

Handout for Students on Using Collaborate during Office Hours

3/15/2020 by Bob Lipe

The purpose of this document is to provide faculty with a handout they can give their students regarding how a student would join either office hours or a class session hosted by the faculty member on Blackboard Collaborate Ultra. Note that the document is NOT ready to send as is. Because different faculty will use different options during office hours and/or class sessions, the instructions below require some customization before you post them.

I have tried to make the parts that need customization obvious by inserting <faculty option> below. Which words you delete and which ones you keep will depend on the way you specifically implement office hours/class sessions. A separate set of instructions explain how you would set up a session; those instructions come with a video how-to. What kind of options are available to faculty? For one, some faculty will allow students to speak via microphones while others will prefer only typed chat; if you allow microphones, you need to tell students how to turn them on. As another, you can allow students to write on a shared white board. You will decide what instructions to share with students based on your own preferences and learning objectives.

One final option is how you have students connect to your Collaborate session. In one case, they will go through Blackboard into Collaborate using their Blackboard credentials. In the other, they follow a URL without necessarily being in Blackboard and join as guest. Because these two are quite different, I am providing two distinct sets of instructions. Faculty should use the one that is most appropriate to their implementation and delete the other before sharing these instructions with students. Below, CCCC#### refers to your course topic (e.g., ACCT or FINA) and course number. Also, the instructions refer to the session as OFFICE HOURS; if you want to call it something else, simply search and replace using the name you prefer.

Type #1: STUDENTS USE THEIR BLACKBOARD CREDENTIALS

Faculty note: In this implementation, you will post a link on your Blackboard page that sends students to the landing page of Blackboard Collaborate Ultra. I will call this link "OFFICE HOURS". Do so, go to the spot in Blackboard where you want the link to appear. Then click BUILD CONTENT. From the drop down "CREATE" menu, pick COURSE LINK. On the next page, BROWSE for BLACKBOARD COLLABORATE ULTRA; it is a looonngg way down the list; select it. Give the link a name. In the instructions below, I assume you named it OFFICE HOURS; if you name the link something else, change the name in the instructions below. Note the instructions below are written as coming from you. Thus "I" refers to you, not Bob Lipe.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS TO JOIN USING THEIR BLACKBOARD CREDENTIALS

1. I recommend you use the latest version of either Chrome or Firefox. If you experience trouble implementing the instructions below using a browser other than Chrome or Firefox, please change browsers and try again.
2. Log into Blackboard, select my course, CCCC#### , and then click OFFICE HOURS
3. You will be taken to BLACKBOARD COLLABORATE ULTRA landing page. Here you will see a session labelled OFFICE HOURS. Click it. You will see several options at the right of the screen; select JOIN SESSION.

