

Livestreaming a class using Blackboard Collaborate: 5/9/2020 by Bob Lipe

Recommended equipment: a mid to high level USB (or other connection) headset. Listening to students via your computer speakers and talking via your computer mic will likely cause bad echoes when participants talk. If you want to share video of yourself, you need a web cam.

Video illustrating steps below: https://ensemble.sc.edu/Watch/virtual_class_using_bb_collaborate

Note that this Word doc was updated slightly after the video was made.

1. In your course, click on COURSE TOOLS
2. Many options appear. Select BLACKBOARD COLLABORATE ULTRA
You should see a virtual room already created for you. It will be labeled “<name of your course>-Course Room”. These instructions assume you use this virtual room. The Appendix describes how to create additional rooms if you need them (e.g., office hours, recording, etc.)
3. Click COURSE ROOM
4. A pop-up with room options appears to the right of the page. Before you join session, let’s set some settings. Most of these can be changed later.
 - You should allow guest access. You can specify what role a guest is assigned. “Participant” is usually best; do not select “Moderator” for a class because students could control every setting.
 - You can click the little box beside guest link to copy that link. One way students can enter the session is by you posting this link on the main Blackboard page or emailing it to them. Please do not post the link on social media because of the potential for non-students attending.
 - You also get to set the default role for students who navigate to the virtual room via Blackboard rather than a URL. Again, the best choice in most cases is “Participant”
 - If you plan to record and want students to be able to download the recording, click Allow Recording Downloads. If you are teaching a PMBA course, this box must be checked.
 - DO NOT anonymize chat messages unless you want to have no idea who you are talking to.
 - Next you set permissions for what a PARTICIPANT can do in the meeting:
SHARING AUDIO lets them talk to you and the rest of the class; not sharing audio means participants can only ask/answer questions using typed chat or some polling options.
SHARING VIDEO lets them share their web cam. In Collaborate, you can only see a couple of people at a time regardless of how many participants are sharing video, plus sharing video uses a lot of bandwidth. I recommend disabling participant video except for very small classes.
POST CHAT MESSAGES this should always have a check mark by it.
DRAW ON... For most classes, this seems like a bad idea; I recommend disabling
 - I strongly recommend you leave “Allow attendees to join the session using a telephone” enabled and NEVER disable it. This allows students with computer microphone/speaker problems to use their phones for audio. Indeed, if you experience problems with your computer microphone or speakers when hosting class, you can use this call in feature as well. If you ever disable this option, I do not believe you can get it back. Past experience shows that in a class of 30, you can expect 1-2 students to need this option.
 - I recommend enabling “Participants can only chat privately with moderators” so that you do not have a lot of private chats going on between students during class. I would not enable “Moderators supervise all private chats”
5. Click SAVE to keep the options you just set.

