



# Facilitating Effective Remote Discussion Sections

## Teaching + Learning Commons

Academic Achievement Hub

Engaged Teaching Hub

Writing Hub

# Meet the Facilitators

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# Webinar Topics

**Getting to Know Zoom**

**Good Pedagogy in the  
Zoom Classroom**

**Supplementing Zoom  
Sections**

## **Intended Process/Outcomes:**

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Model aspects of a remote discussion section  
Give you ideas/motivation for going forward  
You will still have questions, that's okay!

# Be Explicit about Guidelines

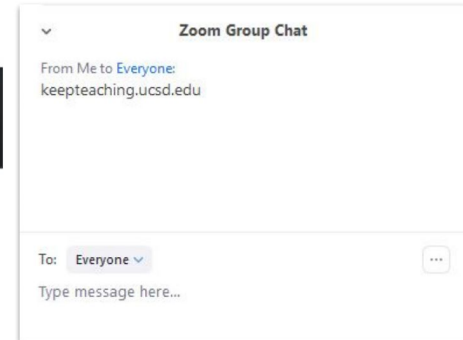
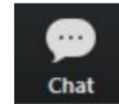
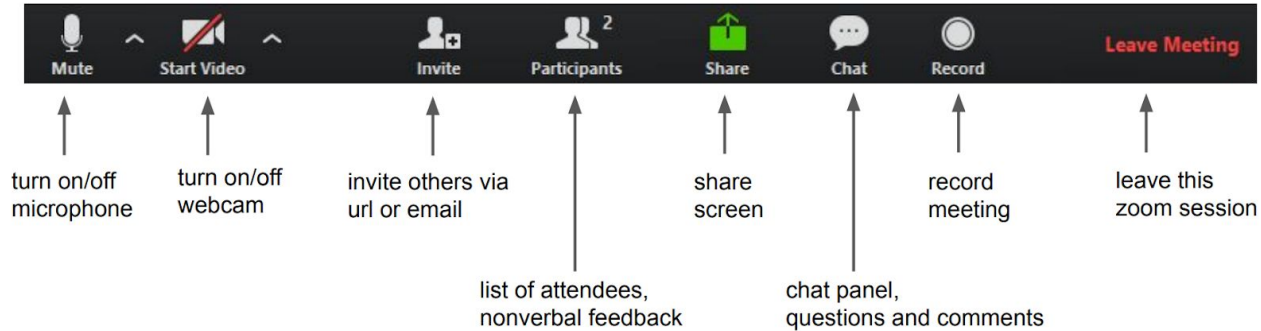
## Discussion Guidelines

- Keep yourself on mute to minimize background noise
- Send questions to the chat first
- “Raise hand” before interjecting
- Be respectful
- Be open to new ideas
- Be thoughtful in sharing your ideas
- Avoid all-caps typing

## Community Guidelines

- Check your emotional response to the technology/circumstances
- Model the kind of interactions you want students to have
- Be mindful of your interaction style
- Contribute mindfully
- Don't be afraid of silence
- Try not to multitask, turn off other technologies if you can.

# Zoom Navigation Basics



[Click here to copy this slide](#)

# We want you to Participate!

Everybody, try raising your hand!  
(now lower your hand)

In the chat box, type in your:

- Name
- Department
- Favorite comfort food



**Starting section  
with a quick  
“human check in”  
is a great way to  
build and keep  
community.**

# What might Discussion Section **be like** in a remote environment?

- Different!
- Clunkier than in-person (the seams are more visible)
- (Much) more explicit than we're used to; requires more reflection, intention, communication
- Requires more flexibility towards students (in different time zones and home environments, with different access to internet, etc.)
- Everyone can get easily frustrated; practice and model empathy, compassion, and self-awareness at every step of the process

**Features in Zoom**

**Important considerations**

# **Let's Get Into It**

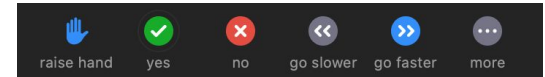
Getting to Know Zoom



# Basic Zoom Features

**Participant Feedback** - nonverbal ways of expressing a feeling to the host

- In participant window, all can see these symbols
- These linger until the participant changes it (or host)
- Host can see quantity for each of these symbols



