Metro Toronto
Movement
for **Literacy**

AlphaPlus

The Silver Lining Café

Using Zoom in an Adult LBS Setting

Zoom Video Conferencing

Section 4:

Breakout Rooms

Acknowledgment

MTML would like to thank the many weekly contributors and participants who not only made the Silver Lining Café possible but contributed so much to its success. Contributors included:

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Zoom Video Conferencing Tools

There are many video conferencing platforms being used by LBS agencies such as Google Meet, Skype, WhatsApp, Webex and Zoom. We will only cover the Zoom platform as it's the most commonly used video conferencing tool used by literacy programs, and also by the Silver Linings Café.

In this manual, we provide information on how to use Zoom as well as highlight some of the features that Silver Lining Café participants have told us are useful in making the most of their Zoom meetings with learners. You will find step-by-step instructions and **practitioner tips**.

There are six sections to this Zoom manual:

Section 1: Getting Started: setting up an account, scheduling meeting, sending an invite, joining a meeting
Section 2: In Meeting Controls and Video layouts (Gallery/Speaker views)
Section 3: Whiteboard, Screen Sharing and Annotation Tools
Section 4: Breakout Rooms
Section 5: Polling
Section 6: Preparing for Remote Learning, Building Community & Engaging Learners, Online Resources

For the history of the Silver Lining Café project and outcomes, refer to the companion report: Silver Lining Café Report, September 2020.

Please note that Zoom updates are frequently available. Some features discussed in this manual will not be possible to use without uploading the most recent version of Zoom. Also note that not all of the features are available to use when starting a meeting from the web portal without being logged into the desktop client as well.

The information in this manual is accurate as of December 2020. Features and steps to using them may change with future downloads. Consult support.zoom.us for more resources and information.

Language note: **Click** and **select** are used interchangeably here. This guide is for desktop or laptop users. There is a separate mini manual for mobile device users (phones and tablets).

Happy Zooming!

Susan and Trish (December 2020)

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Section 4

Breakout Rooms

There may be times during a session when you want to facilitate group work, help learners privately, or administer assessments or tests. This is where breakout rooms come in handy. You can set up breakout rooms before your session (when scheduling a meeting), or you can set them up during a meeting. Covered here is setting up breakout rooms **during a meeting**.

During a session, you (or your co-host) can:

- Assign learners randomly or manually to a specific room.
- Rename the breakout room (for example, by subject or LBS/OALCF level).
- Move learners from one room to another before they go into the breakout rooms.
- Let the system automatically put the learners into the assigned breakout rooms.
- Float from room to room to check on learners to make sure they understand the assigned task and to answer any questions.

Note:

Before you can create breakout rooms, you need to enable the feature in your **Zoom account settings** (from the web portal). Once enabled, you or your **co-host(s)** can now set up and initiate breakout rooms, move between rooms to offer support, and close them when finished.
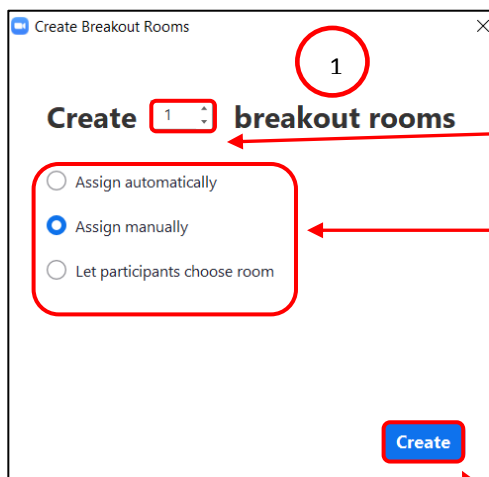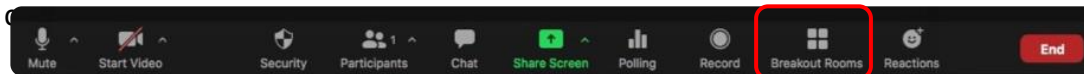
After selecting the breakout room icon, a **Create breakout rooms** window appears.

