**Distance Communication – Session Notes**

**Physical Environment/Connection Challenges**

* Connection Issues
  + Software updates
  + Sound/Video
  + Firewalls when other institutions control connection
  + Bandwidth, quality of transmission
* Room set-up/arrangement
* Contact person (IT? Department admin?)
* Scheduling
* Social cues/Etiquette
* IT support/Training

**Physical Environment/Connection - Solutions**

Pie in the Sky

* Each participant has their own video connection
* Identical rooms (paint, furniture, etc.)
* Multiple cameras and mics
* Hologram/Virtual Reality everyone into same room
* Cue/light to identify participant to speak

Pragmatic

* Optimize camera placement & seating
* Robust sound
* Dedicated conference coordinator
* Assigned seats for regular meetings
* Name ID (caller ID-video)

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**Technology Challenges/Tech Failure**

Technical

* Camera
  + Focused on whom? Mobile?
* Mic
  + Can’t hear
  + Mute/unmute
  + Background noise
* Bandwidth
  + Carrier
  + Platform Zoom
* Venue
* Ability to Share
  + Doc; PPT

Human

* Getting a word in
  + “US – Them”
* Conversation rhythm
* Distraction!
  + Email
  + Phone
  + “Multi-task”
* Agenda
  + Time
  + Content
* Tech Support

**Technology Solutions/Ways to Manage Tech Failure**

Do we really need the meeting?

Dream - $!

* 5G everywhere
* Reliable Wi-Fi
* Mic (working) for all
* Transmogrification
* Cross X
* “Old School” - ?Annual Face-to-Face
* Landline block – Agenda

Reality

* IT support?
* Check connections
* “Pre-Flight”
* End user education
* 3rd party platforms
* ?phone w/laptop mic
* IT Partnerships

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**Sound Challenges**

* Dropped calls / technical issues
* User error
* Staying engaged (time seems to drag on)
* Limited access to tech help in the moment
* Microphones – background noise, echoes, people don’t mute
* Lack of checklist / not following checklist
* Blaming when issues occur
* Those off-site get ignored
* Giant faces on-screen – scary for all!
* Connecting to correct room
* Dress/appearance differences visible
* Small noises/gestures/multi-tasking amplified
* Secondary status reinforced when ignored over VTC
* Responsibility for the call not clear
* Forgetting to make connection

**Sound Solutions**

* Microphone too sensitive – filter extra sound
* (raise them?)
* Muting – “automatic” – when someone not speaking
* $ - Whose budget (reinvestment funds)
* Get CIO from home/remote sites to videoconference (bugs)
* Have leaders videoconference from remote sites
* Move host site – (alternate)
* Log issues = User error by training
* Versatile “Admin” IT Student availability pre-during
* Check list – “sound check” prior
* Collaboratively develop meeting minutes together while online

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**Challenges to engagement & relationships**

* Asking questions
* Stepping on each other
* Buffering
* Sound issues
* Some folks on camera/some on phone only
* Getting on to the teleconference
* IT barriers – security, tools
* Shared expectations for prep

**Solutions to encourage engagement & build relationships**

* Actively discourage disengagement / side conversation
* Design sessions to support personal relationships
* Use the camera! Make video required
* Assign a staff person to problem solve – a “spotter” visual signals
* Draw participants out by questioning
* Agenda w/built in time for distant participants to speak – consider time to unmute
* Start w/roll call/shout out – test mic
* Create personal relationships virtually (restaurants, kids, travel, etc.)
* Use jokes to include everyone – set time expectations
* Acknowledge awkwardness and invite participation