ITL Showcase Session Planning Guide

2021 ITL  Showcase Conveners & Teams,

We look forward to your session at this year's conference! For general information about the conference schedule, registration, and submitting supplementary materials, please visit the ITL [For Presenters](https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/programs/annual-conference-itl/presenter-information/) page; for more information about your specific session type, visit the [Showcase Sessions](https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/programs/annual-conference-itl/stearns-center-showcase-sessions/) page.

In this document you will find:

* General session format for all Showcase sessions
* Session Logistics
* Overview of roles and to-do checklists
* Additional tips and resources for using Zoom
* Useful links to other resources

# General Session Format

The main goals of these sessions are to “showcase” a variety of example strategies/assignments for a given teaching and learning topic (e.g., creating community in the classroom) AND to engage participants in active reflection/discussion about how they could apply these ideas to their own curriculum design and teaching practices. While these are opportunities for speakers to present on their experiences, they are also intended to be opportunities for participant engagement. They should NOT be 90-minutes of speaker presentations.

Specific session plans will vary, but a common plan is as follows:

* Convener starts the session by sharing a few brief remarks and introducing speakers.
* Panelists/speakers respond to convener discussion prompts or share brief remarks/lightning talk presentations (no longer than 5 minutes for each panelist/speaker).
* Session shifts into a roundtable discussion guided by the convener, polls/chat-based activities, a breakout group activity, or some combination of activities.

Conveners will reach out to session speakers with a more detailed plan for that specific session.

Session Logistics

Participants will access the Zoom session by clicking on a passcode embedded link in Sched, the Conference App, that they must log into to access. Presenters will receive an email invitation to the Zoom session, but can also join via the participant link. For security and connection quality, live sessions will have these default Zoom settings:

* Waitroom enabled
* Mics/video muted upon entry
* Chatbox viewable to all attendees, with 1:1 private messaging disabled
* Participants not able to share screens
* Sessions will not be recorded

In order to create a unified feel to the conference, live sessions will have the same general format:

Set up time (20-30 minutes before session start time):

1. A Stearns Center tech host starts the session 20-30 minutes prior to allow presenters to test technology and shares ITL conference welcome slides. Tech host is available to help with any Zoom questions. ITS is available to help with any connection issues.
2. Participants arrive in waiting room. Tech host lets them into the session 5 minutes before start, ensures mics muted, monitors chatbox for tech Q’s, etc.

Session time:

1. (allow 5 minutes) Co-convener welcomes participants, gives a few conference-related announcements, explains the format of the session, and introduces presenters.
2. (90-minutes) Convener runs session
   1. Co-convener emcees the chat, engaging participants, sharing SC and other resources on the session topic via Chat, and assisting convener as needed
   2. Tech host monitors chat box for tech Q’s and lets in late attendees
3. (allow 2-3 minutes) Co-convener shares ITL conference session conclusion slides, thanks presenters, posts evaluation and Twitter links, announces what’s next in conference schedule, and how to contact presenters after the session.

Roles & To-Do Checklists

**Session Convener Role:** The session convener designs the session format, assists in selecting presenters, and serves as the coordinator between the SC ITL team and the session team. The convener is the main point of contact for invited panelists/speakers, keeping them updated, answering their questions, and ensuring their details are correct in the ITL conference records. The convener will lead/emcee the session that runs via Zoom during the conference week. The convener will also create a 1-page summary after the event to share outcomes and key ideas through the ITL Conference Proceedings.