- Use the **up arrow** to select the number of rooms you want.
- Select room assignment method:

    1. **Assign automatically** – Learners are *randomly distributed* among rooms.
    2. **Assign manually** – *you assign* learners to rooms.
    3. **Let participants choose room** – *learners decide* which room to join. (For example, if you had multiple guest speakers and wanted learners to decide who they would like to listen to.)
- Select **Create**.

Renaming Breakout Rooms
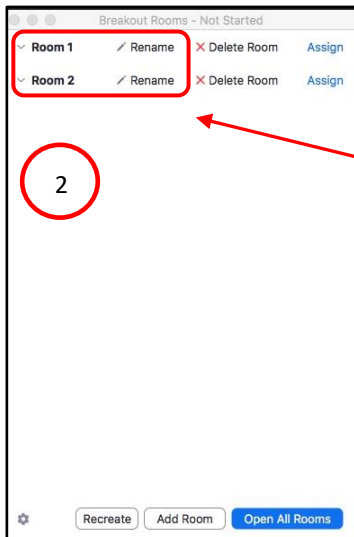
After selecting **Create,** you see this popup window on the left.

- **Hover** your mouse next to the Room. A pencil icon appears.
- Select the pencil icon and **rename** the rooms. You can also delete rooms.
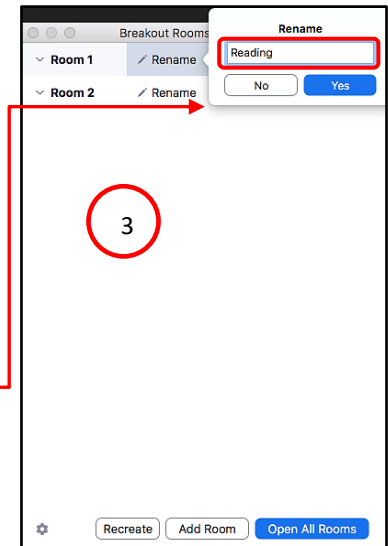
Practitioner Tips:

Zoom has an excellent step-by-step tutorial on breakout rooms, hosted by Ricardo Cervantes, one of their webinar gurus:

All About Breakout Rooms - Zoom

Another good source of videos is universities. Visit YouTube for Case Western Reserve University's tutorial on how to set up and manage breakout rooms at:
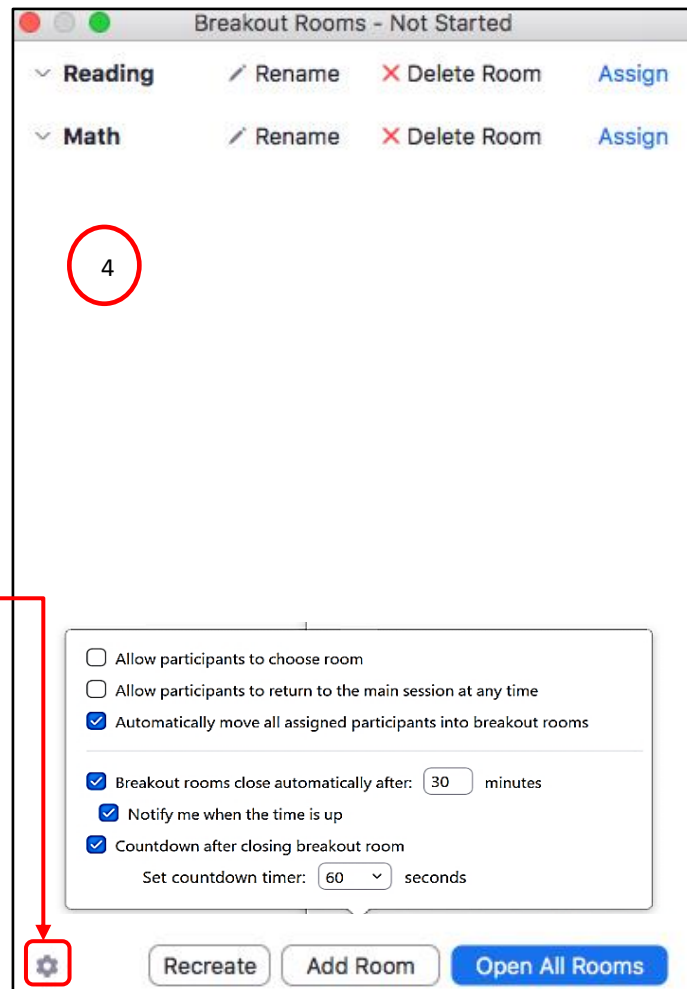
https://youtu.be/BAzipspYhrg

Selecting Breakout Room Options

There are several **options** for breakout rooms, including setting room duration and granting permission to return to the main meeting at any time.

