Blackboard Collaborate

Blackboard Collaborate is a real-time video conferencing tool that lets you add files, share applications, and use a virtual whiteboard to interact. Collaborate Ultra opens right in your browser, so you don't have to install any software to join a session. Check out this short video created by Blackboard for a brief overview of Blackboard Collaborate Ultra.

To Get Started

1. Add the Blackboard Collaborate Ultra Tool Link to your Course Menu.

Tool Interface

1. When you first access Blackboard Collaborate Ultra from your course, you will encounter an intuitive design for scheduling sessions and viewing recordings. The tool menu has two areas: sessions and recordings (Figure 1 and 2).
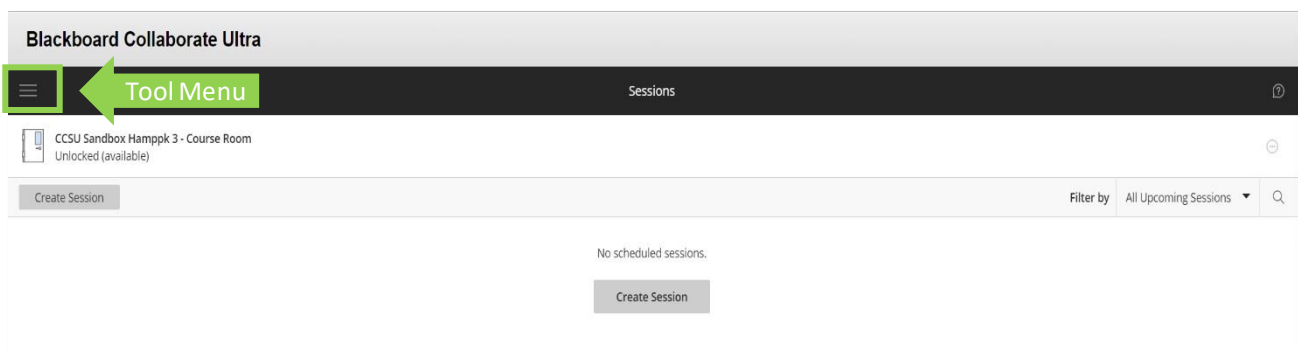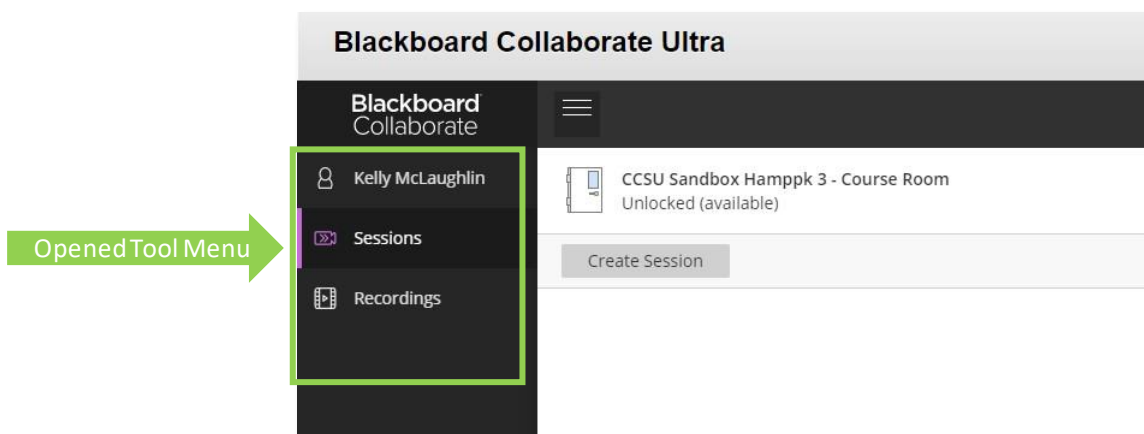

FIGURE 1

FIGURE 2

2. When you Click on **Sessions,** you have the option to create as many sessions (class meetings) as you would like. You also have a **Course Room**. The Course Room is best for Office Hours or drop-in meetings. By default, the Course Room is unlocked or available (Figure 3).
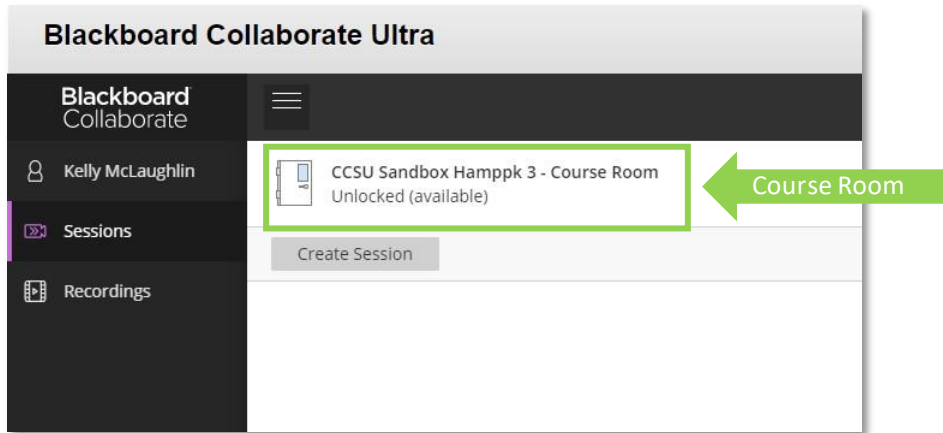
FIGURE 3

3. If you don't want students to view or join the open course room session, you can turn it off. In the Blackboard Collaborate Ultra tool, open the **More menu** for the Course Room by clicking the **Course Room**. Under Event Details click **Lock course room** (Figure 4). You would follow these same steps to Unlock the course room in the future.
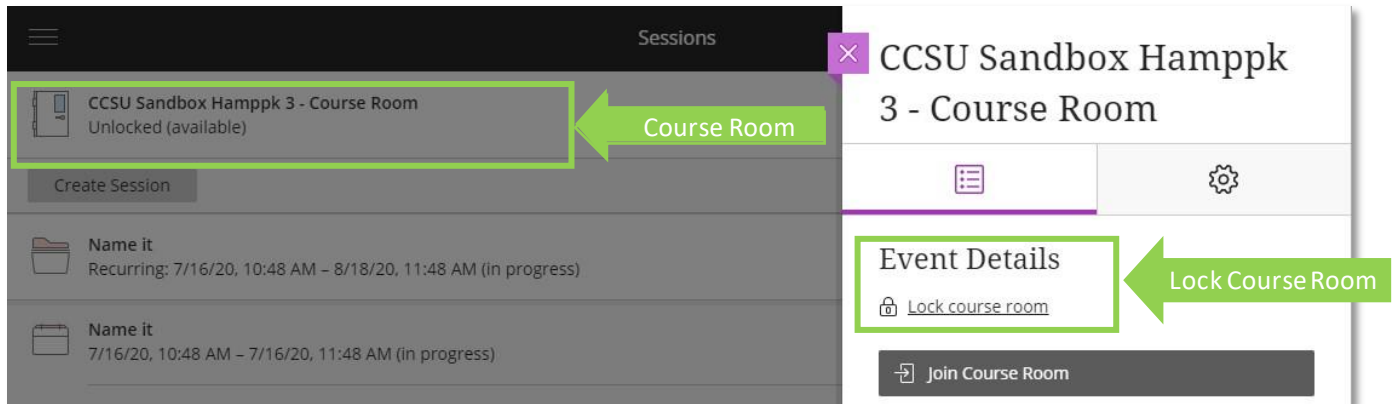

