## Best Practices for Teaching with



After three years of teaching with Zoom, we have developed a few best practices to recommend for faculty. These are organized by before, during and after the class.

**General Recommendations**

1. **Always sign in via the SSO** using the Desktop app when using Zoom. **Stay signed in.**
2. **Do not use the Bb integration.** It clutters your Zoom account with links for every single class session that you schedule. Schedule meetings in the **web portal (mayvillestate.zoom.us).**
3. **Use two monitors**, when possible. When teaching with Zoom it is very helpful, though not required, to use two monitors so you can see the Zoom meeting on one screen and use the other to navigate around your computer.

**Prepare**

**Check your connection.** This is the first thing you should do. No connection or slow connection means no class.

**Be professional.** Make sure your camera is at eye level or slightly above and lighting is sufficient to see your face. Natural lighting works best. Wear teaching attire.

**Schedule the meeting.** Go to the Zoom desktop app or the web portal to schedule the Zoom meeting for the class. If you will be meeting more than once, use the recurring meeting > No fixed time. Although Blackboard has a Zoom integration, *it is not recommended* when scheduling recurring meetings because it clutters the portal with a long list of links to the same meeting.

**Recommendations for meeting settings:**

* Change the name of the meeting to the class number, name and semester.
* Do not require registration.
* Use the automatically generated meeting ID. Require meeting password.
* Mute all participants and host upon entry. Turn off video for all participants and host upon entry.
* Disable join before host.

**Be aware of meeting security.** *Password protect* the meeting and enable the Waiting Room feature. When scheduling a meeting with a password, the password will be included in the link that is generated for the meeting. If students click the link, they will not need to enter the password. However, if they enter the Meeting ID into the Zoom desktop app, they will need it. With the *Waiting Room enabled*, students will not be allowed in the meeting until you admit them. Use the *Security button* to lock the meeting, enable and disable the waiting room, and allow or disallow participant screen sharing and chat.

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**Add the link to your Zoom meeting in your course shell.** As mentioned earlier, the Bb integration is not recommended. Instead, create the meeting as described above and add the link to your Bb site.

**Add the Installation and Quick Start Guides to your Bb course shell.** The Installation Guide is available on the Bb Faculty Resources page. Copy the link location and add the web link to your course in a prominent location.

**Customize the “Tips for Success” slide and practice sharing it in your Zoom meeting.** You will be posting when students start entering the meeting. Give it try before the meeting starts to make sure it works and looks like you want it to. You many need to customize the moderator information.

**Make slides or discussion questions available in advance** so that students can come to class prepared for a discussion. This will help deepen the discussions and will facilitate work in breakout rooms, if used.

**Practice!** If you are new to using Zoom to teach, practice the tips provided below so they come naturally to you when you are under pressure to perform in front of your students.

**Starting the class session**

**Build your online presence by arriving early and staying late.** When you send the Zoom invite to students, also let them know that you will be there up to 30 minutes early and/or 30 minutes after the class (if your schedule allows). This allows students to practice with Zoom. It also gives you a chance to get to know your students or continue to build your relationships with them.

**Help students avoid frustration.** Use Announcements to email the link to the meeting 15 minutes before it starts.

**Watch the waiting room.** Remember to keep an eye on the waiting room so that students are sitting in Zoom limbo wondering why class hasn’t started yet.

**Use interactive roll call.** Interactive roll call is a strategy that helps you break down the barriers of technology. In this activity, you or one of your students chooses a non-related question that each student answers when their name is called for attendance. Even if you do not take attendance, this activity warms up the audience and gets them relaxed and engaged. It also helps students get to know each other across the distance. Examples of questions are: “What is the “real feel” temp where you are?” “What shoe is you?” and “How do you taco?”

**Help students get to know Zoom.** For the first class or two, set aside time for students to get to know Zoom. Make sure their audio and video feeds are working and confirm that they know how to mute themselves. This is a good time to remind them to keep their mics muted when not speaking.

**Remind students of your expectations for video conferencing etiquette.** Discuss your expectations with regard to things like whether students are required to have their cameras turned on, when it is appropriate to turn them off, what to do if they need to leave the meeting briefly, and appropriate and inappropriate ways to present themselves to the class (For example, is sitting in bed during class OK with you?).

**Provide an agenda for the class session.** Create a PowerPoint slide or Word document listing out the agenda for the class session. This practice helps students know what is expected of them and they are more likely stay engaged.

**During Class**

**Make eye contact.** When speaking, look at the camera rather than the images on screen. Look through the camera to your audience. This helps create a more personal connection.

**Account for lag and other pauses.** Often you will experience delay, or lag, from the moment you say or do something to the moment your students hear or see what you are doing. Pause a few seconds longer than you might in person to be sure to take lag into account. Pause when sharing screens, files and videos as well.

**Visual interactions.** Include visual elements, other than your “talking head” whenever possible.

Engage students with built in features for that purpose:

1. [Polling](https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/213756303-Polling-for-Meetings)
2. [Breakout rooms](https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206476093-Getting-Started-with-Breakout-Rooms)
3. [Non-verbal feedback](https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/115001286183-Nonverbal-Feedback-During-Meetings)
4. [Virtual backgrounds](https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/210707503-Virtual-Background)
5. [Screen sharing](https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362153-How-Do-I-Share-My-Screen-)
6. [Whiteboard](https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/205677665-Sharing-a-whiteboard)
7. [Annotation](https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/115005706806-Using-annotation-tools-on-a-shared-screen-or-)
8. [Transcription of Meetings](https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/115004794983-Automatically-Transcribe-Cloud-Recordings-)
9. [Chat](https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/203650445-In-Meeting-Chat)

**Create opportunities for students to interact with one another.** When students are joining the conference with their cameras running, it significantly contributes to community building.

**After Class**

**Build your online presence by arriving early and staying late.** When you send the Zoom invite to students, also let them know that you will be there up to 30 minutes early and/or 30 minutes after the class (if your schedule allows). This allows students to practice with Zoom. It also gives you a chance to get to know your students or continue to build your relationships with them.

**Outside of Class**

**Virtual office hours.** See the Virtual Office Hour Guide for ideas on creating a better office hour experience for you and your students.

**Group study sessions.** Zoom facilitates community building and group work. Students have their own accounts and can meet using their own meetings.