To enable your choices:

- Select the **cog** icon, (**Options** on some computers).

Uncheck **Allow participants to return to the main session**. It's difficult to keep track of where everyone is and you don't want learners inadvertently wandering back to the main room.

Check **Automatically move all assigned participants into breakout rooms.** You will save learners a step. If this isn't selected, learners will be notified to join a breakout room and they have to click on the **join** button.

Check **Notify me when time is up** and **Countdown after closing breakout room.** Then set **countdown timer** (choose between **10/15/30/60/120 seconds**). Give learners time to wrap up an activity. You can close breakout rooms earlier or keep them open longer if you need.
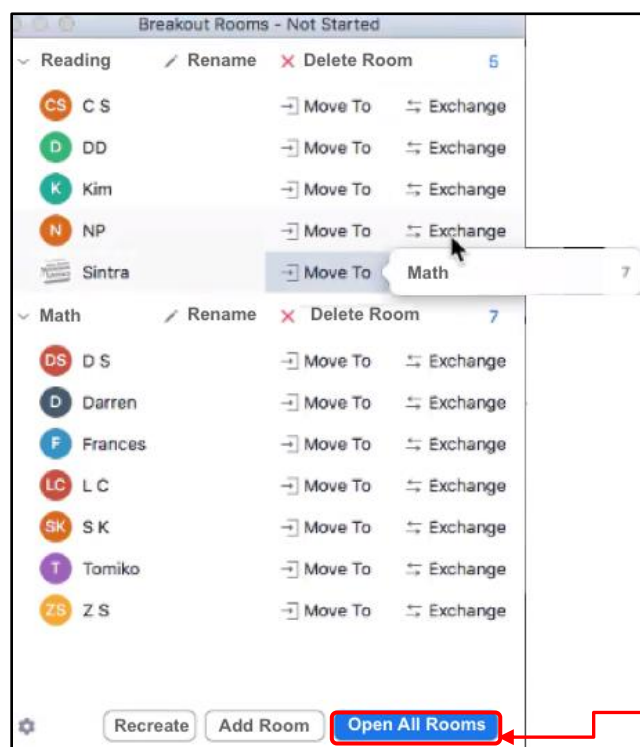
Adding Learners to Breakout Rooms
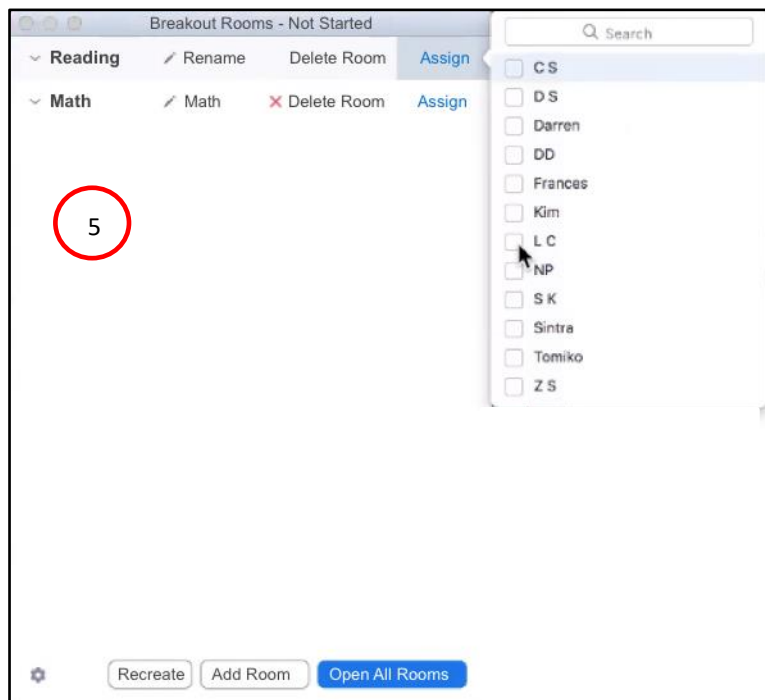
To add learners to a room:

- Select **Assign.**
  (list of learners appears on right.)

