What to do in case of technical difficulties

1. If you’re having trouble connecting, make sure all of your equipment is plugged into the correct outlets. (Check electrical and network wires.)
2. Hang up and dial in again.
3. Try rebooting the system. Turn it off, then on again, and then redial into the bridge.
4. Call the other site’s POTS (Plain Old Telephone System) number and inform them of your difficulties. They might be able to make a suggestion, or they might be able to tell you if other sites are also encountering problems.
5. If all else fails, call the technicians at the bridge. They can often help you troubleshoot or, if the problem is at the bridge, they can repair it.

Adapted from “KCET Videoconferencing Rules to Live By.”
Videoconference Checklist

Date of Conference _____________________
Time _________________________________
Purpose ______________________________
Confirmation Number __________________
Technical Support Number ______________
Local Phone Number ___________________
Remote Site Number ___________________
ISDN Number _________________________

Setting up a successful videoconference long before you do the conference:

_____ Practice using equipment
_____ Prepare lesson plan and materials
_____ Schedule a date and a time for the telelesson
_____ Arrange for remote facilitators, guest speakers, technical support, etc.
_____ Reserve room and equipment
_____ Consider room set-up (background, cameras, clock, etc.)
_____ Develop a back-up plan in case of technical difficulties
_____ Schedule a practice session (if unfamiliar with the system)
_____ If using an ISDN circuit, determine who you will make the connection.

One week prior to the conference:

_____ Make sure your students are aware of your expectations
_____ Make sure the remote site has necessary materials
_____ Share telephone numbers
_____ Find out whom to contact if there are problems
_____ Decide what to wear (avoid loud patterns, red and white)
_____ If you are using an ISDN circuit, confirm who will place the call.

Day of the conference:

_____ Check the arrangement of the room.
_____ Connect with the remote site 30-45 minutes prior to the meeting time
_____ Check audio, video, lighting and auxiliary equipment (Elmo, VCR, etc.)
_____ Preview local camera angle and preset angles if possible
_____ Keep ISDN and telephone numbers handy during the conference
_____ View yourself occasionally (make sure the other end can see whomever is speaking.)

Videoconference Etiquette

Prior to the Conference:
• Make sure that students are aware of who the speaker is and why you are meeting with him/her.
• Have questions ready to ask. Generally, the speaker will make a brief presentation to begin the program. After that, the students should be prepared to ask questions.

During the Conference:
• When it is your school’s turn to ask a question, the student should identify himself/herself by giving his/her name.
• If more than one school is conferencing, the student should also identify his/her school. There are two reasons for this. First, the speaker can respond to a student by name. Second, there is a five-second delay on the sound if you are using a sound-activated system. By giving the information first, none of the question will be missed. This also gives the system operator a chance to get the speaker’s picture onto the screen.
• If no one is speaking at your site, MUTE your microphone. Remember, most videoconferences are voice-activated, and you don’t want your picture fed to another site just because your site has background noises.
• Speak loudly and clearly when presenting information or answering questions.
• Look at the camera when you speak — pretend the camera is your audience.
• Move and gesture as you normally would.
• Wear solid colored clothing in dark or neutral colors.

This form is adapted from the KCET Videoconference Checklist.