**To-Do Checklist:**

* Register for conference (free!)
* Review session details in Sched and in ITLCP (posted soon) and submit any revisions needed through the [Session Update Request Form](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSewIgZpKvROEnp7X7IKPTf1thQcN0tHxt2uKqJkqyANj1XFFw/viewform)
* Attend [Convener preparation session](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1dWi7XaHkPEVRGfO1BKY7si2n1xbDlzIN_a5L56STFuM/edit?usp=sharing) in July/Aug/Sept
* Finalize session plan that aligns with session/conference goals and share it with your team
* Email session team updates, check in with presenters about registration, make sure speakers submit supplementary materials on time, etc. in Aug./Sept.
* Touch bases with tech host to discuss Zoom logistics/desired tech support for session
* Strongly Suggested: Schedule a live meeting with your entire team (including co-convener, speakers, and tech host) to review the session plan, practice using tech, and answer any questions
* Submit any supplementary materials for the session by August 30th. Follow the instructions for how to submit materials on the [For Presenters](https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/programs/annual-conference-itl/presenter-information/) page.
* Day of session: Emcee Zoom session
* After session: Create and submit 1-page summary of session to be published in ITLCP (Oct.)

**SC Co-Convener Role:** The SC Co-Convener serves as a chat emcee for the session, engaging participants via Chat, sharing SC and other resources on the session topic via Chat, and assisting convener as needed.

**To-Do Checklist:**

* Register for conference (free!)
* Review session details in Sched and in ITLCP (posted soon) and submit any revisions needed through the [Session Update Request Form](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSewIgZpKvROEnp7X7IKPTf1thQcN0tHxt2uKqJkqyANj1XFFw/viewform)
* Optional: Attend [Convener preparation session](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1dWi7XaHkPEVRGfO1BKY7si2n1xbDlzIN_a5L56STFuM/edit?usp=sharing) in July/Aug/Sept
* Strongly Suggested: Attend live team meeting
* Prepare list of possible SC and other resources on the session topic that you can share via Chat
* Day of Session: Emcee chat for Zoom session

**Panelist/Speaker Role:** Invited speakers are expected to prepare a few brief remarks (based on convener guidance/directions) and interact with participants throughout the session.

**To-Do Checklist:**

* Register for conference (free!)
* Review session details in Sched and in ITLCP (posted soon) and submit any revisions needed through the [Session Update Request Form](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSewIgZpKvROEnp7X7IKPTf1thQcN0tHxt2uKqJkqyANj1XFFw/viewform) or alert session convener of corrections needed
* Strongly Suggested: Attend live team meeting
* Prepare remarks as planned with Convener
* Optional: Attend a [live presenter preparation session](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1dWi7XaHkPEVRGfO1BKY7si2n1xbDlzIN_a5L56STFuM/edit?usp=sharing) in Aug/Sept or watch the Live Session Resource Video on the [For Presenters](https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/programs/annual-conference-itl/presenter-information/) page (under “Presenter Preparation and Support”)
* Submit any supplementary materials for the session by August 30th. Follow the instructions for how to submit materials on the [For Presenters](https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/programs/annual-conference-itl/presenter-information/) page.
* Day of Session: participate in session and have fun sharing your wisdom with the rest of us

**Tech Host Role:** The Tech host schedules and launches the Zoom session, moves participants from the waiting room, reports session status updates to Mission Control during event, removes disruptive participants, ensures mics are muted, and assists with technical issues during sessions.

**To-Do Checklist:**

* Register for conference (free!)
* Attend tech host preparation session in Aug
* Create Zoom link for session and submit to SC
* Touch bases with convener to discuss Zoom logistics/desired tech support for session
* Set up polls as needed for session
* Strongly Suggested: Attend live team meeting
* Day of Session: Launch Zoom session, admit participants, offer tech support, etc.

Additional Zoom Tips and Resources

[See our [Zoom Session Strategies Handout](https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/ITL-Zoom-Synch-Sessions-Strategies-no-date.pdf)]

**Tips for using the chatbox**:

* Leverage your session host’s presence—ask them to monitor the chatbox and answer or direct questions to you during session so you can focus on what you are saying.
* Ask participants at the start of session to put questions in the chatbox—this allows you to keep the flow of the session, while periodically addressing questions or comments when relevant.