- Select learners for the Reading room by checking the box to the left of their names.

- Repeat steps for Room 2 – Math.

Moving Learners to Different Rooms

Before you open breakout rooms:

You can either **move learners** from one room to another or **exchange learners**.

You can also **add rooms**. You might want an extra one (or two) just in case. (e.g. for learners who need extra help or want to work by themselves for a bit).
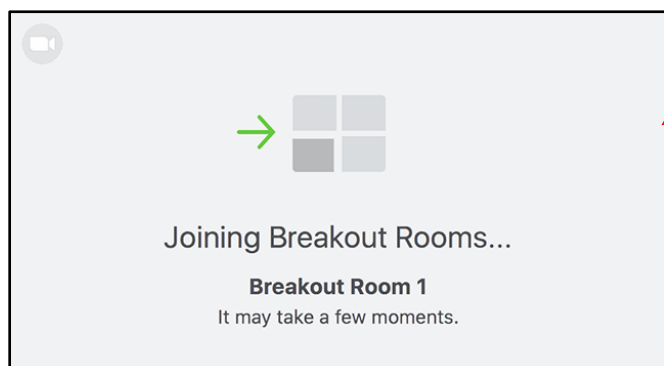
You can't add rooms once you open all rooms without bringing everyone back into the main room and reopening the rooms – this is your last chance.

When you have finalized your room arrangement,
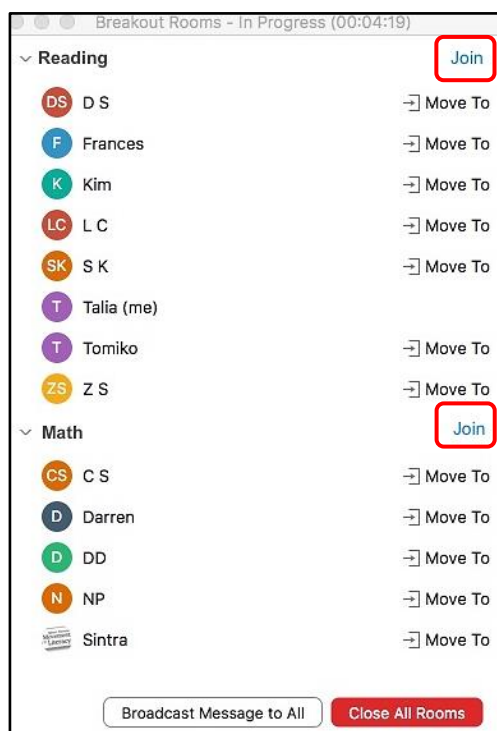
- Select **Open All Rooms**.

Opening Breakout Rooms (Learner View)

This is the screen learners see after you select **Open All Rooms**.

Warn learners that there is a noticeable lag before they enter the rooms. Before opening the rooms, explain the **Ask for Help** and the **Broadcast messages** features. (See section below.)

Moving Between Breakout Rooms (You)

You can move from room to room to monitor learners' progress and offer support.

As host, you will start off in the main meeting. You must join a room to visit (you cannot assign yourself to a room).

You will see a **Join** link next to each breakout room.
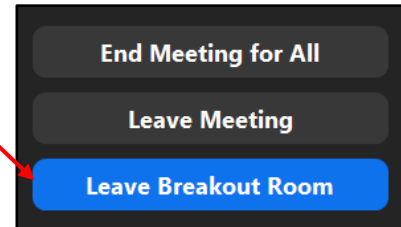
Select **Join**, then click **Yes.**

Moving Between Breakout Rooms (You), Cont.

Breakout rooms have a **Leave Room** link at the bottom right hand side of the screen.

Select **Leave Room** then click **Leave Breakout Room**.

