



## 5 reasons to use a whiteboard for online qualitative research

### 1. It avoids Zoom Gloom



Staring at a screen without interaction for some time, can trigger the default state of screen watching without engaging.

In virtual interactions the brain focuses partly on the words being spoken, but is also processing a myriad of additional cues, from the direction in which people facing, if they are fidgeting, adjusting their hair, the tone of voice and rate of speech etc. And with a number of people to focus on it can become quite draining.

Once someone falls into Zoom gloom they feel tired and don't make as much effort to join in again. So it's best avoided altogether. Switching to a visual channel and giving people one thing to focus on is a good antidote.

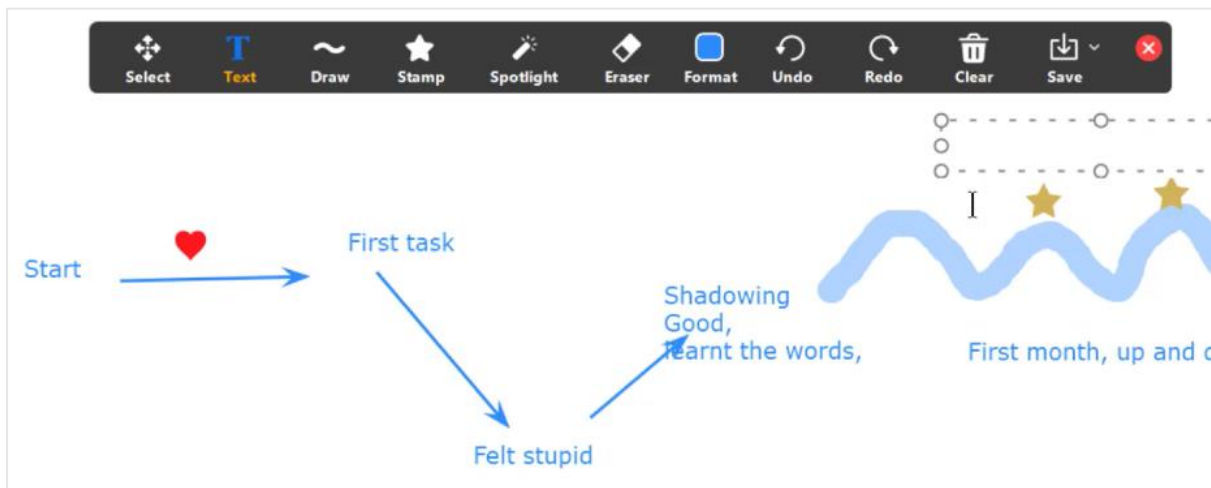
### 2. Stimulus material does what it says on the tin



Many of the subjects discussed in qualitative research are quite abstract. Stimulus material not only stimulates conversation but allows the researcher to define exactly what is meant by 'health' or 'expertise' in the context of the project.

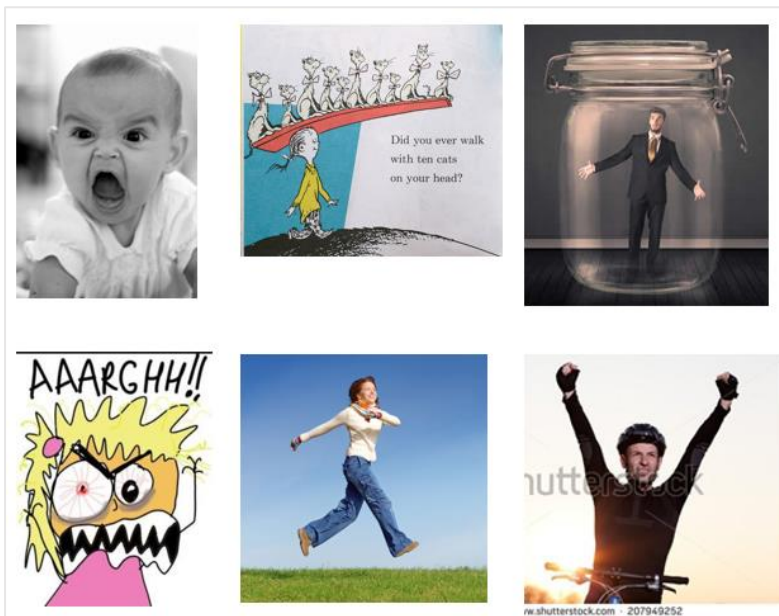
You will find stimulus material will also stimulate interaction and conversation in a naturalistic way, if you allow participants time to listen to each other's comments.

### 3. It's visual thinking (and feeling)



You can track a process, a customer journey, make a list of important factors – get participants to develop their thoughts, re-arrange items, discuss how they felt at various stages. And you end up with a visual that is easy for the client or your team to understand.

### 4. Learn from participant generated imagery



Having the stimulus material come from the world of the participant is a great option.

It circumvents any biases the researcher or client may have had, allows for sharing of different perspectives and probing of the emotions or situations the images refer to.

Note that this is much easier on an insight platform where everyone can upload easily.

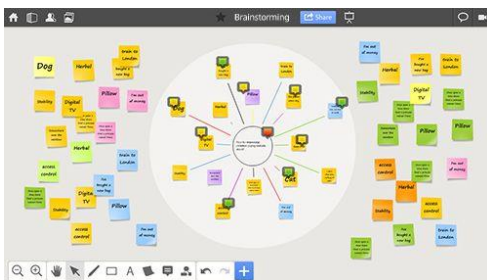
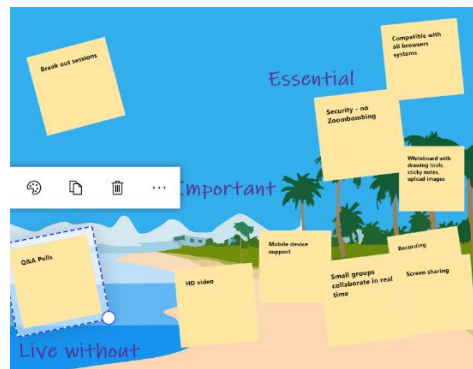
In Zoom you must share a document or website with

the images, and they cannot be easily moved around. They can be annotated using the annotation bar – as in 3 above. (You may need to allow annotation in the settings first.)

You can have participants email their images and then use a free whiteboard like Microsoft to manipulate them and add sticky notes.

## 5. Use projective and creativity techniques

Mapping, grouping, sorting, personification, storytelling, magic shelf, brainstorming,



If you want more features than the ones built into your conferencing software, look at: [Microsoft Whiteboard](#), [Miro](#) and [Mural](#). The Microsoft whiteboard is easy to use, and there is no additional cost. However, if you want to invite collaborators you have to do so through their Microsoft account. The others are 'digital workspaces for visual collaboration', with more features and paid for plans.

If you are looking to run workshops online, [Sessionlab](#) and [Stormz](#) both offer workshop facilitation software.