



# Digital Facilitation 101: Building a virtual classroom

Transitioning classrooms from in-person to online is challenging for educators and participants alike. Learning to use simple features available within conferencing and facilitation platforms is essential to support a diverse group of learners. The document below shares the merits of various web conferencing platforms and dives into the facilitation tools and techniques available to educators using Zoom. These tools will support you to create an engaging space and build your own virtual classroom. This is a working document and will be updated with best practices and tools for virtual facilitation. For further information or support, please contact Michael Denhamer at [michael.denhamer@ubc.ca](mailto:michael.denhamer@ubc.ca).

## Tools available for Virtual Meetings:

*All tools listed are FIPPA compliant*

<b>Video Conferencing Platforms</b>	<b>Features</b>
<b>Skype for Business</b>	Occasional server bugs during larger meetings, integrates into outlook, screen sharing, collaboration tools, chat functionality
<b>Zoom</b>	Strong server capacity, HD audio and video, screen sharing, breakout rooms, collaboration tools, chat functionality, simple calendar integration, RSVP functionality, toll-free call-in to meetings without an internet connection
<b>Webex</b>	Simple connection through webapp, call feature and screen share sometimes crashes
<b>Blackboard Collaborate Ultra</b>	Outages during larger meetings where all participants are sharing video, strong for webinar, or lecture style meetings.
<b>GotoMeeting</b>	Recording only shares screen content and not video as well. Not effective for teaching, great for team meetings.
<b>Jitsi</b>	Free, open-source, in-browser connection, hand-raising, screensharing, incredibly simple for host and participants to access and use

The remainder of this tutorial will use zoom examples, but all features shared below are available in all listed platforms



## Zoom Introduction and Setting the Space

So you've downloaded Zoom and are hosting your first meeting. It's important to support participants in showing up in the ways they feel most comfortable. Some will choose not to share their videos, and others will be so comfortable they may even choose to eat on camera. Please encourage participants to set their names and if desired, change their preferred pronouns.



Click this button to use Gallery view (allows you to see 30-45 participants in one window)

To Change your name, right click (PC) or ctrl + click (mac) on your video.

\*If desired, participants can also add their preferred pronouns!



Turn on/off your video

Mute/ unmute yourself. Please mute yourself if you aren't talking to reduce echo and background noise!

Open Chat- great to share links and communicate technical difficulties

Figure 1- Zoom gallery view and attendee names



## Accessibility and Inclusion

Important to any pedagogical environment is accessibility and inclusion. While moving to a virtual environment supports some learners, other learners may be hard of hearing, struggle with virtual engagement, or are without a computer or internet connection, etc. While different learning tools will be necessary for different audiences, it of the utmost importance that you consider your audience and use the appropriate virtual facilitation tools and techniques. For further advice on accessibility, please contact the [Centre for Accessibility](#).

### Closed Captioning

Zoom has a [closed captioning tool](#) within the application. If somebody within the class is a trained transcriptionist, the host has the ability to assign this role to them. If you require closed captioning, we recommend that you record your lecture and send it to a transcriptionist.

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## Zoom Facilitation Tools

[RSVP](#)- If you require any information prior to starting your session, or will be recording the session, RSVP is an effective way to track this information and get necessary consent. Once you have access to email addresses, you can send out the presentation, or the recording after the session.

[Whiteboard](#)- all participants are able to use their mouse to draw on a shared whiteboard. A great icebreaker tool to support participants with adjusting to the virtual space, and acclimatizing to the session.

[Breakout Rooms](#)- Do you have more than 8 participants? Are you hoping for your session to be collaborative? Using breakout rooms is an excellent and effective way for participants to get to know each other better and bring their ideas back to the main room. Should you be facilitating a [Gallery Walk](#), or a [knowledge café](#), breakout rooms are the most effective tool to use. When using a breakout room, you can designate participants randomly, or assign participants to a certain room. Be specific and provide participants with clear instructions for their breakout room as you will not be able to communicate to all breakout rooms from the main room. Should participants need support, a button is available (only available within the breakout room) to ask for help.