**Raising hands** - a nonverbal way to signal a question or comment

- In participant window, all can see who has raised their hand
- Zoom queues raised hands so that you can keep the order
- Host can resolve a raised hand, or participant can lower their hand

**Polling** - an interactive way to ask questions and get responses from the group

***Let's try it.***

# Testing Out Some Features

## Audience Polling

How confident are you for hosting remote sections? (scale question)

Have you used Zoom to host a group meeting before? (yes/no question)

## Non-verbal Feedback Demonstration

We'll offer a statement, you react to the statement with thumbs up/down

Statement: ***Dogs are smarter than cats.***

Care to share? **Raise your hand** if you don't mind explaining your answer.  
(we'll wait for at least 3 hands)

# Some Considerations

## **Remote instruction requires more flexibility toward students.**

Many students will not be able to attend “live” discussion sections in real time  
(also called: *synchronous instruction*)

- Different time zones (may be drastic for international students)
- Home/family care responsibilities
- Wi-fi connectivity problems

Many students will not have access to a totally quiet, distraction-free environment for discussion section.

- Expect that pets, roommates, family members might be overheard; use muting function and encourage students to mute themselves



**Utilizing small groups**

**Setting expectations + giving guidelines**

**Give clear starting points for discussion**

# **Now that you have interacted with Zoom**

Considerations for good pedagogy in the Zoom classroom

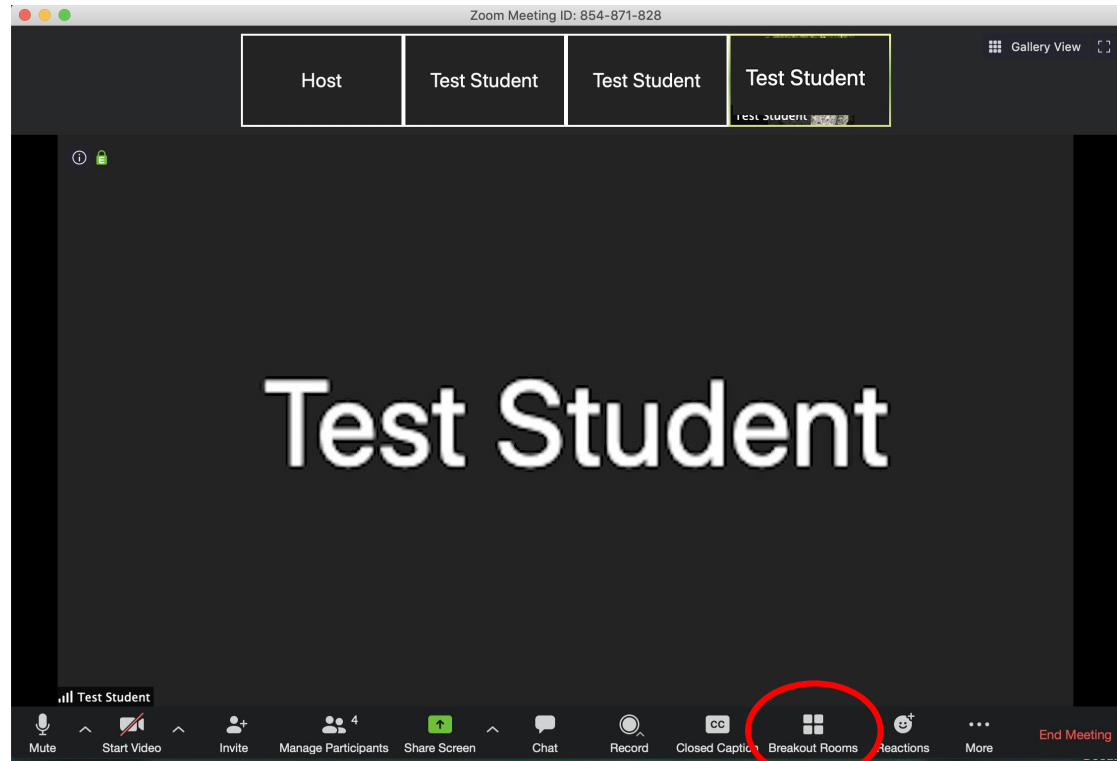
# Utilize Small Groups

In Zoom, you can:

