Top Ten Habits of Highly Effective Blackboard Collaborate™ Moderators

Top Ten Habits of Highly Effective Blackboard Collaborate Moderators

Online learning is all about the experience, and as the moderator, you play a key role in ensuring all your participants have a great experience, one that facilitates engagement, discussion, interaction, and collaboration. So, it's time to get in the habit of being a highly effective moderator! Here are our top ten tips.

1. **Practice, practice, practice.**
   Fine-tune your moderator skills by practicing with two computers side-by-side or with a friend, colleague, or family member. Be sure to take advantage of our On-Demand Learning Center where you can brush up on using moderator tools in just a few minutes by watching our recordings or reviewing the quick reference guides. If you want your own personal practice room, you can get a free trial of Blackboard Collaborate that transitions to a three-person virtual room after 30 days.

2. **Facilitate student orientation to the technology.**
   To ensure that your students have a great first experience with Blackboard Collaborate, make sure they have the resources they need to configure their computers prior your session. Simply direct your students to our On-Demand Learning Center, where they can view a five-minute slide show or participant orientation recording and download a quick reference guide. In addition, at the beginning of each session you moderate, provide a slide that explains how to configure audio and create a user profile.

3. **Engage participants.**
   Experts say that there should be interaction every six minutes, so start off with an ice breaker, such as displaying a map on the whiteboard and having each participant indicate where they are located. Ask questions that require students to raise their hands, click an emoticon, respond with a green check or red X, type in the chat window, or even type or draw on the whiteboard. Be the "guide on the side," encouraging students to think and respond. Better yet, promote participants to moderators, and let them lead the class.

4. **Check frequently for understanding.**
   Use instant polling, and publish the results to stimulate discussion. Plan activities using the whiteboard and breakout rooms where all students participate. Have each group from a breakout exercise present the results of their work. Use application or desktop sharing to have participants demonstrate what you've been teaching.

5. **Prepare content ahead of time.**

   Create presentation slides and instructor notes, and include multimedia, application sharing to help reinforce content. Don't just expect interaction to happen. You can design it into your lesson plan. Your instructor notes should include what you want to say and do on each screen. Your notes can also include suggested questions to promote discussion and interaction. This can be easily accomplished using Blackboard Collaborate Plan, which enables you to organize, script, and package content and activities BEFORE your real-time, online session. [Learn more about Plan](#).

6. **Have a "producer" in your session.**

   How about recruiting another instructor or student helper to manage technical support questions or troubleshoot problems? It's also helpful to have someone manage questions and comments in the live chat area. Your helper can organize questions for you to answer later or address comments as they come, as well as list pertinent information, like a support phone number, instructor email address, important web link, or other resource.

7. **Smile and your participants will smile with you.**

   Be positive and energetic, and your students will catch your enthusiasm. Your voice is critical to setting the tone. Some moderators even stand up and walk around a bit during a session. Consider using your webcam to introduce yourself at the beginning of a session. And be sure to have a user profile with photo and contact information for participants to view. Encourage them to create their own profiles as well.

8. **Record your sessions.**

   Blackboard Collaborate interactive recordings are almost like being there. And they are a great way to build reusable learning content. Your notes should include a reminder to start the recording at the beginning of every session. Provide the recording to students so they can review the content, especially if they missed a session. You can even add indices during the live session to mark key sections in the recording. Consider creating additional recordings as tutorials to supplement your live sessions.

9. **Run the Audio Wizard as soon as you join your session.**

   Running the audio wizard before each session ensures your audio is working and the levels are correct, even if you just left a session. Have your participants do the same. You can even include instructions to do so on your session welcome slide.

10. **Join early.**

    Get in the habit of joining your sessions early. It starts things off right when you greet participants as they join. It will also give you ample time to load content, set up breakout rooms, and test your webcam and video. Turn off your phone, and consider putting up a sign:
    Do not Disturb: I'm Collaborating!

What's Next?

Check out these additional Blackboard Collaborate resources:

- Read "10 Cool Ways to Engage with Blackboard Collaborate" white paper. [Download now](#).

- Promote adoption at your campus with our Blackboard Collaborate Champion Toolkit. [Contact us](#).

- Learn more about the key features and benefits of Blackboard Collaborate. [View recorded demos](#).

- Visit our On-Demand Learning Center for the latest learning resources for moderators. [Learn more](#).

Blackboard