

iPeer project

Usage of Google Meet (breakout rooms) for peer learning

Example and case study

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Document control

Document history

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Table of contents	
Document control	2
Document history	2
Document distribution list	2
Description of the Google Breakout rooms for peer learning	3
Basics	3
The problem	5
Objectives	5
Context	5
Real life usage - the story	5
Step-by-step scenario	6
What is Google Meet?	7
Advantages and disadvantages	8
Additional information	9

Description of the Google Breakout rooms¹ for peer learning

Basics

Tool name: Google Meet Breakout rooms

Related peer learning methodology: Networking Groups ▾

Category: Communication tools ▾

Target group: Executive (management) ▾

Age group: Adults ▾

Context: Entrepreneurship education

Topic: Learning how to pitch your business from peers in virtual sessions

Relation to specific class: This case study is targeted for adult learners. Nevertheless, this tool can be used in elementary (after 5th class, secondary or tertiary edu.)

Link to EQF level²: 9 ▾

Link with Bloom's taxonomy³,

- **knowledge domain:** evaluate ▾
- **emotion domain:** responding ▾
- **action domain:** complex overt response ▾

Relation to PAL pedagogy:

There are several peer-assisted learning methodologies that can be implemented using Google Meet breakout rooms.

Think-Pair-Share: Participants are given a prompt or question to consider and then break into pairs to discuss their ideas before reconvening as a larger group to share their findings.

Jigsaw: Participants are assigned to small groups and each person is responsible for researching and presenting a specific aspect of a larger topic. They then join new groups to teach their peers about their specific areas of expertise.

¹ Or any video conferencing tool with breakout rooms functionality such as Zoom, Teams or Jitsi

² <https://europa.eu/europass/en/description-eight-efl-levels>

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bloom%27s_taxonomy

Round Robin: Participants take turns leading a discussion on a specific topic or question, with each person building on the ideas of the previous speaker.

Debate: Participants are split into teams to argue for or against a particular viewpoint.

Fishbowl: A small group of participants have a discussion while others observe and take notes. The observers then switch with the participants in the fishbowl.

The problem

One of the most prominent problems that video conferencing tools and breakout rooms solve (in adult learning and business environments) is the lack of flexibility and productivity due to geographical barriers. By allowing for remote participation and recording, video conferencing tools can provide flexibility for adult learners and business professionals, which can help make the learning or meeting accessible for those who are not able to attend live sessions. This can increase the productivity and effectiveness of team members, regardless of their location, which can save time and money by reducing the need for travel. Google Meet and Zoom provide breakout room functionality.

Moreover, video lectures can quickly become boring and inefficient if we don't include interactivity and communication between attendees.

Objectives

Using Google Meet breakout rooms we want to improve the motivation to attend online learning sessions. We want to show that even virtual presence in video sessions can be used for peer-assisted learning.

Context

As an adult learning provider, we often use video conferencing tools to perform training sessions. If an online lecture is performed in the traditional style of 'ex-cathedra', the knowledge transfer is questionable. Especially adults who want to advance in their field are more interested in exchanging experiences, networking and real-life cases. As we often organize such sessions for entrepreneurs, we use guided break-out rooms so participants can exchange their experiences and get to know each other better. We usually use Google Meet or Zoom. any video conferencing tool with breakout rooms functionality is appropriate for PAL.

Real-life usage - the story

Joannes started his own business a year ago. He works a lot and delivers his services to his customers. He struggles with acquiring new customers. He knows that using referrals is one of the best ways to make new customers. He wanted to learn about marketing and sales approaches from other entrepreneurs, but he doesn't have time for training courses and travel. He also hates ex-cathedra lectures and loves interactive and involved learning.

Then he found out about the online entrepreneurship group, which meets every week on Friday morning on Google Meet. He joins it and discovers they are using smaller breakout rooms (3-4 people).

They are practising 30-second pitch presentations in these breakout rooms. One entrepreneur starts and the other three are listening and providing feedback. Observers respond with: "I was convinced/not convinced". Then the roles rotate.

At first, he was observing and listening to others. At the same time, he was preparing his pitch in his mind.

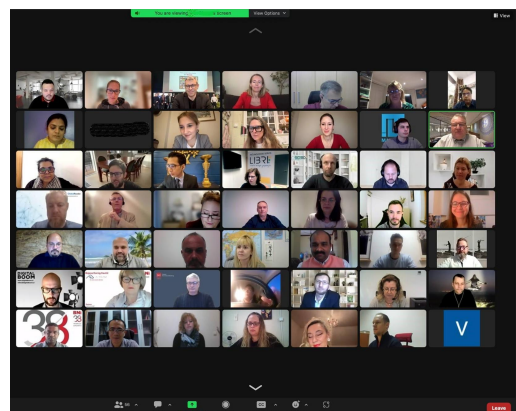
After several rounds of unconvincing pitches, he managed to polish and present a better pitch.

He learned from his peers that firstly he should address the pain point his service is solving. Then, he must address a target group. Lastly, he should present the advantages for the customers.

Every time the moderator closed breakout rooms, the best pitch was presented in a larger setting.

After several meetings, his pitch was chosen as the best pitch and he could present it to the whole group of entrepreneurs.

