LiveTalk Tips for Success

Hosts/Presenters

Before the LiveTalk

Be Familiar with Zoom and the Multimedia LiveTalk Studios

LiveTalks are sessions, similar to webinars, that allow faculty to interact synchronously with students in online courses. From the student perspective, LiveTalks are covered in the Introduction to Online Learning course taught by CTL. At its root, a LiveTalk is a synchronous, online Zoom Meeting. But a LiveTalk, scheduled through CTL from CoursePlus, uses the School’s multimedia studios and technicians guaranteeing excellent support and technology resources.

It is essential that the online faculty team be familiar with managing a meeting in Zoom before going into their first LiveTalk. There are several resources available, including CTL’s faculty video tutorial for using Zoom in a LiveTalk and Zoom’s support page, to help you get to this point.

CTL also offers LiveTalk Training several times throughout the year. This training is recommended for anyone new to online teaching – both faculty and TAs. The training provides an overview of the studio equipment, the role of the multimedia technician, and an opportunity to work hands-on with some of the more common functions such as polling and allowing students to use their microphones. A link to register for training appears under “Recurring Events” on the CTL Events Page.

Communicate the Objective of the LiveTalk to Students

Know the purpose of your LiveTalk and share its objective with the students and any guest presenters. The purpose of the session can set the tone of the session. It may be helpful to develop an outline, or agenda, of the LiveTalk to guide you. This outline could transform into the slides you present during the session.

Generate Interest/Engage the Students Before the LiveTalk

Questions and topics of interest can be posted to a Discussion Forum Category or Topic prior to the LiveTalk. While it’s OK to leave a Discussion Forum Category open and ready for students to post related topics on their own, consider this alternative: as a first post under a LiveTalk’s category, faculty can write the objective of the LiveTalk and prompt students to ask questions, mention related topics they want to see addressed, or link to relevant current events. These questions and topics can alternately be emailed to the faculty team. You may want to impose a deadline, leaving yourself enough time to review the shared interests.

Another idea is to have students prepare for the LiveTalk by assigning preparatory work, such as reading a relevant journal article, reviewing a lecture, watching a video external to CoursePlus, or being familiar with a current item or trend in the news.

Be Ready to Personalize the LiveTalk for your Current Students

If you are having an introductory LiveTalk, take the time to learn about your students before the session. If they’ve introduced themselves online (e.g., in a VoiceThread or Discussion Forum), have a general idea of the professions and interests they represent. In most cases it is not appropriate to single out a student for their perspective representing an entire group, however it is usually fine to ask an opinion or experience of something
in more general terms, e.g. “for anyone who’s been involved in clinical trials” or “for those who have completed residencies”, etc. This personal familiarity can be advantageous and appropriate later in the term as well.

If you are assigning preparatory work, make certain to purposefully tie it to the LiveTalk session. The students need to know that their preparation was worth the time; i.e., that they prepared for a reason.

*Communicate your Expectations of the Students*

Encourage students to join the LiveTalk synchronously but remind them that the recording will be available through CoursePlus within a day of the LiveTalk. (Attendance – both synchronous and viewing of archived recordings – is available via the “LiveTalk Attendance” report in Faculty Tools.) Communicate whether students should let you know in advance if they can’t attend the live session.

If students are *expected* to use their microphones, encourage the students log into the LiveTalk at least 15 minutes early so they can run the Audio Test inside Zoom and get their microphones checked. (With Zoom, participants are encouraged also to share their video. Students can check their video settings also.) If you have student presentations during the LiveTalk, please require that each student presenter practice using their microphone – including muting their microphone – before the LiveTalk. Ideally, the student presenters will be able to practice with someone from the faculty team. If there are issues, the multimedia technician is there to assist.

If students are expected to engage in written dialogue during the LiveTalk, encourage them to use the Zoom Chat window (during). After the LiveTalk they can continue the discussion in the CoursePlus Discussion Forum. If you want students to use their microphones to participate in oral dialogue, depending on the class size you may want to encourage them to raise their hand (in a larger class) or simply go ahead and allow microphone privileges for all participants (in a class with fewer than 20). Please remain culturally responsive and understand that not all students are comfortable or willing to speak during a session.

*In CoursePlus, Provide any Details for the LiveTalk & Upload Slides*

Up to 1 week before the scheduled LiveTalk, visit the CoursePlus LiveTalk page to provide the details and upload any slides or PDFs that will be used. These documents should help guide the direction of your session. Even if there are no slides for a LiveTalk, this page still should be visited to confirm details such as remote presenters, student presentations, Wacom tablet request, etc.

