

ISSUE NO. 21 | JANUARY 2021

SLA Newsletter

The official newsletter for the SLA Community

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Happy New Year!

WRITTEN BY JESS HALL, CHIEF EDITOR

Welcome back to the SLA Newsletter! I hope you have all had a restful and well-deserved break, and have come back feeling refreshed and ready to face the rest of the academic year that lies ahead of us. I want to take this as an opportunity to extend my heartfelt greetings for the season and appreciation for all your accomplishments and achievements last year. I wish you all a very happy and prosperous new year.

This year this scheme is continuing to grow given the digital age we are still in. As you will see from the rest of the content included in the newsletter, one of our Senior SLAs (Gabriel) has launched a social media project for the community to stay well connected during these times.

I look forward to working with you all closely again this year!



SLA Facebook Group Launch

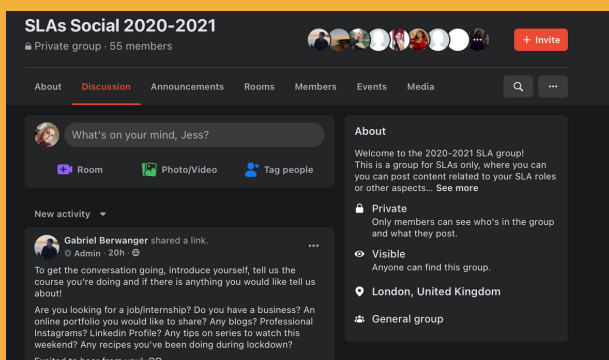
WRITTEN BY SENIOR SLA, GABRIEL BERWANGER

In today's digital world, there's no excuse not to keep in touch. There are more ways to be aware of what's happening with each other, even though you're separated by physical distance. This is now more important than ever as one of the downfalls of COVID is that we all cannot socialise and network in person.

To combat this, we now have a Facebook group for the SLA scheme! All SLAs are invited to join such community. It ensures we can remain tight-knitted and support each other during these times, but also encourage us to learn from each other. There is also the opportunity to self-promote your Instagram/website/portfolio/business/etc., or discuss things not necessarily related to the scheme.

For more information, please read the group description or contact the team at slamdx.social@gmail.com.

I look forward to seeing you all there and creating a community that will be in contact for years to come!



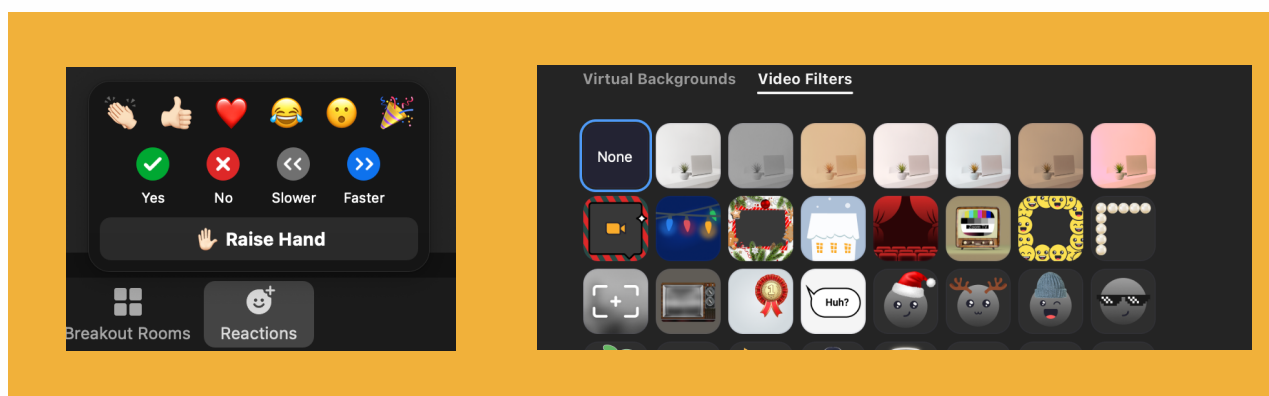
Click [here](#) to join us on the Facebook Group!

New Zoom Features

As some of you may see, Zoom have introduced a new update which allows for more features on top of the pre-existing 'Virtual Backgrounds' that can be utilised by participants in a meeting.

As you know, a large part of the SLA role is encouraging students to connect better on video. However, there are a lot of challenges present when trying to feel connected while working from home. These casual and fun elements can bring us together -- something that has been missing in virtual meetings as people have been reluctant to turn on their cameras. There are now a range of 'Video Filters' present from filters, to lighting effects and ones that can be used on your face.

We want to empower students to feel their best in virtual meetings, express their individuality, and build moments of fun into your day with some new features that uplevel your video game. Some of these can be seen in the screenshot below.



On top of this, Zoom have also introduced new reactions so silence does not have to be any more awkward. There is now reactions like celebrate, laugh, or heart. Just click on the Reactions button and share how you're feeling in the moment. This is also helpful to engage involvement levels.

We would like you to not only implement these methods in your sessions yourselves, but use them to encourage students to participate in your sessions. Please make a point of letting them know of these new features if you can.

If you have any questions about any of the features please drop me an email at: JH1523@live.mdx.ac.uk

Happy Zooming!

Do Not Forget:

- Submit your monthly OU Blog.
- Submit your timesheets weekly and claim your holiday pay.
- SLAs facilitate learning, they do not teach.

Image Credits: Middlesex University