- Assign students into break-out rooms
- Go into break-out rooms to monitor/contribute/be available
- Go between rooms and back to main session
- Have students toggle between group and whole-class discussion
- “Call” participants back to the main session with a broadcast message

# Utilize Small Groups

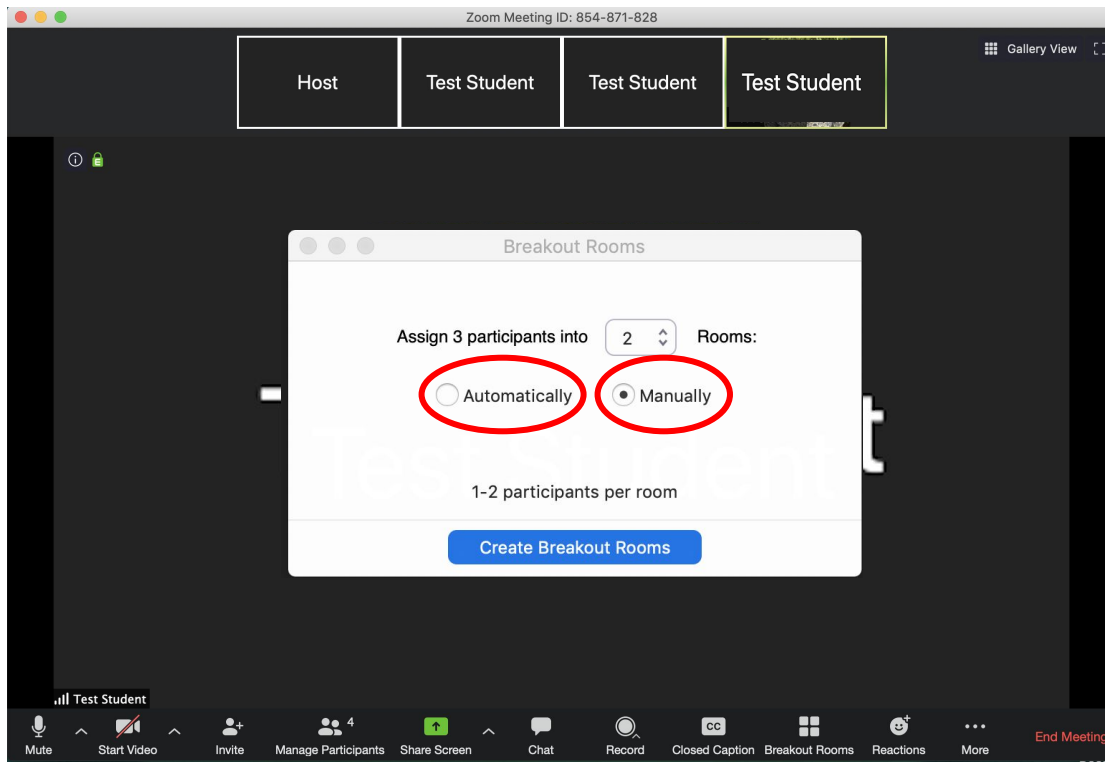