You will be returned to the main room, where you see the screen above again. You can select to join another room by following the same steps as outlined above.

Asking for Help in Breakout Rooms (Learners)
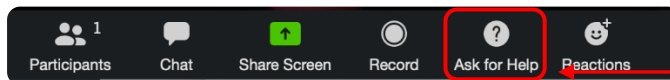
What learners see:

Once inside the breakout room, learners can get your attention by:

Clicking the **Ask for Help** icon on their in-meeting controls bar (you as host don't have this icon).

then,

Selecting **Invite Host**.
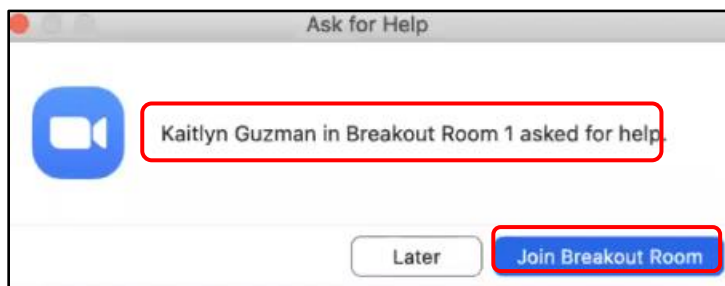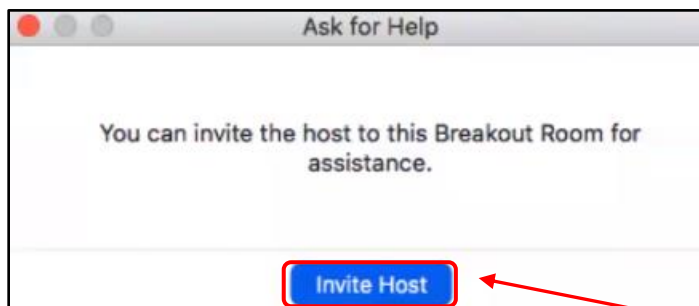
What you (practitioner) see:

As host, you will see a popup window which lets you know who has requested help.

Select **Join Breakout Room**.

Broadcasting Messages to Rooms

You can broadcast a message to all rooms.

Select **Broadcast Message to All**

A popup appears in which you can type your message.

After you have entered your message:

Select **Broadcast**

Note: Learners are not able to respond to broadcast messages.

Note: You can only send short messages.

Closing Breakout Rooms

To close Breakout Rooms, select the red button at the bottom of the screen.

