

Instructions for Students on Using Collaborate

During the Fall of 2020, many of the students in DMSB will attend one or more class sessions via Blackboard Collaborate Ultra. The instructor may be teaching from one of the 1st floor classrooms in DMSB or from their home or office. If the class session is taught from the 1st floor, some students will be in the classroom with the instructor; these are referred to as the face-to-face or “F2F” students. The students attending via Collaborate (also referred to as the “remote” students) will hear the instructor and other students speaking, and their computer screens will display anything that the instructor is displaying for the F2F students on the classroom projection screen. This process can be characterized as “synchronous virtual class meetings”, although DMSB usually refers to it as “livestreaming.”

The purpose of this document is give you the student the basic tools you need to attend class sessions using Collaborate. One warning – each class is different, so the instructor may choose to modify how you livestream his/her class. Thus, if the instructor provides you with instructions that deviate from what you read here, assume that you should follow the instructions from your instructor.

I. How to enter the Collaborate Virtual Classroom?

- A. **Be sure to** use the latest version of either Chrome or Firefox, otherwise you may have an access issue. We realize that some MacBook’s can only access Collaborate by using Safari. However, please be aware that students have had difficulty attending Collaborate sessions using Safari in the past. Finding a way to attend Collaborate sessions that does not involve Safari is a good idea.
- B. Hint: if you experience trouble implementing the instructions below using a browser other than Chrome or Firefox, please change browsers and try again.
- C. Assume the course you want to attend is numbered CCCC111. Log into Blackboard, click Courses, look for your course number, .e.g CCCC111, and select it.
 1. Once in the course, Click TOOLS.
 2. Scroll through the list of tools and click on BLACKBOARD COLLABORATE ULTRA.
 3. You will be on the Collaborate landing page which lists all of the virtual rooms (also known as “sessions”) that the instructor has created for CCCC111.
 4. Click on the virtual room the instructor told you to use. Then click JOIN SESSION. In most cases, you will see a single virtual room labeled the name of the class plus “COURSE ROOM”.
- D. The first time you join a virtual classroom, 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.
- E. You will land on a page where you will see either (i) a desk floating in space; or (ii) pictures (or picture place holders) of other participants; or (iii) the instructor’s content (e.g., PowerPoint, Excel, etc.). This indicates you have successfully joined a virtual classroom.

II. What settings should you use in your Collaborate Virtual Classroom?

Look to the bottom right of your screen, and you should see a purple tab on the lower right with some chevrons (<<). Click those chevrons to see the 4 command windows, 1 at a time. The windows are Chat, Attendees, Share, and Settings. If you want to close the command window to make more room for content, click the purple X that appears where the chevrons were.

- A. **Callout Bubble Icon – click on it to open Chat.** Chat is transient – you only see the chat that is typed while you are in your session.
 1. If you are late to arrive in the virtual classroom, you cannot see chat posted before you entered.
 2. The default chat is EVERYONE chat. You use this to send questions and answers to the instructor during class.
 3. If the instructor uses breakout groups, the default chat will be GROUP chat when breakout groups are activated. You can switch between GROUP and EVERYONE chat by clicking the “<” sign beside of name of the chat. You can also send a chat privately to the room moderator.
- B. **Attendee Icon (picture of 2 people) – click on it to see the list of attendees.**
- C. **Share Icon (picture of square with arrow pointing right) -** You are unlikely to use this icon in your role as a Participant in class. However, if you are assigned to present PPT or some other content to class, the instructor will change your role to Presenter. Or if you participate in a breakout room, your role automatically changes to Presenter when in the breakout room. In these cases, the share icon can be used to share your PPT or other content with other students. For more discussion, see IV.A below.
- D. **Gear Icon – click on it to change settings related to audio, camera, and more.**
 1. One important item may be the SET UP YOUR CAMERA AND MICROPHONE. I say “may be” because in some classes, the instructor might choose to have students type questions in chat instead of speaking their question; in this case, you will not see a microphone icon at the bottom center of the main Collaborate screen. If the instructor chooses not to allow students to share video, you will not see a webcam icon beside the mic icon.
 2. If you see microphone and camera icons with slashes through them at the bottom center of your Collaborate screen, it means you have permission rights within Collaborate to share your mic and/or camera. If either or both is not working, click SET UP YOUR CAMERA AND MICROPHONE. Note that running the process turns off your mic and camera, so you need to re-enable them once the setup is complete. Be sure Collaborate is using the proper device.
 3. Under NOTIFICATION SETTINGS, you can change what Collaborate does when someone enters or exits the room, posts chat or raises their hand. We recommend you disable all sounds notifications; for a large class, they can be distracting.
 4. Professors generally like to see your face. At the top of the settings menu, you will see your name and a picture place holder. Click on the place holder, and if the faculty allows it, you can upload your picture to Collaborate. This picture will become your default when entering classes. You can change it later by going through this sequence again.

