



Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning

Making the Most Out of Zoom: Active Learning Engagement in "V" Mode Instruction

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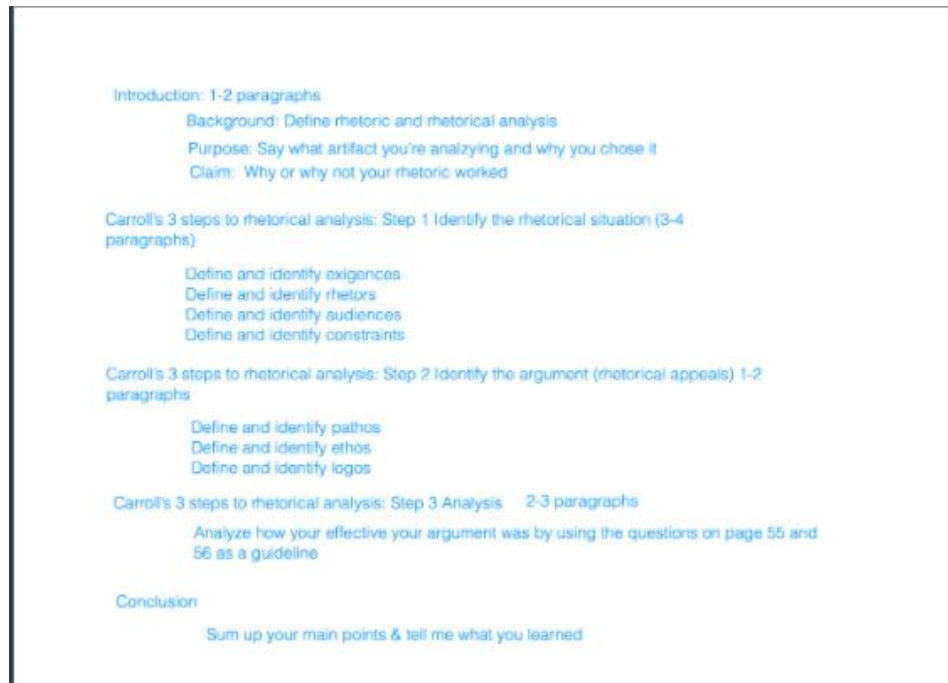
Rationale:

When I first was assigned a "V" mode course, my first question was about how I would make the most out of these Zoom sessions. How could I make them a rewarding learning experience? How could I get students to see their value? The discussion I would like to have in this session will discuss how to make the most of our Zoom, by discussing active learning strategies I've implemented in my Zoom sessions and in the asynchronous time students spend on Canvas.

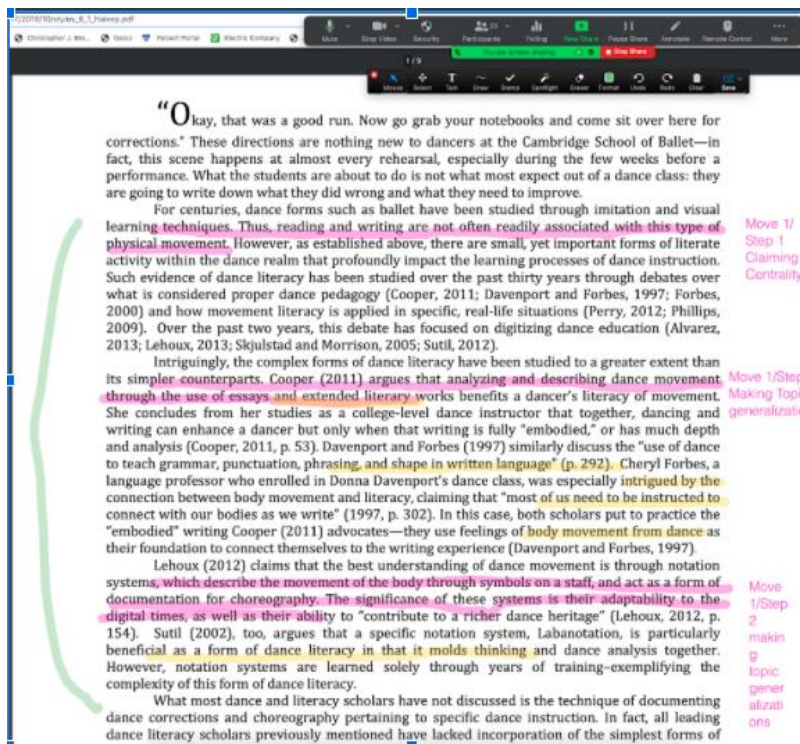
Description:

For this, I'd like to discuss how to use the whiteboard and annotation feature on Zoom, as well as Materia widgets on Canvas to create a comprehensive active learning lesson that is both synchronous and asynchronous. The annotation feature is used to identify moves made in an academic article, the whiteboard is used to create an outline students can take with them. The goal is to show how multiple active learning strategies can work together to make the students see the Zoom and the online content of the course both as valuable and integral to their accomplishment of the course outcomes.

To use the whiteboard feature on Zoom, click "Share Screen" and "Whiteboard". This whiteboard has several features, for example you can write with your mouse or use the text box feature, which I'll focus on here. The text box feature allows for more legible writing and Zoom has the option to change the colors of the text to highlight different features. In my course, I often use the whiteboard to create a collaborative outline of their essays, asking students to explain to me the features of an essay based on examples we've read. Once the outline is finished, you can click "Save" at the top bar and the image will save in your computer's zoom folder. I often click "find in finder" before class ends and upload the image in the chat for students to take with them. The below image shows an example of this activity.



The annotation tool on Zoom is another way to make use of the screenshare feature in a more interactive way. In my course, I have a sample research paper introduction that I share with my students via the “Share Screen” button. Then, using the annotation tool, I ask students to point out the moves the author makes in the introduction. For example, students will identify the author’s research question, which I’ll highlight in pink, or the sources that the author cites in the literature review, which I’ll highlight in yellow. This visual allows students to identify the different moves of the introduction, and see the different length requirements for each section. The annotation tool also has a text box function where I can write comments on the sample paper. The text box font color can also change, so I often correspond the color of the comments to the same color as the highlighted text, so they can see the section I am referring to more easily. Similar to the whiteboard, once the annotations are done, you can click “Save” at the top bar and the image will save in your computer’s zoom folder. I often click “find in finder” before class ends and upload the image in the chat for students to take with them. The below image shows an example of this activity.



While these are just two tools Zoom offers, these particular options don’t require significant prep time or understanding of technological. These alternatives to in-class activities, like a whiteboard or the doc cam, make the Zoom classes feel more like a class and less like watching a recorded lecture. Students seem to participate more in Zoom, using their mic or the chat, when prompted with active learning lessons like the ones described above.

Appraisal:

Student response to these tools have been positive. Students have stated the annotation and whiteboard makes the Zoom sessions easier to follow, rather than me just talking about the ideas. When asked for informal feedback, students specifically noted that the “group discussions help to engage us in the course concepts” and “during the zoom call, the most helpful aspect would be the visual examples provided.” Another use for the whiteboard feature would be for students to use the whiteboard in their own breakout rooms as a reporting back tool, but I haven’t utilized that yet.

References:

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