Close All Rooms

A **countdown timer** begins alerting learners that the rooms are closing (based on the time you set when you set up the breakout rooms). (See **Step 4** above.)
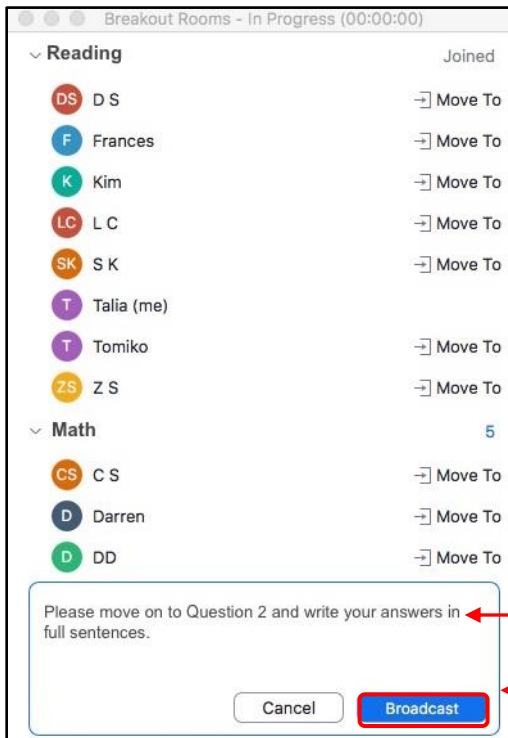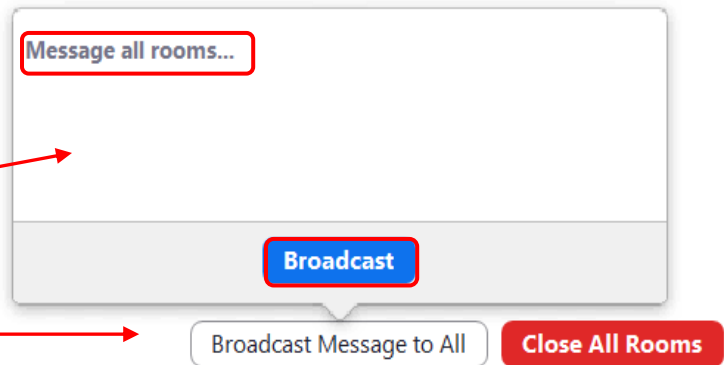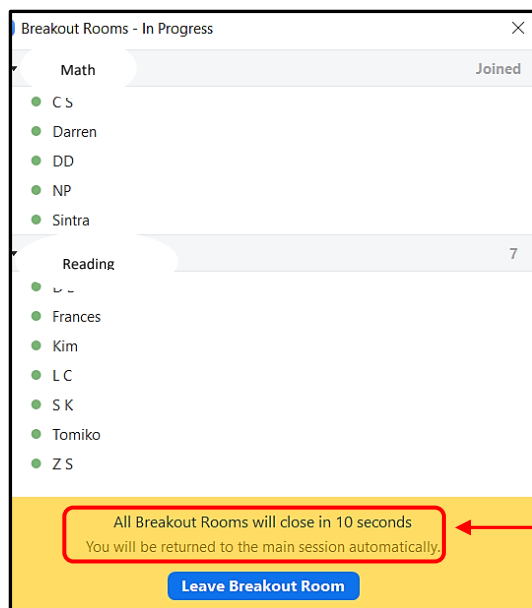
Rooms are automatically closed. Learners can also choose to leave a few seconds early.

Everyone will be automatically moved back to the main meeting. (This prevents people from getting lost or clicking **Leave meeting** by mistake).

Communicating within Breakout Rooms

The **whiteboard** and other **screen shares** function as usual within each breakout room. The **chat** and **reaction button emoji** also function in each room. People in a room can communicate with others in their room the same way they usually do in the main meeting using the methods above. Each room is its own little meeting room.

Communication Limitations of Breakout Rooms

For privacy and consent reasons, **Zoom does not allow information shared in one room to be available to others in a different room**.

This means that you **cannot view a whiteboard** from a breakout room unless you are in that room, **nor can you broadcast the whiteboard from the main room** to the breakout rooms. You also **cannot** pop into a room, **set up a whiteboard and leave**, as your whiteboard/screen share will shut down when you leave the room. The **chat** from one room **will not be visible** in another.

Communicating to All Rooms – Workarounds

Before Opening Breakout Rooms:

- Share **questions and instructions** in the **chat** (simple activity directions).

- **Upload a Word doc/PDF into the chat** with the activity plus instructions. Or, alternatively, email it to learners in advance.

- **Screen share a doc with activity/instructions**. Confirm: is everyone clear on what they are expected to do in the breakout room?

- **Assign learners with Zoom skills** – have at least one learner per room who is good at following directions and is comfortable using the tech you expect them to use.

- **Have learners take a screenshot of instructions** – requires more advanced tech skills.

Once Breakout Rooms are Open:

- **Broadcast messages** to all breakout rooms – You can only send short messages, e.g. *now move to question 3* or *closing rooms in 1 minute - finish up your paragraph*.

- Now that you've assigned a tech-savvy learner to each room, they can **screen share** the activity that you previously emailed and/or uploaded into the chat.

- **Request help** – learners can ask for your help from a room so you can visit them to offer assistance/clarifications, etc.

Preparing Learners for Breakout Rooms

Useful Zoom Skills for Breakout Rooms

These are very useful Zoom skills for learners to be able to do in general:

- Download a file from the chat (instructions/activity).
- Click on the web link in the chat and open a web page.
- Screen share docs, whiteboard and web page (maybe audio/video).
- Annotate others' screen shares (find annotation tools and use them – on regular and mobile devices).
- Post messages to chat.
- Request help.