FIGURE 4

Blackboard Collaborate

Create and Edit Sessions

1. You can create sessions from the Blackboard Collaborate Ultra tool by clicking the **Create Session Button** (Figure 5).
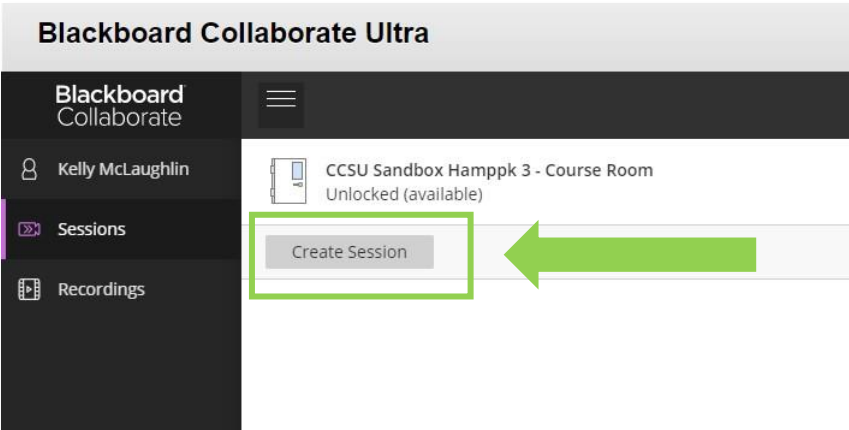
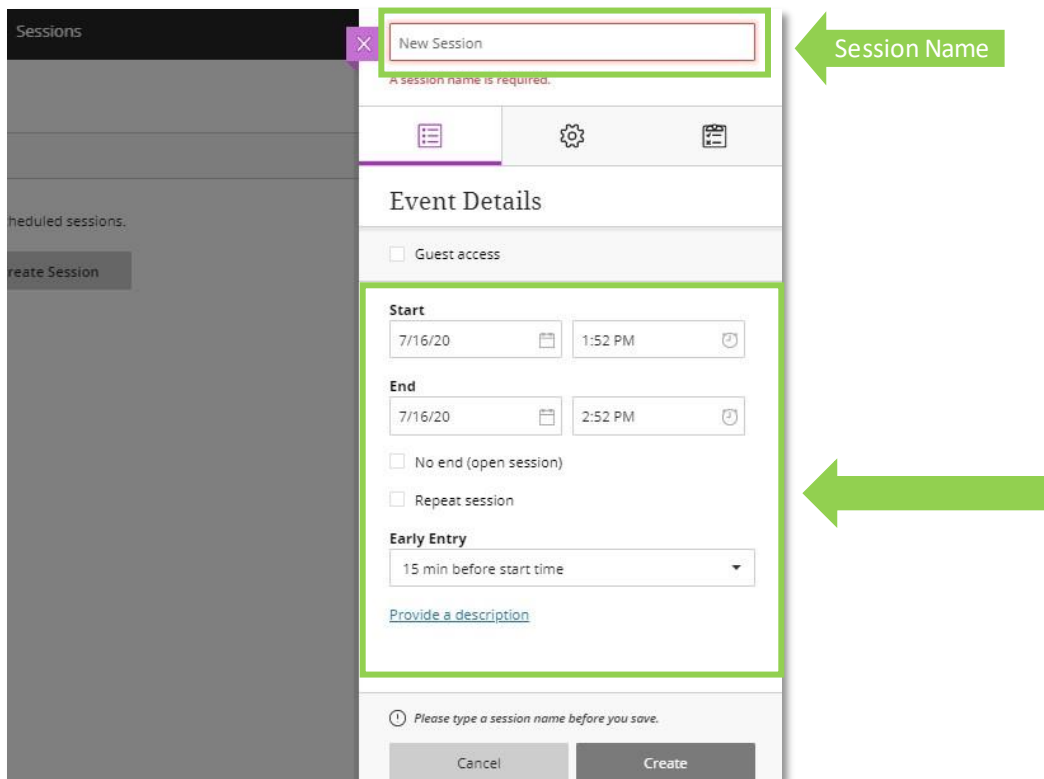2. A **Panel** will open on the right where you can **Configure Session Settings** (Figure 6).

FIGURE 6

a. Type a meaningful name for the session. This helps students find the right session.

b. Set the date and time the session starts and ends. You can choose to keep a session open or repeat on the days and times your class will meet synchronously online.

c. You can also choose to allow students to enter the session before the start time by selecting a time preference under the **Early Entry** drop-down box

d. Type a detailed description of the meeting. This helps students prepare for the session. This is only helpful if you aren't using the repeat option. Click **Provide a description**

e. If you would like any guests to attend your session, check the box titled **guest access.** This will allow participants to invite additional guests
   *Please note for security purposes you may want to leave this option unselected.

3. Open **Session Settings** and decide if users can (Figure 7):

f. Download recordings. Allow recording downloads from the Recordings page as well as on the recording play back page.

g. Share profile pictures. Or show the profile pictures of moderators only. This is helpful if not all students have Webcams, but they can still display a picture so you can get to know your students on a more personal level.

h. Use audio, video, chat, and the whiteboard editing tools.

i. To avoid students having personal discussions within the course during the class session it is best to turn the chat option off. You can allow students to chat with the moderator only(you). Use their phone for session audio
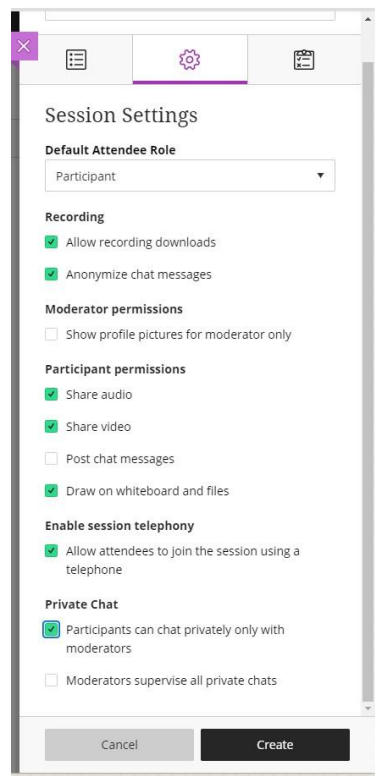

FIGURE 7

4. Open **Attendance Reporting** to allow for Collaborate to take attendance for you while you are in a session (Figure 8).

   j. Click on the top **clipboard icon** to access Attendance Reporting

   k. Select the **Share Attendance information with LMS**

   l. Leave the Late After or Mark Absent as they are or change them to your desired time. You can also determine the amount of time a student has to be in the session to count as present by using the sliding scale.
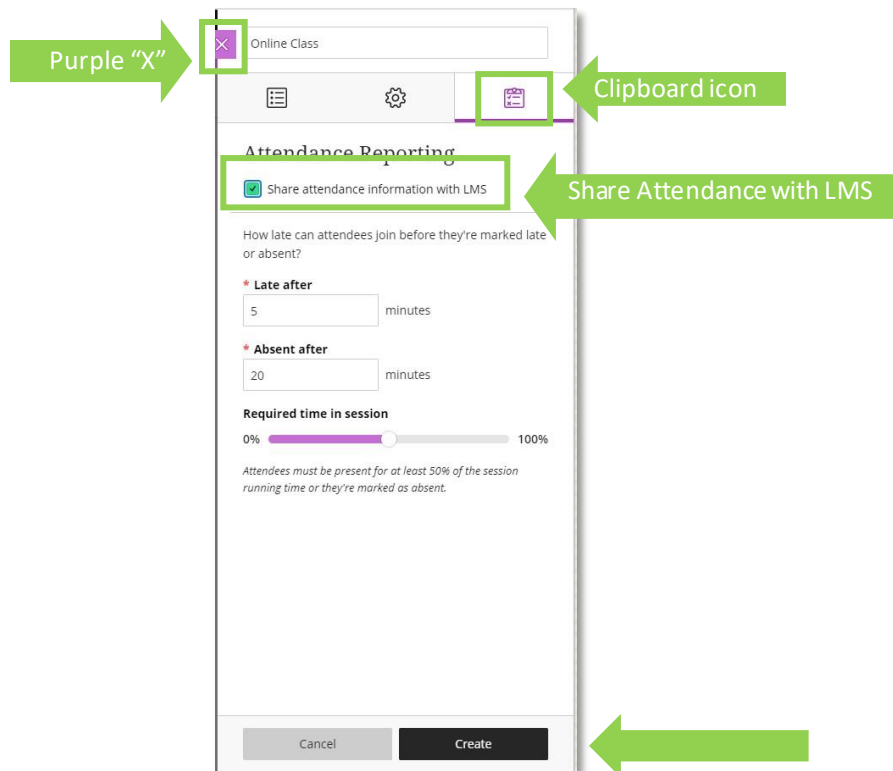

