



Enhance your teaching - inspire your students

# Using Synchronous Communication Tools with Students

Learning Bytes Session – Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2010



Enhance your teaching - inspire your students

## What are Synchronous Communication Tools?

Synchronous means **at the same time** – so any method which allows the tutor and students to communicate at the same time but can be place independent

### Teaching Tools

#### Synchronous Tools

Face to face Sessions

Telephone

Video conferencing

Webinars

Online text chat

Online voice chat

#### Asynchronous Tools

Discussion Boards

Blogs

Wikis

Screencasts

Podcasts

Paper-based Resources

VLEs



Enhance your teaching - inspire your students

# Synchronous Communication Tools: Video Conferencing

## Video Conferencing

### Advantages

- Good for distributed groups
- Can join campuses
- Connect with an expert or guest speaker
- Can be used for meetings
- Have video and audio

### Disadvantages

- Need Specialist and expensive equipment
- Daunting at first
- Need technical help/know how
- Need facilities available



Enhance your teaching - inspire your students

## Synchronous Communication Tools: Webinars

### Webinars e.g. Elluminate

#### Advantages

- Good for distributed individuals
- Only need computer with internet connection
- Connect with an expert or guest speaker
- Can be used for meetings
- Can be recorded for viewing later

#### Disadvantages

- Getting started and sorting out technical problems
- Can be daunting at first for all
- Getting used to all the functionality



Enhance your teaching - inspire your students

## Synchronous Communication Tools: Online Text Chat

### Online Text Chat e.g. Blackboard Office Hours, msn

#### Advantages

- Low tech – so easy to use
- Most students used to text-based chat tools
- Can be used for student-student communication
- Good for Q&A type sessions or office hours
- Can be recorded for viewing later

#### Disadvantages

- Text based –so relies on typing skills and speed
- Usually no video/audio
- Can get very 'noisy' and difficult to manage with larger numbers



Enhance your teaching - inspire your students

## Synchronous Communication Tools: Online Voice Chat

### Online Voice Chat e.g. Skype

#### **Advantages**

- Low tech – so easy to use
- Can be used for supervisions
- Can make use of free software
- Faster to talk than type

#### **Disadvantages**

- Not suitable for larger numbers
- Needs headsets/microphone
- Less chance to reflect before contributing



Enhance your teaching - inspire your students

## Synchronous Communication Tools: Good Practice

### Good Practice

- Prepare the session in advance, think about timings etc
- Practice with the technology, so you are comfortable with it
- Allow the students time to take turns/present/talk discuss
- Establish netiquette and protocols – e.g. how and when to ask questions – whether they are allowed to interrupt
- Try and participate in a session before leading one
- Keep phone numbers for technical support to hand



Enhance your teaching - inspire your students

## Synchronous Communication Tools: Further Support

### Further Support

- Ipark website <http://ipark.hud.ac.uk>
- Your School's Learning Technology Advisor
- Learning Technologies Team in CLS – including Sue Folley
- Staff Development Courses – on Elluminate and Synchronous Tools