

DR. LEIGH ZEITZ

DR. Z'S GUIDE TO ZOOM BREAKOUT ROOMS



A comprehensive guide for educators

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Dr. Z's Guide to Zoom Breakout Rooms

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These instructions are designed to assist you in using **Zoom Breakout Rooms** for your classes. It will begin with an introduction to breakout rooms and then discuss how to assign and use breakout rooms. At the end of the document, there are some directions for changing the settings on your personal Zoom account (if you need to do so) and some links to resources you might find useful.

A Breakout Room is a Zoom feature which provides a variety of “spaces” where attendees can meet in smaller groups. Sometimes we use these to convene groups of randomly selected people. Sometimes we need to provide meeting areas for previously assigned workgroups in our classes. Sometimes we want to provide an assortment of rooms for the students and give them a choice as to where they want to go. These options are all possible in **Zoom version 5.3.0 and higher**

Setting Up a Breakout Room

1. Open a Zoom meeting as the Host.
2. Click on the **Breakout Room** icon at bottom of the screen
 - a. You must be a host. If you are a host and it doesn't show up, click on the ...More button.
 - b. If you ARE a host and the icon is not there, [proceed to page 4](#) for instructions in how to *Set the Settings for Breakout Room*
3. A window will open and you will be given the three options for the rooms to be assigned **Automatically**, **Manually**, or **Attendees' Choice**.

Create breakout rooms

☒ Assign automatically

☐ Assign manually

☐ Let participants choose room

2 participants per room

Create

4. Assigning Process

a. Assign Automatically

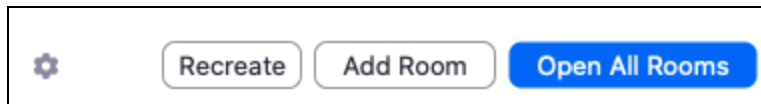
- i. Select the number of rooms. Zoom will tell you how many will go in each room.
- ii. Click the “Create” button.
- iii. Zoom will randomly divide your students into the prescribed groups.

b. Assign Manually

- i. Select how many rooms you want to use.
- ii. Click the “Create” button.
- iii. You will now assign each of the students to room manually (later we will provide some suggestions for simplifying this process.)

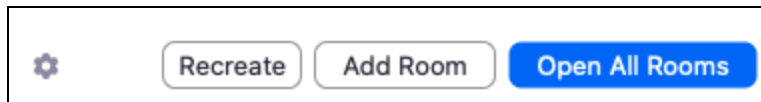
c. Let Participants Choose Room

- i. Select the number of breakout rooms you want to use.
- ii. Click the “Create” button.
- iii. Rename the rooms to fit your needs (e.g., Group 1, Discussion Lounge, Orientation Room)
 1. The Breakout Rooms will not be available to the students until you “Open All Rooms.”



5. Control Panel

At the bottom of the window listing the breakout rooms are 4 choices: Options, Recreate, Add Room, and Open All Rooms.



a. Options (also known as “the Gear”)

- i. *Allow participants to choose a room* - MUST be selected if you want your students to have the option to choose their rooms.
- ii. *Allow participants to return to the main session at any time* - does precisely what it says. You will want to uncheck this if you plan to require your students to stay in the breakout rooms for a prescribed time period.
- iii. *Automatically move all assigned participants into breakout rooms* - will send each of them into their intended breakout room without having to click a button to get there.
- iv. *Auto close breakout rooms after ?? minutes* - enables you to preset the time period for a meeting.
- v. *Countdown after closing breakout room* - enables students to see a countdown for the closing. You can set it to any time you deem appropriate.

☒ Allow participants to choose room

☒ Allow participants to return to the main session at any time

☒ Automatically move all assigned participants into breakout rooms

☐ Auto close breakout rooms after minutes

☒ Countdown after closing breakout room

Set countdown timer:  seconds

b. Recreate Rooms

- i. After the rooms are created, you will see a list of rooms and those students assigned to them. If you want to redo the room assignments, then click on the **Recreate** button. It will recreate ALL of the rooms.

c. Add Room

- i. If you just need to add a single room because additional people have shown up, click on the **Add a Room** button at the bottom of the Breakout Rooms window.

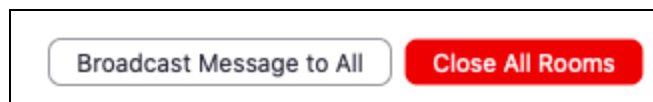
d. Open All Rooms

Click on the **Open All Rooms** button to begin your session.

- i. If you have already assigned the rooms (Automatically or Manually), your participants will move to their rooms.
- ii. If you have allowed the participants to select their own rooms, a window showing all of the rooms and participants will open. Click the Join link next to the group you want to join.