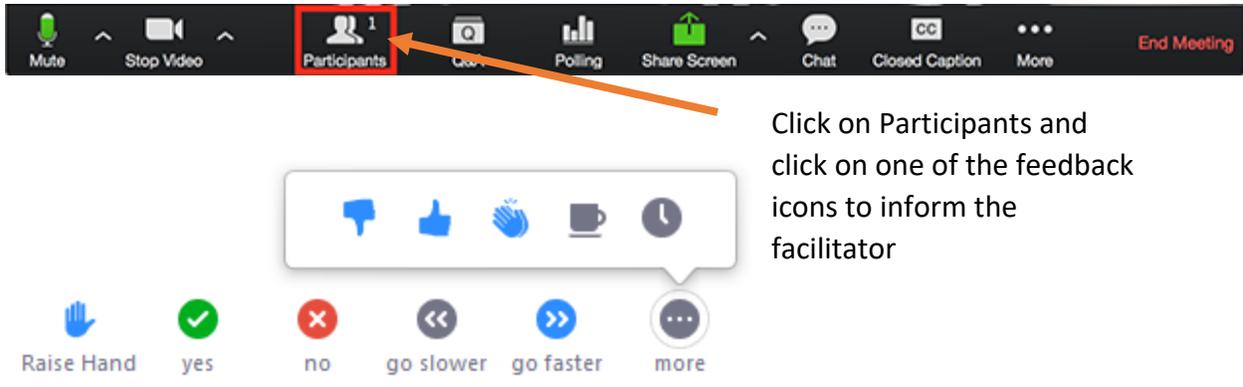
[Polling](#)- Looking to evaluate your session? You can pre-create a list of questions for pre-surveys and post-surveys to receive feedback from participants. You can also use polling to allow participants to vote on how the session will be run and what activities they're most interested in.

[Screen Sharing](#)- You can use screen sharing for a presentation, or to guide participants through a process. You can share your screen, or any application currently open on your computer. If enabled, participants are able to [annotate](#) your screenshare for everybody to see.

[Recording](#)- You can record any session and also allow participants to record the session. If any recording is to take place, please ask for consent using the registration form.



**Non-Verbal Feedback-** If you have a large group of participants, non-verbal feedback is an essential tool. Participants can raise their hands, clap, tell the presenter to go faster or slower, ask for a break, answer a yes/no question. If you intend to use this feature, please guide your participants through how to access it.



Click on Participants and click on one of the feedback icons to inform the facilitator

Figure 2- Zoom participant non-verbal communications

## Facilitation Techniques

**Sticky-note facilitation-** The simplest sticky note facilitation tool is [Google Jamboard](#). A link can be shared with all participants via the chat. Make sure that you've enabled the proper editing features so all participants can work and edit the document. Participants can also share images from their computer or through a google image search.

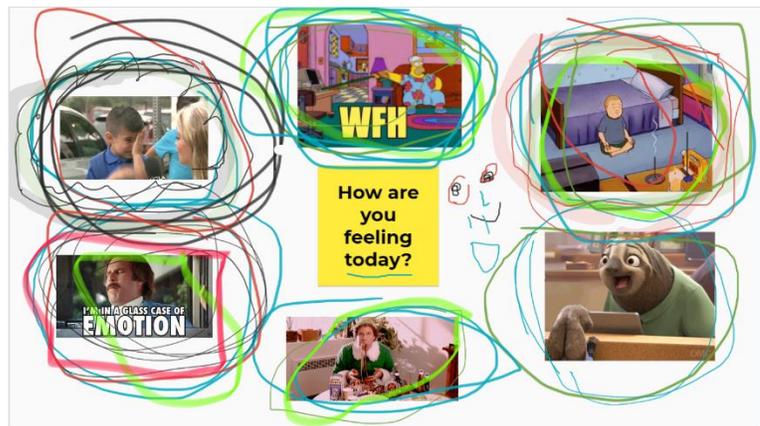


Figure 3- Sticky-note Facilitation

If you require more functions within a shared document, you can use [Google Slides](#) to create a shared editable slideshow. Participants can use folded squares as a substitution for sticky-notes. Google Slides is an excellent tool to also support breakout groups in sharing their conversations with the community of participants.

**Spectograms** are a great digital facilitation technique that requires participants to place themselves on a spectrum in a shared document, or using the annotation tool available in Zoom. [This short video](#) provides a few examples of ways a Spectogram can be used. In the first example below, participants are asked to share a challenge that they've been having in transitioning their work online. In Step 2, participants copy their notes from the first step and map these challenges onto a chart.



