The Silver Lining Café

Using Zoom in an Adult LBS Setting

Zoom Video Conferencing

Section 6:

Preparing Learners for Remote Learning

Building Community & Engaging Learners

Online Resources

Acknowledgment

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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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Preparing Learners for Remote Learning

It is important to connect with and prepare learners for remote learning prior to starting formal online lessons together.

Digitally literate learners who can navigate remote learning environments experience higher rates of success.

When you provide a listening ear for learners to share their challenges and questions about remote learning, together you can come up with solutions to learning barriers before they impede the online experience.

There are a number of variables that can affect the success of an online learning environment. Some of these include having adequate support and space at home to set up a learning environment and to participate in online classes.

Another issue stems from a lack of ideal digital equipment. Computers allow for better functionality when interacting with learning materials, but some learners only have mobile phones to access video conferencing and online learning.

To navigate these challenges, you will find resources and activities in the next sections to promote more productive online learning environments. These resources include tips, best practices, and guidelines that can be distributed to learners.

Checklist: Are You Ready for Online Learning?

The Essentials

> You can use this list with learners to discuss readiness for remote learning.

Digital Equipment and Skills

- ☐ **Desktop or laptop computer** (or tablet/phone) with Internet connection
- ☐ **Wi-Fi access**, preferably unlimited
- ☐ **Webcam** for video classes (most computers and all laptops have this built-in)
- ☐ **Speakers and a mic** for video classes (most computers and all laptops have this built-in)
- ☐ **Software and apps** – essentials might include videoconferencing app (e.g. Zoom); Internet browser (e.g. Firefox or Chrome); word processing app (e.g. Microsoft Word or Google Docs); and app to listen to audio files (e.g. iTunes)
  - **Computer Skills:** can install software and apps with tech support from literacy program or family or friends
  - **Troubleshooting Skills:** can troubleshoot minor tech problems or figure out how to access tech support
- ☐ **Current email account**
  - Email Skills: know your password, can open, save, and send attachments
- ☐ **Basic office supplies** – paper, pencils and pens, etc.

Workspace Essentials

- ☐ Quiet place to learn
- ☐ Space where you do not have to pack up often or watch the time
- ☐ Time to learn, free from distractions
- ☐ Planned activities to engage children while you are learning (if you have kids at home)

Nice to Have

- ☐ **Printer or scanner** (for people who don't like to read or work on screens, or those without consistent computer access)
- ☐ **Headset** with headphones and a mic (for people lacking a quiet space for video classes)
- ☐ **Mobile phone** with good, affordable data plan – for those who lack consistent Internet access or access to other devices

Reflective Activities to Prepare for Remote Learning

Here are some reflective planning activities to use before you go online or during the first few video conferencing sessions with learners.

Reflective Planning

Read the box below. Think about it by yourself, or discuss it with another learner.

Think about a time when you felt you could really learn at your best. It does not have to from a time at school. What was it that you learned? It could be something you learned on your own or something a friend or family member taught you.

The following questions can guide your discussion:

- What was it like?
- What made it easy or hard?
- Who supported you as a learner?

Thinking About Your Learning Space

Now read the box below. Think about it on your own, or share ideas with another learner.

If you had the freedom to create your ideal learning place, what would it be like? Make a list, write a poem, draw a picture, build a collage or sculpture of your place to learn.

Ask the following questions:

- How can you create a good learning place in your home?
- What do you need?
- Who can support you and how?
- How will you ask them for their support?

Discussion Exercise for Learners and Practitioners:

Time Management for Online Learning

> This activity can help you and learners to reflect on the importance of time management in remote learning settings. Use the discussion prompts below with learners to understand the challenges learners may be facing. Ultimately, the responses should help practitioners develop solutions for increasing learner engagement.

Discussion Prompts

- What do you think will be fun about remote learning? What do you think will be easier about remote learning? What will be more challenging?

- How much time did you spend on learning when you could go into a bricks-and-mortar classroom? How much time can you spend now? Can you spend the same amount of time, more time, or less time?

- Can you meet in the video classroom at a regular time each day or week?

- How will you keep track of your learning time and when things are due? Will you make a schedule or keep a calendar? Or something else?

- Do you like the social part of learning? Does your class feel like a community? How will you build and maintain a classroom community at a distance? What can you do? What can the instructor do? What can other learners do? What can people in your home do?

