Virtual Tutoring with Canvas Conferences and Big Blue Button

Virtual tutoring is very similar to using Skype or FaceTime to have a 'video phone call'; but in this case, you'll be using software built in to Canvas which will allow you to document and even record your tutoring session.

There are several steps to follow before, during, and after your virtual tutoring session and the steps below are divided into three sections to walk you through everything you need to know.

However, before you get started, it's critical that you use a desktop or laptop computer which has a functioning webcam and microphone as well as a stable, high-speed internet connection. If you don't have any of these things, or you're unsure, please contact the ITS helpdesk for support.

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Part 1: Before You Begin Your Tutoring Session

Now that you're sure you have a working webcam and microphone, the next steps will have you go into Canvas and create a new "Conference" using a software app available via Canvas called Big Blue Button.

Go to the Conferences Page of the Tutors Course in Canvas:

1. Using the Google Chrome browser, log in to Canvas (https://canvas.utexas.edu/).
2. Navigate to the **Tutors** course.
3. Click **Conferences** in the left-hand navigation menu.
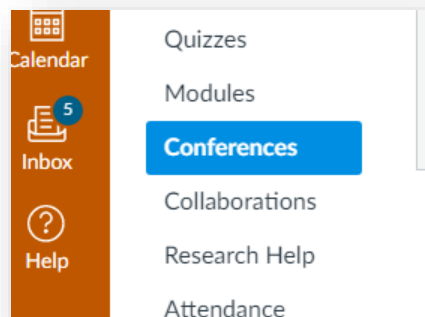
Create a New Conference and invite the student:

1. Click the **+Conference** button in the upper right-hand corner.
2. Type in the **Name** of the Conference (note: this should include your name and the date of the tutoring session).
3. Make sure that BigBlueButton is selected in the **Type** dropdown menu.

4. **Duration** will likely be 60 minutes but can be changed to suit your needs.
5. Check the box to **Enable recording for this conference**.
6. In the **Description** field, be sure to enter your name and UT EID as well as the name and UT EID of the student(s) you're tutoring. Also, be sure to include the date and time of the session as well as any other details of the session such as the topic(s) covered.
7. Finally, be sure to UNCHECK the box that says Invite All Course Members. Then, check the box next to the name of the student you'll be tutoring.
8. Click Update.

When you click Update and finish creating your conference (tutoring session), the student(s) you checked previously will receive an automatic email invitation notifying them that the conference has been created. This email invitation also includes a link to get into the session.

When you're ready to begin your tutoring session, click Start.

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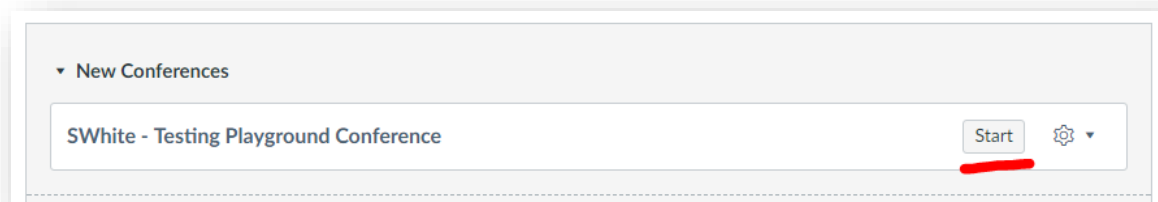
Part 2: During Your Tutoring Session

Getting your virtual tutoring session up and running does take a few steps. What follows should help you (and the student(s) you're tutoring) get through those steps quickly and easily.

When you click Start to begin your tutoring session, the BigBlueButton software should open automatically. Depending on your computer's settings, you may be prompted to enable Adobe Flash Player. If so, click Yes.
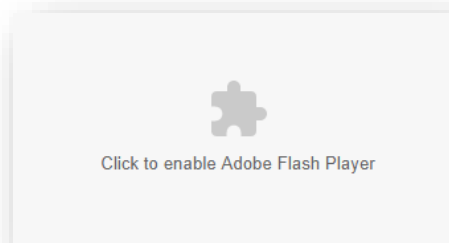
The BigBlueButton page opens automatically. The next step is that the software will ask you if you wish to only listen to the conference or if you wish to use your microphone as well. Click Microphone.
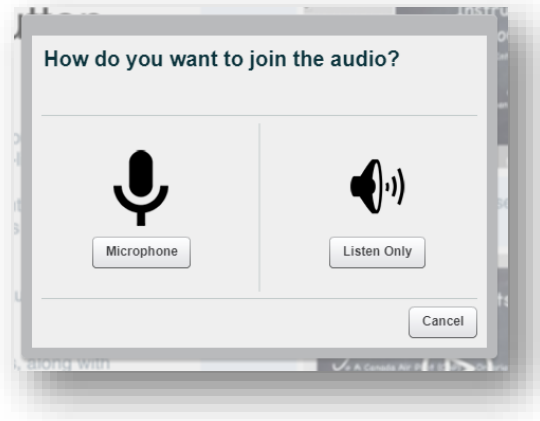

