

# SYNCHRONOUS SESSIONS AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

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SLIDES BASED ON INFORMATION  
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# SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE LEARNING

## I. PEDAGOGICAL OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSIDERATIONS





**BUILDING IN A VIRTUAL  
SPACE:**

INTENTIONAL. PURPOSEFUL. DESIGNED.

**COMMUNITY**

POSITIVE  
CLASSROOM  
ENVIRONMENT  
AND  
INSTRUCTOR  
PRESENCE



1) Improves student learning



2) Works toward student retention



3) Can be enhanced through synchronous Teams sessions

# WHAT IS SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE LEARNING?



Definition: "Real-time" or "live" instruction that requires the instructor and students to be online at the same time.



\* Options to host synchronous online sessions include Microsoft Teams for videoconferencing and D2L Chat for text-only real-time interaction.



# BENEFITS

Increases student-to-student and instructor-to-student interaction.

Offers opportunities for real-time collaboration.

Enhances students' motivation to engage, learn and persist in an online course by increasing instructor presence and fostering a sense of classroom community.

Increases instructor efficacy and lower workload by decreasing amount of asynchronous back and forth.

Allows for immediate feedback.

## CHALLENGES

Students might not have the technology or working space to participate in the sessions.

Students might be in different time zones and being present would be difficult.

It can be challenging to keep everyone engaged.

Accessibility limitations. For example, the absence of close captioning may limit students' participation and opportunities to engage in meaningful ways.



# ARE SYNCHRONOUS SESSIONS RIGHT FOR MY STUDENTS?



learning  
outcomes



instructional  
needs



comfort level  
with technology



teaching  
preferences

**I WANT TO HOST  
SYNCHRONOUS  
SESSIONS. WHERE DO I  
START?**

# REQUEST A MICROSOFT TEAMS SITE.

IMPORTANT!

Make this request through Checkmarq. There will be an icon beside the roster icon in your class.

# INTENTION

- Provide a schedule of the synchronous sessions.
- Plan student interaction activities (e.g., collaborate on a practice problem or peer review).
- Consider if you will be taking attendance during the sessions.
- Humanity, especially at the beginnings and ends of classes.



# SYNCHRONOUS SESSIONS DURING CLASS TIMES



\*If there is a scheduled class time for your course, please hold your session during that scheduled time.



\* Be mindful of students' schedules.  
\* Consider whether these sessions will be optional or required.



\* Consider recording your sessions and making them available in a Stream or your Teams site.



\* Practice compassion.

# PREPARATION

## Practice

Practice recording sessions and posting them in D2L with closed captioning.

## Engagement

Provide the “rules of engagement” for interacting during the sessions. You may have students contribute to these rules as part of a class activity at the beginning of the semester.

## Purpose

Include in your syllabus a description of the sessions. What are your expectations for participating, attendance, etc. and why are you hosting synchronous sessions (i.e., purpose of the sessions).

# BREAKOUT ROOMS

Tips:



Set up breakout rooms in advance if you know you'll be using them.



Plan to have a practice session with your students during the first week of class. This will provide students an opportunity to get familiar with the breakout rooms in a low-stakes situation, without the pressure of having to complete a course-related task within a limited time.

# WHAT STRATEGIES CAN I USE TO MANAGE MY SESSIONS IN MICROSOFT TEAMS?

1

Post a reminder of upcoming virtual synchronous sessions in the course announcements, email, news, etc.

2

Request questions from students prior to session. This will help you organize the session and it will also allow for you to answer questions from students who cannot attend.

3

At the start of each session, remind students that you will be recording the session to post it in D2L.

4

Post a link to the session recording in the week's module in D2L.



# AM I BEING INCLUSIVE?

- Make sure you include equal access to information and learning for students who cannot attend sessions via activities and recordings.
- Consider the accessibility of the content that will be shared in the synchronous session.
  - If the students are required to see and read the content quickly, consider sending the content in advance.
  - Or, you can narrate, being explicit in your descriptions of the content, for those students who may not be able to see your content.
- Enable the close captioning in your session recordings.
- If using a whiteboard feature, be sure to orally describe what you are drawing
- If using visual images, be sure to add verbal detailed information about the image
- Consider time zones involved and the variety of domains students are managing at the same time.

# MANAGING YOUR SYNCHRONOUS SESSIONS IN MICROSOFT TEAMS



You can mute everyone. :)



Talk slowly and stop every few minutes to check in.



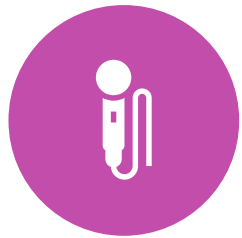
Acknowledge questions (e.g., I see a few questions in the chat and will address them when I finish discussing this topic).

Consider asking different students to help you manage questions in the chat.



Students can raise hands, use the chat, etc.

# EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES FOR REQUIRED SYNCHRONOUS SESSIONS IN AN ONLINE OR BLENDED COURSE



GUEST SPEAKER(S)



DEMONSTRATIONS



STUDENT  
PRESENTATIONS



PEER-TO-PEER  
COLLABORATION



DISCUSSIONS,  
DEBATES, ROLE-  
PLAYS

# EXAMPLES OF OPTIONAL SYNCHRONOUS SESSIONS

## Weekly Online Virtual Office Hours

- ❑ Mimics purpose/format of face-to-face on-campus office hours; however, there is potential for more than one student at a time.
- ❑ Offered each week either on same day time or alternating day/time.
- ❑ Alternative titles for this type of “online office hours”: Consultations, Design Studio, Conference Room, Open Space, etc.



# OCCASIONAL VIRTUAL MEETINGS



Create a poll to identify what times of day work best for students (and you)



Feels less formal than online office hours and may help students feel more comfortable asking questions among peers.



Strategically scheduled – does not need to be every week. For example, schedule live sessions prior to major deliverables or exams.



Alternative titles for less formal “online office hours”: Student Hours, Coffee Breaks, Afternoon Tea, Screaming into the Void, Bat Cave, Around the Campfire, etc.

# 1:1 VIRTUAL MEETINGS



Offer to meet for individual student-instructor conversation.



Different than the other examples because you are meeting with one student at a time in a private virtual meeting space.

# WHAT MIGHT WORK FOR YOU?

Yes, you count, too.

**IMPORTANT!**



You matter, too.

While we just reviewed considerations for students' experiences, don't forget yourself.



Note: Many of the issues and considerations discussed thus far also apply to you.



COMPASSION.

GRATITUDE.

HUMILITY.

DETERMINATION.

LOVE.

COMMUNITY  
OF  
TEACHERS  
AND  
LEARNERS

**PLEASE ATTEND THE  
SYNCHRONOUS SESSIONS**

**THEY WILL HELP YOU!**

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# II. TECHNICAL OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSIDERATIONS

# OVER TO DREW!

1. Basics of presenting with Teams
  - Recording, raising hands, accessing chat
  - PowerPoint
  - App sharing
  - Screen sharing
2. Storing and accessing video
  - In Teams site
  - In Streams
3. Creating Group Channels
4. Microsoft Whiteboard