

Ways to Be More Inclusive in Your Zoom Teaching/Meetings

Before a session, ask participants to consider the settings for their names. In face-to-face meetings, the first courtesy typically extended is introductions. Apply this lesson to Zoom: Invite participants to edit their name on display and choose how they would like to be addressed. Suggest they consider adding a preferred pronoun and/or a pronunciation guide, too.

Establish the rules of engagement for Zoom meetups. Be mindful that the video component may not be possible because of internet access or some may feel uncomfortable sharing their workspace at home. As always, we advocate being transparent about the reasoning behind requests. You might also decide which other aspects of class/meeting culture are important to you — such as keeping audio muted until called upon, use a certain method to ask a question, or indicate in a particular way when they have to leave a session early. Invite participants to suggest a few rules of engagement of their own, since, at this point in the transition to social distancing, they have probably seen both good and bad examples.

Use different ways for participants to "speak up." In Zoom, just as in face-to-face teaching/meetings, there are many ways to hear from people. We're learning in our own campus administrative meetings what number of people starts to feel like "a crowd" on Zoom and when we might be tempted to retreat and shut down. Likewise, the more ways you can allow participants to engage, the better. Besides options such as the click on the hand-raised symbol to speak, you can allow participants to use the chat tool or you could open a live external Q&A. For quick questions — "Can you see my screen?" or "How are you feeling about the information so far?" — just ask everyone for a thumbs up or down.

Consider the way you start. Without structure, the beginning of online meetings can be very awkward. As people join in at different times, consider using those initial minutes to build community. Ask participants to select a virtual background that tells something about them — you could even propose themes: the place you would be if you could snap your fingers and make it happen, the food you are most craving. Another way to begin is to pose a question — "What's one thing that you're grateful for today?" — that participants answer through the chat tool. They can scroll through responses as they get settled.

Be intentional about how you end your Zoom sessions. In face-to-face teaching/meeting, the universal signal that class/meeting is nearly over is that participants start packing up their materials. Find ways to make the closing of your virtual class/meeting more structured and routine. For example, you might end sessions with participants sharing their "muddiest point" in the chat window before they leave, so you know what to go over again in the next Zoom session. Or you could invite participants to hang around after the session if they want to chat more informally.

Break out the [breakout-room tool](#). Consider adding to your repertoire the division of the class/meetings into small groups. Many participants are more likely to join in a small-group discussion than in a large scale one. The tool itself will randomly assign participants to small

groups, but you can change the default timing settings of when they enter and exit the breakout rooms, as well as who is in which groups. Provide clear instructions to explain the prompt. Ask participants to share their names and Zoom locations before beginning the discussion or assignment. Tell them how much time they will have, and how and where to report the results. Groups function more inclusively with more structure, so consider assigning someone (use random criteria, such as "alphabetized starting with first letter of your last name") to report on each group's results once back in the main Zoom meeting.

Lastly, acknowledge that we're all learning together. It's understandable that you may feel frustrated, sad, mad, or any host of other emotions about switching to Zoom (or some other website) from the comfort of campus. This is not what you, participants, or students signed up for this term. Model how remote learning doesn't have to mean exclusion and social isolation. Perhaps now, more than ever, is the best time to reassure students and others.

Adapted from Kelly A. Hogan and Viji Sathay, *8 Ways to Be More Inclusive in Your Zoom Teaching*