*A Note on Slides*

More than one file can be uploaded for the LiveTalk. The files will be opened and displayed directly on the studio computers’ desktops. PowerPoint files that are *properly formatted* (i.e., universally accessible) usually have very few issues when they are displayed on different computers. Try to avoid PowerPoints with macros or other add-ins to keep away from unexpected mishaps. PDF files are also an option, though they may require a bit of adjustment (for example, selecting the appropriate zoom level) when displayed during the LiveTalk.

If students are submitting slides, the faculty team is responsible for uploading these into CoursePlus. Try and upload student slides no less than 24 hours before a LiveTalk and make certain to check them before the LiveTalk. *Please encourage students to use Microsoft PowerPoint or PDFs for any shared slides.*
Type up any Polls that you want to Use During the LiveTalk

While you can add Polls in the studio right before the session, it is also a good idea to have them typed up in a Word or other document that you can bring with you (or download) to the LiveTalk. It will be easier to copy and paste the questions and students’ possible choices as opposed to typing them up by hand, taking up precious time and possibly having typographical and grammatical errors.

Instruct Remote Faculty/Guest Presenters how to Access the LiveTalk

Remote faculty and guest presenters must have a (free or paid) Zoom account and have downloaded Zoom on the computer they’ll be using. In addition, they should check for Zoom updates, test their audio (USB headsets are highly recommended), and check their video settings. If the faculty or guest presenter does not have access to CoursePlus, ask the Instructional Designer for the direct URL in advance of the LiveTalk.

If there are connection issues or the remote presenter is not able to use Zoom, you can call the main studio number (410-955-5903) for assistance. For anyone who requires telephone access for this or any reason: you must have a good connection (preferably a landline) and, ideally, simultaneous access to the Zoom session to read the participant questions and comments in the chat pod. After making the call to the Multimedia main studio number, you will be given the assigned studio’s direct phone number that you can call immediately after; no less than ten minutes before the session.

During the LiveTalk

Have Someone from the Faculty Team on a Personal Laptop

During the LiveTalk, while there are several monitors and keyboards in the studio it is still just a single host computer. If a TA or second faculty member has their personal laptop in the studio with them and is promoted to co-host, they can connect to the LiveTalk through CoursePlus to monitor the student (participants) chat and, if necessary, visit any Breakout Rooms, grant Microphone Rights, upload files to distribute through the Zoom chat feature and/or CoursePlus, etc.

Engage Students During the LiveTalk

Be familiar with and call upon your students’ own expertise. This is possible only if you get to know their personal interests and anecdotes prior to the LiveTalk. Prompt the students so their experiences outside of class add to the LiveTalk’s discussion. This personalizes their learning, making the topic relatable and it increases the chance that your objectives are met.

During your conversation and presentation, draw upon any recent assignments including LiveTalk preparation (readings, lecture reviews, etc.). This can also include a formal or informal formative assessment of their knowledge in the course to this point. Direct the LiveTalk’s conversation so your objective is met. Consider the LiveTalk in conjunction with the other student activities. Students should see a clear rationale for both attending the LiveTalk and doing any work that is intended to support it.

Switch between your Gallery and Active Speaker video layout of Zoom, according to how your LiveTalk is proceeding to get a sense of how students – who control their own views – might be experiencing the session. Remember that sharing video is an important opportunity for building community in the LiveTalk!

If there is a second faculty team member monitoring the Chat pod, and the chat is largely silent or inactive, consider typing directly into the Chat some key points that are stated by the presenter separate from the text.
on a slide that is being displayed. It's important to keep on topic, especially with a limited window of time. You want to keep or draw back the attention of any of the participants that may have strayed away from the session by reiterating important points. It is OK to type in a prompt such as, “Are there any questions before we proceed?” even if this has just been asked by the presenter.

If students have already been told they will be allowed to use their microphones and have checked their audio ahead of the LiveTalk's start, in larger classes encourage students to Raise their Hands so they can be called upon to use their microphones. Make sure students mute their microphone when they are not contributing to the discussion. (Remember that as host, you have the option of muting or disabling the participant’s microphone.)

Make certain the presenter addresses aloud questions and points that are typed by students in the Chat. It may not be possible to address everything; in this case, consider prioritizing or searching for common themes. If the chat is quite active and there is a second faculty team member monitoring it, these questions & points or themes can be found later by downloading the Chat text file which will be automatically saved for the main meeting room.

Make certain to build in time to address questions or common themes students had stated (ahead of the LiveTalk) that they want to see addressed in the LiveTalk. These questions or themes should have been shared via email or in a Discussion Forum post and reviewed by faculty ahead of the LiveTalk. Oftentimes, these are addressed in the natural course of the conversation. But it is helpful to leave a few minutes to review these at the end. If there is not enough time, remember the conversation can continue inside of CoursePlus in the Discussion Forum.