Assigning  
break-out rooms



# Utilize Small Groups

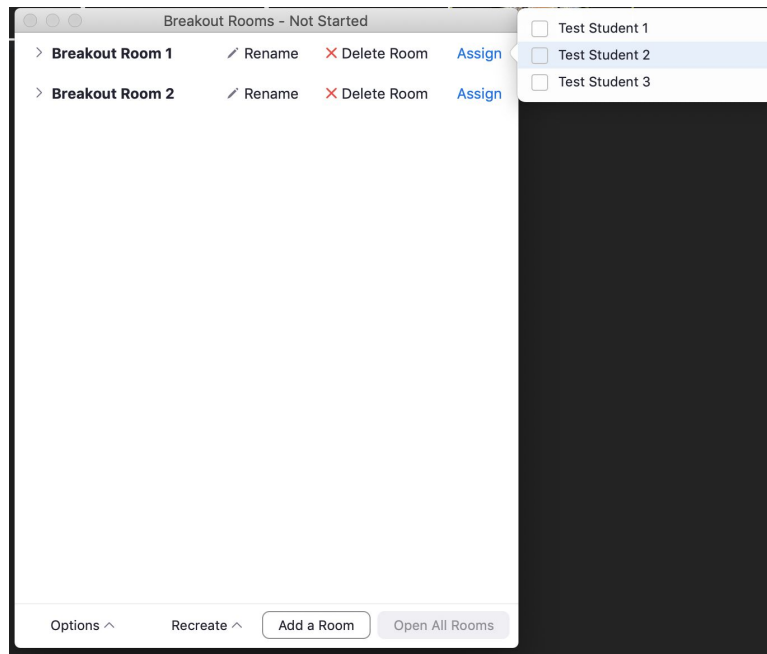
## Assigning break-out rooms function

1. Automatically  
(random)
2. Manually



# Utilize Small Groups

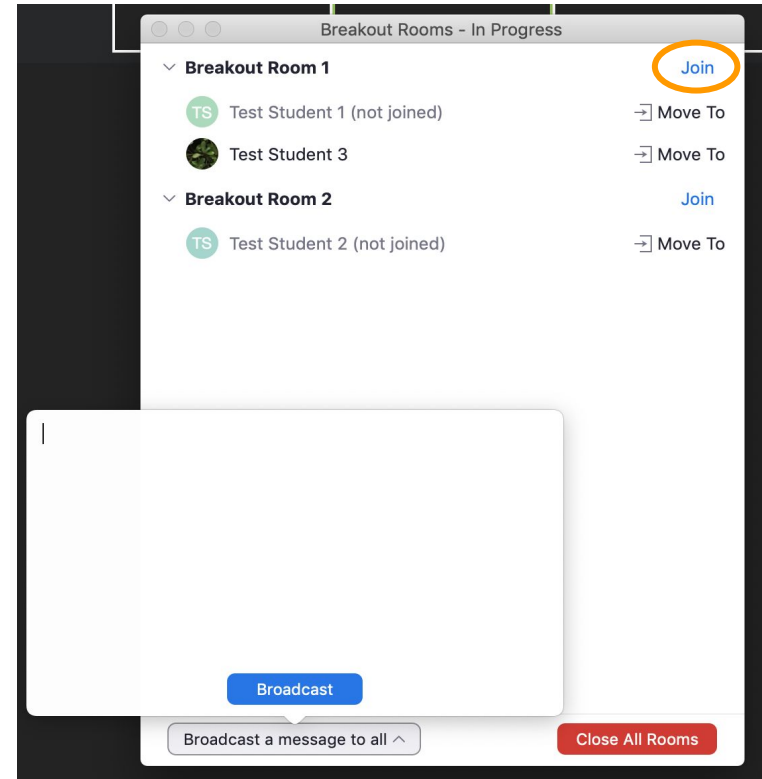
Assigning participants into  
break-out rooms