Next, you will most likely be prompted by your Web browser (Chrome) to give permission toBigBlueButton to use your microphone. Click Allow.
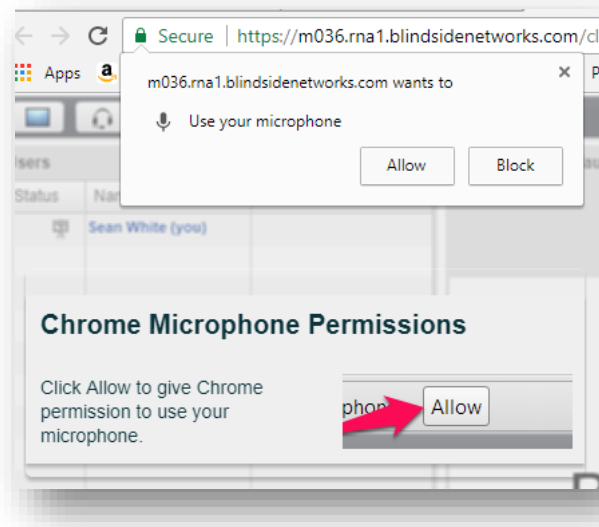
Next, you'll be prompted to perform an audio test which ensures that your computer's microphone and speakers (or your headphones) are working properly. Follow the on-screen instructions for the audio test.
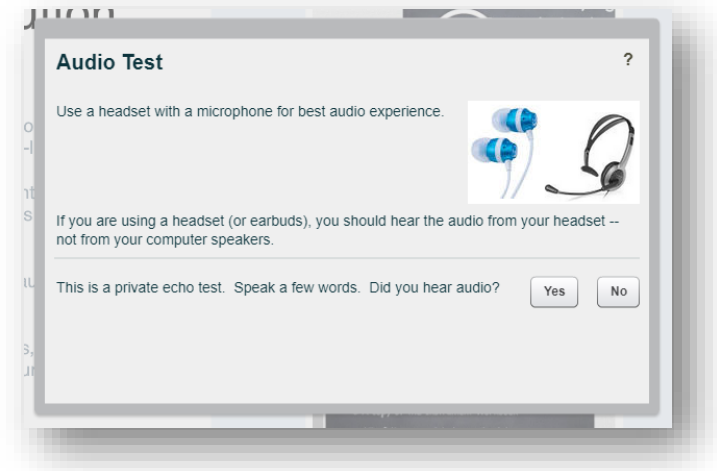
Since you checked the box to enable video recording when you created this session, you'll see a notification on screen that you can record the meeting by clicking the record button in the upper-left-hand side of the screen.
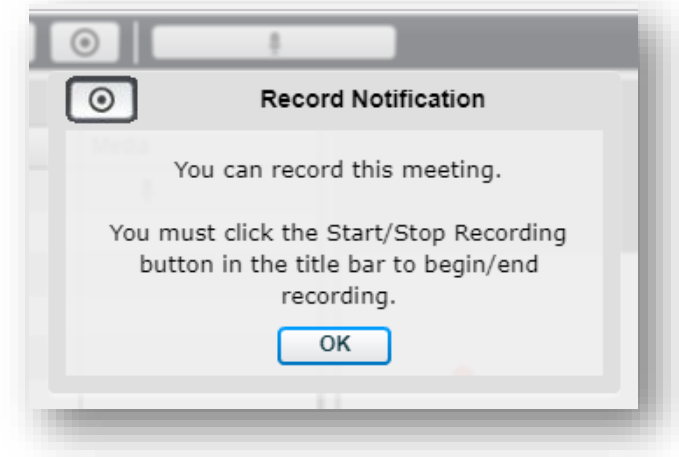

Now, you're ready to really get started.

First, you need to turn on your webcam. To do this, click the **Share Your Webcam** icon in the upper left. Note: if you don't see the button right away, hover over the icons in the upper left and the text explanation for each will appear.

When you click Share your Webcam the Webcam Settings window opens. Follow the on-screen instructions and click **Start Sharing**.

