

# **SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE TEACHING**

**A Quick-Start Guide for Teaching and Learning**

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# Synchronous Online Teaching

If you would prefer a video tutorial, click here:

<https://utep.yuja.com/V/Video?v=770914&node=3205107&a=471238724&autoplay=1>

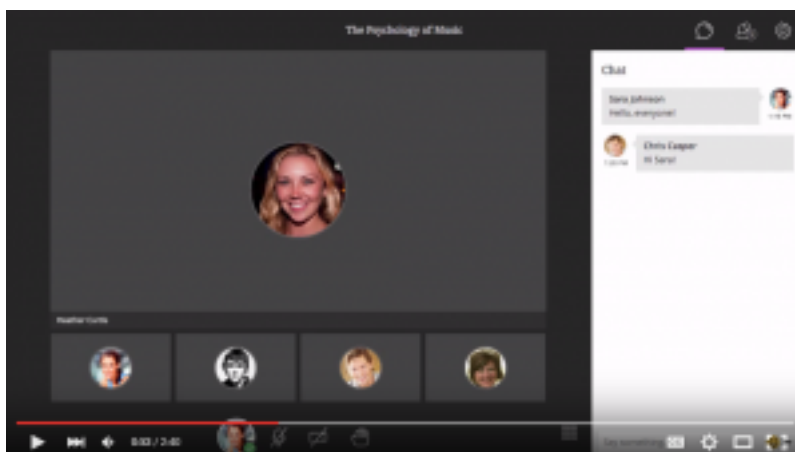
## Teaching and Learning Considerations

**Distance learning** has become, with the help of technological innovations, a viable option for many learners. In fact, research has found that students reported studying more for online courses than for traditional courses, and that they put more thought into online discussions and interactions than in their face-to-face classes. In addition, faculty reported that online teaching improved their understanding of teaching with technology, and, even better, that online teaching improved their face-to-face teaching.

**Transitioning from teaching a face-to-face class to a fully online environment** can sound overwhelming, though. It is important to view fully online and face-to-face (f2f) learning environments **not as competitive formats**, but as alternatives that broaden the educational options for prospective and current students. The main challenge, then, for a faculty member teaching an online course is to integrate their teaching experience with innovative approaches and tools, all in flexible ways that maintain or improve learning outcomes.

**Faculty who are new to online teaching**, tend to gravitate towards webconferencing as a replacement for the F2F meetings. However, **it is best to use synchronous tools in conjunction with asynchronous course content (i.e. teaching and learning modules)**. Just as it is in a live classroom, interactivity is critical in a virtual classroom. Good teaching includes incorporating multiple learning styles and interactivity. **You should have specific purposes and goals** for using web-conferencing tools for synchronous teaching.

**Having said that**, this Quick-Start Guide will focus on Bb Collaborate. **Blackboard Collaborate Ultra** provides a virtual online room. It's an effective tool for online office hours, live lectures, and teaching remotely.



## Online Class Meeting Best Practices

Keep the following best practices in mind when planning your Collaborate session:

- Send pre-session information that includes the agenda/objectives, how to access live stream, how to access recordings once the session is complete, and where to go for help should a tech issue arise: [HELP Desk in Technology Support](#).
- When presenting a session, provide a slide with instructions, including how to communicate via chat, audio, and video, as well as how to test the audio settings.
- Build community by creating a profile and encourage participants to do the same. Consider creating a biography page introducing yourself.
- You should be checking in with students every 3 - 5 minutes and can do so by using various features and techniques. For instance, when you ask students a question, wait at least 10 seconds for a response. If no response comes within 20 seconds, rephrase the question and wait an additional 10 seconds. The silence will encourage the students to engage (this is also good practice in traditional F2F classes).

