

# Using Zoom tools to engage students in online classrooms

Educators are increasingly using Zoom as a teaching tool in online learning. This document presents practical suggestions for taking an active learning approach to using zoom. This is grounded in evidence that getting students DOING within the learning experience is a factor in student success (Kilgo, Ezell Sheets, & Pascarella, 2015).

## The problem

The online environment presents a challenge for student engagement as part of their learning. Although StudyDesk is designed to facilitate information, communication and interaction, in the context of learning, the third element (interaction) is a challenge in many learning environments.

## The solution

Embedding synchronous (educator and students participating together at the same time) Zoom rooms, and using Zoom tools, can substantially increase student interactivity and engagement.

Going beyond the basics of Zoom can practically and easily enhance the student learning experience. Notably, some students cannot attend synchronous sessions (due to work, sport, time zones and other factors), and it is therefore important to record the synchronous sessions and post them for all students.

Zoom is a cloud-based, video communication platform. It includes online meeting tools, which can act as a virtual classroom, and offer video, audio, messaging, and screen sharing. Zoom tools provide useful features to engage students in active learning as part of an online tutorial.

## Benefits

- » Helps students apply and consolidate knowledge
- » Facilitates social learning via online communication and interaction with the teacher and with other students, thus enabling student retention and success (Rienties & Toeteneel, 2016; Weidlich & Bastiaens, 2017)
- » Allows the teacher to check student learning progress, and lesson effectiveness.

## Zoom tools

The following is a summary of Zoom meeting tools you can use to facilitate active student learning. Please see the *links* to how-to videos provided by the vendor for each of these tools.

- » **Annotation tools** are available whenever you or a student share a screen or application in a Zoom meeting, so you can highlight and annotate PowerPoints, websites, images or whatever you are sharing with participants.

- » **Polling** allows you to test student interpretation and recall of ideas, concepts or problems; it is also a useful tool for informally surveying student preferences, or evaluating aspects of the course.
- » **Break-out rooms** can be used to split larger online student groups, and for online, collaborative, small-group activities.
- » **Participants tab** enables you apply a snap poll, or elicit spontaneous non-verbal feedback in response to a question or suggestion. Students can give respond yes/no, or thumbs up/down to a question, and raise their hand. Responses are visible to the host in the participant list. The host can also control (mute) microphones and videos of participants.

## Considerations

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- » It is important to provide an overview of the session process to students, and orient them to the tools and their use. Explicitly stating communication protocols is also suggested. For example, direct students to raise their hands to ask questions, speak one-at-a-time and set their microphone to mute when not speaking.
- » Prepare tools and functions in advance, so that the process is smoother during the session.
- » Have a play with the Zoom meeting features in advance so that the process of the session runs more smoothly.
- » Ensure that your personal account settings, and sometimes advanced settings, allow you to maximise your use of the tools.

For help with implementing Zoom tools in your course, contact [OALT@usq.edu.au](mailto:OALT@usq.edu.au)

## Links

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From Zoom help centre:

**Sharing your screen:** <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362153-Sharing-your-screen>

**Using annotation tools on a shared screen or whiteboard:** <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/115005706806-Using-annotation-tools-on-a-shared-screen-or-whiteboard>

**Getting started with Breakout Rooms:** <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206476093-Getting-Started-with-Breakout-Rooms>

**Polling for meetings:** <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/213756303-Polling-for-Meetings>

**Non-verbal feedback [participants tab] during meetings:** <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/115001286183-Nonverbal-Feedback-During-Meetings>

## References

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- Kilgo, C. A., Ezell Sheets, J. K., & Pasarella, E. T. (2015). The link between high-impact practices and student learning: some longitudinal evidence. *Higher Education*, 69(4), 509-525. doi:10.1007/s10734-014-9788-z
- Rienties, B., & Toetnel, L. (2016). The impact of learning design on student behaviour, satisfaction and performance: A cross-institutional comparison across 151 modules. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 60, 333-341. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2016.02.074
- Weidlich, J., & Bastiaens, T. J. (2017). Explaining social presence and the quality of online learning with the SIPS model. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 72, 479-487. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2017.03.016

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