

We are a Community: *distanti ma uniti!*

Create community by reminding your pupils that they are part of a group. Create the sense of we are all in this together.

People need pictures in their head to feel connected, so a class video chat is great!

Some simple tips for video calls.

At the beginning make sure that:

- **Everybody knows that you want to hear from each person: everyone will have the chance to share.**
- **Everybody says something: give cues by directly asking: how about you, James/ Lucia?**

Body Language

- **Practice active listening, look at the screen, use gestures.**
- **Smile 😊!**
- **Leaning forward towards the screen demonstrates that you are listening.**
- **When you lean back in your chair it looks like you are 'backing away from' the conversation (you could use this to signal that the class may talk between themselves).**

Getting Started

Start with: How are you all? Good? Follow up with open questions like:

- **How do you organize your day? How many breaks do you have?**
- **Are you managing the workload ok? What works well/doesn't work?**
- **What are your weekends like? Are you in contact with each other? How are your families?**

Listen- summarize- ask: what else can you tell me?

Tell them that you want to get an impression of what their days are like. You want to know how things are going for them. They like to talk. They will enjoy connecting/being together in this way.

Remember: to tell students something about yourself, your situation.

Don't Forget!

Video: Enable mirror effect. When you raise your left hand, your hand on the left of the screen rises. This effect is good as it prevents confusion when you show people things, or when you need to hide something you notice in the video view.

Audio: Always mute microphone when joining a meeting. It can be annoying to start talking and realize that you have to unmute, but it's far better than the alternative—everyone hearing you swearing because you can't figure out why your headphones aren't working.

Audio: Automatically adjust microphone or mic level. This setting is usually enabled by default, and fine to leave on, but if you hear complaints from others that your voice is fading in or out or echoing, try disabling this. Other software on your computer, or the microphone itself, maybe be applying changes or effects that are competing with the Web-conference software's settings.

Final Points

Schools do so much more than academically educate pupils, but right now these opportunities are limited. Isolation can lead to post-traumatic stress, anxiety, depression and anger.

To combat this, we need to create and reinforce our sense of community by reminding pupils that they are part of a group: we are all in this together.

We as people need pictures in our heads to feel connected: teachers/ students could share pictures of themselves working or relaxing (don't give away too much of your private life, though!)