



Q. 1 Do virtual classes present any special difficulties?

x yes

Problem encountered	Illustrative examples	Possible/ideal/current solutions proposed by group participants
Equipment and facilities	Lack of rooms equipped with VC equipment - Technology which is used is not compatible - Given the few VCs which can be organised with the EU Institutions in particular, any time wasted because of technology is a major problem.	
Technical knowhow	Technician related issues: - scarcity of available technicians means that classes don't run smoothly, are difficult to schedule - lack of willingness of available technicians hinders smooth running/scheduling of VCs - Technician support not included, therefore incurs extra cost. - Lack of expertise (technicians themselves can't operate the system fully or can't solve problems)	Trainers are trained to use the equipment, to be self-sufficient .
Participant motivation	Either students or other trainers lack motivation to participate in VCs because they are considered to be an unnecessary burden / simply add to a busy workload. How to motivated students etc.: coercive measures / what kind of incentives?	If VCs are incorporated into the official program, there is no longer a need to "negotiate" with students or trainers – it is a mandatory part of the course. If the purpose of the VCs is explained and presented well, it should encourage enough participants to take part.
Finding partner universities	Universities training students with minority languages find it difficult to pair up with partner institutions because of lack of commonality.	E.g. Turkish and Polish – some compromise solutions can be found to ensure that the experience is beneficial to all. However, doesn't detract from the fact that easier to organise with Universities which share common languages.
Stress	Stress related to the setting, and sometimes the quality of the sound (quality of sound transmission).	Stress is a key part of the job of being an interpreter, therefore important part of training to develop coping measures. VC class environment can be made less stressful by preparing those involved properly (see question 4)
Language combination of Assessors	A student gave a convincing performance into their A language, Turkish, and was given a favourable assessment by a Turkish C in the assessing institution. This positive	Assessors with a C in target language should therefore avoid commenting on register / quality of language in the interpretation and focus more on general

	assessment was subsequently at odds with the less favourable opinion of the Turkish A assessors.	content and delivery to avoid contradictory feedback.
--	--	---

Question 2: Do they present any special advantages?

x Yes

Advantage for the student	How is this an advantage?
Stress	Stress is part and parcel of being an interpreter, therefore exposing the students to stressful situations can a) help them understand the kind of pressure they will be confronted with; b) be seen as an opportunity to develop coping techniques;
Pure listeners	Given the normal artificial class-room context students are normally working in, VCs offer those involved to play the actual role of a “real interpreter”.
Exposure to new technology	Remote interpreting and/or interpreting involving ICTs is becoming increasingly common, therefore VCs expose students to this reality.
Different speakers	Chance to listen to different accents, different live speakers, since students may become over-accustomed to the voice/manner of speaking of their trainer.
Fresh feed-back	New assessors means receiving feedback in different forms, on different issues. May also offer fresh advice and remedies.

Advantage for the trainer	How is this an advantage?
Feedback	May endorse comments already made by the trainer to a student, thereby increasing credibility of the trainer’s assessment ability / objectivity.
Good practice	A chance to pick up remedies / feedback methods from experienced trainers. May also help a trainer identify good and bad feedback methods by watching how students react to comments, hearing student views on how they felt about the external assessment.
Soft skills for interpreting	Opportunity for trainers to place students in a near-reality context and introduce periphery skills such as punctuality, booth manners, how to use the mic (switching off, using mute button, looking at the camera, not interrupting, etc.) All skills related to real-life situations as opposed to the comfort of the class room.

Question 3: In which phase of the training VCs should be organized for the first time?

x in the first third of the course

When	Reason
After note-taking has been introduced	So that the student has been introduced to the basic concepts of what interpreting actually is, and can benefit more from the new experience (by definition everything is new at the beginning of the course, therefore the novelty

	and purposes of the VC may be drowned amid all the other new skills and concepts the student is expected to take on board at the beginning of the course)
Matching VCs to the progression and needs of the students	VCs can be tailored to suit the requirements of students at different stages in the course as well: e.g. focusing external feedback on B/C into A, or on the return by another native speaker.

Question 4: What are the most important tasks for trainers before, during and after a virtual class?

Before	Illustrative example / reasons
Trying and testing the equipment with the partner institution before the VC	To avoid any time wasted with technical problems. Decide what should be seen on screen - what the camera will move to if not everyone can be seen at once.
Booking technician	For obvious reasons.
Detailed brief with detailed time schedule	For students: explain <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the purpose of the VC (not an exam); - what is expected of them, (again it is not a test – do what you are normally capable of, no miracles expected); - where the sound will be coming from; - where the cameras will be and what / who they will be recording; - who will interpret whom and into what language; - when to switch the mic off/on. For trainers/assessors (from the institutions or other universities): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who is chairing the session; - At what stage the students are in their training (beginner...etc.); - Any essential background info about students (e.g. been absent for illness for a month from the course – may have had an impact on the day's performance, etc.); - Who is assessing, when to give feedback; - How long for each piece of feedback; - How to give feedback (should be concise, to the point and relevant); - What kind of feedback (content? Delivery?, etc. e.g. saving specific language related comments for the post-VC feedback session, to avoid wasting time and ensure remarks are useful for all those present);

During	Time keeping (e.g. ensure feedback is not too long)

After	
Collect feedback from students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ensure they have understood the feedback / criticism - ask them to identify their issues and try to think of solutions, then offer remedies to complement their own input.

Collect feedback from trainers	
Finish giving detailed feedback (if necessary)	Complete the assessment with other matters that were left out due to time constraints / omitted in the VC e.g. too close to the mic,

Question 5: Can virtual distance teaching replace face-to-face classes in conference interpreter training?

X no

Quick answer	No.
Long answer	No, because it would not give students comprehensive training, in practice, they will need to be able to work with others face-to-face.
	VC-only programs would induce a lack of engagement, it would make it difficult to introduce the “soft skills” mentioned earlier, and observation of students becomes more difficult.

Question 6: What are the dos and don'ts when it comes to virtual classes?

DO	DON'T
Give positive feedback	Focus only negative points or mistakes
Ensure feedback is relevant and concise	Treat it like an exam
Have a detailed script for VCs to guarantee efficient use of time	
Prepare a set of assessment guidelines	
Ensure that VCs are an integrated part of the course, to ensure proper participation	
Explain what the VCs are for: 1) preparation for real-life situations with pure listeners; 2) to benefit from external advice and a fresh perspective on performance; 3) to have the chance to hear different speakers 4) underscore that VCs are not tests (although they may be considered as preparation for them);	