**What is Synchronous Teaching?**

Synchronous learning means that the instructor and the students in the course engage with the course content and each other at the same time, but from different locations. The instructor interacts with students in real time by means of tools such as Zoom to livestream audio, video, and presentations, hold live classes or meetings, use the chat feature to engage in live conversations, and more. If you choose to share course content synchronously you should record it for later viewing.[[1]](#footnote-1)

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| Advantages | Disadvantages |
| * Students can ask questions and get answers in real-time, as the session is proceeding.
* The instructor can gauge the students understanding in real-time, and adjust the session accordingly.
* Students feel an increased sense of the instructor actually “being there”.
* Instructors can facilitate workshop-style classes and run breakout group activities
* Live chats or office hours allow for real-time interaction, like a conversation.
* Synchronous sessions provide a schedule to help students who struggle with task initiation to stay on track
 | * Some students might not be able to participate at the required time due to technical or scheduling problems. They may be in different time zones.
* AODA (accessibility) requirements may be more difficult to meet - for example, providing captioning for a live presentation.
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<https://uwaterloo.ca/keep-learning/strategies-remote-teaching/synchronous-vs-asynchronous-online-learning>

Recommended steps when designing and teaching a synchronous class:

* Be sure that you are signed into your HU Zoom account and not the personal version of Zoom (the are not connected!)
* Define correct room for students on Zoom (create and send out calendar invites beforehand).
* As soon as you begin, ask the students about clarity in voice and video from your end, and check theirs too.
* Make sure to start the recording (even better if you’ve adjusted Zoom settings so that recording is enabled automatically).
* Start with ice-breakers to increase students’ comfort level.
* Clearly state the objective of the session and the benefit to the students from it (in the spirit of transparency while teaching).
* Keep checking for questions in the chat box from time to time (in case your students are hesitant to ask via audio). Also, keep an eye out for the ‘raised hands’. If you find it too distracting to do this, appoint one of the students to watch the chat box and alert you if someone wants to talk or if there’s a raised hand.
* Include interactive activities in the session (such as breakout groups or polls) to gauge student participation.
* Seek feedback on the session from the students.
* You may want to save and post the transcript of the chat from the session.
* End the recording.
* Provide the link of the recorded lecture to students at a specified location within your Canvas course modules.
* Web link to the recording should be available in your Canvas course modules.
* Synchronous lectures may be used to gauge that students are watching the asynchronous videos.
1. Synchronous and Asynchronous Online Learning. 13 July 2020, uwaterloo.ca/keep-learning/strategies-remote-teaching/synchronous-vs-asynchronous-online-learning. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)