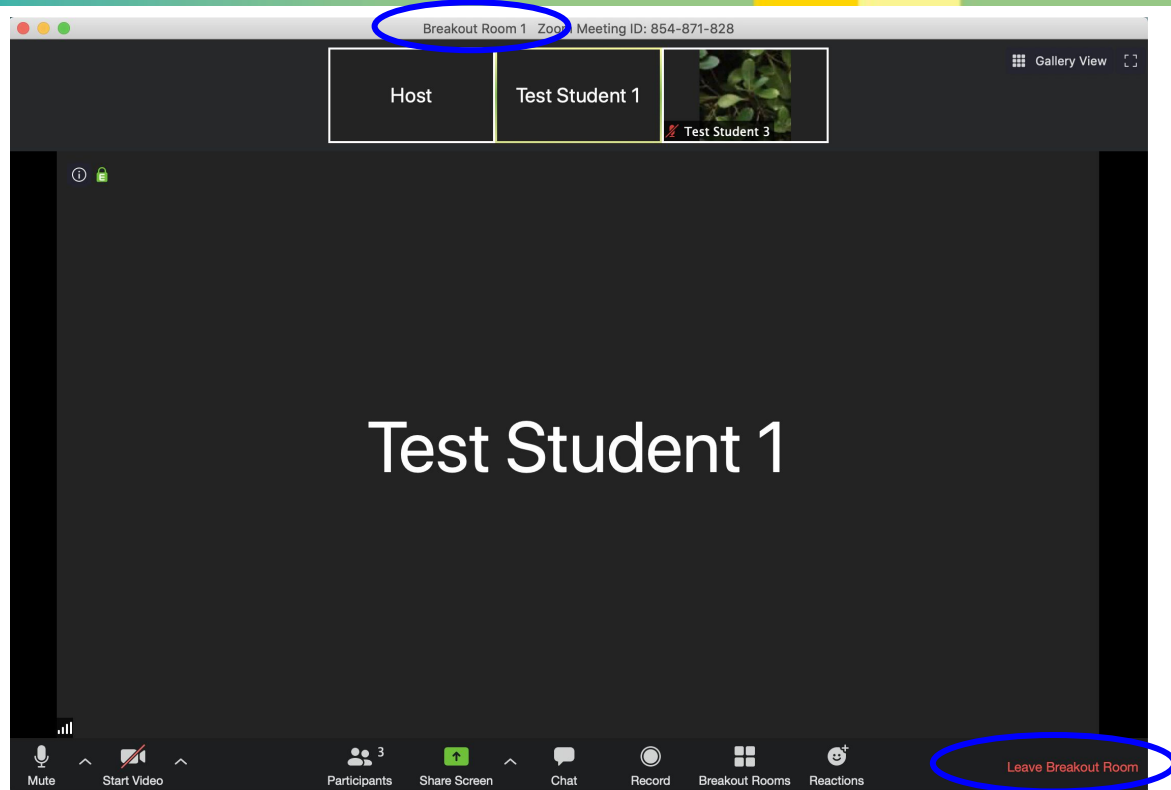
# Utilize Small Groups

Host can go into break-out rooms  
to monitor



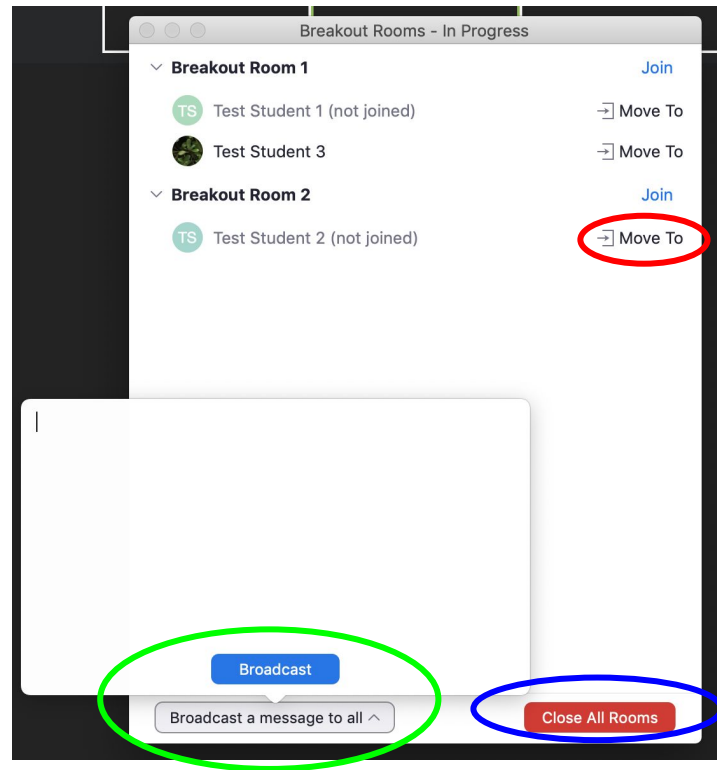
# Utilize Small Groups

Host can go between  
rooms and back to main  
session



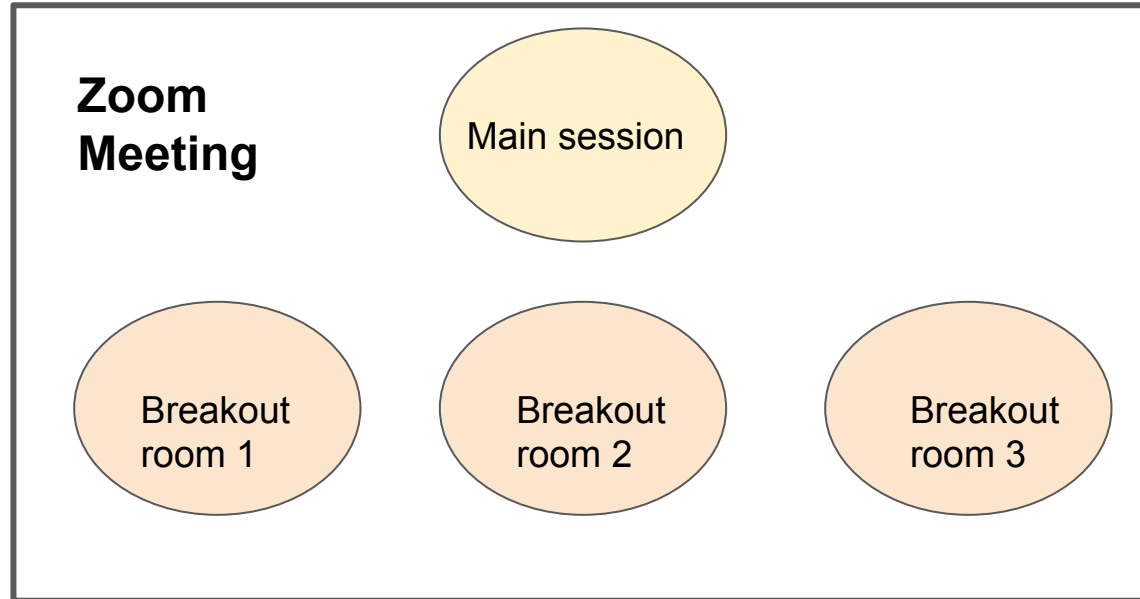
# Utilize Small Groups

- Host can move participants from one breakout room to another
- Broadcast message- Host can “call” participants back to the main session.
  - Why? Participants and hosts can only chat people in the same meeting room
- Host can close all break-out rooms and redirect all participants back to the main session



# Utilize Small Groups

Each participant and host can only be in one meeting space at a time



[Click for video on Zoom Breakout Rooms](#)

# Practices to Help Facilitate Discussion

**Build in time** for you and the students to test and get to know the technology together.

Make things **more explicit than implicit**.

On the first day and often thereafter, help **set students' expectations** for the technology, for you, and for each other.

Explicitly review **discussion and community guidelines** in the first several sessions, and make them available on Canvas.

# When Initiating Discussions

(especially if breaking up students into rooms)

## Give clear and explicit starting points for the discussion

- You won't be able to “see” if your question is over their heads.
- Get specific with your questions, let the students build the complexity.
- Give students a sense of how the discussion should progress in the group.
- Signal to students how they will “share out” after their groups.