**Tips for using breakout rooms**:

* Have a plan for the number of participants in your breakout groups ahead of time; 2-4 is ideal to make sure everyone gets a chance to share (and consider if you have a small or large group attend).
* Pre-decide if you want groups to be randomly assigned, assigned by you during the session, or picked by participants—there are different logistics to make each option work smoothly.
* Give directions before putting participants in breakout rooms.
* Provide a link to a shared document before putting participants in breakout rooms.
* Include breakout group activity directions at the top of the shared document (so participants can get started right away).
* Include a space for “recorder” and “presenter” at the top of the breakout group if activity involves either, so group can decide this upfront, rather than negotiate in front of the whole group later.
* Consider having a shared folder that contains shared documents so participants can easily go between items rather than clicking on many links.
* For longer breakout activities, plan to pop into groups to see if they need help. Session hosts can assist latecomers in the main room.
* Schedule/send 2-minute notice messages to breakout rooms (see Zoom tool FAQs on website) and decide in advance who in your presenter team will do this.
* Note: When you send participants into breakout groups, the silence and not being able to see what groups are doing can feel weird.
* **TECHNICAL NOTE:** Only the Zoom host can see who is in which breakout group, move individuals between groups, and send a message to the groups. Zoom cohosts will be randomly assigned if you choose the random assignment option—meaning that the Zoom host will need to manually move them if they are leading a specific breakout group or move other participants into a new group if they are paired with cohosts who are not participating in the breakout group activities.

**Tips for using polling**:

* Consider having a test question up at the start to get to know participants and to work out bugs before the heart of your content.
* Consider using an external polling tool like Poll Everywhere that allows for real time open-ended responses—give participants a short time (2-3 minutes) to respond and narrate the responses with your expert commentary as they come in.
* Conserve your session time and ask yourself if a poll question is necessary or adds significantly to the experience. Could using the ‘raise your hand’ tool or asking for a visual nod or headshake suffice?
* Be sure to share the results and connect them explicitly to the session content.
* **TECHNICAL NOTE:** Both Zoom host and Zoom co-hosts can launch the poll, but only the host can create one.

**Tips for keeping things on schedule**:

* Plan your session to the minute and practice—ask a friend to try the activity and see how long it really takes them or see how long it takes you and double it.
* Leverage your session host’s support—ask them to give you specific time cues.
* Use a timer for individual or breakout group activities and provide 2-minute warnings.
* Have groups or individuals record work in a shared document so all responses are visible, but you can be selective on any reporting out.
* Allowing participants to use their mic or share their screen can create a greater sense of community during the session, but can take additional time to transition and navigate tool use—add 5-10 minutes to each activity you plan to do this in.
* Have a shared folder or documents, including copies of any materials you plan to show by sharing your screen; that way people can easily follow along (especially if participants are calling in due to tech issues).

**Tips for an unexpectedly large group of participants**:

* Anticipate and have a backup plan for a large group.
* Don’t be intimidated! They’re there because they want to hear what you have to share on the subject, and you were selected for the program because you have something to share for the benefit of all.
* Zoom is pretty stable, but you may want to ask the tech host to turn off participant video feed.
* You can still do breakout groups—consider doing quick think-pair-share activities or use partners instead of larger breakout groups for more involved activities.
* Consider changing to poll-based activities instead of open-ended ones.
* Consider changing to individual reflection activities instead of larger working groups.

**Tips for an unexpectedly small group of participants**:

* Anticipate it and have a backup plan for a small group. Consider having a couple “extension” activities prepared in case your session runs a little too efficiently with a smaller group.

Useful Links

* Information for [All Presenters](https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/programs/annual-conference-itl/presenter-information/)
* Information for [Stearns Center Showcase Sessions](https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/programs/annual-conference-itl/stearns-center-showcase-sessions/)
* ITL Conference Proceedings (link coming soon)
* ITL [Conference Schedule](https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/programs/annual-conference-itl/conference-schedule-and-proceedings/)
* ITL [Conference Registration](https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/programs/annual-conference-itl/registration/)
* ITL [FAQs Page](https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/programs/annual-conference-itl/faq/)
* Stearns Center [Zoom Resources](https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/zoom-resources/)