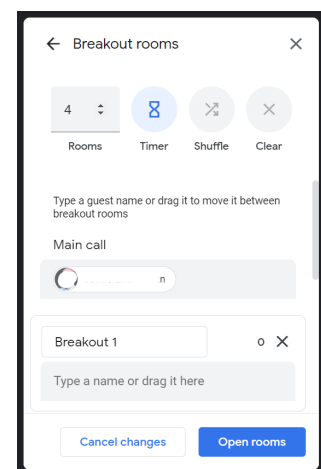
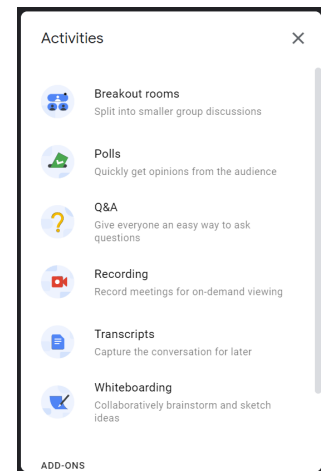
He found out that smaller breakout rooms in the virtual meetings are a great approach to learning from peers.



Step-by-step scenario

(short instructions for teachers/educators)

1. Announce the video meeting session - send an invitation link and short agenda. Don't forget to tell participants about their active participation.
2. At a specified date, start a Google Meet session: Go to <https://meet.google.com> and start a new meeting or use a calendar invite to join an existing meeting. Optionally: start recording the session. Each breakout room will be recorded in a separate video.
3. Enable breakout rooms: During the meeting, click on the three dots in the bottom right corner of the screen and select "Breakout rooms". Then, click "Create rooms".
4. Assign participants to rooms: You can either manually assign participants to rooms or allow Google Meet to randomly assign them. You can also assign a moderator for each room. Also, set a timer.
5. Give instructions: Before starting the breakout session, give instructions to participants on what they should do during the breakout session (e. g. Each participant has 30 seconds to pitch their business idea).
6. Start the breakout session: Click "Start breakout session" to begin the breakout session. Participants will be moved to their assigned rooms.
7. Monitor and switch between rooms: You can monitor and switch between rooms by clicking on the "Switch room" button. You can also rejoin the main room by clicking "End breakout session".
8. Reconvene: After the breakout session, reconvene the group in the main room, and give time for participants to share what they have discussed or learned during the breakout session.
9. End the meeting: Click "End meeting" when you are finished.
10. After the meeting, send the recording to the participants.



What is Google Meet?

Google Meet breakout rooms are a feature of the Google Meet video conferencing tool that allows users to split into smaller groups for group discussions or activities. This feature is particularly useful for facilitating peer-to-peer learning and collaboration in an online setting. Teachers or facilitators can assign participants to rooms, either manually or randomly, and can also assign a moderator for each room. This allows for different learning styles and for different needs, interests or levels of understanding. During the breakout session, the facilitator can monitor and switch between rooms, and after the session, the group can reconvene in the main room to share what they have discussed or learned. Furthermore, Google Meet breakout rooms can be used to facilitate collaboration and teamwork and to improve access to education by reducing the need for travel. It is available for business and enterprise users.

Google Meet breakout rooms are available for business and enterprise users, and you can also assign different rooms to different subjects, or levels of understanding, depending on the goals of the session.

The equipment needed to use Google Meet breakout rooms is relatively minimal. All you need is:

- A device with internet access: This can be a computer, laptop, tablet, or smartphone.
- A web camera: This is necessary for video conferencing. Most laptops and tablets come with built-in web cameras, but if you are using a desktop computer, you will need to purchase an external webcam.
- A microphone: This is necessary for audio conferencing. Most laptops and tablets come with built-in microphones, but if you are using a desktop computer, you will need to purchase an external microphone.
- Speakers or headphones: This is necessary to hear the audio during the meeting.
- Reliable internet connection: A stable internet connection is essential for a smooth video conferencing experience. A minimum of 1 Mbps upload and download speed is recommended for a smooth experience.
- Google Meet account: You will need to have a Google Meet account to use the breakout rooms feature.

Advantages and disadvantages

Advantages

1. **Facilitating small group discussions:** By splitting a large group into smaller breakout rooms, participants can have more focused and meaningful conversations without the distractions of a larger group. This can increase engagement, participation and understanding.
2. **Encouraging participation:** Breaking participants into smaller groups can make it easier for quieter or less confident students to contribute their ideas and share their knowledge. This can increase the number of perspectives and ideas in the discussion.
3. **Supporting collaboration and teamwork:** Breakout rooms can support collaboration and teamwork, by allowing participants to work together in small groups, even when they are not in the same physical location. This can foster a sense of community and can improve the quality of the discussion by allowing for different perspectives and ideas.

Disadvantages

1. **Technical difficulties:** As with any technology-based solution, there is a risk of technical difficulties, such as poor internet connection, audio/video issues, and difficulties using the breakout room feature. These can disrupt the flow of learning and can cause frustration among participants.
2. **Limited interaction with the facilitator:** During the breakout session, participants are in smaller groups, which means that the facilitator's interaction with each group is limited. This can make it more challenging for the facilitator to monitor the progress and understanding of each group.
3. **Limited control over group composition:** When the facilitator randomly assigns participants to groups, there is a risk that groups may not be well balanced in terms of skill level, background knowledge, or other relevant factors. This can lead to uneven participation and learning outcomes.

These disadvantages can be mitigated by preparing for the session, providing participants with clear instructions and troubleshooting tips, and monitoring the breakout sessions closely.

Additional information

Use breakout rooms in Google Meet,

https://support.google.com/meet/answer/13054147?product_name=UnuFlow&hl=en&visit_id=638094743700448412-1170865210&rd=2&src=supportwidget0&hl=en

How to Use Google Meet Breakout Rooms for Jigsaw Activities,

<https://www.teq.com/google-meet-breakout-rooms-jigsaw-activities/>

How to do a fishbowl activity in the virtual space?

<https://www.barbaracv.com/blog/a-virtual-fishbowl/>