By default, the webcam image for you and the student you're tutoring appears in the lower left-hand corner.
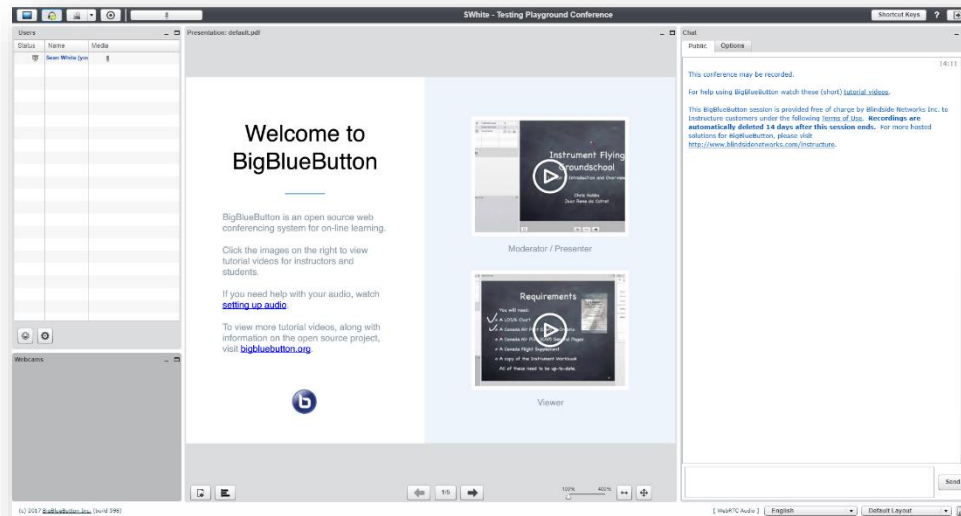
You can change the size of the webcam display, or anything else on the screen, by clicking and dragging each box to the size of your choice.

However, you can also use the pre-determined layouts that may suit you better. To see those, click the Default Layout dropdown menu in the lower right-hand corner and select any other option to see what it's like. Most likely, you will want to choose Webcam Meeting, Video Chat, or Presentation Meeting.

Now, it's time to start recording.

Once you and the student have both logged in and can see and hear each other via the webcam interface, begin recording your tutoring session.

Click the **Start Recording** icon in the upper left-hand corner. Then, click **Yes** to confirm.

Troubleshooting

Please note that the student you're tutoring will have to go through most of these same steps to get into this tutoring session and they may run into technical issues somewhere along the way.

Unfortunately, computers don't always do what we'd like them to do...

In cases where you (or the student) run into trouble, you can use the chat box on the left side of the screen to communicate with the student to help resolve audio or video issues, etc.

In the event that the student can't even access BigBlueButton, it's likely that they need to either install or update Adobe Flash Player on their computer. If this is the case, you can send them the following hyperlink either via Chat or email: https://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/

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Part 3: After Your Tutoring Session

Once your virtual tutoring session is completed, there are still a few additional steps you'll need to follow before you're really finished.

1. First, stop recording the session by clicking the Record button in the top left-hand corner.
2. Next, click the Log Out button in the upper right-hand corner.
3. Finally, click Yes to confirm that you wish to log out.

Logging out will close BigBlueButton and return you to the homepage of the Tutoring course in Canvas.

In a separate tab of your Web browser, the Conferences page in Canvas should still be open. Click on that tab and you'll see that Canvas still shows your virtual tutoring session as "In Progress". To end the session, click the **End** button as seen below. Then, click **Ok** to confirm.
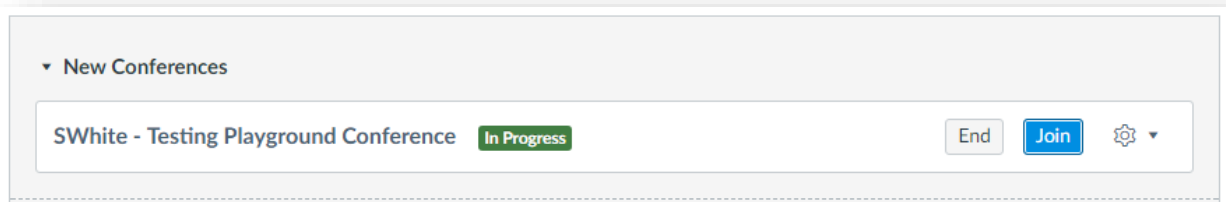
View the Video of Your Session

The recording of your virtual tutoring session is not immediately available within Canvas. However, shortly after the end of the session, you will receive an email notification from BigBlueButton that your video is now available.

Once you receive that email notification, return to the Conferences page and click the name of the conference you just completed. This expands the additional information section displaying a link to the video recording of your session.

Click the small icon (as seen below) to view the video recording.

Download the Video

Once you begin playing the video recording, you can click the Expand icon in the lower right-hand corner to increase the size of the video. This also displays the Download button. Click download and save a copy of the video to your computer so that you can upload it to Canvas.

Upload the Video to Canvas

Now that you've downloaded a copy of the video, return to the Canvas Tutors course and navigate to the Files section of that course.

In the Files section, find and click on the folder named Virtual Tutoring Sessions. Next, click the Upload button in the upper right-hand corner of the screen.

Be sure to rename the file you're uploading and include the date and your UT EID.