FIGURE 8

5. Select **Create** and then **Save**. (Figure 8).
6. To get back to Blackboard to view your sessions, click on the purple box with the "X" to close the session window (Figure 8).
7. The session will now appear under the Collaborate tool link. If there are recurring sessions, they are packaged in a folder. Click on the folder to view all sessions (Figure 9).
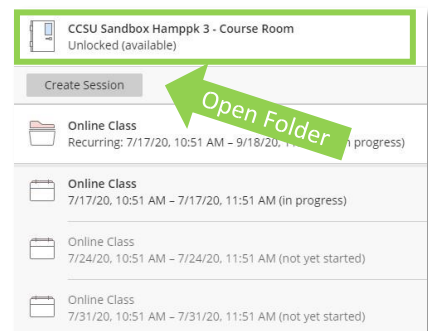

FIGURE 9

Session Options (Edit, Delete, View Reports, or Get a Secure Link)

1. Under **Session Options** you can **edit** the entire series, **delete** the entire series, **view reports**, or get a **secure link** to the session. You can also edit and delete individual sessions. **Click** on the three "dots" on the right-hand side of the **Session Folder** (for sessions with recurrences) to access the **Session Options Menu** (Figure 10). Select the item on the Menu and then follow the prompts.
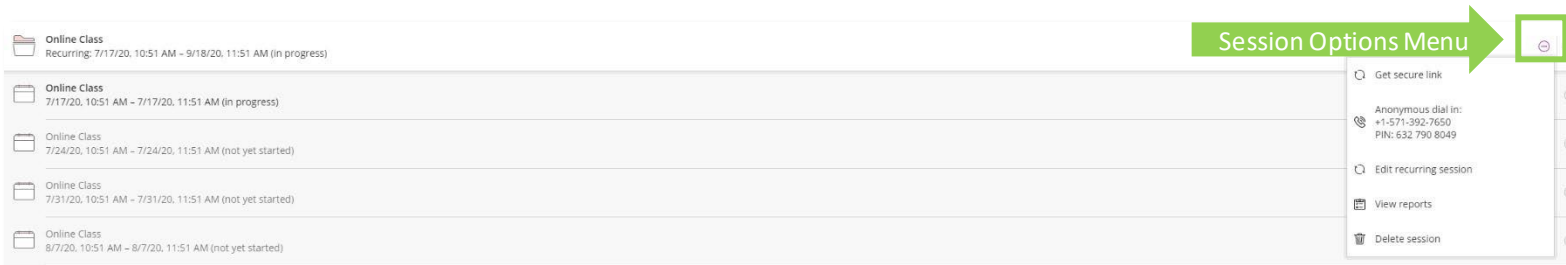
FIGURE 10

2. To **delete** one session or **edit** one session, **Click** on the **Session Options Menu** to the right of the individual session (Figure 11). Select the item on the Menu and then follow the prompts.
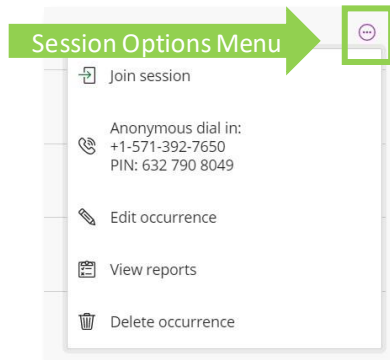
FIGURE 11

Begin a Session

1. Click on the **Session Options Menu** to **Join the session**. If there are multiple occurrences, just verify you are clicking on the correct day/time (Figure 12).

Online Class
7/17/20, 10:51 AM – 7/17/20, 11:51 AM (in progress)

Online Class
7/24/20, 10:51 AM – 7/24/20, 11:51 AM (not yet started)

Online Class
7/31/20, 10:51 AM – 7/31/20, 11:51 AM (not yet started)

Online Class
8/7/20, 10:51 AM – 8/7/20, 11:51 AM (not yet started)

Online Class
8/14/20, 10:51 AM – 8/14/20, 11:51 AM (not yet started)

Join Session

Join session
Anonymous dial in:
+1-571-392-7650
PIN: 632 790 8049
Edit occurrence
View reports
Delete occurrence

FIGURE 12

2. Once you Join the Session you will be presented with a **Welcome Screen** in a browser window (Figure 13).

Welcome!
You're the only one in the room.
Jump in and get started! Upload your content and check your audio.
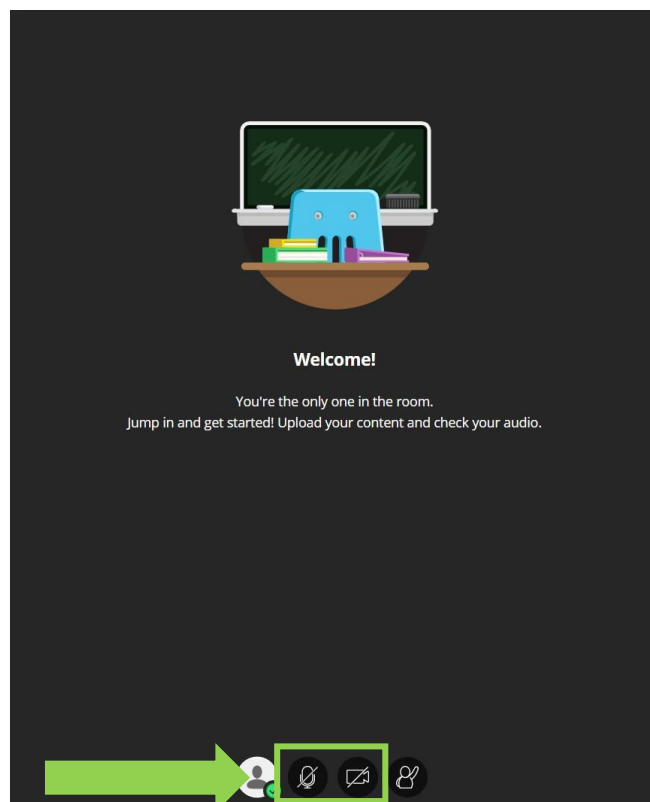
FIGURE 13

3. By default, when you begin or enter a session you and your participants are muted, and videos are off. You can turn your **Audio on** by clicking on the **Microphone Icon.** Click on the **Camera Icon** to turn your **Camera on** (Figure 13).

Room Interface

Session Controls

1. You may access the main **Session controls** (Figure 14) by **clicking on the menu with 3 lines** in the upper left of the Room.

    a. **Start/Stop Recording** – this will record your session. Click on this at the beginning of the session and click on it to stop recording at any time.

    b. **Use your phone for audio** – will display the phone number to call and the unique PIN to hear the session with your phone.

    c. **Report an issue** - displays a checklist of problem items for you to fill out. When submitted, this will alert Blackboard to problems with your session.

    d. **Tell me about Collaborate** – offers information cards and a walk-through of features in Collaborate. This is a good feature to use for familiarizing yourself with Collaborate.

    e. **Blackboard Collaborate Help** – opens a link to Blackboard's Collaborate knowledge base.

    f. **Privacy Policy** - elaborates the Blackboard Privacy Statement.

    g. **Leave Session** – allows you to exit the session
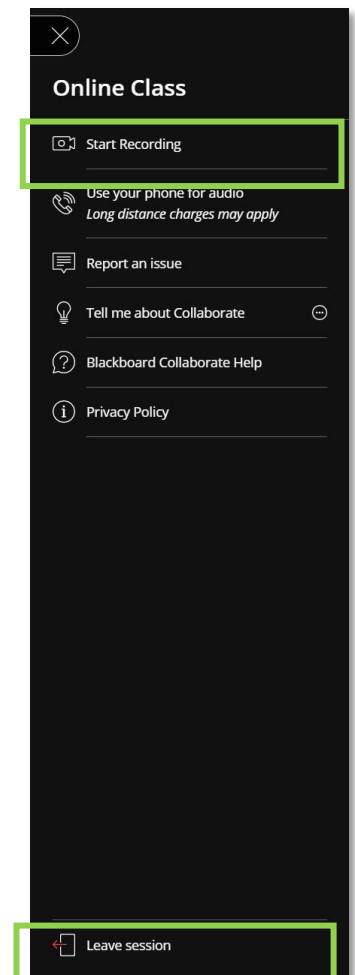
Online Class

- Start Recording
- Use your phone for audio
  Long distance charges may apply
- Report an issue
- Tell me about Collaborate
- Blackboard Collaborate Help
- Privacy Policy

- Leave session

FIGURE 14

# Blackboard Collaborate

Room Controls

1. You can adjust features in your Collaborate room by clicking on the purple chevron icon [icon] in the lower right of the room. This will open all your functions (Figure 15).