Learners feel more comfortable if they know what to expect. Tell learners that you're about to open the rooms, and that they will go automatically there (with a bit of a lag).

Cover the following:

- What to expect.
- How to communicate within the room.
- Clear instructions on the breakout room activity.
- How long they'll be there.
- How to ask for help, etc.

To help learners become comfortable working independently in breakout rooms, you may want to start out with simple, short activities. Gradually increase the time and level of complexity of the breakout room activities based on their comfort level and your lesson goals.

Practitioner Tip:

Preparing Learners - Tech Skills

Even though you may be keen to open breakout rooms and get going, make sure you've prepared learners adequately beforehand. Spend time teaching them how to do whatever skills they need to use in advance if you want them to use the skills in a breakout room without you. Set them up for success by having them use the Zoom skills, in the whole group repeatedly till you know they can do it automatically.

Ways to Use Breakout Rooms

Discussion – Rooms discuss questions from activity. Many practitioners use breakouts this way.

Debates – Learners can be grouped by room to prepare pro vs. con arguments on an issue.

Four Corners Activities – Four breakouts with different opinions/stances on an issue. Learners choose their room based on their opinion (a/b/c/d). They can share their opinion via raised hands, a poll, or voting **yes** in the **Participants panel** as you go through each opinion. You can write down their responses on a whiteboard (before you start the rooms) and then rename each room with each of the opinions. Then you assign them to rooms based on who chose which room, or you can use the option where they can choose which room to go to.

Jigsaw Method of Instruction (cooperative learning) – Each group works on a different part of a reading or a problem, then they come together to teach the other groups what they learned.

Mixed-Level Classes – Organize learners by level into breakout rooms. You can then move back and forth between rooms to help learners individually.

Multi-Level Reading – Similar to mixed-level above, but learners at different levels work on the **same story/activity in all rooms**; rooms have different degrees of difficulty and passage length.

This way, everyone can rejoin the main group and discuss the reading together, since they read different versions of the same passage. The **Ministry of Education Ontario** has provided a monograph on using multilevel texts in inclusive classrooms.

There are a few sites that offer multi-level readings (many other sites offer different levels of reading, but the passages are not the same across levels):

    a. Newsela
    b. Breaking News English
    c. How to Learn English in Levels (designed for ESL learners)
    d. ESL Library (also for ESL learners, of course)

Brainstorming Sessions – Learners brainstorm writing or other ideas in groups.

Homework Groups – Either at the beginning of the session or possibly during a homework-only Zoom meeting. Learners can go to breakout rooms with classmates to help one another with their homework. Offering a chance to complete homework during class time could help learners who do not have enough free time to complete their work after class.

Privacy During Lesson – Practitioners share answers to the work with some learners, while other learners, who have not finished the work, can complete the task in a different room.

Volunteer Tutors – Tutors can meet with learners in breakout rooms to provide extra help. Many practitioners regularly include a **Math Room** or a **Reading Room** in their weekly sessions.

Guest speakers – Host a **Career Day**, with representation from different careers, or an event with different education options. (ACE, colleges, school boards, pre-apprenticeship programs).

Breakout Rooms for Assessment and Orientation

Ongoing Assessments

There are several ways LBS programs report using Zoom for assessment purposes (initial intake and to demonstrate learner progress while attending the program.)

You can put a learner in a room to complete a writing/reading or speaking/listening assessment. If you are comfortable with breakout rooms, you can have two or three rooms open into which you move learners from the main room to complete an assessment task.

Learners in the main room could be working on an assignment that they can do independently, like a paragraph writing or reading activity so they can function while you pop into other rooms (or even for a 10 minute absence) while you do an entire reading assessment in another room.

Orientation Sessions

A few LBS programs hold scheduled orientation sessions over Zoom. Prospective learners first participate in an initial screening phone call to determine whether the program is the right fit, given the individual's educational background, stated goal, and commitment to learning. If the results of the call confirm LBS/Upgrading is a viable option, the potential learner is emailed a Zoom invitation with a link to attend an online orientation session. Immediately following the orientation sessions, assessors have the option to take individuals into a breakout room to answer questions specific to the individual and to schedule an assessment appointment which also takes place over Zoom.