- How will you stay motivated when you are working at home? Does working in a classroom with an instructor and other learners help you stay motivated? What do you need to help you stay motivated as a physically distanced learner?

- What do you do when you get stuck when you are trying something new?

- For learners having trouble finding space or time to learn at home, consider asking them to include other household members in their asynchronous learning activities.

- On the LBS and COVID-19 site, https://sites.google.com/alphaplus.ca/covid/home, AlphaPlus has collected some helpful resources in the Resources for Learners section, especially on the Fun page.

Guidelines for Online Learners: Video Conferencing

The following guidelines were adapted from a number of educational resources and conversations with LBS instructors.

Share this with learners before they join your online session and review them together in your first meeting.

Guideline #1: Invitation

Your instructor will send you an email or text link inviting you to the video session. ***Never share the link with anyone outside your group/class***. ***Never post the link on social media feeds*** (*e.g.* Facebook). This is a private invitation.

Guideline #2: Live Video

Remember, you are live on camera. The advantage of video conferencing is that you can take advantage of facial expressions and tone of voice. Remember to think before you respond to make your thoughts and ideas clear and to the video conferencing participants.

Guideline #3: Behaviour

Follow the same rules of behaviour during the session that you would in an in-person class. Video conferencing takes place in real time and the communication is live. ***Respectful interactions are even more important in video conferencing.*** Remember to mute yourself if you need to talk with someone outside of the session.

Guideline #4: Screen Sharing

Most video conferencing platforms let you share your screen. You must not display any inappropriate information or images such as those that promote, threaten or intimidate any person or suggest violence, hatred or discrimination toward other people; use inappropriate and/or abusive language or infringe on the rights of any other person according to the Ministry of Education policies, the Ontario Human Rights Code, or the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Guideline #5: Respect

Be mindful of all video conferencing learners. Consider opinions from other learners in the session. Allow other learners time and opportunities to contribute to the discussion and share their ideas with the group.

Guidelines for Online Learners, Cont.

Guideline #6: Participate

Share your experience and knowledge. Be active during the video conferencing session. The more you participate, the better your learning experience and the more fun it'll be!

Guideline #7: Stay on Topic

Respect the purpose of the video conferencing session. Like in the classroom, discussions can wander off topic. It is important to stay on topic unless the group agrees otherwise.

Guideline #8: Privacy

Respect everyone's privacy. *If the session is recorded, **do not post any comments or images from your session on social media sites** such as Facebook or Instagram.*

Guideline #9: Patience

Be forgiving of mistakes. Video conferencing is a new communication platform. There are bound to be technical glitches – be patient with each other during the session.

The above guidelines were adapted from the following resources that you can visit for more information about online etiquette:

1. **Merlot Journal of Online Learning and Teaching, Vol. 8, No. 4, December 2012:**
   Videoconferencing Guidelines for Faculty and Students in Graduate Online Courses
   https://www.merlot.org/merlot/viewMaterial.htm?id=769025

2. **How to Get Kids Ready to Video-Chat for Online Classes**
   https://amp.commonsense.org/blog/21e3093d-2769-4714-a0e4-d9ae01ee2bc3

3. **Online Etiquette: Introductory Lesson to Proper Online Behaviour**
   https://www.commonsense.org/education/lesson-plans/online-etiquette

WhatsApp protocol

This form was created by Sandra Martinez from Centennial College LBS to get consent on the ground rules the class developed for using WhatsApp. She has kindly shared with us for people who would like to adapt it for their own use. Here is how Sandra introduced the form:

Hello Class,

Based on the suggestions made by your peers, we are creating a WhatsApp group! Please include your name and phone number below to be added to the group.

Please review the ground rules for the WhatsApp group. It can be easy for messages to get out of hand and overwhelming.

1. Regard this group chat as a professional environment. Be mindful of your messages, tones, emoji use, etc. and be respectful of others.

2. Please only message or use the chat between 8:30 am and 6:00 pm.

3. Only keep this chat school related. Remember that everyone is getting the notifications and we don't want a flood of unnecessary comments. It defeats the purpose of this group.

