



A synchronous lecture using Zoom can be a fantastic way to engage your students in the course material and a great way to establish a personal connection to online students who often feel isolated. This guide helps faculty prepare for this high-impact instructional strategy that can be utilized to increase student-to-faculty learning; as well as a practice that supports cognitive, teaching, and social presences from the Community of Inquiry teaching framework. At NLU we support **synchronous Zoom sessions that are mapped directly to module-learning objectives for the week**. During times of school closure, a synchronous Zoom session can be used to substitute for in-class meeting times—at the express permission of the university. Your synchronous session should only occur during the regularly scheduled meeting time.

Prior to the session, be sure to:

- 1) Create an [Announcement](#) in your course and [email your students](#) with the date, time (with time zone), and Zoom credential information. Be sure to include information about the labs that may be open on campus should students lack internet or computer access at home.
- 2) Consider sending out the finalized topic 1-3 days in advance based on learning analytics and student inquiries.
- 3) Consider sharing the entire slide deck at least one day in advance as a PDF for students who experience slow internet.
- 4) An explanation of the importance of the sessions.
- 5) Create a new [Discussion Forum](#) labeled "Recorded Zoom Sessions" for later storage of the sessions. Each week, create a new Discussion Topic labeled by the Week or Date and the topic. Be sure you use Live Captioning with Google Slides so it will be accessible (see below).

Prior to your synchronous Zoom lecture, be sure to:

- 1) Login at least 15 minutes prior to the published start time.
- 2) Check that you have a good and stable Internet connection, and a quiet and distraction-free environment in a semi-professional setting (e.g., please avoid presenting from a couch, a bed, or from a public place – check your background for anything that may distract your students from their learnings).
- 3) [Check your audio and video connections](#) in those tabs in after clicking the Zoom Settings icon.
 - a. Consider using the “touch up” tool in Zoom to [soften your video image](#).
 - b. Check your [video for proper lighting](#).
- 4) While still in Zoom Settings, also check [Side-by-Side Mode](#) on the General Settings tab.
- 5) **Consider using [Google Slides for live closed captioning](#) to accommodate all learners.**
- 6) Draft your slide deck to include:
 - a. Welcome Slide
 - b. Agenda
 - c. Last Week Feedback
 - d. Current or Upcoming Week Topics
 - e. If possible, a [breakout](#) or student-involved activity such as contributing to a [shared Google doc](#) (approximately 15-30 minutes)
 - f. Questions (approximately 15 minutes)

As the session is starting, be sure to:

- 1) Turn off email and messaging apps prior to sharing your screen.
- 2) [Turn on captioning in Google slides](#).
- 3) [Share your screen](#) with your presentation deck (note: most users find that normal slide view, rather than Slide Show views are easier to manage over Zoom. You can use the slide rule at the bottom-right of the slide window to make the slide larger).
- 4) Start on-time.
- 5) Be sure to make eye contact directly into your web camera and SMILE!
- 6) Welcome each participant by name and/or ask each of them to say hello using their first and last name; making note of the attendance.
- 7) Ask for a volunteer to monitor the [Chat](#) to alert you to a question that needs answered during the presentation.
- 8) Announce you will be [muting everyone](#) for the next few minutes so everyone can hear and take notes without distractions; let them know they can unmute themselves any time during the session.
- 9) Encourage students to keep their Webcams on for the whole session, but do not require it if they are not comfortable doing so.
- 10) Remind everyone you will be recording the session and storing in the D2L classroom in the Recorded Zoom Sessions Discussion Forum.
- 11) Ask each participant to view the session in [Side-by-Side mode](#). This allows them to see you and your slide on the same screen.
- 12) Inform your students you will be [recording the session](#).

During the session, be sure to:

- 1) **For students who are blind or have low visibility, narrate the material that you're displaying visually on the screen.** Just as you might read materials aloud in class, read screen material that you share on-screen just in case students are not able to see essential text.
- 2) Activate your students by asking them a fun question that has a one word answer they can quickly type into the Chat message area. For example, "What is one thing you are grateful for today?", "How are you feeling today in one word?", "What is your favorite color?".
- 3) Review the agenda for the class meeting and discuss your expectations regarding their participation (see "As the session is starting" section).
- 4) Share your screen and keep your web camera on and GO!
- 5) Be sure to stop frequently and ask questions of the students and/or to have them provide input into the session.
 - a. This can be done verbally by unmuting participants, via chat while they are muted, or online poll (<https://www.sli.do/> or <https://www.easypolls.net/>).
- 6) If possible, design a group [breakout](#) or student-involved activity such as contributing to a [shared Google doc](#) (approximately 15-30 minutes) to activate learning and attention.
- 7) At the end of the session thank the students for their time and ask them to rate the session using a polling function.
- 8) Allow recording of your session to complete, upload to your Discussion

Forum you created for that lecture and create an Announcement directing students to it.

Synchronous sessions are an immediate and personal engagement between students and instructors, which may create greater feelings of community and lessen feelings of isolation. **Be sure to take this time with your students to express care for them, in addition to your goals towards keeping them on track to graduation,** even during times of school closures.

We want to thank you for your enduring commitment to learning and student success. Be sure to contact the [HelpDesk](#) should you need assistance with your synchronous session.