

## Tips and Tools for Faculty Virtual Delivery

Moving face-to-face curriculum to an online format in a hurry isn't a small task, but there are a number of ways faculty can leverage new and existing tools to help speed the process.

First, if your university has a campus-wide instance of the Learning Management System, you can use it to share content, post announcements, provide feedback and help students connect with one another. Instructional designers and LMS administrators on campus can assist with these efforts.

Academic Partnerships can bolster support in this area as well. Experts in online course design and delivery, AP can offer faculty workshops or webinars on these topics (and more) as our university partners work to quickly move to alternate or modified delivery modalities in response to campus closures.

In addition to leveraging the LMS, video conferencing tools are a great way to facilitate synchronous sessions in a virtual setting to ensure that class time and curriculum are not missed.

Below are a set of suggestions and best practices related to the utilization of virtual conferencing tools. Academic Partnerships can provide just-in-time professional development and support to help you get up and running.

### Facilitating Synchronous Classes at a Distance



Whether you are familiar with synchronous sessions or this is your first time facilitating a class virtually, using the tips below can help you connect with your students during this time of precaution.

The suggestions here are applicable to any video conferencing tool such as: Zoom, Adobe Connect, Big Blue Button, Go-to-Meeting, WebX, Teams, Google Hangout, Slack, or Skype, in addition to others.

### Getting Started

- Select the tool of your choice or the one specified by your institution.
- Schedule your sessions to align with your normal course schedule or as your university advises.
- Record sessions for students not able to attend. Post them to the LMS.

### Before Your Session

- Determine the objective of your session.
- Prepare an outline/ agenda, how much time each activity will take, and what interaction you would like with your students. Determine your supporting materials (e.g. PowerPoints, polls, documents to screen share).
- Practice with the tool.
  - Use your webcam even if just at the start of the session. Position where the lighting is strong to illuminate your face and avoid distracting backgrounds.
- With more than 10 students, its best to limit to chat upon entry. Even with audio off, you can “call on” students by “un-muting” them.
- Share the session link and time with your students. Encourage them to test their connection. Have a separate link for each of your sections or courses.

## **Your Session**

- Log on 5 - 10 minutes early to configure settings
- When possible, use a wired connection (versus a wireless).
- It's nice to have an introductory slide or music playing to the welcome students to the session. An initial poll or question can also work well.
- Recognizing by name when responding to a question or comments helps students feel connected.
- Share your guidelines for how you want students to ask questions (e.g. chat, vs. audio).
- Record the session and make students aware that you are recording the session for the benefit of other students.
- Be clear about introductions and who you are calling on.
- If you screen-share, make sure you close other desktop applications to avoid inadvertent sharing.

## **Other Uses of Video Conferencing in Addition to Lectures**

- One-on-one consultations
- Virtual Office Hours
- Live Q&A Sessions / Extra-help Sessions
- Simulations / Scenarios / Negotiating

# Troubleshooting During Your Synchronous Session

## Dropped Internet Connection or Slow Connection Speed

A strong internet connection is key for a successful synchronous session. If possible, hardwire your internet to your device using an ethernet cable. If you need to use WiFi, stay close to your router and avoid obstructions between you and the signal.

If you or a student's connection drops while they are speaking, ask them to repeat themselves. Occasional interruptions in connection can happen. If the interruption occurs repeatedly, turn off your webcam to see if the connection improves. If the connection does not improve, exit and re-enter the room to reestablish a strong connection.

If your internet connection is dropped during your session, have a plan in place for your students. A policy like "stay on the Zoom call for 10 minutes and watch your student email for updates" can help reduce panic and give you time to reconnect.