4. Send messages in one chunk - not sentence by sentence.

5. If you have a concern, please email me at _____ and share it with me privately.

6. Please respect the privacy of your peers!

7. Do not have one-on-one conversations in the group. Switch to private messages.

8. If someone asks a question and you don't know the answer don't respond with "I don't know". Just wait for someone who knows the answer to reply.

If you are not sure, ask yourself these three questions before you post:

* Required

Is this relevant?
Is this necessary?
Is this a good time to post?

I have read and understood the ground rules above. * Circle your response.

Yes   No

Name: * _____   Phone Number: _____*

Remote Learning Tips for Practitioners

In addition to setting expectations for online etiquette with learners, here are some tips to help you get ready for the challenge of teaching online. These tips are in no particular order and were adapted from resources referenced in the video conferencing guidelines above.

1. Determine Your Needs

Identify the video conferencing software you will be using. Google Hangouts, Skype, and Zoom are a few popular ones. Register for the platforms you will need (you may need more than one).

2. Review Features

Start with the basics – every video conferencing platform is different. Review basic functionality, such as how to answer and make a video call and to join a meeting through a link, login or phone number.

Locate controls – how to move the cursor and see the tools that appear at the bottom and/or top of the screen. Turn the video camera on and off to see what it looks like to others if the camera is off.

Test out features – pause video, mute sound; learners should mute themselves unless it's their turn to speak. If someone is presenting verbally or screen-sharing, everyone should be muted and comments can go in the chat box. Learners can raise hands if they have pressing questions.

Test out the text chat (if the platform offers it), understand how learners share their screen (so they can collaborate), and use the reaction buttons/emoji. Encourage learners to use these functions throughout the session. This will enhance participation and can include quieter learners. Record the session if necessary – not all want to be recorded. This should be discussed at the start of the session.

3. Create a Calendar

If learners don't yet use an online calendar, consider creating one (e.g. Google Calendar). Help learners add their classes to their schedule and set up alerts so they are notified when they need to get ready.

4. Adjust Sound and Video

Make sure the camera is on and working. Do a mic check so you know it works. You can test the system's camera and mic, but it's ideal to make adjustments in the video conferencing software to save settings.

Remote Learning Tips for Practitioners, Cont.

5.   Assemble Necessary Equipment

Collect necessary items like earphones, a microphone (often built into earphone sets), paper/pencils for notes. Look at assignments to determine whether learners need anything extra for the online sessions.

6.   Close All Other Tabs

Video conferencing uses a lot of machine power. Keep devices plugged in and, to prevent video from stuttering, close all other programs.

7.   Get Camera-Ready

Face the screen; mute yourself when you're not speaking; unmute when you are ready to talk, turn off the camera if you need to blow your nose etc. Come to the session appropriately dressed.

8.   Choose a Neutral Background

Think about where you are going to set up your device. Avoid setting up in your bedroom if you can. Make sure you have good lighting so others can see you. Show learners how to temporarily disable the video and mute themselves in case of unavoidable interruptions, and then turn everything back on again.

9.   Prevent Outsiders

Instructors can prevent outsiders from entering the sessions by **being careful with the platform settings**. Get to know the security settings of the platform you are using and adjust them accordingly.

10. Do a Practice Run

Dry runs are a great way to prepare for your sessions. Start a video conference session a few minutes early or while you're planning and play with the screen share and other tools. Practice putting your materials up and see how they look. Consider having a few minutes at the start of your sessions to go over tech issues and let learners play with the functions of the platform. Encourage questions and check that everyone knows how to participate and use the tools.

Remote Learning Tips for Practitioners. Cont.

11. Promote Social Interaction

Learners value social connection with their peers and appreciate that they are staying connected in these unprecedented times. They appreciate hearing their practitioner's voice.

To maintain this connection, make sure to leave the first and last five minutes of class for social time. Take a pause to see learners' children and pets and to chit chat. That is probably (minus the children and animals) how most practitioners run in-person classes – chatting after greeting, then getting down to work. Try to replicate that same kind of experience in an online platform. If it's a long session, build in a break mid-way through as well to connect and restore energy. Consider playing music during break.

12. Get Crafty

Hard to hold your phone while you're on Zoom? Here's some DIY cell phone stands! There's more creative videos on YouTube to turn household items into phone stands if you don't have binder clips.   **Binder clip stands** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8-kn2eaMiNA

Additional Resources for Remote Learning Prep

Get learners ready for online learning using the resources below. The links will take you to helpful sites where you can create checklists and develop surveys to assess learners.

