



30 Strategies to Boost Engagement Via ZOOM

Based on *Engaging Learners through Zoom*

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WAYS TO USE POLLS

Polls provide an immediate way to engage – they give students and teachers a chance to get real-time feedback. Use them at the beginning, middle, or end of any class to survey your students.

- 1. Icebreaker Polls** – As students enter class, ask a get-to-know-you type question.
- 2. Starter Polls** – Engage students immediately in the learning by asking them about their prior knowledge, a reading they did for class, or by making a prediction about the content of the day's lesson.
- 3. Reflection Polls** – After learning, ask students to share implications, connections, or applications in the poll.
- 4. Comprehension Polls** – Give a simple ungraded assessment to gauge the students' understanding of a concept.
- 5. Practice Polls** – Have students practice alone, in pairs, or teams and then select an answer from poll options.

WAYS TO USE THE CHAT

Like polls, the chat provides an opportunity for 100% participation at once. Plus, the chat allows students to interact with and respond to each other as well.

- 6. Class Break Chats** – To prevent Zoom fatigue and isolation, let students connect socially in the chat at times.
- 7. Instructor Question Chats** – Set up the controls so students can send questions privately to the teacher.
- 8. Pair Chats** – The teacher asks a question and then students “discuss” it in pairs by sending private chat messages to each other. This is one way to do a typical “think-pair-share” activity.
- 9. Reporting Chats** – Use the chat after a breakout activity for certain “spokespeople” to report out.
- 10. Feedback Chats** – Put students in pairs or trios and have them use the private chat function to give each other feedback on an assignment.
- 11. Practice Quiz Chats** – Have students create questions based on class material. Then assign pairs and have them use the private chat to take turns quizzing, answering, and commenting on each other's responses.
- 12. Whole Group Chats** – In addition to encouraging students to share their ideas via the chat, give them several minutes to read each other's ideas in the chat. Then have them comment on one idea that interests them either in the chat or privately with the person who wrote that idea.

COMBATING ZOOM FATIGUE

- 13. Poll about Zoom Fatigue** – Give students a poll about how much they are currently experiencing Zoom fatigue as a way to check in and acknowledge Zoom fatigue.
- 14. 20-20-20 Method** – The American Association of Optometry says it helps to turn away from your screen and look at an object 20 feet away for 20 seconds, every 20 minutes. Set a timer for your class.
- 15. Ergonomic Fixes** – Educate your students about the proper way to sit – screen at eye level, keyboard at elbow level, feet flat on the ground – so they experience less physical fatigue and pain.
- 16. Energizers** – Give students breaks to turn off their video to stretch, shake, do jumping jacks, walk around the room, or have a dance party!
- 17. Don't Overload Students** – Technology and worrying about one's appearance increases students' already overworked cognitive load. Help them focus on one activity at a time rather than multi-tasking.
- 18. Model Best Practices** – Model the methods mentioned above and call them out while you're doing them.

WAYS TO USE BREAKOUT ROOMS

Breakout rooms provide opportunities for more in-depth discussion, thinking, and interactions among students.

- 19. Icebreakers** – For deeper interaction than a poll, have students share three things they would bring to a stranded island, play Two Truths and a Lie, or do another icebreaker activity.
- 20. Collaborative Quizzes** – For formative retrieval practice, assign students to groups and either attach a pdf to the chat with a practice quiz or a link to an app-based quiz (Kahoot!, Socrative, etc.) Have students collaboratively discuss questions before submitting them.
- 21. Observer Trios** – Put 3 students in each breakout room. One will serve as the “observer” while the other two engage in a learning activity. After the learning activity, the observer provides feedback on the explanation of ideas or other skills. The teacher can broadcast a message into the breakout rooms when it’s time to rotate so another student can serve as the “observer.”
- 22. Read-Arounds or Talk-Arounds** – Provide a reading, and in breakout rooms have students each take a turn reading aloud or take turns each sharing a response to the reading.
- 23. Jigsaw Teams** – Give each student a number from 1 to 4. Next, tell them they will become an “expert” on one part of a handout. In the main session, ask all of the Expert 1s to read handout 1, and Expert 2s to read handout 2, etc. For the first breakout, have “Expert Group Meetings” with all of those who did the same reading to review the material. Next, give everyone time to do solo reflection to outline what they’ve learned and how they plan to teach it to others. Finally, hold a second breakout group with one expert from each group (1, 2, 3, and 4) and have students teach each other the material they know.
- 24. Topic Rooms** – For a discussion, the teacher assigns a different topic to each breakout room. Students get to choose which topic they would like to take a deeper dive into. This promotes deeper critical thinking.

WAYS TO USE THE MAIN SESSION ROOM

Even in the Main Session Room, you can actively engage all students at once. The poll and chat ideas above all help to make the class more interactive in the Main Room. In addition, more ideas are below:

- 25. Video Guest** – It’s easy to bring guests into your class via Zoom since they don’t need to travel to get there.
- 26. Whiteboard Activities** – Zoom has shared whiteboards allowing any and all students to annotate a shared document. Just like inviting a student up to the board, you can have a student write, draw, or solve a problem on the whiteboard in front of the class. Students can also use the different annotation tools (Arrows, Question Marks, Check Marks, Hearts, and Xs) to mark up a shared document in response to the teacher’s question.
- 27. One-Minute Paper** – Students write on paper or their devices for this quickwrite activity as a way to analyze, synthesize, reflect, give feedback or other purposes. It allows all students to think and write at once.
- 28. Learning Stations** – In advance, the teacher plans 10 minutes’ worth of learning activities for each station and organizes these in different folders in the class management system. The teacher introduces the assignments lets students know what they need to do in the Main Session in between stations – such as sharing a question, a takeaway, or an answer in the chat with you or in a larger class discussion.
- 29. Scoring Clusters** – The teacher prepares a 1-page reading and attaches it to the chat. Students do the reading, score their response (1. Strongly Agree, 2. Partially Agree, or 3. Strongly Disagree), write an explanation of their score, and then share perspectives in the Main Room.
- 30. Why, How, What If?** – The teacher provides a mini-lesson and then students are asked to come up with questions (Why, How, and What-If Questions) that they post in the chat for others to respond to in order to deepen their thinking.