FIGURE 15

a. **Chat-** Chat messages can be exchanged between you and your participants. This is a useful feature if you have disabled audio and video for participants. Chat can be enabled or disabled in Session Settings (Figure 16). Click the chat **bubble icon** and click **Everyone** or **Moderators**. The chat window will then appear, and you may begin typing your chat message into the box that says **Say something**
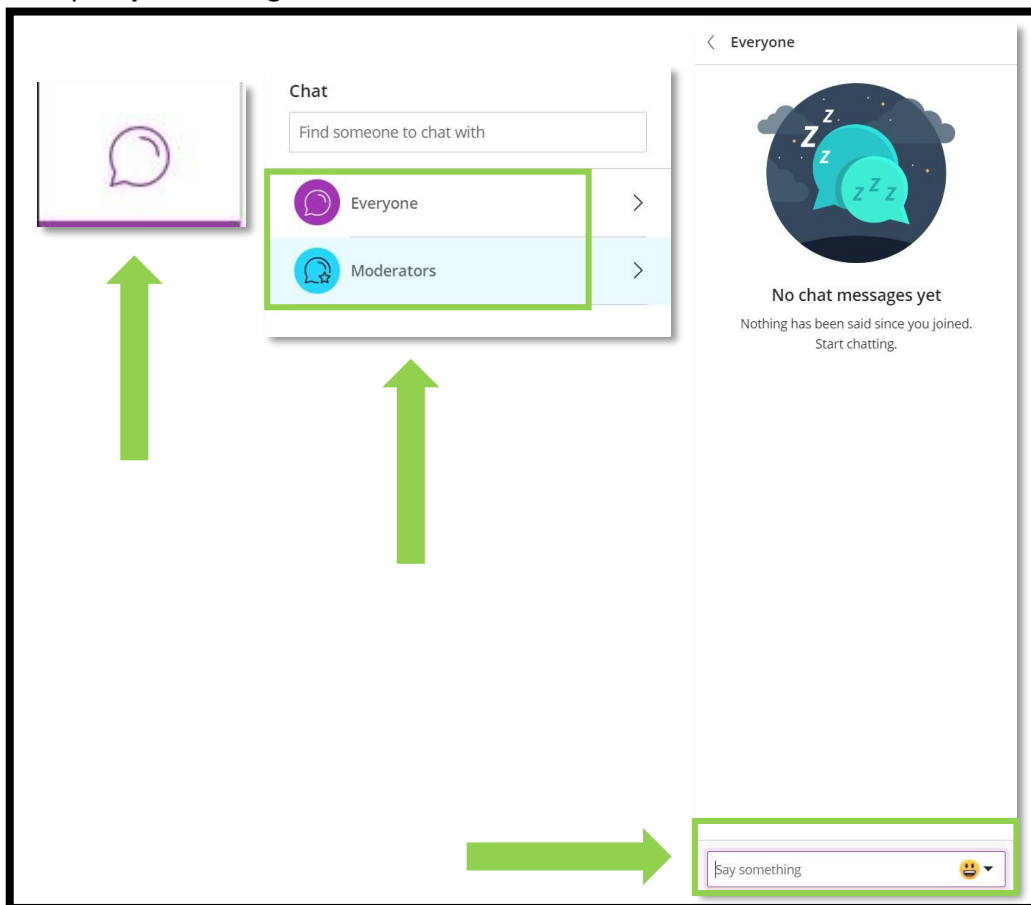

FIGURE 16

b. **Attendees-** The Attendees feature allows you to see who is in the Collaborate session, and their role. The icon on the room control panel will display how many attendees are present with a number at the bottom. You can modify these attendee options (Figure 17):

    i.   Send a direct chat message to the attendee

    ii.   Promote to Moderator (full session control)

    iii. Promote to Presenter (audio, video and sharing)

    iv. Promote to Captioner (allows them to type in text for closed captioning of audio conversation)
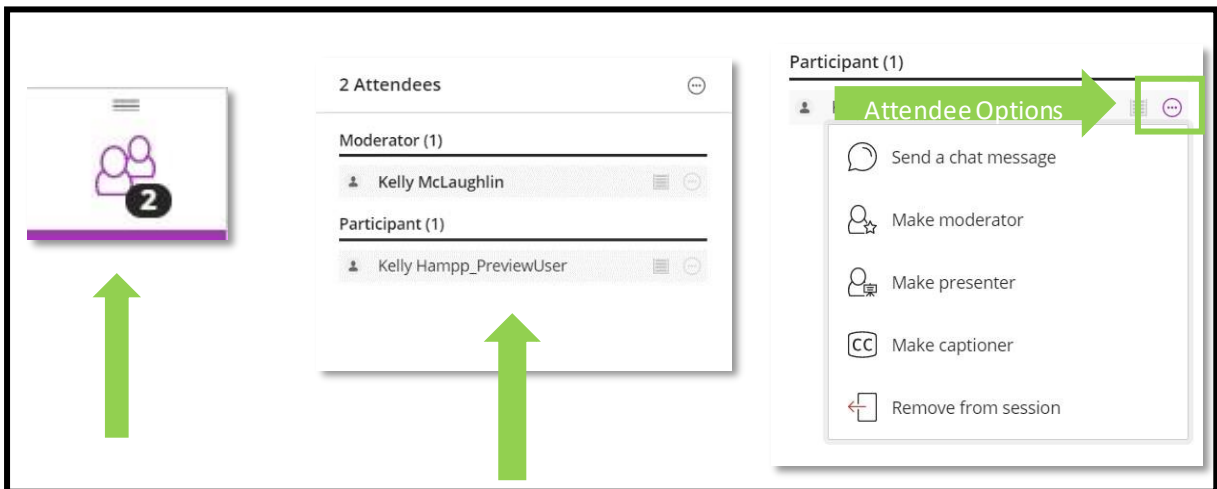
    v.   Remove the attendee from a session

FIGURE 17

c. **Share Content-**The Share Content button allows access to multiple sharing features in Collaborate: Whiteboarding, sharing your screen or individual applications, sharing, and displaying files (Figure 18).

   i. **Whiteboarding** – opens the whiteboard and drawing/text tools. For more information about the annotation tools, [Blackboard has a provided a helpful explanation.](#)

   ii. **Share Application/Screen** – Opens a selector to choose sharing an application or full screen on your computer. [Watch the video](#) for more information and details on sharing an application and sharing files. You may then run demonstrations with the app/screen displayed to participants

   iii. **Share Files** – opens a drop window. You may drag and drop files into it, and they will be displayed in the session. You may also click on the area to open a file browser.

   iv. **Polling** – Collaborate allows you to set up and display a poll of multiple choice or Yes/No online polls to participants. By default, the moderator sees poll results. If you wish participants to view results, you can click "Show Responses".

   v. **Timer** – Allows you to set a timer for either all participants or just moderators. Timers help you keep track of elapsed time for events and presenters.

