

Sample Plan For the First Virtual Class Meeting

Prior to First Class:

- ☐ Standardize what platform, or applications, you will be using with learners
 - ☐ In choosing a platform, keep in mind the following:
 - ☐ What platforms are your learners familiar with ?
 - ☐ Do they have an email address? And do they have knowledge of how to use it?
 - ☐ Does the platform have the features you need to teach your class?
- ☐ Check what device each learner plans to use to join your class. This can be helpful to know to best assist them.
- ☐ Contact each learner and support them to download the application onto their device.
- ☐ Collect email addresses, or phone numbers from learners (used to send links to the class).

Getting Ready

- ☐ Plan to enter the virtual class session 5-10 minutes before the start time.
- ☐ Be sure your camera and microphone are on. Consider asking a colleague to join this first session. They can participate as a learner and let you know if there are sound or visual issues.
- ☐ Prepare a printed visual or screen share of microphone and camera icons to show learners via your camera or screen share. These images can be helpful to communicate what you need learners to click on in order to enable their cameras or mics.

Starting your First Class:

- ☐ As learners enter the virtual class:
 - ☐ Let learners know, "This first class meeting is for us to practice meeting on the computer. It is ok to have problems or feel some worry. We are all learning. We are going to go slow today. We will take our time. We will practice many times, again and again."
 - ☐ Let learners know, "If something goes wrong and you are not in the classroom anymore, it is ok. Just click on the link I sent you again." **You may also choose to share a phone number for learners to reach out to you for support. If you are able to have a colleague help you run the first session--they could take over if you need to support any learners via phone.*
 - ☐ Greet each learner by name as they enter the class and let them know you will practice 3 things today: seeing each other, hearing each other, and writing to each other.
 - ☐ Depending on the level of your class, you may choose to share the rename feature. Settings vary depending on the platform you are using, but usually each learner should be able to click on their picture or name assigned to update their name, if needed. **Don't get into this if you think it will be too much for your group during the first meeting. You should also be able to rename each participant as the host.*

Repeat this practice cycle again and again as new learners enter the virtual space.

Cameras:

- ☐ Ask each learner to share their camera (explain where the camera button is on the screen and what it looks like). Let learners know everyone can see each other.
- ☐ If you are recording your class, let learners know they can turn their camera off if they do not want to be recorded.
- ☐ Ask learners: "How many of your classmates can you see?"
- ☐ Depending on the level of your class, you may choose to share different ways to view everyone in the session. Settings vary depending on the platform you are using, but usually you can choose to view everyone in a grid or just the speaker. **Don't get into this if you think it will be too much for your group during the first meeting.*

Muting:

- ☐ Define unmute: "everyone in the group can hear you". Define mute: "no one can hear you".
- ☐ Explain where the mute/unmute button is on the screen and what it looks like.
- ☐ Let learners know you will model muting/unmuting yourself. Do this while saying something continuously so it is obvious to learners when the sound goes off/on.
- ☐ Once you have several learners who have arrived, ask each learner to unmute to say their name & say hi to everyone. Then, mute themselves so no one can hear them. **You should also be able to mute/unmute learners as the host, but you want to show them how to do this themselves, too!*
- ☐ You might think of a question to ask everyone during mute/unmute practice. For example: How many of your classmates can you see? Are you helping kids with school today? How are you feeling?

Chat Box:

- ☐ Once learners have mastered mute/unmute and turning on their camera, share the chat box feature with them.
- ☐ Explain where the chat box feature is on the screen and what it looks like.
- ☐ Write a simple question (suggestions above) in the chat box. Ask each learner to respond in the chatbox. Cheer them on! Call out answers when you see them.
- ☐ For learners who do not respond in the chat, ask them to unmute themselves and guide them through instruction on how to find and use the chat box. Cheer them on! This thinking-aloud instruction will be beneficial for all learners.
- ☐ Let learners know they can use the chat box to ask questions while you are talking.

Plan to continue practice of camera, muting, and chat box for as long as needed during the first session. Don't worry if it takes a long time, repetition is key for learners to master feeling comfortable in the platform.

Other tips:

- ☐ Wait time is longer in the virtual classroom. Give learners time to experiment before jumping in to help.
- ☐ Remind learners to have a paper and pen to write notes on what they are learning.
- ☐ Learners will all join the class at different times. Be sure to greet each learner as they appear, whenever that may be. Pause and take time to explain what you are doing at that time to new joiners. Repetition is good for everyone.
- ☐ Remain calm and positive. Teaching this way is difficult for everyone. We are all learning, and we are all in this together!
- ☐ Remember, try to find a colleague who can join you for the first session. Talk about your plan before the class. Try it out together to build your confidence.