## My Audio Won't Connect

- If you are using a microphone, double-check that it is plugged in completely and correctly to your laptop or desktop.
- Check the software's input sound settings:
  - [Zoom](#): Select the ^ icon next to your Mute/Unmute button. Check that the correct microphone is selected.
  - [Blackboard Collaborate](#): Open *My Settings* by selecting your profile picture/name. Select *Set Up Your Camera and Microphone*. Check that the correct microphone is selected.
  - [WebEx](#): Select the More Options button on your WebEx screen. Then, select *Speaker, Microphone, and Camera*. Check that the correct input device is selected.
- Check your device's sound settings:
  - If you are using a Microsoft computer, [check that the microphone you are using is selected as the sound input device](#).
  - If you are using a Mac computer, check that your [sound input settings are correct](#).
- Connect to audio using a phone:
  - [Zoom](#): Select *Join Audio* in the Zoom meeting and select *Phone Call* or *Switch to Phone Audio*. Dial the join number that appears on your screen.
  - [Blackboard Collaborate](#): Using the three-dash menu on the left-hand side of your screen, select *Use Your Phone for Audio*. Dial the phone number and enter the pin that appears on the screen. You will appear as an anonymous user using this option.
  - [Webex](#): Using your meeting invitation, dial the *Join by Phone* global number

## My Webcam Won't Connect

- If you are using an exterior webcam, double-check that it is plugged in completely and correctly to your laptop or desktop.
- Check the software's video settings:
  - [Zoom](#): Select the ^ icon next to your Start/Stop Video button. Check that the correct webcam is selected or select *Video Settings...* for more options.
  - [Blackboard Collaborate](#): Open *My Settings* by selecting your profile picture/name. Select *Set Up Your Camera and Microphone*. Check that the correct camera is selected.
  - [WebEx](#): Select the *More Options* button on your WebEx screen. Then select *Speaker, Microphone, and Camera*. Check that the correct webcam is selected.
- Check your device's webcam settings:

- If you are using a Microsoft computer, [check that the webcam you are using is selected as the camera device](#). Also, turn on the *Let Apps Use My Camera* setting.
- If you are using a Mac computer, check that your webcam is on and that you [allow apps to use your camera](#).

## I Can't Hear My Students

- Check that your device volume (computer, headset, headphones, etc.) is turned up and not set to “mute.”
- Check the software's output setting:
  - a. [Zoom](#): Select the ^ icon next to the Mute/Unmute button. Check that the correct output device is selected under *Speaker*.
  - b. [Blackboard Collaborate](#): Open My Settings by selecting your profile picture/name. Then select *Audio and Video Settings*. Adjust your speaker volume and double check the correct input is selected.
  - c. [WebEx](#): Select *More Options* and then select *Speaker, Microphone, and Camera*. Check that the correct output device is selected and that the volume is turned up.
- Check your device's output setting:

## Loud Student Users

- During your first session with students, have everyone practice muting and unmuting themselves using the software you have selected.
- Zoom: As a session host, you can mute/unmute all meeting attendees at once or mute individual attendees by selecting the microphone icon next to their name under the Participants panel.
- Blackboard Collaborate: Using the three-dot menu on your attendees list, you can mute all participants at once. Using the three-dot menu next to each attendee's name, you can mute individual attendees.
- WebEx: Open the Participants panel and select the microphone icon next to an individual's name to mute them. Select Mute All to mute everyone at once.

## I'm Concerned About the Privacy of My Zoom Session

- [Create a waiting room](#) so you can monitor who joins and lock down your room if someone enters who does not belong.
- [Disable “Join Before Host”](#) so people can't enter your meeting space until you arrive.
- [Enable “Co-Host”](#) so you can assign others to help moderate while you are presenting
- [Disable “File Transfer”](#) so there's no digital virus sharing.
- [Disable “Allow Removed Participants to Rejoin”](#) so removed attendees cannot re-enter the meeting.

## I Can't Turn Off Screen Share

When you are sharing on Zoom, your screen or the application you are sharing will be outlined in bright green. Move your mouse cursor to the top of the page to reveal the presentation control panel. Select the red *Stop Share* button (or select Alt + S) to stop sharing your screen with attendees or select *New Share* (Alt + Shift + S) to share a different screen or new application.