## Consider assigning students roles in the breakout rooms.

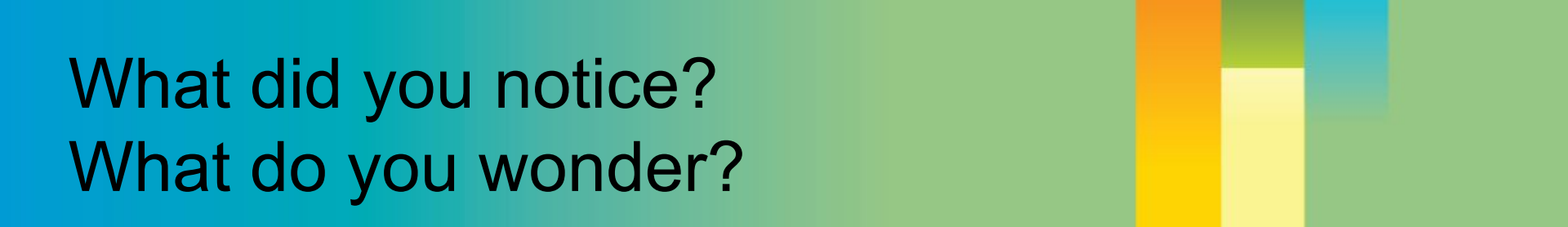
- Manager(s) - keeps the conversation on track, shares out
- Scribe(s) - takes notes, ensures accuracy for group-mates
- Skeptic(s) - offers counterarguments, further questions
- Promoter(s) - builds on others' thoughts, extends, offers “Yes, also...”

# Let's Experience it as a Student

- We will put you into a breakout room
- In a minute, but not yet: accept and join the room, turn on your video if possible (it's easier to talk to people!)
- We will end the room after 5 minutes
- You will have a 1-minute warning before we end the rooms.

Discussion Question:

**Which fictional villain do you most identify/empathize with?**



# What did you notice? What do you wonder?

Raise hand to join the queue

Lower hand to leave the queue

Jump in without raising your hand *if* it feels appropriate

**What did you notice about being in the breakout room?**

**What did you notice about the necessity of clear guidelines, a clear starting point for discussion, something else?**



Participation beyond Zoom

Recordings

Virtual office hours

Small group office hours

# **Zoom is Your Classroom, Not your Teaching**

Other pedagogical choices can  
supplement Zoom sessions

# Additional Options for Participation

Synchronous discussion is not the only method... discuss with your course instructor other options for participation...

**Participation can be encouraged synchronously or asynchronously, through:**

- Asynchronous discussion boards in Canvas
- One-on-one discussions/feedback with you, asynchronous questions/feedback
- Group projects, peer review, virtual group study sessions
- Writing projects, journals, reflections, applications
- Creative projects

Course activities are a necessary supplement to Zoom meetings! They will help catalyze and sustain discussion in the Zoom session.

# Recording Options

- **Broad**
  - Ex. Record Zoom discussion section meetings and upload/distribute for those who cannot attend
  - Note: Zoom does not record every meeting element
- **Targeted**
  - Ex. Short, topic-based recordings with Kaltura Capture
  - Note: student persistence w/ long recordings is limited
- **Consider Accessibility**
  - Ex. Captioning or transcripts for audio recordings

# Virtual Office Hours

- **Plentiful Options** (supported by campus)
  - Canvas: Chat, Discussions, Collaborations
  - Google: Meet (formerly “Hangouts”), Docs
  - Slack, Zoom, Microsoft Teams
- **Key Considerations**
  - Manageability: avoid overwhelming email volume, etc.
  - Fit: what suits the context for you/your students?
  - Clarity: schedule & expectations of remote OH

# We Want to Reiterate...

## **Remote discussion sections can:**

- Be interactive, encourage varied types of participation, and make space for meaningful conversation

## **Remember that you are a model for the students**

- Model the emotional response you hope students will have, especially in these stressful times.
- Embrace a growth mindset - you will become very skilled in doing this, with time and practice!
- Reflect on these experiences, learn from them.



# Still have questions?

Reach out to us!

# Contact Us!

## Digital Learning Hub

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## Engaged Teaching Hub

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