

Should you require your students to turn on their Zoom cameras?



PROS

Showing faces:

- Creates a sense of [connection and accountability](#).
- Fosters [community](#) and enhances [presence](#).
- Is required to build [engagement and trust](#).
- Simulates in-person instruction. [Students have to show their faces in class](#).
- Makes it easy to [identify students by name](#) especially in large-enrollment classes.
- Gallery view or the “[Brady Bunch view](#)” makes everyone visible to each other at the same time. May help to break perceived power differential.

CONS

Consider:

- The [digital equity gap](#) for example [limited bandwidth, internet access, and no camera on older laptops](#).
- Invasion of [privacy](#). Students can see other students’ faces all the time.
- [Self-consciousness](#) is also an issue.
- The stimulation of [staring into faces at close range can be exhausting](#).
- The element of [video overshooting](#); students do not want to show their [surroundings](#).
- Concerns about [FERPA-protected information](#).

ADVICE

Please consider the following recommendations:

- [Establish expectations](#) for turning on cameras early on, and explain why.
- Set [norms](#) for synchronous meetings and the use of video camera.
- Turning video cameras on should not be mandatory.
- Have short conferences to have face-to-face with students. Encourage, but do not insist on the use of video camera for discussions, [virtual office hours, and consultations](#).
- You may ask students to make themselves visible if they are asking/responding to a question; otherwise, use chat.
- In larger classes, some professors tell students to turn their cameras off during lectures.