# The Yesod guide to online teaching using Zoom

**Introduction**

Online teaching has pros and cons, and while it will never rival the potential for connection and relationship building available in a bricks and mortar classroom setting, there are clearly tremendous advantages to it, such as accessibility to students in remote locations and expert teachers from around the world. It is important to realise remote teaching using online platforms has a unique skill set that needs to be mastered. This guide will explore some of the basic skills necessary, with a specific view to using Zoom as the online video conference platform for your teaching.

**General Tips**

Presentation:
Just as in a bricks and mortar classroom, how you look on the screen of your students is important and sets the tone for the class. Start up Zoom early to get a preview of the following:
- Camera angle: make sure your head takes up the majority of the screen
- Background: make it look professional and not distracting. Books are great. A mess is not. At the very least a blank wall works.
- Lighting: make sure there is enough of it, but not too much.
- Personal presentation: choose your clothing for the message you would like to project (at least from the waist up. Waist down you are on your own!) and check your hair is doing what you would like it to do.

Sound quality:
Rarely will a laptop's inbuilt microphone provide good enough sound quality (and a desktop computer does not have an internal microphone). It is vital that the sound quality from the instructor is good. Use of headset with a microphone (with USB connection) is highly recommended and can be cheaply purchased.
It is also worthwhile recommending to your students that they also have headsets with a microphone (but not essential).

Time keeping:
- The instructor must be online at least five minutes before the session is due to start to allow participants who wish to log on early to access the session.
- Arriving early allows some informal relationship building with those students who also arrive early. Building an informal rapport with students in an online forum is a challenge (and should be a priority), and arriving early to shoot the breeze is a good strategy to address this.
- Sessions should start and finish on time (even if not all participants have logged on). It is not fair to go over the advertised timings of the session, as participants may have scheduled their day around this session.

Source Sheet:
This can be in a MS Word document or PDF, sent to participants ahead of time, or shared during the session by sharing your screen (see below) or even through sending it via the Chat feature. Powerpoint presentations can also be used to share sources during the session through screen share.
Source sheets should look professional and be clearly presented (quality is slightly impacted when screen sharing is used so this is vital.)

Further resources:
https://www.gend.co/blog/best-practice-tips-for-using-zoom
https://blog.zoom.us/wordpress/2016/02/02/zooms-tips-for-educators-in-remote-learning-environments/


**Maximizing Zoom as an educational platform**

The following section of this guide presents useful features of Zoom as a platform for educators. It assumes you will be using Zoom from your PC/Mac. While using the Zoom mobile app on your phone or tablet is an excellent alternative when you need to join a Zoom session on the go (or as a backup should you experience a tech failure with your computer/wifi) many of these features are not available on the mobile app, and teaching using it is not recommended.

Scheduling Sessions
Although Yesod will always schedule your Zoom sessions for you, it is worth knowing how easy this is to do. Go to https://zoom.us/meeting (log in to Zoom on your computer and click on the meeting link on the left hand side). Schedule a new meeting (pay attention to the time zone you have chosen). This will generate a unique Zoom meeting ID which you can then log in to on the day, and publicize. This meeting will appear under the meeting tab on your Zoom profile, and can be edited at any time. You can also determine your meeting options for your session(s) such as how your participants will be able to join the session. If your class will meet on a number of occasions, you can choose the recurring meeting box and set that up (the meeting ID will remain the same for all sessions). The most efficient way to publicize your classes (and invite people to attend them) is to create a Google/Outlook/Yahoo event from the Zoom meeting link. Once this has been added to your calendar, you can invite participants by adding their email address, and send them messages about the class.

Settings
You can determine several settings for your Zoom meetings here:
https://zoom.us/profile/setting
Setting options include the following:
- Host (you) video on or off when you join a session
- Can participants join session before the host (you)
- Chat feature enabled or not (including private chats or not)
- Sound chime when participants leave/arrive

- Enable extra features such as polling, whiteboard, annotation, non-verbal feedback, breakout rooms (see below)

These settings will be applied to all your Zoom sessions. If you wish to make specific settings for a class, you can do that from the meeting link, found here: https://zoom.us/meeting

## Managing your own Zoom visual

You can mute yourself and stop and start your video whenever you wish (useful if you are disturbed while on a Zoom session). These controls are bottom left hand corner of your Zoom screen.

Make sure your name appears on your video as you wish participants to see it. To rename, right click on your video and select rename.

There are two options for video layout (how you see the participants in the session) – Active Speaker and Gallery. Active speaker will enlarge the video of the person currently speaking, and their video will take up the majority of your screen, and minimize all other videos. When someone else begins to speak, it will switch to their video. Gallery view maintains all participant videos at an equal size. When teaching a class of multiple participants, Gallery View is recommended so you can maintain a connection to everyone in your class.