6. To give you a feel for how to access office hour, I am going back to my main landing page to enter the class. Before you do, if you are connected to UofSC via VPN, disconnect from VPN. Experience suggests Collaborate does not work well when VPN is connected.
7. Click COURSE TOOLS, BLACKBOARD COLLABORATE ULTRA, YOUR COURSE ROOM.
8. On the far right, click JOIN SESSION
9. Most commands are accessed by purple chevrons (<<) at bottom right of the page.
10. The callout bubble is for chat. Chat is transient – you only see the chat that is typed while you are in your session. If you log out and re-enter, chat will be blank. If a student logs in late, they cannot see past chat. Chat can be saved, but only if you record the session. Use EVERYONE chat to communicate with students. By clicking the “<” beside EVERYONE, you can see other chat options.
11. The icon with people shows list of attendees. There is a little circle at the top right beside the word Attendees, click it and click DETACH PANEL. Then you can see attendee names and chat at the same time.
12. The gear icon allows you to change settings. The one important piece here is the SET UP YOUR CAMERA AND MICROPHONE. Double check that the microphone and camera you want to use are functioning. NOTE: once you perform a microphone and camera set up, you will have to re-click your mic and camera to turn them back on.
Under Notification settings, you can change what Collaborate does when someone enters or exists the room, posts chat or raises their hand. Session Settings were discussed earlier.
13. Sharing with students
 - Click the microphone icon to turn on your microphone
 - Click the camera icon to turn on your camera
 - In many cases, faculty want to share their screen with students so the instructor can solve a problem or show a powerpoint, etc. If you want to share work with students, at the far right bottom, the icon between participants and the gear allows content sharing. Click it. Under PRIMARY CONTENT, you have a lot of options what to share. I use SHARE SCREEN.
WARNING: IF YOU HAVE A SINGLE MONITOR AND SHARE SCREEN, IF YOUR PPT OR WORD OR EXCEL OR WHATEVER IS IN FULL SCREEN FOR YOUR STUDENTS TO SEE, YOU WILL NOT SEE CHAT. IT IS BEST TO SHARE ONE SCREEN THAT HAS YOUR PPT, WORD, EXCEL, ETC. PAGES YOU WANT STUDENTS TO SEE AND HAVE THE COLLABORATE SESSION ON A SEPARATE SCREEN (OR SEPARATE LAPTOP) SO YOU CAN FOLLOW CHAT.
 - POLLING allows you to ask a question and have students respond. Like everything else in Collaborate, these polls are very transitory. You cannot create the poll in advance, although you can type the question into a word file before class, copy the question from the word file and paste into the dialogue box in the poll. You do not have the option to save or download the results. You can show the results to students if you click the little eye icon at bottom of poll results. Also, you can see the answers each student selected if you open the attendee list; if you want to save their answers, you can use your mouse to select all of the text in the attendee list, right click to copy, and then paste as text into a word document (formatting is awful, but you will see the answers they selected).
 - Under INTERACT, you can set up breakout rooms for smaller groups of students to work together independent of the main session. If you want to use breakouts in class, contact me for additional information and instructions.

14. When you are ready to start covering content in your class, you or someone designated by you needs to click the bars at top left and select START RECORDING.

When you are done covering content, click the bars and select STOP recording.

15. When done, click bars at top left and pick LEAVE SESSION (bottom left)

To invite students to join the class session, you can post the guest link you see when first opening your virtual room. Alternatively, students can click TOOLS in Blackboard, then click BB COLLABORATE ULTRA, then they will see all meeting rooms that can be entered. They can then select COURSE ROOM and click JOIN SESSION. They will appear in your attendee list under their UofSC name. If they enter as guest, they appear under whatever guest name they typed in when joining the session.

16. Collaborate has some additional ways to get student responses during class using emojis. The video demonstrates several of these. I do not think most students know how to use them, so you might need to give students a bit of training.
17. Your recordings are accessed on the same Collaborate page where you originally joined the session. Look for three bar in upper left. Click and pick recordings. Depending on traffic and length of recording, it can take a long time for the recordings to appear after you hit stop recording.

Appendix: Adding a new virtual room in Collaborate

1. In your course, click on COURSE TOOLS
2. Many options appear. Select BLACKBOARD COLLABORATE ULTRA
3. Click CREATE SESSION
4. In textbox top right of screen, enter name for the meeting. For example, "Office Hours".
5. Select several settings for your virtual room (note, most of these can be changed later)
 - a. You should allow guest access. You can specify what role a guest is assigned. Participant is best; do not pick moderator as students could control every setting.
 - b. You can click the little box beside guest link to copy that link. One way students can enter the session is by posting this link on the main Blackboard page
 - c. Start date will default to current time. I would not change that.
 - d. For a virtual room that you will use on a recurring basis, you should click NO END OPEN SESSION. Otherwise, if you log onto Blackboard outside of the start – end time, you will not see the room.
 - e. For an open session, early entry is irrelevant
6. Next, click the down arrow beside SESSION SETTINGS and select the options you want. These are described in the main instructions item #4 above.
7. Click SAVE to keep the options you just set. Now you use the new room just like the COURSE ROOM discussed in the main instructions.