1. Create a Checklist for Learners

https://readytolearn.uncg.edu/

UNC Greensboro has a pre-assessment survey for learning online that could be a model for you to use. The language may be difficult for some, but you can get inspiration here and create your own Google Form with the appropriate language level for your learners if you like.

The Government of Canada has some good links to Writing Resources on plain language, including this Government of Ontario Clear Writing Fact Sheet, which can be used here (or anywhere else you want guidelines on clear writing and plain language).
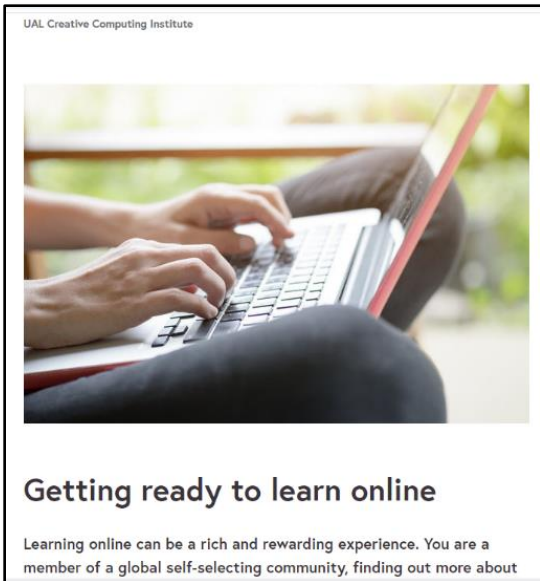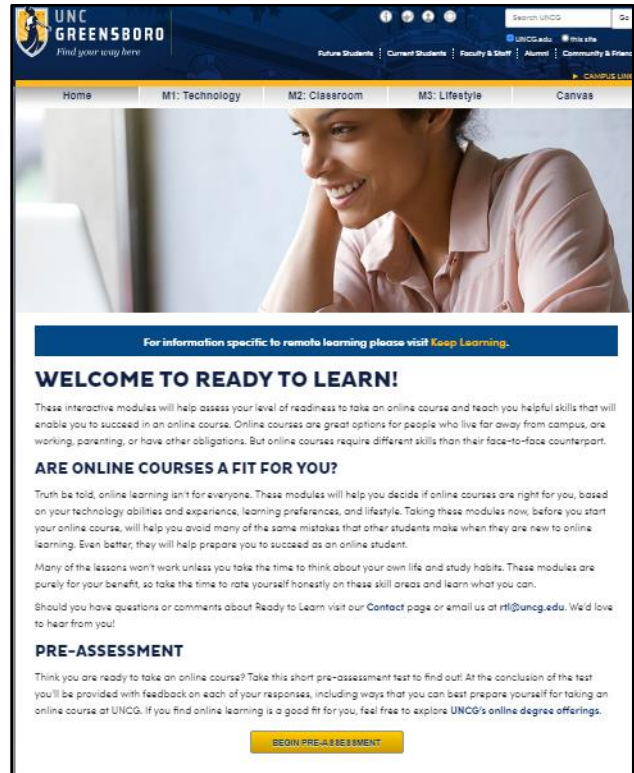
2. Generate Guidelines for Online Learning

The Getting ready to learn online guide from Future Learn is an interesting model:
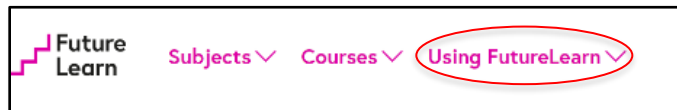
Building Community & Engaging Learners

LBS practitioners have long known the benefits of building community in the classroom. They understand that a successful class community helps to foster a sense of belonging and is an important factor in promoting learner persistence, motivation, and engagement. Online learning makes building community a challenge. Video conferencing can feel a bit stiff as only one person can speak at a time, and especially if learners and practitioners don't have their videos on during a session, it can feel isolating. Practitioners are finding they have to be more purposeful when considering how to structure activities that foster connection among learners.

In this section, you will find ideas and website references that can help build community in an online environment. Many of the ideas and references are from the practitioners of the Silver Lining Café and Tracey Mollins at AlphaPlus.