Manage the Meeting using the Built-in Tools

Familiarize yourself with the basics of Hosting (managing) the Meeting inside Zoom (your LiveTalk platform) well in advance of your scheduled LiveTalk. Consider using Polls, Breakout Rooms, the Zoom Whiteboard, and more to meet the objectives of your LiveTalk.

Remember that you are Being Recorded

The LiveTalk session is recorded and the microphones in our studios are very sensitive. Please take this into consideration and avoid any inappropriate or unnecessary conversation while you are in the studios. If a student is asking a question that deserves a private answer, consider waiting until after the LiveTalk or sending a private chat response.

Students/Remote Participants

Before the LiveTalk

Check for any Pre-LiveTalk Instructions or Other Communications

Often there is a Discussion Forum category devoted to the LiveTalk where students can post questions or share relevant topics or current events related to the LiveTalk. If there isn’t a Discussion Forum category, but you want to suggest a topic or ask a question to be addressed during the session, email the faculty team.

There may be an assigned reading or suggestion for lecture review in advance of the session. Make sure to set aside the time to complete this preparation before the scheduled session.
Check Zoom Installation, Audio, and Video Sources on the Device that will be Used During the LiveTalk

If you’ve never used Zoom before, make sure to create a (free or paid) Zoom account prior to the LiveTalk. Your account name should match your preferred name inside CoursePlus. Download the software (computer) or app (mobile device) and check for updates.

Make sure your connection speed is fast enough by joining the Zoom test meeting. Take the time to do this quick connection test on the computer or mobile device that will be used during the LiveTalk!

In addition, make sure your audio headset is working properly. If you are asked to participate with a microphone, a USB-connected headset which is connected to your computer before you enter the LiveTalk room works best. (External speakers often lead to a frustrating echo.) To make sure your audio is set up correctly inside the LiveTalk, after you've logged into the session, please test your Audio.

Check your video inside Zoom. This check can include making sure your camera is capturing your face in a good light and at a good angle. (Avoid sitting in a dim room in front of a window letting in a lot of light! And don’t hesitate to prop up your laptop so you aren’t looking “down” at the camera.)

Student Presentations should be Submitted Directly to the Faculty Team

Slide presentations should be edited and saved inside of Microsoft PowerPoint using best practices. All files should be submitted to the faculty team adhering to any instructions including deadlines, file format (PDFs may be accepted in addition to PowerPoint), and other guidelines such as submitting via CoursePlus Drop Box or via Email.

During the LiveTalk

Arrive on Time

Sign into Zoom first and then, via CoursePlus, connect to the LiveTalk at least 10 minutes prior the scheduled start time. This helps everyone move through the session cohesively and steadily. (NOTE: For LiveTalks, you cannot sign in with your JHED ID. You must have a Zoom account! Your attendance is recorded when you connect to the LiveTalk from the link inside CoursePlus.)

If you are presenting, arrive to the LiveTalk at least 15 minutes prior to the start time to test your microphone and video.

Avoid Side Conversations

Side conversations – Chat or otherwise – can be very distracting so they should be conducted via private messages. However, it is fine for participants to converse a little before the session gets formally underway, or when the session ends.

Observe Key Rules of Netiquette

Everyone should be courteous, respect other people's time, present his or her best side, share expert knowledge, and think first to share well-framed questions and comments.

Avoid Opening a Separate Screen, Video, or VOIP (voice) Sharing Application

While you are logged into Zoom during the LiveTalk, there is a heavy demand on your computer's resources and your Internet bandwidth. In addition, the audio configuration of most computers is such that speakers and
microphones (i.e., headsets) like to only be associated with one application at a time. Opening a separate audio or streaming application (such as Google Hangouts) will likely have a detrimental impact on the class session and should be avoided.

*If you are Granted Microphone Rights, Turn on Microphone to Speak and Mute when Done*

Prior to the LiveTalk, you should have run the Audio and Video checks. If you are granted microphone privileges, you still may have to turn ON your microphone. When you aren’t speaking, mute your microphone (clicking on the microphone icon on the toolbar again) to reduce feedback and extraneous noise.

*You’re Encouraged to Use your Video*

If you are comfortable sharing your video and are in a place free of distractions, check your video to make sure the other attendees can clearly see your face. Avoid sitting in a dim room in front of a window letting in a lot of light; don’t hesitate to prop up your laptop so you aren’t looking “down” at the camera. And while you’re encouraged to use your video, please stop your video if you are doing other tasks, such as looking at your phone or eating. Even if you’re only viewing the “Active Speaker”, others may be viewing the Gallery View of all participants depending on their selected video layout.

Switch between your **Gallery and Active Speaker video layout of Zoom**, according to how the LiveTalk is proceeding to get a sense of how others – everyone controls their own view – might be experiencing the session. Remember that sharing video is an important opportunity for building community in the LiveTalk!