Zoom for Virtual Classes – a.k.a. teaching a live/synchronous online class

Summary:

A virtual class (synchronous/real-time online class) is very similar to having a live production. Preparations need to be made for a successful virtual classroom, such as an agenda with timings outlined for instruction, activities, questions and answer, and like a show should be rehearsed before going live. Online teaching also has technical requirements for both the instructor and students with regards to computers/devices, Internet connection/bandwidth speeds, and staying in the scheduled times. Both sides of the connection need to be familiar and comfortable connecting and using the features in Zoom. The meeting time is not the time to troubleshoot audio issues or connection issues. Zoom has the capability and tools to have smooth interactive class sessions which will be reviewed in this document.

Depending on your subject matter, teaching style, and normal classroom activities, a live virtual class may not be the best solution for you, but that is for you to decide. There is another document on using Zoom and other tools for pre-recording lectures for online teaching (asynchronous classes).

If you don’t know how to connect to your CSUSM Pro Zoom account, view the document on setting up your CSUSM Zoom account.

Prerequisites and to this paper*:

- CSUSM Zoom Pro Account
- Computer or Device with microphone and/or webcam
- High-speed internet

*See the document on setting up your CSUSM Zoom account for details.

Objective:

The instructor will be able to successfully have an interactive synchronous online class session.

Goals:

- Being prepared for a successful live virtual class.
- Conduct a virtual class with the same or similar activities you would face-to-face.
- Figuring out what Zoom features work the best to suit your needs.

Preparing

To prepare for a virtual class, you will need to understand what Zoom can and cannot do and some of the limitations. A good way to start is by logging in to Zoom and exploring features and playing around. You will also need to plan the activities. The more comfortable you are the smoother the live session will be.
Exploring

In this section we will explore some Zoom features. In each of the sections any underlined blue text will link to a website or file for more information.

- Participants
- Polling
- Share Screen
- Annotation Tools
- Chat
- Breakout Rooms

Participants

Both the Host (You) and Participants (Students) can see participants. The students can raise their hand to indicate they would like to speak, you will see a message that a hand is raised and if your participant window is open you can visually see it.

The participant window has other non-verbal feedback icons that can be used: yes, no, go faster/slower, thumbs up/down, clap, need a break, and away.

As the host you mute/unmute all participants, mute participants on entry, allow participants to unmute themselves, Play enter/exit chime, Lock meeting, Clear all feedback. You can also remove people from the meeting if they are being disruptive.

Polling

You can setup polls before your meeting, so they are ready to go. To add polls, log in to the Zoom web portal go to meetings and select your meeting. It will open the summary page for the meeting. Scroll down towards the bottom of the page and you will see Poll and Live Streaming. Select Poll and to the right, click on the “Add” button to add a poll.

*Note: There is a limit of 25 polls for a single meeting, but you can have multiple questions in a poll.

Poll types can be single choice or multiple choice, with up to 10 answers per question.

For context there are 3 types of polls: Introductory, Content-Based, and Concluding.

Introductory examples would be icebreakers or sound and video checks.

Content-based examples can be used to assess knowledge/experience levels before presenting a topic, kind of like a pre-test. You could also ask a question about a topic and compare it to a data point.
Concluding polls could be a quick quiz, end of the class survey, or voting.

Face-to-face equivalents would be oral quizzing, clickers, surveys.

**Share Screen Activities**

Sharing a screen allows both the host and participants to share documents, images, web pages, presentations.

To share press the share icon. You can share desktop(s), whiteboard, iphone/ipad via Airplay (wirelessly) iphone/ipad via cable (wired via USB) and by application. Phones and devices can share items from the phone or web, photos, dropbox, google drive, onedrive, screen. Some permissions may need to be setup the first time you share on a computer or device.

In the share window on a computer, you have two additional options at the bottom of the share window, “share computer sound” and “Optimize Screen Share for Video Clip”. These will share your computer sound if you are playing a video, music, or audio file.”

Sharing the desktop will make anything that appears on your desktop viewable to all of the participants. Email, notification popups, IM, etc. Make sure nothing that could be confidential or potentially embarrassing is on your desktop. It is useful if you are switching between multiple windows or applications.

The white board is just a virtual whiteboard and you can use the annotation tools which will be discussed below.

iPad/iPhone can be used to demonstrate a phone application or how to use the phone.

Application share will share an open application. PowerPoint, Web Browser, YouTube, Excel

Students can use it for project presentations as individuals or groups.

All screen shares have access to the annotation tools.

**Annotation Tools**

Annotation tools allow you to draw, point, and collaborate. Some activities could be brainstorming, game activities. You could share a powerpoint slide and have 2 choices and have the students put a check or x next to their choice to select an answer.
There is also a spotlight pointer and drawing tools that can be used to emphasize an area or word on a screen. Similar to using a laser pointer or circling/underlining/highlighting text.

**Chat**

Similar to texting, In Meeting Chat activities can be used for icebreakers and sound checks. You can have the students ask questions via chat. They can also have discussions via direct chat. Use the chat for open ended questions. Students can comment via chat. You can send links or topics for students/groups to research/discuss.

**Breakout Rooms**

Breakout rooms allow you to split your Zoom meeting in up to 50 separate sessions. Participants have full audio, video, and screenshare capabilities. Zoom now allows you to create the Breakout Rooms assignments before your meeting. They have a template .csv file that you can title your rooms, and select what users will be in that group by email address.

The .csv file can be opened in Excel or Google Sheets to edit.

**Managing Breakout Rooms**

**Participating in Breakout Rooms**

Breakout Room Activities: Create teams to brainstorm ideas for a project, research a topic and present after ending the breakout sessions.

Face-to-face equivalent for group work or breakout groups.

**Best Practices to Learn Zoom**

Learn about Zoom features
Find out what the features can do and think of how they can work with your teaching style and use them effectively in a virtual class. The Zoom website is a great resource to find out about features. You can also talk with your peers or academic technology staff about features or adopting processes for online.

Explore Zoom features
Create a Zoom meeting and login to test the features you might want to use in class. See if the features do what you expect them to do. Maybe they do more than you thought. Play around it won’t break.

Participate in a Zoom
Join a meeting as a participant and see Zoom from a student perspective. You can create a meeting and join from another computer/device or with a colleague.

Host a Zoom Meeting
Host your own Zoom meeting to familiarize yourself with the interface and tools. Invite colleagues, family, or friends to test out some features.

Adapting Materials to Use with Zoom

If you have physical items like photos, handouts, videos, those need to be digitized to share in Zoom or online for easy sharing.

Interactions and Activities

Adapt activities to keeps students engaged online. Interactive events should occur every 3-5 minutes. Polling, chat, annotating, etc.

Adjust and Adapt Exercises to Zoom

You will need to transition face-to-face activities to an online activity that keeps the students engaged.

Verbal Quizzes -> Polling
Small Group Work -> Breakout Rooms
Open Ended Questions -> Chat