

COLLABORATE LIVE-EVENT BETTER PRACTICES FOR EDUCATORS

START SESSION EARLY AND START INTERACTING:

Are you tired of your students joining your sessions late? While you should always have your session open at least 15 minutes prior to the start time to give you time to prepare, try adding some interaction early to motivate the students to join early. Turn on your microphone and start asking the participants questions or request that they ask you questions. If they receive some rather exclusive interaction with you before the session start time, word will get out that there is valuable time being shared before the session even starts.

GET A STUDENT TO ACT AS A “PRODUCER” TO HELP YOU:

Moderating a Collaborate session can be an overwhelming experience. Especially when you have a large number of participants attending and/or some participants are having computer trouble during the session. Consider asking a student to be a “Producer” for the session. The producer can help you to answer chat questions, manage the session and perhaps even troubleshoot problems. There is usually at least one tech savvy student in every class that is willing to help.

USE DUAL MONITORS:

It may prove quite difficult to manage all aspects of a Collaborate session on a single monitor. When you add “Application Sharing” to that, you may find windows are always in your way while you are presenting. With a second monitor, you can host the application sharing on your primary display and move windows like your participants’ panel, chat panel, and audio/video panel to a secondary monitor which will give you a greater ability to see everything at a glance. If you don’t have dual monitors, try joining the session with a second computer.

PROVIDE AN ORIENTATION TO THE SESSION:

If you want your session to be engaging and interactive, you have to use the tools to your advantage. Provide a brief orientation at the start of your session to show your student what tools you will use and set expectations.

AVOID “DEATH BY POWERPOINT” – VISUALIZE YOUR CONTENT:

I know you’ve seen it and maybe you’re guilty of it. Those text-heavy slides may seem meaningful and informative, but what they actually do is draw attention from the presenter’s verbal content. [Avoid “Death by PowerPoint”](#) by replacing those wall-of-text slides with images, single key terms or brief phrases that help to drive the content home without distracting from the presentation. You may need more slides to do this successfully and you may need to push through them more quickly than before. Visualize your content to create a more lasting impression. If you need help finding some great images for your presentations check out [Pixabay](#) and [Unsplash](#) for high-quality, royalty free images.



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CONSIDER A DISCUSSION-BASED PRESENTATION:

Lectures are great in certain situations for conveying information. However, do not discount the engaging power of discussion. It is important to keep your students engaged during your Collaborate Live session. Straight lecturing will encourage your students to tune you out. Bring in questions that lead to discussion of topics of interest. There is value in voice. Use your microphone and encourage your students to do the same. Hearing multiple voices and their questions and comments brought into the presentation will discourage students from tuning out. You can maintain order in the session by asking students to raise their hands to be recognized and then they can speak.

INTERACT WITHIN THE FIRST FEW MINUTES:

The beauty of an online session is that it is a synchronous experience for you and your students. Treat it as you would a face-to-face class. Drive engagement and interest in the session by getting your students to interact with you early and often. Set the stage for a highly interactive and engaging session right away by immediately using features such as polling, chat, emoticons, raise hand, microphone, and webcam.

USE FREQUENT AND VARIED INTERACTION:

Interaction with your students promotes engagement with and interest in the session. Consider interacting at regular intervals without making it too formulaic. Five to seven minute intervals (give or take) is a good marker. Use all of the tools at your disposal so that the interaction avoids becoming mundane. Polling is an obvious option, but also consider asking them to type in a response to a question or comment in chat. Asking them to raise their hand is also a quick and easy way to interact with your students. You can plan your whiteboard slides with interactivity in mind. Giving your students permission to interact with the different whiteboard tools will promote engagement and interest in the session.

USE ANNOTATION TO GRAB AND DIRECT ATTENTION:

With the whiteboard tools you have options for drawing, highlighting, making lines, using clipart, and even blocking out areas on your screen with the filled shape tool to reveal later. The pointer tool allows you to draw attention to the whiteboard; and students can easily follow where you are on the whiteboard. Additionally, you should use emphasize cursor with application sharing to help the students follow along. The halo around your cursor will direct the students attention to where you are.

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MANAGE THE AESTHETICS OF YOUR WEBCAM VIEW:

Video lets you get face-to-face with your students, which adds a high level of engagement opportunities for you as the moderator. Take advantage of this by optimizing your meeting space for video. Lighting should come from in front of you and never behind you to avoid casting shadows on your face. Your background should be interesting but not distracting – consider a canvas to pretty up your wall or a folding/modular screen if you have no wall behind you.

MAKE EYE CONTACT:

Do you want to really pull your students in when streaming your video? Look at your webcam instead of your screen. This will give the effect of eye contact and visual engagement. Use the gestures and mannerisms that you would typically use in person. If you are viewing the video feed of others, try moving that feed to a monitor position just below your webcam to make this easier.

ALWAYS RECORD:

There are numerous benefits to recording your sessions: reach students that could not attend, provide a chance for students to review the content, and more. Consider whether you want to record from beginning to end or if you only wish to record certain portions of the session. Typically, I recommend that you start recording just after delivering your quick session orientation as that live interaction instruction is not useful to those watching a recording. The recording index feature in Collaborate allows students to jump to a specific area in the recording. This indexing is useful as the students do not have to view the entire recording or large portions of the recording to find the particular part of the recording that is of interest to them.