Keep Teaching Live: Blackboard Collaborate Ultra Tips and Tricks

Once the tool is added to your course, you and your students can enter into any Collaborate session. Be sure to communicate with your students, what virtual room they should join (i.e. Course Room) and at what time should they join. More detailed documentation on Collaborate can be found at:
https://confluence.uconn.edu/display/IKB/Using+Blackboard+Collaborate+Ultra+-+A+User+Guide

Note: You don't need to create a Session for every meeting. Use the Course Room as often as possible to avoid confusion about what Session the students need to join. Only have possibly one recurring session, such as Office Hours. If you record any session, it will not overwrite other sessions. For example if you use the Course Room and make two recordings they will be called "*Name of Course*" / Recording 1, "*Name of Course*" / Recording 2 with dates for each.

Instructions for Students on Using Blackboard Collaborate:
https://confluence.uconn.edu/display/IKB/Using+Blackboard+Collaborate+Ultra+-+A+User+Guide

Before the session starts:
Make sure you've tested your Audio and Camera by clicking on the Collaborate Panel Menu (bottom right), click the Settings Panel, and click on "Setup your camera and microphone".
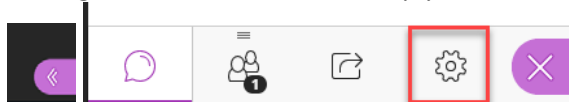

Once you've tested both, the application will remember your settings so you shouldn't need to do this every time. But you can return here if you have any issues. **If your audio drops out, use your cell phone to call in.**

If you share a PowerPoint you can share it right away and have reminders on the first slide such as:
- If you can hear me, raise your hand by clicking on the person raising their hand at the bottom of the screen. Please leave your hand raised for now.

- Please send chat messages to Everyone so everyone else can see the responses, unless it is private in nature. I will try to respond to all of your questions. If I miss your question, please ask it again.
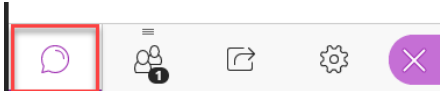

- If you have a technical issue connecting your audio, please call in by clicking on the top left menu (three white lines), click "Use your phone for audio," it is a toll call, so please use your cell phone.

- If at any time, you need me to slow down, click on the person icon (to the left of microphone) at the bottom of your screen and indicate: slower.

- This session will be recorded and will be shared in HuskyCT in the Blackboard Collaborate Ultra Tool. Click on it, click the menu in the upper left, and click Recordings. (you may share links to each of the videos in your course, so modify these instructions as needed).

If you include these reminders, you will know you've successfully shared your PowerPoint, that your microphone is working, and your students can hear you. In addition, you're setting expectations for the room as they enter. This can relieve any anxiety they may have especially in the first few sessions. As the students enter the room, acknowledge them by name, ask them a question. That way they feel more comfortable being in the room. **The last bullet point is to remind you to start recording the session.**

Recording the Session

Click on the upper left Session Menu (three white lines) and click on Start Recording. Be sure to Stop Recording before you leave the session.

Sharing Content
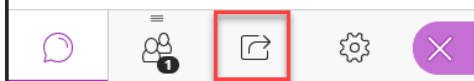
Note: If you're sharing an application you won't be able to see the Attendee list. If this is important for you, and you're sharing either a PowerPoint, PDF or image file you can share it as a file, rather than using Screen/Application.

Share Application/Screen: Share screen if you will be showing more than one application at a time. Share Application if you're only sharing one application (that application must be running for you to select it).

Share Whiteboard: You can use a tablet to write on the Whiteboard, but you can't use an iPad. If that's what you have, you need to use WebEx.

Share Files: You can share a PowerPoint, PDF, or Image. Once shared you can annotate them.

Polling: Questions are asked on the fly and can't be saved.

Breakout Groups: Randomly assigned is the best way to create the groups, unless you have a smaller class and have the time to drag/drop students into the groups. These can be used for Think/Pair/Share activities.

Changing Student's Role in Collaborate Session

By default the students are Participants in the Course Room, unless you edit it. If a student needs to make a presentation, you can change their role by clicking on the Attendee Panel, click on the circle with three dots to the right of their name, and change their role to Presenter. If you have someone helping you manage the session, you can make them the Moderator, if needed. Moderator can mute microphones, etc.

Sharing Recordings with Students

You can direct your students to the Blackboard Collaborate Tool in your course. Ask them to click on the Menu (three white lines) and click Recordings.

If you anticipating having multiple recordings, it might help students if you can link to each recording from a Content Area in your course. To get the link, click on the circle with three dots to the right of the recording. Copy that link. Then you can add it as a Web Link in your Course. For example, if you're now organizing content for them by day, go to that day, click on Build Content – Web Link and follow the prompts.