## Getting Started: Adding Bb Collaborate to Your Shell

1. In the upper left corner click on the **+ sign with the circle around it**.

2. Select **Tool Link**

3. **Enter the name** you want displayed on the left content panel. There are multiple ways Bb Collaborate can be used, so faculty will sometimes call it:

Online Office Hours

Online Classroom

Our Meeting Space

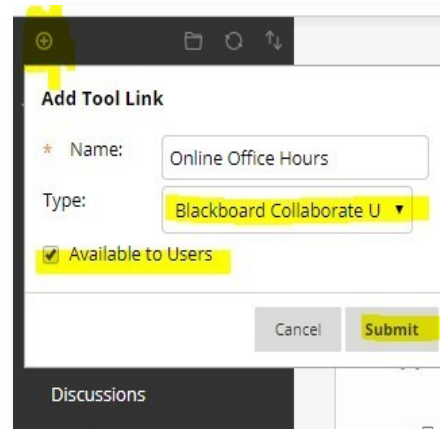
Virtual Collaboration Space

Webconferencing

4. Select **Type** and choose **Blackboard Collaborate Ultra**

5. Click **Available to Users** (this becomes the access point for your students if you don't just send them the Guest link)

6. Click **Submit**

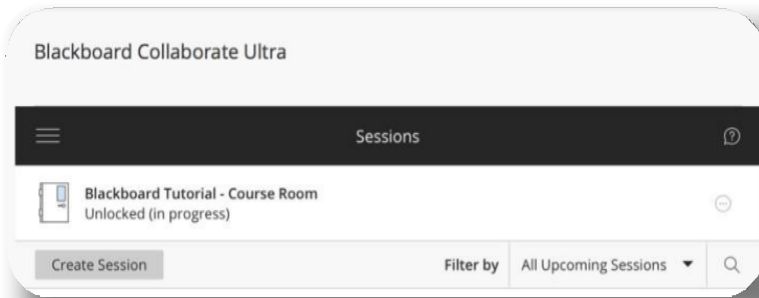


The screenshot shows a web form titled "Add Tool Link" with a plus sign icon in the top left corner. The form contains the following fields and options:

- Name:** A text input field containing "Online Office Hours".
- Type:** A dropdown menu with "Blackboard Collaborate U" selected.
- Available to Users:** A checkbox that is checked.
- Buttons:** "Cancel" and "Submit" buttons at the bottom right.

The "Discussions" section is visible at the bottom of the page.

When you click on this link (whatever you have decided to call it), you will see the following screen (or very similar to this):



There are a number of reasons you may still want to create scheduled sessions when you have a course room. Three examples are:

**Sessions with a specific purpose:** Like online office hours, live lectures, etc.

**Supervised sessions:** When the course room is unlocked anyone can join the session at any time. Instructors don't have to be present for students to join the session. If you don't want students to join a session unsupervised, lock the course room and create scheduled sessions.

**Multiple sessions at once:** If you want to run multiple sessions at the same time for students to use as virtual study room, for example, you can create multiple sessions for the different groups to join.

## Creating a New Session and Determine the Settings

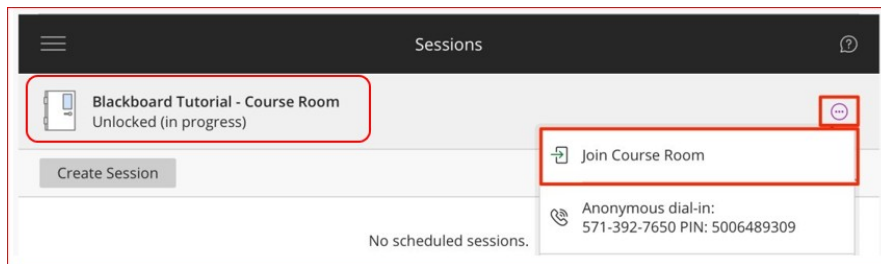
Click on “Create Session.” A new window will open and allow you to give your session a title and set the parameters for the session

We would encourage you to select “**No End (open session)**” so that you don’t have to worry about things being open or not. A basic rule of thumb with technology is to keep its functionality simple and easily accessible.

### Enter a Collaborate Ultra Session

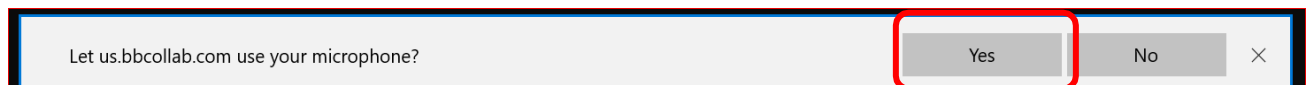
1. Click the link you created on your left panel or Click **Tools**
2. Select **Blackboard Collaborate Ultra**

3. Select the **Session Options** button
4. Select **Join Course Room** to enter the BB Collaborate Ultra Room



## Cameras and Mic's

Make sure your Camera and Mic are working. The 1st time you or your students log into Collaborate Ultra you will receive a message at the top of the screen. Please click **Yes** to make sure you have the resources you will need activated. For example:



## Take a Tour: Navigation and Functionality

### Open Session Menu



**In the upper right corner**, you will find the session menu. This menu will let the instructor do two important things:

1. Start Recording
2. Leave Session

**Tools available to both Moderators and Students**—found in lower center of screen.

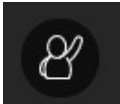




You may want to instruct student to click the Green check to indicate when Students need to set their status to Away. That way you will know they are temporarily not engaged in the session.