Step 1.

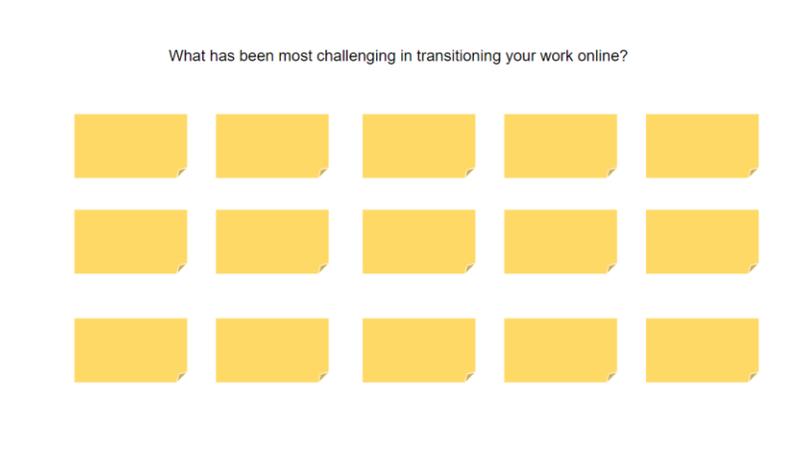


Figure 4- Sticky Note Facilitation in Google Slides to be used for Spectrogram in Step 2.

Step 2.

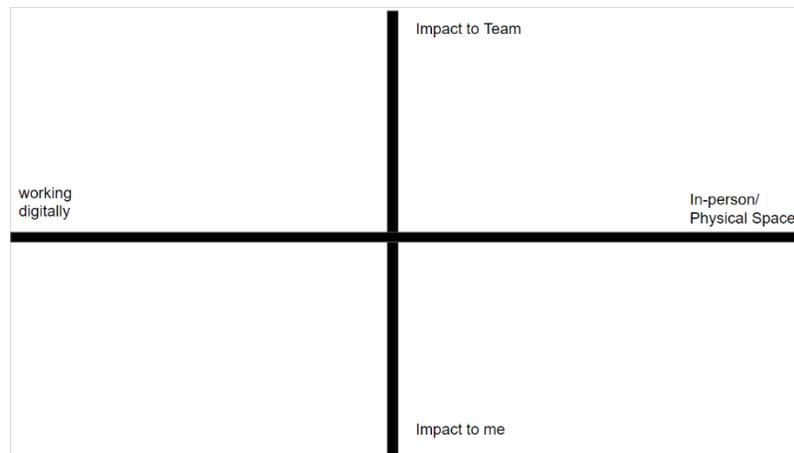


Figure 5- Spectrogram chart in Google Slides

**Spectrograms** can also be represented graphically as a tool for reflection or debriefing. For example, here is a graphic from Training for Change. In this question participants are asked to share which image they're feeling right now and share a sentence about why. The sticky note facilitation activity listed above is using this type of spectrogram activity.

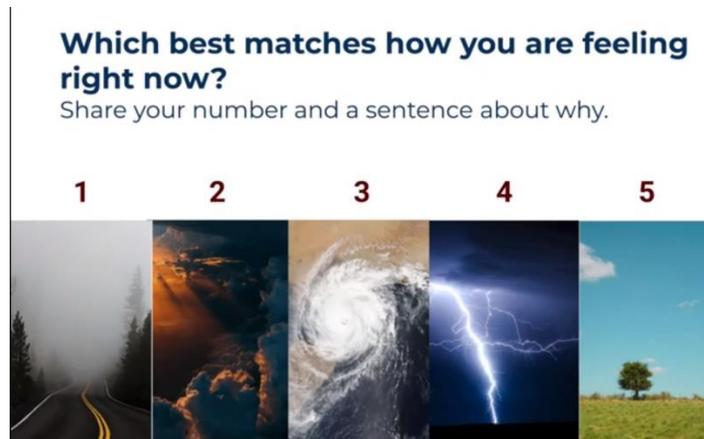


Figure 6- Graphic Spectrogram from Training for Change

As we continue to deepen our experience with digital facilitation techniques, we will be building on this document. If you have any resources that you'd like to share, or suggestions to support others with the creation of virtual learning environments, please contact Michael at michael.denhamer@ubc.ca.