1. **Create a Highly Participative Online Classroom:** Zoom and other video-conferencing technologies are built for dialogue, and your students use them outside the classroom for conversation. Because of this, the most important thing to know about teaching with Zoom is that your students come to class anticipating a conversational learning experience.
2. **Normalize Interrupting:** At the same time, out of respect, most students are hesitant to jump into conversation, not wanting to talk over you or other students. This is compounded by latency, that gap or lag we sometimes experience in video conversations. Hesitancy + Latency can stifle the conversation. So, be persistent to invite your students to talk and push past the concern of interrupting.
3. **Keep All Microphones Live:** Students report that a muted microphone is a major barrier to participating. Instead of muting, make your students responsible to find a quiet place where they will not be uninterrupted.
4. **Rotate between Direct Instruction with Active Learning:** When lecturing, do so in succinct, concentrated talks, alternating between direct instruction and segments active learning.
5. **Leverage Breakouts:** If your class is larger than 12 students, you’ll want to employ breakout rooms to allow your students to meet in small groups. This creates a space for more introverted and reflective learners to converse in a conducive environment and expands the opportunity for all to speak and be heard.
6. **Invest in Group Teambuilding:** Successful learning groups run on trust. Early in your term, provide your groups opportunity to complete low-stakes conversations to get acquainted and develop safety and build trust. Many educators skip this practice, deeming it peripheral to learning. However, teambuilding creates disproportionately positive results in the quality of academic discourse.
7. **Flip your Classroom with Zoom-Preps:** From a student perspective, the primary factor in a successful Zoom class session is that *all students come prepared for the conversation*. Create Zoom-Prep work that integrates course readings, existing assignments, and online video content into the upcoming conversations.
8. **Provided Strong and Clear Leadership:** Students enter this environment apprehensive and perhaps a bit disoriented. To remedy this, be directive, speak to the apprehension, and normalize the initial awkwardness. This will help your students find their bearings. They will feel secure knowing you are there to guide the experience.
9. **Give Your Sessions Structure**: This is especially critical for class sessions lasting more than an hour. The 3-Act Structure is a great place to start. Share your class structure at the beginning of every class. After a few classes, you’ll have created a sense of rhythm. Start simple and add variety in increments.
10. **Access to Materials:** Students will want to download anything you screenshare. Post your presentations and other resources so your learners can take notes and reference materials used in class.
11. **Screenshare:** When screensharing, direct your learners to use the split-view of their screen. This allows them to see your presentation on the left and you and other learners on the right. Closing screenshare frees up space for you and your students to see one another. So, always turn off screenshare when you move into dialogue.
12. **Maximize Your Screen Real Estate:** If you plan to teach with Zoom on a regular basis, consider purchasing a larger monitor. This allows you to better perceive nonverbals and requires less strain on your eyes.
13. **Invest in learning Tech:** The great thing about a Zoom is you can start a meeting at any moment and begin practicing on your own. Practice screenshare and get online with colleagues to practice breakout rooms.