Using a Breakout Room

Once your students are in their Breakout Rooms, it's a matter of keeping them informed and bringing them back to the main Zoom session when you need them. After you have opened the rooms, You will see these two buttons in the window.



6. Broadcast a Message to All

- a. Click on the **Broadcast a message to All** button at the bottom of the **Breakout Rooms** window.
- b. Enter your message and click the **Broadcast** button.

7. End the Breakout Room Session

- a. Click the **Close All Rooms** button.
- b. A message will appear in each of their rooms telling them that "All Breakout Rooms will close in 60 seconds." (The time period can be changed.)

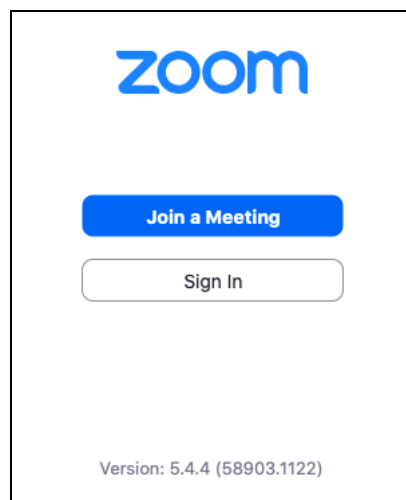
Setting Settings on Breakout Rooms

You should be able to accomplish all of the options explained above. There are a number of settings that need to be set to make this happen. Here is a set of directions for changing our settings if you need to do so.

Checking Your Zoom Version

Your Zoom version must be at least 5.3.0 to enable your participants to select their own breakout rooms. If you don't know which version you have, follow these instructions:

1. If you are in Zoom now, close it down.
2. Open your Zoom client (Zoom program on your computer - not your browser.)
3. In the Sign In window, your version should be at the bottom of the window.



4. If you are up-to-date, skip to the next section. If you need to update:
 - a. Click the Sign In button and sign in with your name and password.
 - b. Click once your photo (or photo placeholder in the upper right corner)
 - i. A dropdown menu will appear.
 - ii. Click on *Check for Updates*
 - iii. If the window says *Update Available*, you can download the update and install it right away. It only takes a couple of minutes and Zoom will return you to this page, but you can click the *Not Now* button and do it later.

Checking Your Settings

It is also important to ensure that you have all of the settings set properly. This can make running your Breakout Rooms more efficient.

Video Resources

Some people learn better if they are **shown** how to do something rather than just reading the directions. These videos are short but informative.



[Breakout Room Intro](#)
[Setting the Settings](#)
[Starting a Zoom Meeting](#)
[Assigning Groups Automatically](#)
[Group Assignment Options](#)
[Preassigning Groups](#)

[How to Use Breakout Rooms in Zoom for Teaching and Learning](#)



[Creating a Cohost](#)
[Assigning Groups Automatically](#)
[Broadcasting to/Closing Rooms](#)
[Group Assignment Options](#)
[Preassigning Groups](#)

[Video Breakout Rooms - Zoom \(3 min\)](#)

Includes directions for presetting the breakout rooms. End of Video

Tips for Teaching/Learning through Breakout Rooms

1. **Begin your classes by greeting each of your students.** This is an effective process in building community AND it is a sneaky way to test their technology - microphones and speakers are working and loud enough
 - a. Suggestion: This past semester, I began my classes by asking my students “How are you?” About halfway through the semester (Mid-term time) our discussion became a gripe session. Things changed for the better when I began using questions like “Carlos, what is exciting you this week?”
2. **Communicate with Your Students in Breakout Rooms:**
 - a. If you want to have your students access specific documents or instructions, type that text into the Chat room BEFORE you start the Breakout Rooms.
 - b. You can provide them with a shortened URL (e.g., [Tinyurl.com](#)) When you create the shortened URL, don’t allow Tinyurl.com to use random characters (e.g., tinyurl.com/G93vw73). Replace the random characters with short phrases (e.g., tinyurl.com/BreakoutRoomsWorkshop)
 - c. Students have a button “Ask for Help” in the menu bar when they are in a breakout room. This sends a notice to the host in a window containing a button that takes the host directly to that student’s breakout room.
 - d. The Host has the capacity to send a note to all of the breakout rooms. This is usually a warning that time is passing or a reminder of something that they all need to do in their discussion.

Resources

[Participating and Using Tools in a Zoom Breakout Room](#)

[Dr. Z Reflects](#) - My blog with LOTS of Zoom resources and instruction.

Good Luck

Contact me if you have any questions or would like me to do a workshop for your school/organization. @zeitz leigh.zeitz@gmail.com