Let’s take a short look and linking to Collaborate and the settings of a Session from inside a Blackboard course.
To ensure that both the instructor and students have convenient access to the Collaborate tool, it is a good idea to create a link to it in the course menu. Start by clicking on the plus-sign icon at the upper left of the course menu. On the menu that pops up, click on “Tool Link.”
On the list of tools that pops up, click on Blackboard Collaborate Ultra. Type “Collaborate” or some other, meaningful name in the name field.
Be sure that the “Available to Users” box is checked, otherwise students won’t be able to see the link. Remember to click the Submit button.
The Collaborate link will appear at the bottom of the Course Menu. You can drag and drop the link to any position on the menu you prefer. Click on the word Collaborate (or other name you gave the link) to start the Collaborate tool.
After the Collaborate tool starts up in the course, you’ll see a screen that looks something like this. Let’s look at some of the parts of this in more detail.
The three stacked bars are an icon that toggles an expanded menu on and off.
The Course Room is an open-ended Collaborate Session that is automatically part of every course. Students can enter the course room at any time to interact with other students, unless the instructor locks the session.
The Create Session button allows a new session to be scheduled.
If there are any sessions already created in the course, they’ll be listed below the Create Session button.
Clicking on the menu icon -- the three stacked bars -- expands the menu options. From this point is possible to list either sessions or recordings.
If there are recordings previously created in the course, clicking on the Recordings link in the expanded menu will produce a list of them.
Note that when looking at the list of sessions, a small icon that looks like a circle containing three dots appears to the right of each session. Clicking on the icon brings up a menu of options applying to that particular session.
Finding Session Options

Some of the most important options for a session are Join Session and Edit Settings. To begin participating in a session, or to preload files for sharing later, click on Join Session. To change the settings of a session, click on Edit Settings.
Whether creating a new session or editing the settings of an existing session, you’ll have a chance to change options like these. Note that settings for Guest Access only apply to guests from outside the course, not to students. The small down-arrow to the right of Event Details and Session Settings bring up additional options that should be specified.
In the Event Details section, you can set start and end times for the session. Click on repeat session a series of sessions with similar schedules. The Early Entry setting specified how soon before the scheduled start of a session students can join in. It's usually set to something like 10 or 15 minutes ahead. On this screen you can also add a description, such as the topic or theme for the session.
Under Session Settings you can specify the Default Attendee Role. Under most circumstances, this should be set to Participant. That means students will join the session as consumers of your presentation. You can designate one or another student as a Presenter once inside the session. If you think that later you might want to download a recording of the session, you MUST click the “Allow recording Downloads” box BEFORE the recording begins. If you want students to be able to share audio or video without being specifically designated as a presenter, you can check those boxes here.