   vi. **Breakout Groups-** Collaborate can provide you with the ability to set up groups for breakout sessions. Moderators may enter or leave breakout sessions to monitor activity and end the breakout sessions when necessary.
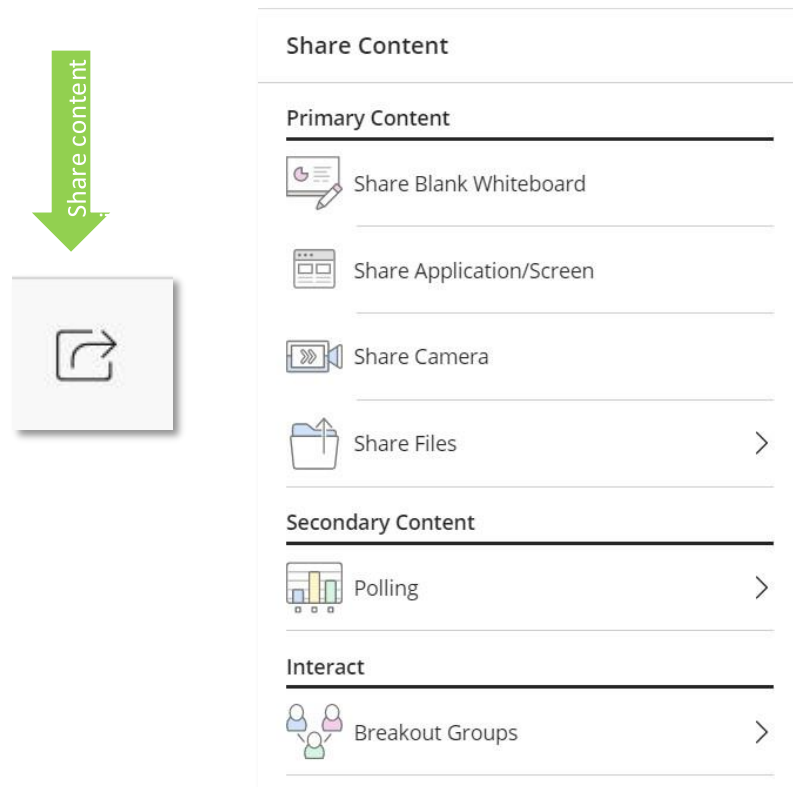

FIGURE 18

d. **Settings** – The room settings can be accessed by clicking on the Settings gear icon. There are several options in this feature (Figure 19).

   i. **Audio and Video Settings** – allows for adjusting your camera and microphone, use your phone for audio, and to set the speaker volume for the session.

   ii. **Notification Settings** – set alerts to be notified when someone joins the session, posts a chat, or raises their hand. Many of these settings are selected by default but are customizable.

   iii. **Session Settings** – (for Moderator only) allows the moderator to set participant features, such as sharing audio, video, chat, etc.

   iv. **Report an Issue** – a useful tool for reporting problems encountered during a Collaborate session. This will send valuable information directly to Blackboard for analysis.
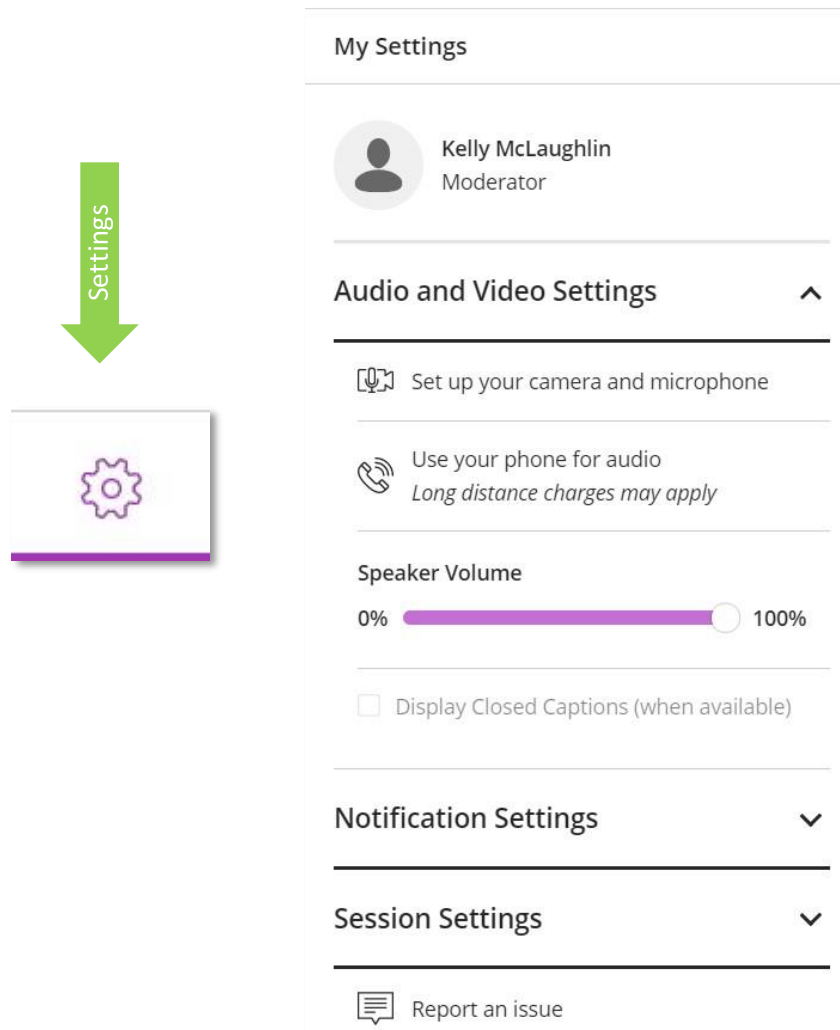

FIGURE 19

Record a Session

1. To **Start** recording, open the **Session Menu** (Figure 20).

FIGURE 20

2. From the Session Menu, select **Start Recording**. The recording camera appears on with a red dot while recording is in progress (Figure 21).
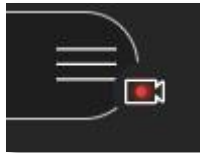

FIGURE 21

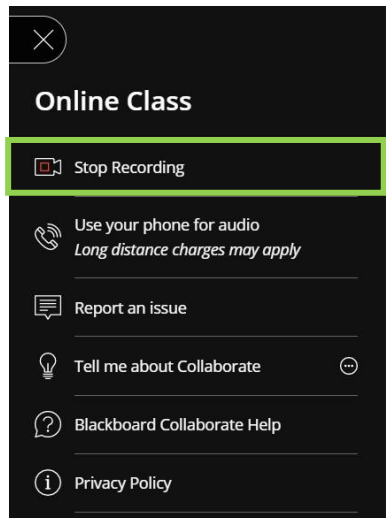3. To finish recording, open the **Session Menu** and select **Stop Recording** (Figure 22).

FIGURE 22

View and Download Recordings

Recorded sessions are saved as MP4s and include audio, any content shared or active speaker video, and the captions entered during the live session.

Please note the following:

- If your session had more than one caption track, only the first available one is captured.
- Only moderators can record sessions.
- Everyone can view the recordings from any device as often as they want. There are no view limits.
- Recordings need to be converted into a playable format before viewing. The first time a recording is accessed the conversion begins. It may take a few minutes but once is has been done the recording can be viewed by everybody.

Note: If you want users to download the recordings, you MUST allow session recording downloads for each session.

