

Fun and Learning with Zoom Whiteboards

Looking for ideas for using the whiteboard in Zoom? The whiteboard provides a blank canvas for students to engage with each other and take an intellectual risk with anonymity. It also gives students an opportunity to take a visual break from each other and the instructor during a synchronous session. The Zoom whiteboard is best used as a space for students to engage with each other and course content.

Pedagogically

- When choosing to use the whiteboard, ask yourself:
 - How will using this tool serve to reinforce content or assess learning?
 - How will using the whiteboard foster connections among students?
- Provide clarity about use and prompts: It is important to be transparent with students about the use of any learning activity. Put the use of the whiteboard into context for them.
 - "I am going to display the whiteboard so you can all share which concepts are still unclear to you. This will help me understand what content I need to go over today. I want to remind you that what you write is anonymous (unless you use the arrow). I want to see where there are gaps in understanding so I can help to close them."
- What the zoom whiteboard is not – limitations
 - The zoom whiteboard is NOT ideal for complex problem sets or equations. It can be challenging to use the *draw function* to answer problems, so use the *text function* whenever possible.
 - In a large class the whiteboard can get crowded, and responses of more than a one or two might fill up the board quickly.

Suggested Practices

- In your settings for your Zoom account in tufts.zoom.us, you have options as a host to automatically save whiteboards and chat. Decide whether you want to choose those options before your course begins.
- When you use the whiteboard in class for the first time, explain how to use the tool and give your students a quick practice run so they can play with the annotation option and get comfortable. Once you talk them through how to use the whiteboard and they have practiced a bit, introduce the activity.
- Remember to save the annotated whiteboard to Canvas. The save option can be found by the person sharing their screen at the right end of the annotation toolbar. Annotations are saved by making a screenshot to your computer or by the person who is saving the whiteboard. The whiteboard files can be renamed and [uploaded to Canvas](#).
- The whiteboard can also be accessed by participants through *share screen mode* in breakout rooms, but participants will need to be reminded to save it before returning to the main room.

Virtual Teaching Tip

Structures & strategies for using whiteboards

- Beginning of a class session
 - The whiteboard can be used to facilitate an icebreaker, start a discussion, do a quick formative assessment or serve as a parking lot for sharing concerns or ideas. For example:
 - [Brain Dump](#) (everyone aggregate understandings): Tell students to dump (write) all of their ideas about [content] on the whiteboard.
 - [Chalk Talk](#) (silent collective reflection): During this silent "conversation" students respond to a prompt and then draw lines between ideas they think are connected.
- Middle of a class session
 - The whiteboard can be used to check in with students to see how they are understanding the content or to see how they are feeling. Example prompts:
 - Post on the whiteboard something that is clear to you and an idea or concept about which you are 'muddy' (unclear).
 - Post an analogy. "Teaching is to learning as _____ is to _____."
- End of a class session
 - This activity can be used as an "exit ticket" or a way to help students consolidate learning gains just before the end of class. Example prompts:
 - What is something you know now that you did not know when this class began?
 - What is something you learned from a peer during this session?
 - On the board, share one word that describes how you are feeling at the end of this class.

Debrief in some way

Always reserve a few minutes to debrief the whiteboard activity. Questions to ask during a debrief may include:

- What was it like to do that?
- What did you learn from your peers?
- What themes do you notice?
- Was anything written by a peer that affirmed or validated your thinking or feelings?
- Looking at the whiteboard, do you see any gaps in information that we should talk about?

Technology Support for Whiteboards in Zoom

- [ETS Recorded Trainings](#)
- [Sharing Whiteboards in Zoom](#)
- [ETS's advice on Zoom's limitations](#)
- [Find an upcoming training session](#)
- Email edtech@tufts.edu for 1-1 support

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