

1/22/2020

## **USGS National Training Center- Live Virtual Classroom**

### **What Instructors Need to Know**

**What is a Live Virtual Classroom?** Streaming your training class in real time from the National Training Center (NTC) in Denver provides a classroom-like experience for remote participants. Streaming is invaluable, especially to those who may not be able to travel. Remote students get to experience classes much the same as your students who are sitting in the classroom. From their computers, they can see and hear instructors as well as view presentation slides and chat screen questions.

Your in- the-classroom participants will not notice much of a difference when your class is streamed. Besides a camera and occasional voice-over-internet questions the experience is the same. Throughout your event an OED staff member will monitor the event for any troubleshooting issues.

**How does it Work?** OED staff is committed to helping you make your streamed class a success. NTC has WebEx licenses available to be used in any NTC classroom. To enter your classroom virtually, they simply open a browser from their desk top computer using a provided link. Remote students can engage their instructor from their computers using a chat screen window and/or computer or phone. Your NTC classroom is accessible from student computers at any location.

**Is My Class a Good Choice for Video Streaming?** Live, video streaming works well for most multi-day, presentation style classes. OED recommends streamed classes have a minimum of two instructors. This allows one instructor to answer participant questions via the chat screen while the other is “up front” teaching. For longer classes, the number of remote students should not significantly exceed the maximum participant number set for your course.

**Course Modifications** Some modifications of your course materials may be necessary for effective streaming. PowerPoint slides should feature a minimum 24pt font and, as for all presentations, the amount of text on each slide should be limited. Using additional slides to explain a complex idea is recommended and slide colors/backgrounds should be consistent. Having each slide numbered along with any exercises is encouraged. A maximum of 40 slides per hour and self-paced activities for each module provide maximum engagement and learning retention. Breaks may be announced with specific slides. Certified OED Staff are available to review your course content and provide recommendations.

**Learner Engagement** Remote participants appreciate being engaged by their instructors. To keep your remote students on their toes, instructors are encouraged to ask remote participants specific questions by name.

**Exercises** Participation in class exercises is possible by sending course materials to registered remote participants in advance. For some classes, remote participants will need access to class

related software such as Modflow, S-Plus, etc., on their remote computers. To ensure your initial streamed class is a success, NTC provides a “Tips and Techniques” handout developed especially for USGS subject matter expert/instructors.

**Technical Support** Technical assistance is available for remote students and instructors. Please contact the OED Streaming Lead Ralph Roland at 303-445-4678 or [raroland@usgs.gov](mailto:raroland@usgs.gov) or Patty Gonwa at 303-445-4680 or [pmgonwa@usgs.gov](mailto:pmgonwa@usgs.gov).

**Associated Costs** The normal advertised tuition applies for remote students. Beyond the NTC learning support services fee, there are no additional charges to have your course video streamed.

**Responsibilities of Remote Participants** OED will provide your remote students with a handout “How to get The Most from Your Virtual Class.” They register and prepare for a video streamed class just as their classmates in your classroom. They are also prompted to familiarize themselves with your course outline and any materials in advance. Remote students are encouraged to ask questions during the class. OED Staff asks remote participants each day to login 30 minutes before the class starts, so we can cover any last minute issues/questions. We also request their patience when asking questions via the chat screen, as instructors may be simultaneously fielding questions from other remote participants. If possible, we recommend that remote participants team up with another person from their office to take the class. Remote participants need to make their supervisor’s aware of the duration of the class, start and end times and the need for their employees to stay at their computer for the duration of the class.

Your remote students are asked to test their video streaming connection prior to the start of the class. For longer classes they are also invited to attend a debrief with the instructors at the conclusion of the first class day to provide feedback. This allows the instructors to make minor changes, if necessary for the remainder of the class.

**Virtual Participants - What’s needed?**

- An internally networked computer with 2.8 GHZ processor speed.
- A good WiFi connection is recommended for network connectivity. 40 Mbps.
- A test of the WebEx in advance of the class.
- Dual screens is recommended for class.
- An informed and supportive supervisor.

Streaming Works!