Tips for Using BlueJeans for Teaching and Learning

This handout is for instructors who are leading classes and want to use BlueJeans to conduct live sessions with students. The handout covers tips for using BlueJeans for teaching and learning.

Questions to Consider BEFORE using BlueJeans

What technology / access to the Internet is available to you / your students?

- What device(s) do students have? If someone is only able to access learning through a phone or iPad – this situation will impact the functionality they have when using BlueJeans (e.g., they might not be able to see chat, access a web browser etc. while using BlueJeans).
- Bandwidth could be an issue; poor bandwidth means lower quality video / audio during 'live' sessions.
- Students may be sharing bandwidth / devices with multiple others in their living space; for some it might be challenging finding a quiet space to engage in live interactions.

What are the best media available to meet the learning outcomes for your course?

- Does the learning outcome require group work, interaction in pairs, interaction with the instructor etc., or can it be achieved through individuals engaging with material / performing tasks, on their own or with peers in an 'offline' environment (e.g., a discussion board on Blackboard Learn)?

Does a particular learning outcome require 'live' interaction?

- If 'yes,' BlueJeans may be a good solution.
- If 'no,' consider other options: YouTube videos, handouts / notes shared by email or on Blackboard Learn, narrated Power Point presentations, shared Google docs, Kaltura recordings with added quizzes etc. Having a Blackboard Learn site for your course is a great option for providing a space for 'non-live' interaction (e.g., discussion boards, wikis, polls, accessing 'static' material for the course for students to review in their own time).

As with any technology, planning to use it requires some practice and a Plan B. At any time, the internet could be less than reliable and cause a well-planned BlueJeans class to be a non-starter or something you must abandon mid-way through. Ensure you build back-up plans with your students if there are challenges with technology (e.g., use the phone number to call in, turn off video, log off and log back in again, move closer to wireless modem, turn off other apps using bandwidth etc.).

Suggestions for Teaching and Learning via BlueJeans

Here is a brief list of possibly ways of using BlueJeans in your classes. If you are teaching a DLU (Unscheduled) class many of these items may be optional for students to attend as regularly scheduled classes are not part of this delivery format.

Orientation and Welcoming Activities

- **Introductions -** Students and faculty meet early in the first week to get to know each other, share some introductory comments, meet each other etc. Use 'gallery view' so students can see most of the class.

- **Share the Agenda for the Class when using BlueJeans**: Put up a nice picture, or thoughtful quote or something related to the content for the class through sharing screen to help set the tone for the class.

- **Ice Breaker/Quick Start Activities:** Use a quick interactive activity at the beginning of a BlueJeans session (e.g.., Jamboard); fun activities; useful things -- annotate features for engagement

- **Temperature check:** Use BlueJeans to do some quick engagements/polling/live screen sharing/activity to ensure students are understanding assignments

- **Introduce Few Things at a Time:** Not to overwhelm students with too much all at once - have them practice a few tools and gradually add other functions to practice

Creating Community and Connection

- **Between the Instructor and Students**: particularly for classes that have not had the opportunity to meet face to face, having 'live' touch points is a way for everyone to get to know each other, build community and connect students every now and then

- **Recording Sessions:** create community between students by providing a link to a recorded lesson or session for those who could not make it, or for those to review on their own

- **Office Hours:** Some students value the chance to have individual opportunities to 'meet' with their instructor to ask questions, discuss concerns, and raise issues that they would prefer not to discuss in a larger group format.

- **Breakout Groups:** Using breakout groups of 4-5 students can help students with engagement, feeling more comfortable and with opportunities to talk through new learning; instructor visits each room throughout the live class or only some groups each day

Applying Learning

- **Team or Group Problem Solving:** students are given resources to read/watch prior to the live class. They are placed in pre-arranged groups and sent to 'breakout rooms' and have a task to discuss a case study, application activity or rich problem that can only be done with the groups. Students use the chat and any other instant messaging while in the breakout room to discuss and arrive at a solution.

- **Group Discussions:** students are sent to breakout rooms to discuss a question or content presented in class. Instructor visits each breakout room to see how students are doing, answer questions etc.

- **Group Times to Collaborate and Practice Presentations:** set up a collection of meeting rooms with long-standing start and end times (e.g., beginning and end of course). Each group uses a meeting room to practice and record their presentation using the moderator code to enter the rooms.

Engaging Learners

- **Presentations:** students take turns presenting slide decks, creations of learning, hosting the live chat etc. with other students giving feedback at the end of the session
- **The "In-Flip":** Tutorial groups in flipped learning environment with small group sessions taking place during the live sessions based on needs
- **Use Web Tools for Engagement:** Use polling software, or collaborative workspaces or interactive websites for students to provide responses and work together

Reviewing Key Concepts and Content

- **Q+A Session:** Host a live question and answer session where students bring a question and an answer to ask the class, students submit questions and answers prior to the session to ensure correct, students answer in teams rotating from one team member to another
- **Tutorials:** host tutorial sessions before the course begins or when it is needed throughout the course to help students with key concepts and drop-in/optional learning experiences to get up to speed
- **Review Sessions**: give students an opportunity to ask questions that might be too complex to ask in an email or a discussion board forum, before a test or exam to help prepare etc.
- **Assessing Understanding**: chatting directly with students sometimes offers a clearer picture of what individuals understand / need more help with. Consider touching base with those students who you know may need some additional 1:1 time or may give you further details about their understandings.
- **Follow Up on Assessment:** After a quiz or an assignment given, use BlueJeans to give an optional summary + recording to share with unavailable students

Assessments

While there are limitations to using 'live' assessments (e.g., bandwidth issues, problems if the Internet or hydro go down etc.), in some cases BlueJeans can be used as an option for assessment.

- **Initial Placement Assessments:** Use BlueJeans to connect with students 1:1 to conduct initial placement assessments or other individual assessments of learning.

- **Group Presentations:** Students share their presentation (slide deck, website, document) to the whole class. If you let them enter the meeting with the moderator passcode they can manage the hands-up feature to answer questions and manage the conversation. They can also use the annotation feature to highlight and illustrate concepts and keep the presentation moving along.

- **Oral Assessments:** Have students sign up for a time and then use the assessment to gauge understanding of a concept / problem where you want to ensure an individual student has fully understood everything needed to achieve a learning outcome for the course.

- **Group Informal Assessments:** Have groups discuss in breakout groups and then come back to large group and share a summary about the lesson or a key concept. Use this to find out how students are doing.

- **Small Group Application and Feedback:** Visit breakout groups and engage with students as they are applying new learning. Ask questions, seek feedback, and give feedback on learning.

- **Support Tests and Exams:** If students are doing a timed exam or undertaking a test at the same time you could have them enable BlueJeans so they could ask a question or seek clarification if required (tell them to turn off speaker volume or everyone will hear the question and get interrupted)