III. What can you do in the Collaborate Classroom?

- A. WATCH: During the virtual classroom session, you will see either
 1. Video of the instructor and up to 3 other students (the display includes people who joined the session the earliest or who spoke or made noise with an open mic most recently), or
 2. PowerPoint, Word, Excel, or other materials that the instructor is sharing with students along with a small thumbnail of whomever is talking in the lower right corner of the Collaborate window. Clicking on the thumbnail of the speaker toggles between the content versus the speaker being large and the other being the small thumbnail.
 3. In addition, if your video is active, a small thumbnail at the bottom left of your screen will show what others see of you.
- B. TYPE CHAT: If you open the chat window, you can post a question or comment to the professor and the other students. You can also read the chat from others. If you see a number highlight by the Chat icon when chat is not open, it means there are messages in chat that you have not read. Please use appropriate “netiquette” when posting chat messages or using emojis. The instructor should explain the protocols for asking questions in his/her class.
- C. RAISE YOUR HAND: In the bottom center of your screen, you will see an icon of a person’s torso with one hand raised. Click this to raise your hand. When your question has been answered, click the icon again to lower your hand.
- D. SPEAK (if enabled by the instructor): Please keep your microphone muted except when you are going to talk. Otherwise, Blackboard will display your video precisely when you don’t want that to happen. You will know it is muted when you see a slash across the microphone icon at the bottom center of the screen. Follow the instructor’s protocols for asking questions in his/her class.
- E. BE SEEN (if enabled by the instructor): To be seen, click the camera icon to share your video. Please be mindful of your environment; do not position your camera in a way that it reveals details about you or your roommates that should remain private.
- F. EXPRESS YOUR STATUS: Another icon at the bottom center of the screen is your status. Clicking this gives you various options, some of which the instructor may require you to use. For example, if the instructor frequently calls on students and you have to step away from your computer for a minute or two, it is best practice to click “Away” so that in the list of attendees, the instructor can see you would not be available to respond to a question. Or, the instructor may make a statement and ask students if they agree or disagree; you can make that choice using the status icon.
- G. LEAVE THE SESSION: When it is time to leave the session, click the bars in the upper left hand corner of the Collaborate window. At the bottom left in the drop down, you will click LEAVE SESSION. Blackboard will ask you to rate the session or skip.

IV. Additional tasks the instructor may ask of you during class

- A. **Present Materials or Make a Presentation:** If you are asked to present materials to the class, you will need to turn on your camera and share your computer screen.
1. First, the instructor must change your role from Participant to Presenter. Participants cannot share their screens.
 2. Click the purple chevrons at bottom right of the Collaborate window to see command icons.
 3. Click on the share icon (a box with right hand arrow).
In the share menu, select SHARE SCREEN/APPLICATION.
In the pop up that appears, leave the selection on SHARE ENTIRE SCREEN and Click on the picture of the computer monitor until the SHARE button at the bottom right of the pop-up turns blue.
Then click the blue SHARE button.
When content is initially shared, you will see an endless number of shared screens; this means it worked. Now move to the application you want to share with the class (e.g., the PPT, Word, Excel, etc. file). Everyone else should now be able to see what is on your computer.
 4. **Be careful**, it is possible that anything open on your computer monitor might become visible to others. You should close sensitive documents or pictures or other content on your computer before beginning a class session in which you may be presenting to the class or sharing with a breakout group.
- B. **Polling:** If the instructor launches a poll, please select your response in a timely manner.
- C. **Breakout Groups:** If the instructor uses breakout groups, you will be moved from the main virtual room to another virtual room with a few other students.
1. The instructor will assign some problem or issue for your group to tackle.
 2. During the breakout, your role is automatically changed to Presenter inside of the breakout room. You can share your microphone, camera, and screen with other students in your breakout room.
 3. During the breakout, the default chat is Group chat. In this chat, only people inside the room see what is in chat. If the instructor sends a message to Everyone chat, a little red dot appears beside the "<" beside Group chat. Click on the "<" to switch over to Everyone chat to see what the instructor said, and then click "<" again and go back to Group chat.
 4. If the instructor plans to use breakouts, s/he should provide additional information about how to participate several days before the session when breakouts are used.

V. After the class is over

- A. Most DMSB livestreamed class sessions will be recorded.
- B. If the instructor provides instructions for accessing those recordings, you should follow those instructions.
- C. If no specific instructions are given, then the recordings are accessed as follows:
 1. Go to the Collaborate landing page as described in "how to go enter the Collaborate classroom" above (Item I.C. steps 1-3 above).
 2. In the upper left hand corner of the landing page are 3 bars. Click the bars.
 3. Click on recordings.

4. A list of the recordings of Collaborate sessions in this course.
5. Select WATCH NOW to view the recording you want to see.

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VI. Trouble Shooting

- A. If you experience difficulties connecting to BB, such as having to repeatedly reconnect to Collaborate, BB troubleshooting for connectivity issues can be accessed at this link <https://blackboard.secure.force.com/publickbarticleview?id=kA7100000008PM6>
- B. If your computer microphone/speakers are not working, click the gear icon and go through the “Set up your camera and microphone” to try to fix the issue. Make sure you pick the correct microphone and that Chrome is not blocking the use of your microphone. Also, ensure that no other program (e.g., Zoom) is open and using your microphone; if so, Collaborate cannot use your microphone until you fully close the other program. You can also check out Collaborate troubleshooting advice for audio/video issues <https://blackboard.secure.force.com/publickbarticleview?id=kA7390000008OR3>
- C. If you still cannot get your computer microphone and speakers to work, you can use your phone instead
 1. Once you are in the virtual room, click the purple chevrons and then the gear icon
 2. Select “Use Your Phone...” from the drop down menu.
 3. Dial the phone number and enter the specific PIN that appears. This is not a toll free call.
 4. FYI, the PIN is specific to you and this session.
 5. DO NOT use the anonymous dial in number that appears just before you join the session if you are attending the class on a computer. The anonymous dial in number is only to be used when you are joining the session without the use of a computer; you basically want to listen in to class but will not be able to see content.