Sharing Activities – Tell the Class About Yourself

Photo Share – Ask Learners to:

- Take turns sharing a photo and story of a favourite place or person.
- Share a photo that makes them think of someone else in the class. Ask them to say why the picture makes them think about the other participant.
- Post a photo of a favourite person, place, book, meal, etc. on a Padlet Wall or Grid. Make sure **Comments** are enabled. Have everyone ask a question about each photo. Start each video class with one participant answering the questions about their photo.
- Choose a virtual background. They can choose one of the options or upload their own picture. Ask them why they chose that background.

Music Share – Ask Learners to:

- Take turns sharing music that they love, helps them relax, or helps them get energized.
- Share a story about the music – how they discovered it, why they like it or when they listen to it.
- Share a song that makes them think of someone else in the class. Ask them to say why the song makes them think about the other participant.
- Post a song /video on a Padlet Wall or Grid. Make sure **Comments** are enabled. Have everyone ask a question about each song. Start each class with one participant answering questions about their song.

Sharing Activities – Tell the Class About Yourself, Cont.

Story Share – Ask Learners:

- What was your favourite story when you were young?
- Who told it to you?
- Why did you like it?
- Can you tell it?

My House – Ask Learners to:

Give a tour of their home office or a favourite place in their home. They can use the camera on the device they are using to join the video class, make a video or create a photo story.

Invite someone who lives with them to the video class. The class can create a set of questions and interview the household member about the learner.

- What is your favourite thing about _____?
- What is their favourite show? Game? Meal? Colour?
- What is something they really don't like?
- What is the bravest/silliest/funniest/kindest/smartest thing they ever did?

Talent Show – Ask Learners to:

- Share a talent. Learners can play music, sing, share something they made (a photo or video, a craft, artwork), tell a joke, etc.
- Teach the class how to do something. It could be something that learners are good at in their daily life or it could be something they know or understand well.

Other Sharing Activities

Celebrations

Make a shared calendar and ask participants to add dates they would like to celebrate. For each date convene a small group to plan celebrations. You can play games and music as well!

Share Successes

Capture and share what is working with your learners: one or two learners share one thing they did during the week that they felt was a success. Then have everybody share and collate the group ideas.

Ice-Breaker Activities

Ice breakers help relieve the tension among new members of a group and set the stage for more ongoing community building. Here are some links to articles that provide some fun activities to help learners get to know each other:

- **Five Tips to Breaking the Ice in a Virtual Classroom**
  Source: https://mytechdecisions.com/mobility/how-to-warm-up-your-virtual-classroom-with-these-5-icebreakers/

- **Virtual Ice Breakers, Bringing Remote Workers Together**
  Source: https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/virtual-ice-breakers.htm

- **Online Warm-Ups and Energizers**
  Source: https://www.mural.co/blog/online-warm-ups-energizers

Interactive Strategies for Zoom

There are many ways to make Zoom more interesting and engaging for learners. Check out these articles to get ideas and step-by-step instructions on topics like using virtual backgrounds in lessons, fun surveys, and playing games.

- **25 Strategies to Engage Students on Your Next Zoom Meeting**
  Source: https://hookedoninnovation.com/2020/05/13/25-strategies-to-engage-zoom/

Introducing Fun and Variety

It can be a challenge to keep learners engaged when they are also dealing with other stresses. It's important to build some fun into your online classes, as you do in your face-to-face classes. Here are some ideas that practitioners came up with during Silver Linings Café sessions.

Use Weekly Themes: Use a new theme every week that learners will find interesting for lessons and homework.

Offer Variety: Some literacy practitioners are expanding the types of lessons and classes they offer to keep learners engaged online. Here are some examples:

- Cooking class with a literacy component
- Creative writing
- Self-care
- Civic engagement

Interactive Strategies for Zoom, Cont.

Relax and Celebrate: Build opportunities into your lessons by trying new ideas, like playing music or playing a movement/dance game.

Play Games: Try the following websites to make topics like grammar and spelling more engaging:

Word Crimes
https://play.howstuffworks.com/quiz/word-crimes-can-you-solve-these-grammar-mistakes

Drawize (online Pictionary)

https://www.drawize.com/#friends=CHEEKITI

Visually Stimulating Content

Use Visual Tools with Learners: There are several websites where you can create visually stimulating content for learners. One of those is **Padlet**, which works like an online canvas where you can post pictures and text. The other is **AnswerGarden,** which allows the group to enter answers to a question. The answers are then made into a collage where the most frequently used words are displayed in the largest font.