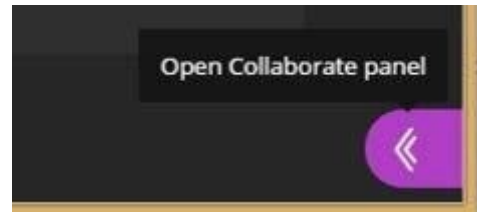


**Audio and Video:** Turn your audio and video on. Lines through the microphone and camera icons mean that they are turned off. Click **Share Audio** and **Share Video** to turn them on.



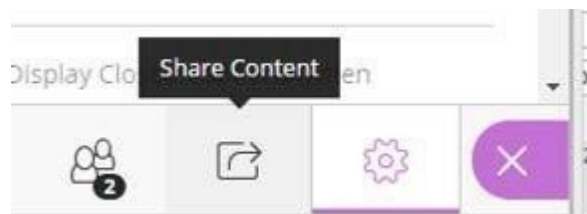
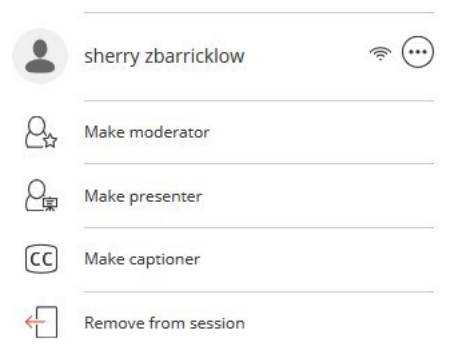
**Hand raise:** Raise your hand to answer a question or get another moderator's attention. **Note:** you can clear the screen when a student raises their hands.

**Collaborate Panel:** found in lower right of screen.



**Chat:** Chat with participants. Click Open Chat.

**Participants panel:** View the list of participants. Click Open Participants List. In this menu, you are able to view the quality of participants signal and you can grant them Moderator access to share their screens or upload a PowerPoint or image.

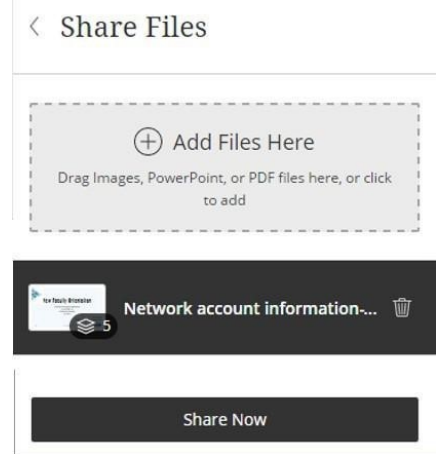


**Share Content:** clicking here will allow you to share a whiteboard, files, powerpoints, applications and webpages.

## Most Popular--How to add PowerPoint

Select Share Files when using PowerPoint presentations of 60MB or lower. This gives you and your participants the best experience.

Upload your PowerPoint and select **Share Now**. A slide navigator panel opens showing you all of your slides. Select a slide to start sharing it. Select the presentation name to open the slide navigator panel again at any time.



## Active Learning: Polling and Breakout Groups

### Polling

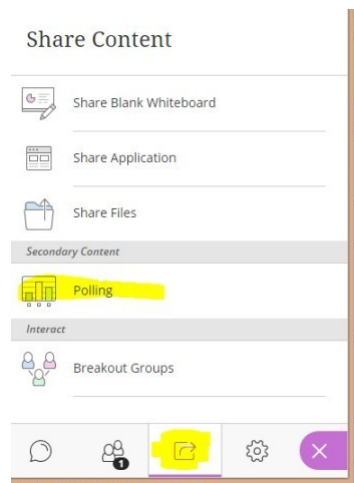
Polls are great to engage your participants and keep them interested. They have so many uses. You can use a poll that gives participants yes or no as their response choices. You can also select to give participants two, three, four, or five responses to choose from