1. To view or download recordings, click on the **Blackboard Ultra Collaborate Tool Link** and select the **Tool Menu** (Figure 23).
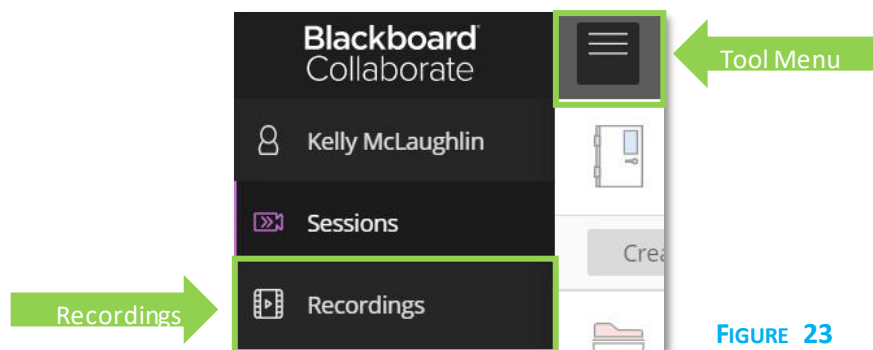2. Select **Recordings** for a list of all recordings (Figure 23).

FIGURE 23

3. Locate your recording and click on the **Menu Button** to the right.
4. This will open a Menu.
   a. Select **Watch Now** to watch your recording.
   b. Select **Download** to download your recording
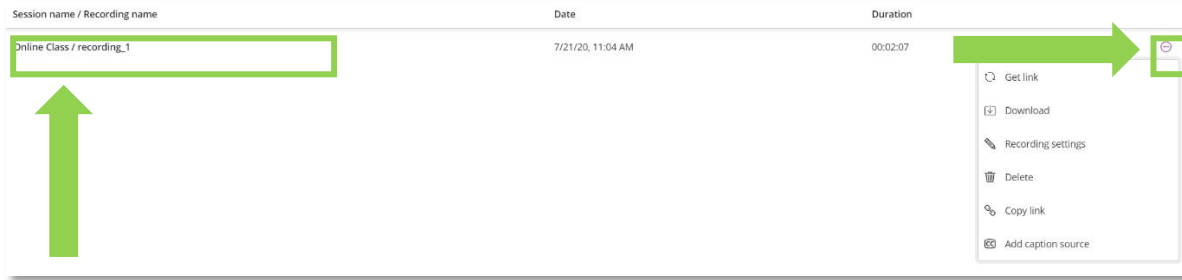   c. Select **Copy Link** to copy the link to send via email or post in your Course Shell.

FIGURE 24

Creating Breakout Groups

To facilitate small group collaboration, you can create breakout groups that are separate from the main room and assign participants to them. Breakout groups have their own private audio, video, whiteboard, application sharing, and chat. Any collaboration that takes place in a group is independent of the Main Room (and other groups). Check out this short video from Blackboard.

1. Open the **Share Content Panel** from the Collaborate Panel (Figure 25).
2. Select **Breakout Groups** (Figure 25).
3. Assign groups. Select **Randomly assign** or **Custom assignment**.
   a. **Custom Assignment**: Create your own groups.
      i. Check **Allow participants to switch groups** if you want participants to be able to switch groups
      ii. To move a participant to a breakout group, click on **the three dots** to the right of their name and then **choose the breakout group.** You can also **click and drag students into groups**, and into different groups if they are already assigned a group
      iii. Add another group by clicking the **plus sign.**
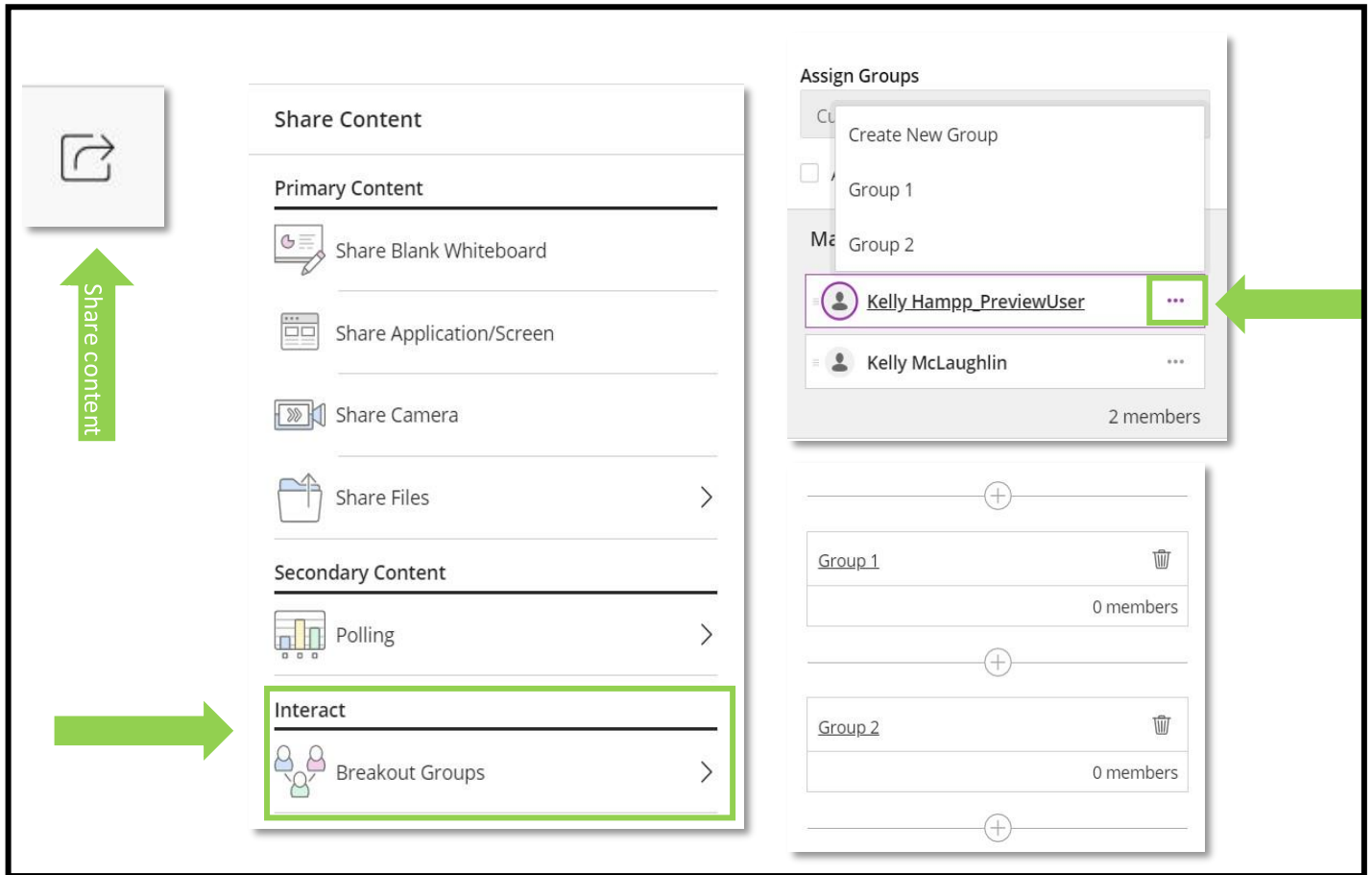
FIGURE 25

4. To change the name of a group, click on the **name**
5. When finished select **Start**.
   a. **Random Assign**: Collaborate creates groups and randomly assigns participants for you. Note: Random assign is only available when there are four or more people in the room
      i. Select **Number of Groups**
      ii. If you want to be in group select, Include moderators in group assignment
      iii. Check **Allow participants to switch groups**, if you want participants to be able to switch groups during the session. You may leave this option off until the end of a session.
      iv. Click **Shuffle participants** if you do not like how the participants were grouped

Monitoring Breakout Groups

After breakout groups are started you can move between groups to monitor them. If you assigned yourself to a group, you could see and hear what others in the group are doing. This includes any shared content, audio, video, and chat.