Padlet
https://padlet.com/
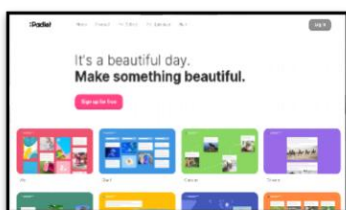
AnswerGarden
https://answergarden.ch/

Online Resources

To facilitate knowledge sharing and respond to an identified need, AlphaPlus curated a collection of shareable, free and high-quality learning materials to support learning at OALCF levels 1 and 2.

See *Resources for online and offline learning* at:
https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1JH0jvAYbrd4qmgG0S_oh9IMXq3wWsWop2BvDiguy15o/edit?usp=sharing

AlphaPlus Covid-19 Site: https://sites.google.com/alphaplus.ca/covid/home

Learning resources

Here are some online resources you can use while your program is closed or if you want more practice. You may find that you can do some of these activities with the children you have at home with you... especially those in the Fun section.

Remember you can still sign up for online courses at **e-Channel**. Scroll down for the links. If you are looking for other community resources, scroll down to the **Community resources** section.

Contact Tracey to tell us about other good learning places you have found.

tracey@alphaplus.ca

We have divided the activities into categories. Click on the buttons below to see them.

Digital Technology	Practice Typing	Math
Reading	Writing	Fun

Online Resources, Cont.

The Simcoe County District School Board: https://sites.google.com/scdsb.on.ca/skills-upgrading/home
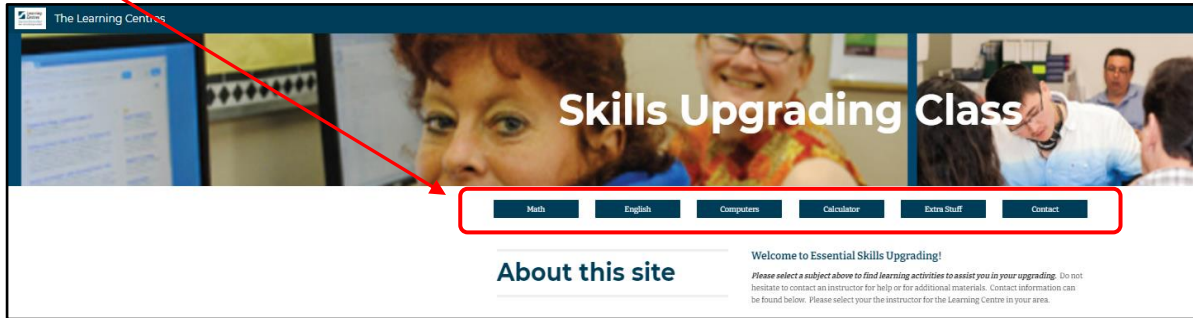
Select a subject to find learning activities to assist you in your upgrading. This site includes ready-made learning activities, videos and links to other online resources.

TLG Learner Resources: https://sites.google.com/view/tlglearnerresources/home

Two literacy instructors created this website as an additional resource for use by adult learners.

Zoom Resources

Check out Zoom live training and video tutorials, as well as their support pages for more information and troubleshooting related to the Zoom video conferencing platform. Their top 20 resources is a good list to find what you need as well.

Websites - **YouTube** has lots of Zoom videos and so do many **universities**:

Here's some **University websites** with Zoom support:
University of Rochester
Indiana University - great troubleshooting section!
Harvard University - In-depth Guide: Use Zoom to teach online
University of Minnesota - Great flow and organization - easy to see sections
University of Western - Well laid out into sections - Getting started and more info.

Each Other - Consider meeting (formally every other week, or informally, emailing here and there to practice skills and support one another). As we mentioned before, practitioners have found this to be really helpful! It's nice to have a place to talk about challenges, victories, resource-sharing, and strategies for digital instruction.

Yourself - Start quick solo meetings to preview new material, explore newly updated versions of Zoom. To view something from a student's perspective try joining a meeting using your phone or tablet. A colleague who is willing to duck into a meeting to be the learner can be helpful too (you could also do this in your group meetings, if you choose to set them up!).