Online teaching

Do's and don'ts - A (dynamic) list of tips from our teachers

Version 21.04.2020

Do's and don'ts from *Fadi Hirzalla*, based on experience with *Zoom* for the course QCA (April 2020):

1. Before the course begins inform the students about the platform you will use, how the students will be asked to join online sessions, and how the used platform works. This was my message to the students for the use of Zoom:
"We will hold the two sessions on Zoom. Please download this platform from https://zoom.us/client/latest/ZoomInstaller.exe, and check if it functions properly on your device as soon as possible.
To join the two sessions please go to: https://zoom.us/j/6713127267
(Meeting ID: 671 312 7267)
*The two sessions start at 11:00, but please check in already at 10:45. If you have trouble joining a session, call me at +31(0)6******** (also possible via Whatsapp)."*

   If you like to know more about Zoom, here you can find some video tutorials:
   https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206618765-Zoom-Video-Tutorials

2. At the start of each session the teacher should explain / remind the students what the general rules of engagement are. Mainly:
   - Everyone should set their audio on mute as much as possible if they are not speaking, to reduce background noise.
   - Everybody should turn on their video if possible for better communication (unless this severely weakens the internet connection).
   - Students should unmute and interrupt the teacher if they want to speak; they need to take the initiative (one of the reasons this is relevant is the fact that the teacher may not always be able to see (all) participants, e.g. when the teacher shares his/her screen, see point 6 below)
   - Students should try to stay online as much as possible, even if there are moments with no direct communication (e.g. during exercises); during longer breaks this is not necessary
   - Students who lose connection with the platform should let the teacher know via email / SMS / Whatsapp (whatever is preferred by the teacher and students) as soon as possible

3. Next to the general rules of engagement (under point 2) give instructions about more specific functions of the platform whenever they are used.

4. One of the more specific uses of a platform could be placing students in breakout sessions (if possible; in Zoom this is possible).
The teacher can place students in a breakout room with 1 or 2 other people to make an exercise more fun and interactive. I generally place students in breakout rooms from the start of an exercise. I ask students to first make an exercise themselves,

but seek for help in the breakout room if needed and share results with each other after they have finished the exercise. Breakout rooms can also be used for brainstorm or discussion assignments.

Teacher can visit the breakout rooms (if possible) to check if everything goes well, and s/he can ask students to contact him/her in case there are questions. In Zoom students can ask the teacher for help from the breakout room using the chat function or by pressing on a help button:

https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/115005769646-Participating-in-breakout-rooms

5. Preferably use a platform (such as Zoom) that allows the teacher to share a screen; you can use that option e.g. so show a PowerPoint.

6. To show a shared screen properly (fully), in most cases the teacher should minimize windows with other people's screens. When there is a question, the teacher may be able (as is the case in Zoom) to temporarily show the person with the question in the shared screen.

7. When the students are placed in breakout rooms, they may not be able to see your shared screen (as is the case in Zoom). If this is the case the teacher can not show for instance details on a PowerPoint slide about how to make an assignment. Instead, the teacher can ask students to make a screen shot of a slide, prepare slides in separate files and share them via the platform during the session (in Zoom this can be done via the chat function, if turned on: https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/209605493-In-Meeting-File-Transfer; https://zoom.us/profile/setting), or send descriptions of assignments via email before or during the session.

8. In case the teacher shares his or her screen, s/he can actively use the cursor to direct the attention of the students on the part (of e.g. a PowerPoint slide) that is discussed.

9. The teacher may not be able to share videos properly (smoothly) via a shared screen. It's better to refer students to where the video can be viewed if possible (e.g. YouTube) on their own PC or laptop, or share the videos before the session via Surfdrive or an other platform and ask the students to have the videos ready (downloaded) during the session.

10. Teaching online is in some respects harder than teaching in class. Sensing who needs help, inspiration or a break, and motivating and connecting with people is all more difficult, possibly leading to quicker exhaustion among both students and teacher. For this reason it's probably better to have relatively short sessions (e.g. 3 hours) instead of daylong workshops.

Do's and don'ts from *Gerben Tuin*, based on experience with *Zoom* for the course Self-presentation: focus, structure, interaction and visualisation (April 2020):

1. Use a proper password.

2. Make sure to look straight into the camera, this enhances the feeling of being connected for the participants.

3. Actively address people with their name when you ask a question. This will motivate them to interact more.

4. Tell the participants which view you want them to use:
   • Speaker view when you're sharing or presenting;
   • Gallery view during discussions.

5. When using slides, use the 'appear' animation. Visual changes keep participants alert.

6. Turn your camera off when you want the group to focus on a document you're sharing.

7. Make sure you sit in front of a neutral background.

8. Interact with the group using exercises; on-screen, on paper, in sets of two or groups in breakout rooms.

9. Alternate between presentations, excercises, discussions, etcetera.

10. Use a maximum of 1 hour for breaks.

11. A session should last no longer than 3 hours.

12. Make sure to share large pieces of information in advance for your group to read or make a video in which you present the material; it's better to keep everything without interaction outside of the online classroom.