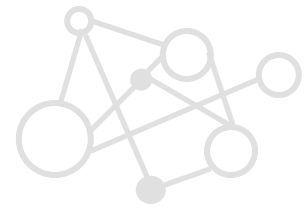# TIPS FOR COLLABORATING ACROSS DISTANCE
## MIDDLEBURY

### PRIVILEGE THE VISUAL…BUT DON'T FORGET THE AUDIO

Strong visual connections help remote participants to feel less distant from the on-ground conversation. Try to ensure that participants can see each other's faces. Audio issues can make or break a meeting, so verify and test audio connections ahead of time. Remote participants joining individually should consider using headphone and a designated microphone when they connect.

### EQUALIZE OPPORTUNITIES FOR REMOTE ATTENDEES TO PARTICIPATE

It can be difficult for a remote participant to speak up during an organic conversation among people who are physically co-present. Check in with remote participants every now and then to give them a chance to add their voice to the conversation. Consider offering some meetings in which everyone is participating virtually, to equalize the experience for everyone.

### PLAN THE TECHNOLOGY AND PHYSICAL SET UP EARLY

Do one or more "trial runs" of the technology and physical room set up to identify issues early. The meeting facilitator(s) should participate in the trial run and experiment with different strategies for engaging participants in all locations. Middlebury's Media Services group will provide training on how to use technologies for web conferencing, and can provide guidance during your trial runs.

### CONSIDER A BUDDY SYSTEM TO PROVIDE MORE MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS

Buddies can provide advocacy for and attention to remote participants, helping them to feel like they have a physical connection to the meeting via their buddy. Buddies may exchange contact information so that the remote participant can reach out if they are having trouble participating.

### USE MUTE FUNTIONALITY TO MANAGE NOISE

Web conferencing technologies do not handle multiple audio streams well. To improve the quality of the meeting, remote participants should mute their audio unless they are speaking. Before and after the meeting, all locations should mute their audio, as the noise levels can be problematic as people are entering a room and greeting each other.

### MAKE TABLE TENTS TO HELP WITH IDENTIFYING PARTICIPANTS

Remote participants often cannot see the faces of people in the physical rooms—the cameras are not able to capture much detail from a distance. To help remote participants know who is talking, use large double-sided table tents on which physically-present participants write their first names in large font.

Read more about collaborating across distance at http://digitallearning.middcreate.net