### Open the Collaborate panel.

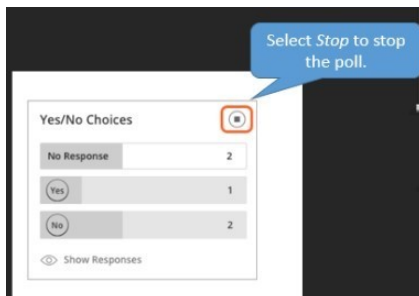
1. Select Share content.
2. Select Polling.
3. Select the type of poll you want to use.

*If you choose one of the numbered choice polls, participants see numbers as their choices. Tell your participants what each number represents*

4. Select Start.



If you want to see how each Participant's response, or even who hasn't responded, go to the Participants panel:



## Breakout Groups

To facilitate small group collaboration, you can create breakout groups that are separate from the main room and assign participants to them. Breakout groups have their own private audio, video, whiteboard, application sharing, and chat. Any collaboration that takes place in a group is independent of the Main room (and other groups). **It can also serve as a “Waiting Room” for you Online Office Hours while you are conferencing with another student!**

You can choose to have Collaborate create and randomly assign breakout groups for you. Or you can create the groups yourself.

1. Open the Share Content panel from the Collaborate panel.
2. Select Breakout Groups.
3. Assign groups. Select ‘Randomly’ assign or ‘Custom’ assignment.

**Randomly assign:** Collaborate creates groups and randomly assigns participants for you. Randomly assign is only available when there are four or more people are in the room. If you want to be in a group, **select Include Moderators** in group assignment. You can change how many participants are in each group. Select the number of groups from the Number of Groups menu. If you don't like how the participants are grouped, select Reassign participants.

**Can I remove someone from a session?** Yes. You can choose to move them back to the main room or to another group. Or you can choose to remove them completely from a session. Open the participant's options menu from the Participants panel. Select Remove from session.

## Ending Breakout Groups

When you want to stop breakout groups and bring everybody back to the main room, select End breakout groups. You can find this at the top of the Participants panel or beside Breakout groups in the Share Content panel.

After you select End breakout groups, all participants are moved back to the main room.

*After the groups have ended, nothing shared in a group is available in the main room. Give your participants a few minutes warning that you are ending the breakout groups. Give them time to take a screen capture, or record in some other way, what they were working on before ending the groups.*

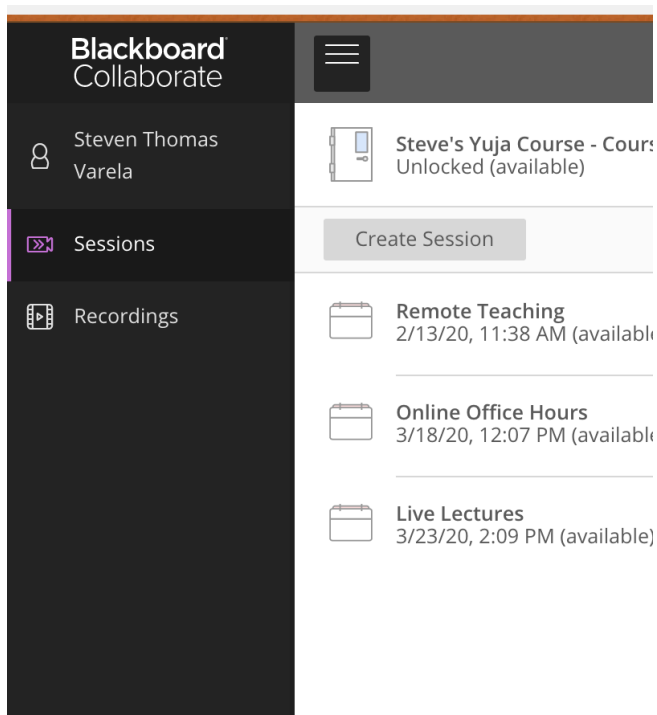


## We're Done! Find Your Recordings and Get Your Report

Recordings are saved on the same page you joined your session from.

In your Blackboard site click the **3 lines at the top** of the Collaborate enter screen.

