. It is often difficult to present content effectively and coherently while tracking all the messages that could be posted by students in a chat space.

- Take advantage of the last minutes of your session to survey students, with a one-minute paper, on their understanding of the ideas/concepts you discussed or on technical/pedagogical elements that you could improve on for the next virtual session.

Monitoring the pace and duration of your virtual session

- Print out the outline of your virtual session (with the timing) so that you have it in front of you for ongoing guidance. If necessary, make adjustments during the session and share this information with students.

- Do not forget to schedule one or more breaks throughout depending on the length of your session. It is important to have one or more breaks of a few minutes to maintain the level of concentration you want from your students. Also, take advantage of these breaks to stretch, drink and focus on what is coming next – it is important for you too!

Despite good planning, you can see that there are several key elements to consider when setting up your virtual session. The following checklists will allow you, at a glance, to confirm the different elements that will make your virtual session a successful learning experience!

Before you start your virtual session...

- You have chosen an appropriate location.
- You are comfortably settled for the duration of your virtual meeting.
- You have started up your equipment and relevant software (do not forget the power cord for your laptop).
- Your internet connection is good.
- Your microphone is well adjusted.
- You have calibrated your webcam (height, lighting, background, setup of a built-in microphone).
- You have the outline of your session (with the timing) and all the other necessary documents.

During your virtual session...

- Speak slowly and articulate clearly.
- Be aware of your non-verbal cues (e.g., gestures, sudden movements, and wandering glances).
- Allow students to communicate (e.g., chat, polling, microphone).
- Do not forget to take one or more breaks.
- Conclude with wrap-up activity (e.g. one-minute paper).

One-Minute Paper!

A few examples
- What are the two [three, four or five] most important ideas you learned today?
- What are the two [three, four or five] key concepts that you are taking away?
- What ideas were particularly surprising to you today?
- What are two [three or four] technical aspects that could be improved for our next session?