4. The first time you join OFFICE HOURS, Blackboard might ask a bunch of questions, such as do you want to watch tutorials, will you allow Blackboard to use your mic and camera, etc. Pick whichever answers suits you and keep moving forward.
5. You will land on a page where you either see a desk floating in space or pictures (or picture place holders) of other participants or the content (e.g., PowerPoint, Excel, etc.) I am sharing with students.
6. Look to the bottom right of your screen, and you should see some chevrons (<<) in purple. Click them to open session menu options. You can click a callout bubble to view chat typed by other students or to enter chat of your own. You can click the people icon to see who is attending the session. You can click the gear icon and change some settings.
<Faculty option, if you allow students to share their audio, include the following> One of the most important options is in the settings sub menu AUDIO AND VIDEO SETTING. Just under this you can click SET UP YOUR MICROPHONE. This allows you to select which microphone to share, to test your microphone, and offers some troubleshooting if your mic is not working.
<Faculty option, allowing audio sharing is common; but you can also allow students to share their video (NOT recommended for classes with more than 5 or so participants). If you allow audio and video, include the following> One of the most important options is in the settings sub menu AUDIO AND VIDEO SETTING. Just under this you can click SET UP YOUR MICROPHONE AND CAMERA. This allows you to select which microphone to share, to test your microphone, and offers some troubleshooting if your mic is not working. You can also select your camera, test it, and troubleshoot if it is not working.
7. <Faculty option: Only include this if students can share audio> At the bottom center of the screen, you will see a microphone icon. It usually starts with a slash through it meaning it is deactivated or muted. Click the icon to activate. Say a few words, and the mic icon should light up as you speak. During the session, please mute your microphone when you are not involved in the conversation. Sharing audio works best if you use a headset or headphones. When using your computer microphone and speakers, if you leave your mic open when others are talking, the other participants might hear an echo as your mic picks up their voices coming through your speakers.
8. Once the session starts, you will see my materials on the screen. You can close chat if you need to the screen to be larger; if you see a chat notification, you will want to open it to see what your fellow students are saying.
<Faculty option: here is where you should explain your personal instructions on how students will interact with you in your session. Do you want them to raise their hand before typing chat? Should they just start typing whenever they have a question? If they can use their mic, do they have to raise their hand and/or type a chat and wait for you to call on them before unmuting their mic? Or do they just speak up? You need to tell students what you expect.>
9. <Faculty option: you can allow students to write on white boards or files using their tablet “pen” or mouse. If you do, you need to explain protocols in these instructions. If you do not allow writing, delete this item.>
10. When you are finished, click the bars in the upper left hand corner of the screen. At the bottom left in the drop down, you will click LEAVE SESSION. Blackboard will ask you to rate the session or skip.

Type #2: STUDENTS USE GUEST LINK URL

Faculty note: In this implementation, once you create your Blackboard session, you can copy the guest link for the session. You then put this URL somewhere that your students can find it. It could be in an email, it could be in a Blackboard course item. Anywhere you can put a URL, you can post the link to OFFICE HOURS. In these instructions, I will call this link "LINK". One option is to put the URL into these instructions before you send them to students. Note the instructions below are written as coming from you. Thus "I" refers to you, not Bob Lipe.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS TO JOIN AS GUESTS

1. I recommend you use the latest version of either Chrome or Firefox. If you experience trouble implementing the instructions below using a browser other than Chrome or Firefox, please change browsers and try again.
2. Click on the LINK I gave you. You will be asked for your name. Please type in your first and last name. I might have several John's or Jane's in class, so your first name is not sufficient for me to know who is talking to me during the session. Then click JOIN SESSION.
3. The first time you join OFFICE HOURS, Blackboard might ask a bunch of questions, such as do you want to watch tutorials, will you allow Blackboard to use your mic and camera, etc. Pick whichever answers suits you and keep moving forward.
11. You will land on a page where you either see a desk floating in space or videos (or video place holders) of other participants or the content (e.g., PowerPoint, Excel, etc.) I am sharing with students.
4. Look to the bottom right of your screen, and you should see some chevrons (<<) in purple. Click them to open session menu options. You can click a callout bubble to view chat typed by other students or to enter chat of your own. You can click the people icon to see who is attending the session. You can click the gear icon and change some settings.
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5. <Faculty option: Only include this if students can share audio> At the bottom center of the screen, you will see a microphone icon. It usually starts with a slash through it meaning it is deactivated or muted. Click the icon to activate. Say a few words, and the mic icon should light up as you speak. During the session, please mute your microphone when you are not involved in the conversation. Sharing audio works best if you use a headset or headphones. When using your computer microphone and speakers, if you leave your mic open when others are talking, the other participants might hear an echo as your mic picks up their voices coming through your speakers.

6. Once the session starts, you will see my materials on the screen. You can close chat if you need to the screen to be larger; if you see a chat notification, you will want to open it to see what your fellow students are saying.
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7. < Faculty option: you can allow students to write on white boards or files using their tablet “pen” or mouse. If you do, you need to explain protocols in these instructions. If you do not allow writing, delete this item.>
8. When you are finished, click the bars in the upper left hand corner of the screen. At the bottom left in the drop down, you will click LEAVE SESSION. Blackboard will ask you to rate the session or skip.