**Select Recordings:**



You will then see the recordings available:

The screenshot shows a table titled 'Show Recent Recordings' with a dropdown arrow and a help icon. The table has the following columns: Session Name, Recording Name, Duration, Date, and Recording (MP4). There is one row of data:

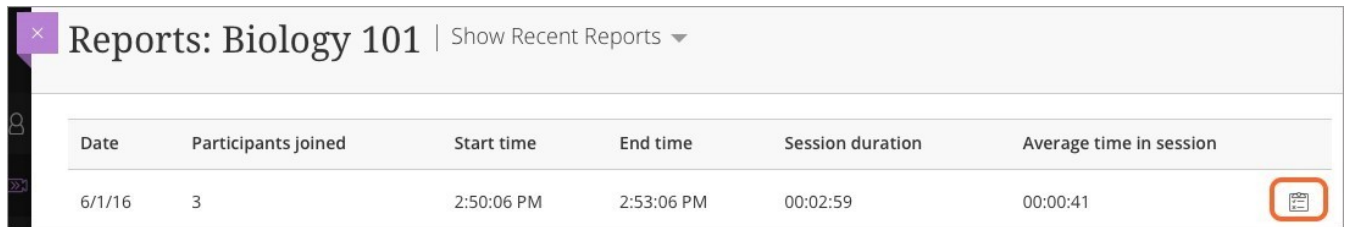
Session Name	Recording Name	Duration	Date	Recording (MP4)
Course Room	Course Room - recording_1	00:00:42	8/18/16, 3:57 PM	<a href="#">View Recording</a>

**Session Attendance**

## Report

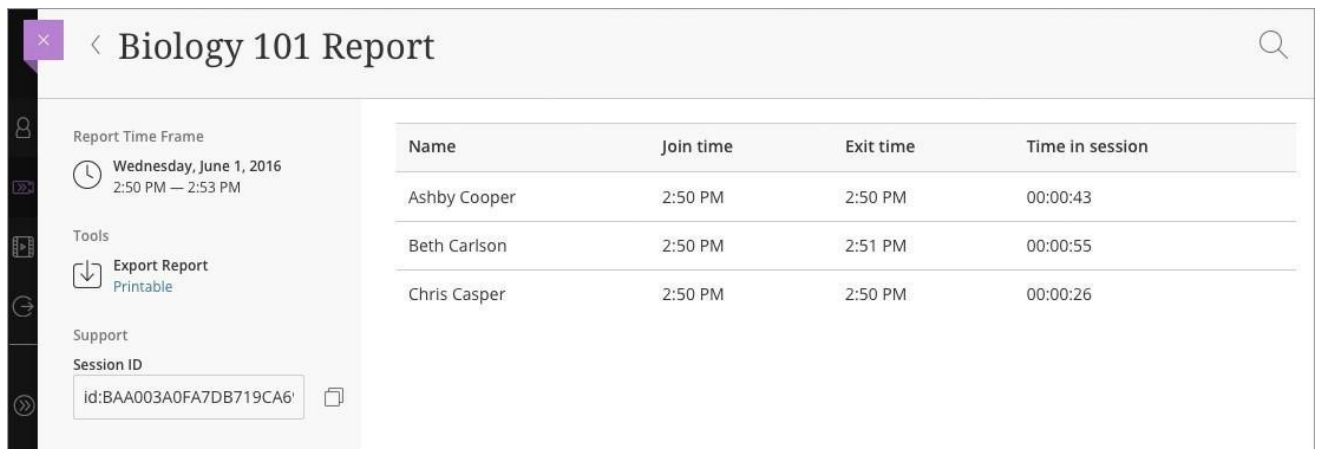
The Session attendance report tells you an overview of when participants joined and left your sessions. It also gives you an idea of how long participants were present in the session on average.

If you have used a session more than once, there is a report for each time it was used.



Date	Participants joined	Start time	End time	Session duration	Average time in session
6/1/16	3	2:50:06 PM	2:53:06 PM	00:02:59	00:00:41

**Select View** report to see the full report. See when each participant joined and left the session. With this knowledge, you can check in with individual participants to see if they were having any technical issues or need a quick review of what was presented and discussed.



Name	Join time	Exit time	Time in session
Ashby Cooper	2:50 PM	2:50 PM	00:00:43
Beth Carlson	2:50 PM	2:51 PM	00:00:55
Chris Casper	2:50 PM	2:50 PM	00:00:26