Blended synchronous learning with Zoom

Using Zoom in your classes to teach students on-campus and online simultaneously can:

- potentially increase the active learning for all students both on and off campus
- provide access for off-campus students to contribute through collaborative authoring, like Padlet and whiteboard tasks
- support all students to ask questions via text chat (requires someone to monitor) and low risk participation via Padlet, UQpoll.

This type of teaching requires preparation and the right technology but can be highly effective and rewarding.

Pre-planning using Zoom for synchronous on and off campus learning sessions

Prepare for synchronous/asynchronous (Zoom facilitated) learning sessions

Pedagogy for learning

- Clearly define learning outcomes.
- Design for active learning, consider other tools UQpoll, Padlet, Zoom chat rooms.
- Determine whether to group online with face-to-face students. Benefits include: inclusion, sense of belonging and peer-to-peer learning.
- Utilise general learning and teaching design principles.
- Include reminder slides or prompts to stop for questions.
- Understand delivery of content will be slower via Zoom.

Technology

- Match technologies to lesson requirements. How will Zoom work? What other support will you need? (i.e. extra microphones, speakers, larger screen)
- Setup and test the environment in advance.
- How will the Zoom audio of the face-to-face class be shared with online students?
- How will the Zoom audio of online students be shared with the face-to-face class?
- How will the Zoom video of the face-to-face class be shared with online students? Will the Zoom video be shared (i.e. bandwidth may not be sufficient - only use audio)?
- How will video of online students be shared with the face-to-face class? Will the Zoom video be shared (i.e. bandwidth may not be sufficient - only use audio)?

Setup preparation

- Be highly organised in advance.
- Solicit the right institutional support – you can find support at the school, faculty and ITaLI level.
- Prepare students using communication channels. Consider a run sheet or similar shared with students. Share the UQ Zoom URL or schedule via your Learn.UQ Course Site. Share a simple Zoom troubleshooting sheet with students. Have students test their connection prior to the session and post reflection on Blackboard.

- Prepare yourself. Practise using the technology with course team, tutors or colleagues.

Making it work! Process factors

Pedagogy process factors

- Encourage regular student contribution. Set up rules and expectations (e.g. one at a time, raise online hand, etc.)

- Distribute attention between online and face-to-face students.

- Identify the focus of learning and discussion and make this clear to students. Hint: this can be a worksheet, a Powerpoint interleaved with activities.

- Avoid duplication of explanations across the groups, ensure that individuals speak to the whole group rather than fragmenting the conversation, use Zoom breakout rooms if you wish to break into groups.

- Draw upon existing pedagogical knowledge such as what works and in what circumstances (e.g. icebreakers, team building exercises, shared problem solving, challenging questions, peer to peer learning across online and on campus students).

- Be flexible, adaptive and composed. We suggest having two facilitators or co-opting students to provide support by monitoring chat room and technology issues.

Technology process factors

- Know how to use (and troubleshoot) the technologies.

- Appropriately utilise audio-visual modalities.

- Ensure students have correct permissions, advise students how to use the technology and provide pre-session checklist to students. Suggest to students to post when they are set up and enabled.

- Use devices to facilitate visual input if required.

Setup process factors

- Start lessons at least 10mins early for technology testing for students and troubleshooting. Again suggest either two facilitators or co-opting students to support the process. If you select the option "Allow participants to join before host" anyone can join early to do the testing without the meeting being started by the host.

- Apply tactics to work with text chat contributions, utilising students to assist, Hint: Zoom chat can be downloaded and questions/answers posted later on Blackboard.

- Login to a second computer (to see student view), you can only have one active login to Zoom at any one time on a desktop or laptop, you can log into the meeting via the Zoom app on a mobile device without it logging you out of the desktop version.

- Seek teaching assistance where possible and desirable. Hint: an extra facilitator may not be feasible, however, if on and off campus students are encouraged to partner, then a sense of shared responsibility for text chat, student interaction and technological challenges.

Adapted from:

Bower, M., Kennedy, G., Dalgarno, B., Lee, M. J., & Kenney, J. (2014). Blended synchronous learning: A handbook for educators: Office for Learning and Teaching, Department of Education.