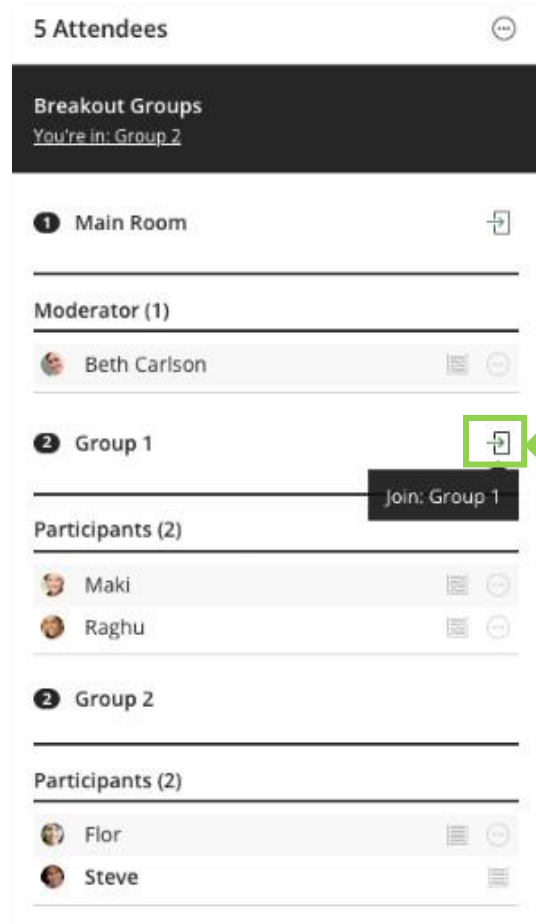1. To move to a different group, select **Join Group** from the Participants Panel

FIGURE 26

Moving Participants to Another Groups

1. From the Attendees panel, find an attendee and select **Attendee controls**.
2. Select **Move to another group**. This opens the Breakout groups panel.
3. Move the attendee to another group. There are two ways you can do this.
   a. Select the attendee's options menu and select the group.
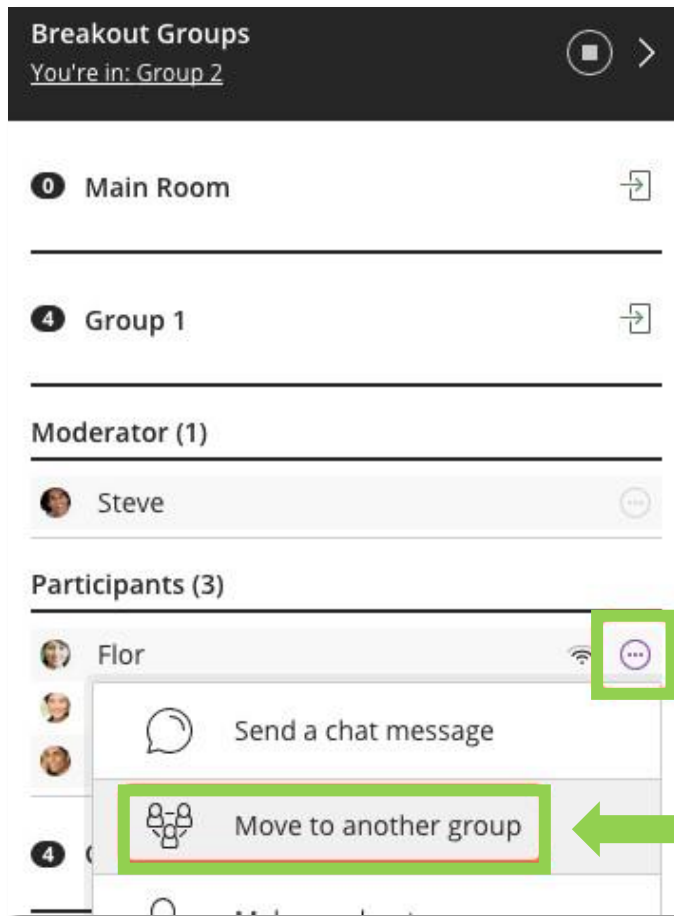   b. Select the attendee and drag them to the new group.
4. **Select Update**

Blackboard Collaborate

FIGURE 27

Ending Breakout Groups

To stop breakout groups and move everyone back to the main room select **End breakout groups.**

1. Open the **Participants panel**
2. Click the **stop button** at the top (Figure 28)
   -OR-
3. Open the **Share Content panel**
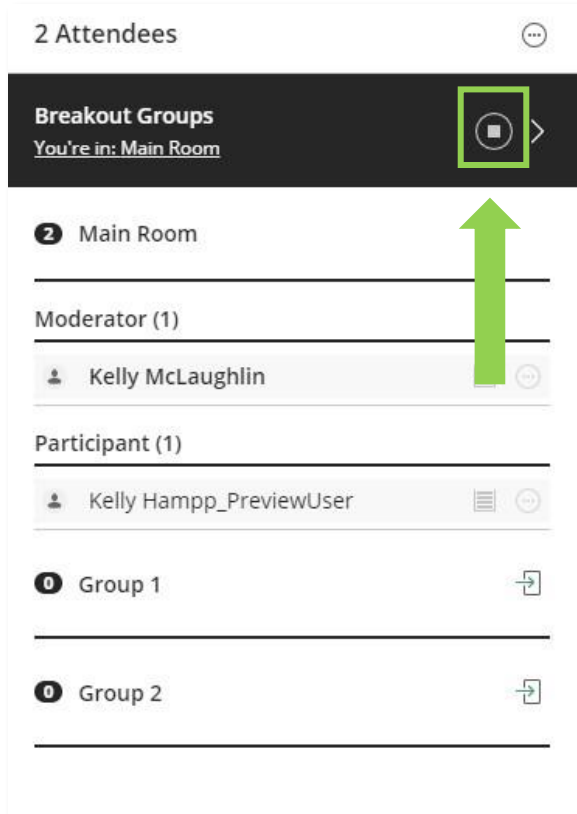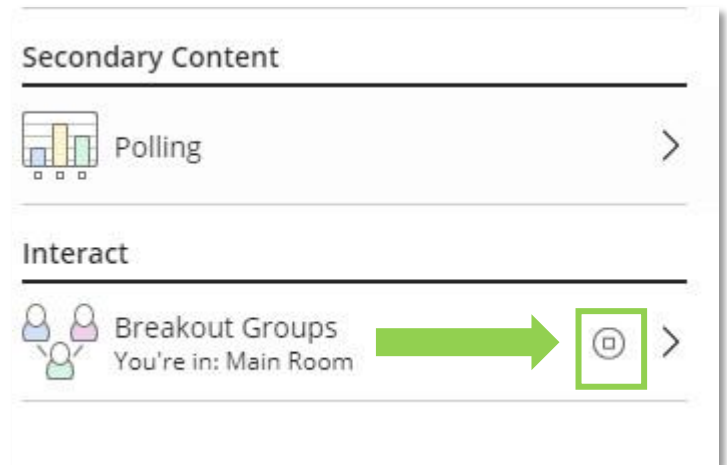4. Click the **stop button** next to Breakout Groups (Figure 29)

FIGURE 28

OR

FIGURE 29

Create Polls

Check out this short video created by Blackboard for a brief introduction to polling.

1. Open the **Collaborate panel**.
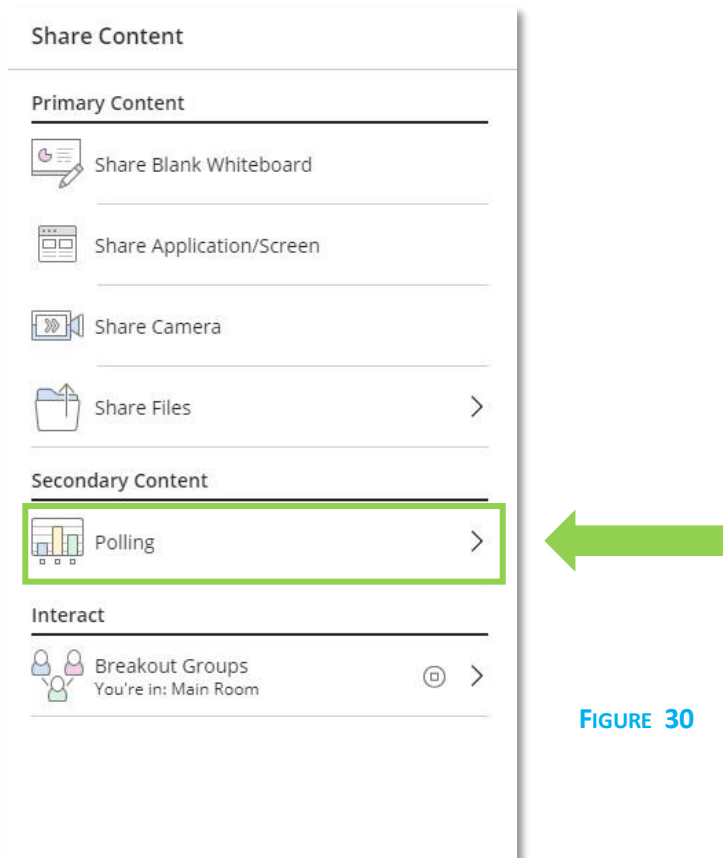2. Select **Share content**.
3. Select **Polling**.

