

## **Blackboard Collaborate Web Conferencing - Guest Speaker Guide: Optimizing Your Experience**

Thank you for agreeing to share your expertise with SJSU students by delivering an online presentation using our web conferencing software, Blackboard Collaborate. To help you optimize this experience, we've provided this Guest Speaker Guide.

### **For the Instructor**

#### **Arranging a presentation and learning about the technology**

1. Participants for your presentation can be from all over the world, so coordinate a date and time with your guest that's best for both you and a majority of students.
2. Schedule a meeting with your guest to discuss the content of the presentation and to become familiar with Blackboard Collaborate. The guest should use the same equipment and network connection they will use for their presentation.
3. Request a Collaborate Assistant, if one has not been assigned to work with you. The Collaborate Assistant can provide a number of services, such as:
  - a. Pre-loading and testing your presentation
  - b. Assisting participants with audio issues
  - c. Conducting an ice-breaker activity before the session starts.
  - d. Monitoring the chat area for you
  - e. Conducting polls

### **For the Presenter**

#### **Getting started**

1. Obtain a headset/microphone. Avoid the use of a built-in microphone. [Read more about recommended equipment.](#) Plug in your microphone and proceed to step #2.
2. Go to <http://www.java.com> to download and install the Java Web Start. Don't worry—they make it easy!
3. Go to the Configuration Room on "[Getting Started with Blackboard Collaborate Web Conferencing](#)" page (see step #2). You'll test your audio there, as well as testing your ability to join a Collaborate session.
4. Review [the What to Expect when Connecting to Blackboard Collaborate](#) guide.

#### **Learning how things work**

1. Print out the [Quick Reference Guide](#) (a 2 page PDF document).
2. Listen to a [7-minute recorded participant orientation](#) from Blackboard.

#### **Planning your presentation**

1. PowerPoint (PPT) works best for the first-time presenter; however, you can use other software or even share Web pages if you prefer.
2. Keep in mind: PowerPoint in Blackboard Collaborate will not show effects such as animation, transitions, builds, or embedded audio or video.

3. Pausing your online lecture at least every 10-15 minutes to allow for interactivity is advisable. Decide how participants should respond; for example, using polling responses or raising their hand, participating in brainstorming sessions using chat, providing vocal comments, or using the laser pointer in the whiteboard space.

### **When your presentation is ready**

4. If you'd like to record a practice session and review it, ask your contact to schedule a session for you with moderator access. (See [Moderator Quick Reference Guide PDF](#).)
5. Send your presentation to your contact for review and feedback.

### **TOP 8 TIPS!**

1. Set up an orientation session with your contact or an assigned assistant to become familiar with presentation tools/features in Blackboard Collaborate.
  - a. As a minimum, be sure to become familiar with the Blackboard Collaborate interface, be able to use the microphone, understand hand raising (recognizing when someone has a question), advancing the PPT slides, and using the pointer.
  - b. Based on your directions, participants may add questions and/or comments to the chat area. Learn to monitor the chat area, or request that an assigned assistant provide that service for you.
2. Test while using the same computer, headset, and network connection you'll be using for the actual event ... and practice, practice, practice!
3. All of those classic public speaking tips come into play while presenting in Blackboard Collaborate. Voice inflection is important; try not to read from a script. Smile while you talk, it really comes through in this environment.
4. Remember to breathe...it also helps to have a glass of water or tea nearby.
5. Encourage participants to use emoticons for quick feedback. In the beginning and throughout the presentation, check-in with your audience to make sure everyone can hear you. (\*Pesky mute buttons have a way of turning themselves on at the least opportune times☺)
6. Mute/turn off cell phones & other noise disturbances...remember your microphone will be on the whole time you present.
7. Set boundaries: ask participants to ask questions during particular Q&A session (for example, at the end of the presentation) OR ask participants to either type questions into the chat box OR to click the "hand raising" button.
8. Set a timer. For example, if your presentation is scheduled for 10 minutes, you may want to set a timer (or ask your contact or assistant to do this) to help you stay on track.

### **Best Practices in Blackboard Collaborate**

1. Conduct audio setup wizard upon entering every Collaborate session (Go to: Tools > Audio> Audio Setup Wizard). Click to select the proper device (usually this will be a USB headset) for hearing sound and for speaking.
2. Close any unnecessary applications while you present.
3. Avoid a wireless connection if possible. Plug into an Ethernet cable to avoid intermittent connection drops.
4. Login 30-45 minutes early to ensure audio/microphone and network connectivity are on par.
5. Trade phone numbers with other moderators.

6. Using a web cam for a portion of your presentation is an option you may want to consider. Note: Your assistant can suggest options to reduce problems with lag times.
7. If it's your first Collaborate presentation, keep it simple. Stick with plain PowerPoint.
8. And most of all... HAVE FUN!