Masterclasses Communication

Some general guidelines based on experience from previous Masterclasses
Basic Communication Issues

There are (mostly) two moderators running the show

- both moderators should talk roughly equal amounts
  - in case of a (more) senior + (more) young moderator, the senior one should not answer all questions
- avoid talking too much to your co-moderator
  - a long dialog only between the moderators may disconnect the students
  - if you feel you’ve talked too much, hand over to your co-moderator, e.g. “Uta, this seems a perfect question to be answered by you…”

Most of the students are not native English speakers and don't understand and speak English very well

- speak slowly and clear
- avoid using complicated and long sentences
- use simple words (vocabulary of the students is limited)
- don’t use acronyms, abbreviations, physics slang not common outside of our community, avoid talking “CERNish”
Starting the Conference I

Introduce yourself

→ e.g. “My name is Michael, I'm working at ..., one of the 4 large experiments at the LHC collider at CERN in Geneva Switzerland…”

Explain where we are (the moderators)

→ e.g. “Right now we are sitting at CERN. CERN is the largest centre for particle physics research in the world and a rather cool place...”

Put live video streams from the ALICE, ATLAS or CMS Control Rooms onto the shared desktop

→ explain what can be seen, e.g. physicists from ALICE/ATLAS/CMS are doing shifts on 24h/7d basis in their control rooms to monitor the detectors (high voltage, gas, cooling etc.).

→ LHC will start running within the next days/weeks to continue data taking for discovery of the Higgs...
Starting the Conference II

Tell in a few words, what's happening in the next hour

- read the agenda, e.g. report of measurements and discussion of the results, questions to the moderators, quiz

Display a map showing all connecting sites

- an actual map of today’s VC is available, produced by the Masterclasses organizers before the VC:
  https://twiki.cern.ch/twiki/bin/view/Main/InternationalMasterclassesModeratorManual

Ask one short question to each masterclass, one by one

- answer should be given by a student (not the organizers or teachers), no longer than 2 minutes.
- question could be a localized question, that you might receive from the local organizers beforehand, e.g. “Vienna, have you seen the VERA accelerator?”
General Comments on Discussion

Most difficult part: to encourage the students asking questions at all

- they are shy, don't want to expose themselves in front of their fellow students
- it's a video conference with microphone + camera, they are not used to
- they don't speak English well, sometimes cannot express what they want to ask, don't know the right words (e.g. in physics questions)

For them, we (at CERN) are considered as “super-experts”

- they are even more shy and hesitate to ask “stupid” questions

Try to encourage them

- go through institute by institute and ask if the students have questions
  - give examples: “was the exercise difficult, what was the largest problem, how is life at CERN” e.tc.
- sometimes teachers (very rarely) or local physicists are asking the questions on behalf of the students