<div align="right">

FIGURE 30

</div>

4. Select **Multiple Choice** or **Yes/No Choices**.

<div align="right">

FIGURE 31

</div>

5. Optionally, type the poll question or leave it blank. Poll questions have a 110-character limit.
6. If using Multiple Choice, give up to 5 answer choices by clicking **Add choice (Figure 32)** Type your answer choices or leave them blank. Answer choices have a 90-character limit. If you leave the choices blank, attendees see numbers for their choices (Figure 33)
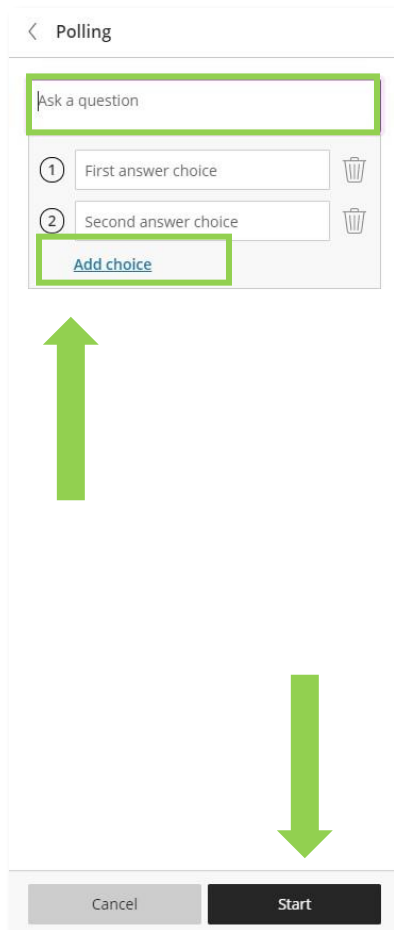

FIGURE 32

FIGURE 33

7. Select **Start**.

Monitor your Poll

Immediately after starting your poll, you can see an overview of poll responses. This overview gives you a response count for each choice. It even tells you how many attendees haven't responded yet. If you want to see how each attendee responded, or even who hasn't responded, go to the **Attendees panel**.

The polling overview doesn't stay open. Open it by selecting **Polling**. From here you can choose to **show responses** to all attendees or stop the poll (Figure 34).

To stop the poll, select **Polling** to open the poll overview. Select **End Polling** to stop the poll.
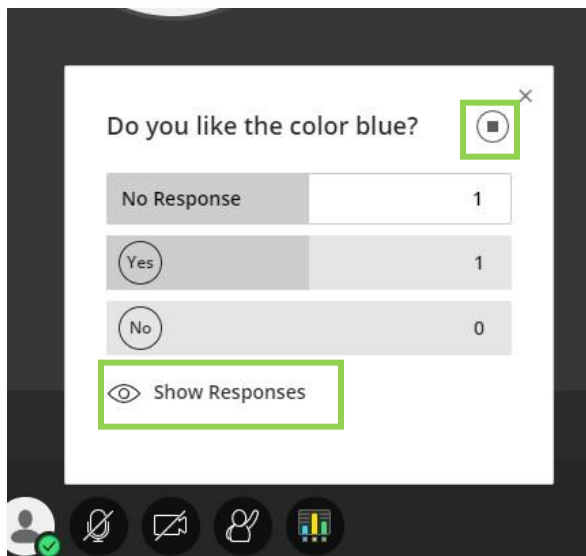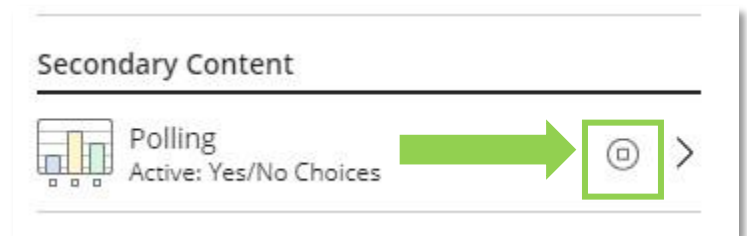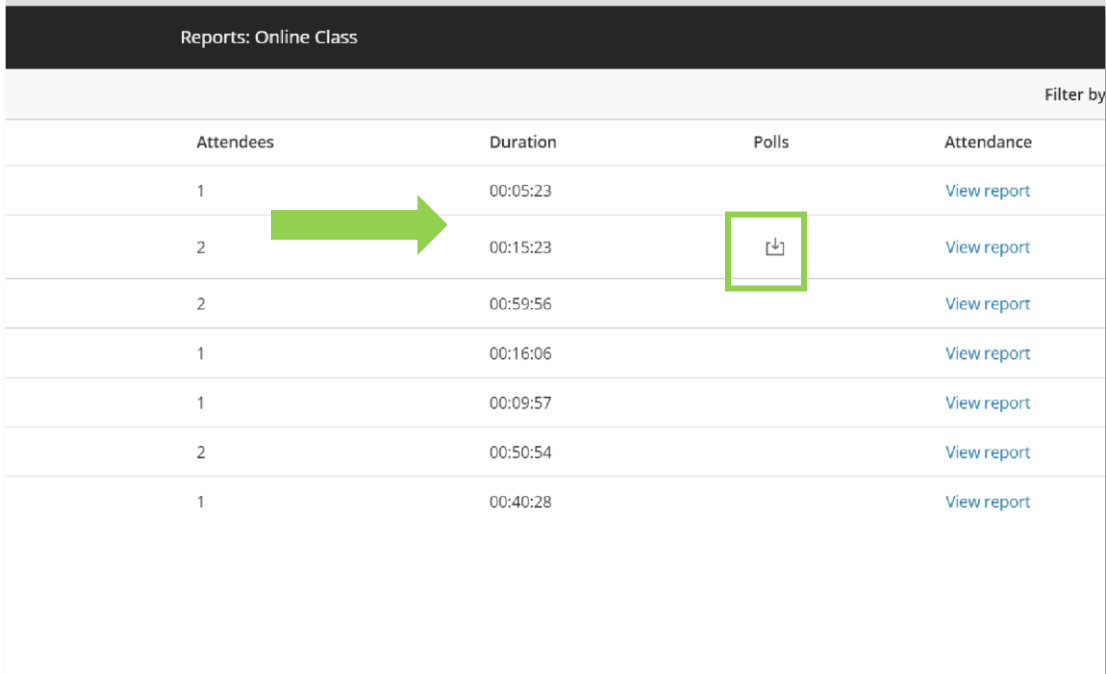

FIGURE 34

FIGURE 35

Show Responses to Attendees

1. Select **Polling** to open the poll overview.
2. Select **Show Responses** to show the responses to all attendees. Attendees see the overview count of the responses only.
3. Select **Hide Responses** to hide the results from attendee.

Download Poll Results

Moderators, instructors, and administrators can download a session's Poll report. This report includes the poll question and how each attendee responded.

1. After you leave the session, open the **Session options menu** and select **View reports**.
2. Click the **download arrow** (Figure 36).

FIGURE 36

Accessibility

For more information about **accessibility** please check out the accessibility link from Blackboard's help page.

For additional information please go to Blackboard's Collaborate Help Page.

Adapted from Blackboard