When someone initiates a screen share (see below) all videos are minimized as the shared screen is enlarged.

## Host Controls

Host controls allow you as the host to control various aspects of the Zoom Meeting, such as managing the participants. You must be signed in to your Zoom account to be the host when you join the session. Your host controls appear at the bottom of your screen, and include Manage Participants, Record, Closed Captioning, and breakout rooms (see below).

Manage participants is where you can find a list of participants, and manage them in the following way:

- Mute participants (mute all or mute individual participants)
- Request that a participant unmutes
- Stop a participant's video
- Request that a participant starts their video
- Rename a participant
- Put a participant on hold
- Give a participant the ability to record locally
- Make a participant host or co-host

You can choose a co-host to share these controls. Do this by clicking on the three dots in the top right hand corner of the video of the person you wish to make co-host.

## Screen Sharing:

You (or any of the other participants) can share their screen. The screen share button is found at the bottom of the Zoom window. When screen share is initiated, a window dialogue box will open with all the options of what programs you have open on your computer that you could share with all other participants. Click the screen you wish to share. If you wish to share a video with sound (for example a Youtube clip) you must click the "share computer sound" on this dialogue box before clicking the blue share button at the bottom of the dialogue box.

When screen share is active, participants can annotate using the annotation tools found at the top of the screen (they will appear when you hover your mouse at the top of your screen). When screen share is initiated, an extra option of "whiteboard" is also offered, which will be a blank white space available for annotation for collaborative working.

Chat Feature
The chat feature can be used during a Zoom session for an additional way to communicate as a group. While private messages can also be sent, which can be useful to send a message you don't want to be publically seen, the most important use for a teacher is to use the chat feature for students to contribute to the conversation at their own leisure, parallel to the verbal conversation. For example, you could ask a question and allow responses to be ongoing during a section of your class, or students can ask clarifying questions for you to address when the moment is right. It is a challenging skill to be able to read and write on the chat while also teaching verbally, and this takes some practice.
The chat conversation can be saved at any point as a text document (by clicking on the save chat in the chat box. The file will be found in your zoom folder on your local hard drive).
If you have messaged a participant privately, the default destination of messages will stay with that person, so be sure to change the destination if you then wish to message the whole group on chat.
Chat can also be used to share files (if this is enabled in Meeting settings in your Zoom profile).

Breakout rooms
Breakout rooms are an excellent resource for small-group work, and chavruta text learning.
The meeting host (you) can choose to split the participants meeting into breakout rooms automatically (randomly) or manually (choosing the groups/chavrutot), send messages to all participants in their breakout rooms, and can jump in and out of each breakout room at any time.
When you press the breakout room button at the bottom of your screen, you will be asked how many break out rooms you would like (which will determine how many participants in each group), and will have the option to choose which participants are grouped together.
You can decide that breakout rooms will close automatically after a predetermined amount of time (a countdown will appear when this is close in each room).
Participants can call you to their breakout room and you will receive a message stating you are being called to a breakout room.

Polling
Polling is another way for you to interact with participants and continue the educational conversation. The polling feature for meetings allows you to create single choice or multiple choice polling questions for your classes. You are be able to launch the poll during the session and gather the responses from your attendees.
The polling questions are created ahead of the session, in the "meeting" that you have created in the meetings section of your profile (https://zoom.us/meeting) and therefore exists only in the unique session with its unique meeting ID. If you have a recurring meeting set with the same ID, the poll you have created will remain available there until you delete it from the meeting settings.

You can launch the poll for your participants at any time during the session, and then close it whenever you decide by clicking "end poll". You will then have the option to share the results of the poll with the participants.

This may be a good activity to start the session with while latecomers enter the session.

Closed Captioning:

Closed captioning allows you or another meeting attendee to add closed captioning (subtitles that appear at the bottom of everyone's screen) in a meeting. This may be very helpful if your students are not native English speakers. However it is unlikely you will be able to type the closed captions yourself while teaching, so it is suggested you arrange with a participant ahead of time for this to happen.

When you initiate Closed Captioning, you will be given the choice to type them yourself, or to assign a participant to type.

Further resources:

https://elearning.uq.edu.au/guides/virtual-classroom/using-zoom-tips

https://zapier.com/blog/zoom-tips/

https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362603-Host-Controls-in-a-Meeting

https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362153-How-Do-I-Share-My-Screen-

https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/115005706806-Annotation-as-a-Viewer

https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/203650445-In-Meeting-Chat

https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206476313-Managing-Video-Breakout-Rooms

https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/213756303-Polling-for-Meetings

https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/207279736-Getting-Started-with-Closed-Captioning