Facilitating Live Sessions with Zoom: Instructional Guidance

- [Create Zoom meetings within Blackboard](#) and let students know when and how to access the live class meetings. Ask your students to inform you if they are in a time zone other than EST to determine the best time to connect in live sessions. [Record the live sessions](#) so those students who cannot attend are able to access later and complete their work. Also, recorded sessions provide opportunities for students to review course content.

- Send [Zoom Participant Guide](#) to your students and encourage them join your online class at least 10 minutes before the start of your class to test connection.

- Log in to your Zoom conference room early and stay for individual questions after the meeting. This is a great opportunity to personally connect with students, reach out to them, provide support and encouragement.

- [Mute students](#)' mics at the beginning of the meeting and show students how to unmute their mics to speak. For a large class, you may ask students to [raise hands](#) first and then you can ask them to unmute to talk.

- Encourage the students to turn the web camera on their computer on, pending their Internet's bandwidth, as visual contact helps continue a sense of community among the students. Be considerate and flexible in your approach to accommodate all students based on their computer's connectivity.

- On your first slide, **display an agenda** at the start of the live session so that students know what to expect of the live session.

- **Use slides and screen sharing** within Zoom to make sure discussion questions are visible to students who may have a slow Internet connection or who may struggle to hear the audio for the initial question. (Look for ["Share Screen"](#) at the bottom of your Zoom call.)

- Use **the "chat" space** selectively for student questions or student reporting technical issues or connectivity problems. Both faculty and students tend to get distracted using live discussion and chat simultaneously. Convey clearly to students why and when to use the "chat" space, such as for posting clarifying questions, posting main take aways from live discussion, posting page references to readings as examples.

- Use [Polling questions](#) to engage students and collect their responses.

- Provide an [online participation rubric](#) to articulate your expectations of students' online participation and discuss it with the students, especially if participation constitutes a part of the overall course grade.

- **Post agenda and/or questions for the live session in Blackboard in advance** and convey to students how to prepare for their participation in the live session.
- Use **Zoom Breakout Rooms** to engage your students in a "Think, Pair, Share" activity; that is, assign questions, have students pair up in breakouts to answer the questions, and then have them rejoin the main meeting to share back with the whole group. See Managing Video Breakout Rooms.
- Zoom regularly provides new versions of the Zoom desktop client and mobile app to release new features and fix bugs. Please update to the latest version once it is available to access Zoom's new features.

Troubleshooting Tips:

- **If your microphone is not working,** use the phone number listed in the Zoom invitation when you set up a Zoom call. You can use your phone as the microphone and audio source for your call rather than your computer's built-in microphone if necessary.
- **If your Internet connection is slow or lagging,** consider temporarily turning off your video stream and only maintaining the audio stream. Sometimes, running the web camera on your computer will use up the Internet's bandwidth in a way that might make communication challenging. Turning off the video should improve communication quality and consistency.
- **If you have earbuds or a headphone set, wear them!** Wearing earbuds or headphones will reduce the amount of noise that your computer will pick up when you speak, which will make it easier for your students to hear you. Similarly, you may want to advise your students to wear earbuds or headphones during the live session.

Adapted from:

Cohn, J. & Seltzer, B. Teaching Effectively During Times of Disruption at https://bit.ly/stanfordteachingdisruption

Prepared by VITAL, Villanova University, November 2020