Digital Platform Tip Sheet: Zoom

Tips, instructions, & resources for using Zoom with LBS learners.

Acknowledgements

Introduction

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Community Literacy of Ontario has developed three tip sheets to support community-based LBS agencies learn more about using digital platforms with adult learners. The three technologies covered are Facebook, Google Classroom and ZOOM. Each contains tips, resources and success stories on using these technologies in LBS agencies.

These three Digital Platform Tip Sheets can be accessed on CLO's [website](#).

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Using Zoom with LBS Learners

What is Zoom?

Zoom is a popular video conferencing program that works on Windows, macOS (Apple), and Linux computers as well as Android and iOS smartphones.

A great feature of Zoom is that learners don't need to create a Zoom account or download an app to be able to join a meeting. This reduces barriers for learners with lower digital skills and allows them to continue with their lesson plan more quickly, rather than learning a new technology.

There are more features available if everyone in the meeting has a Zoom account, even at the free level. Anyone can create an account with their email address and use the basic functionality for free, forever. Because of these features, it is a very popular choice for providing LBS services remotely.
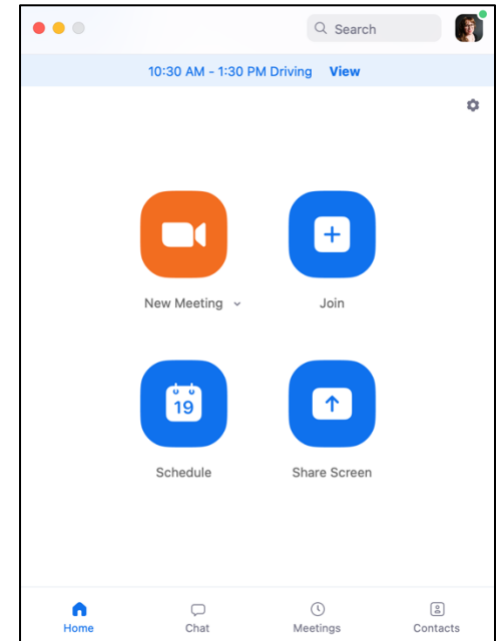
Many LBS agencies have reported that they have purchased a paid subscription for Zoom because the platform has proven to be a valuable resource for remote service delivery and communication with staff, learners, colleagues, and Board members. While most functionality such as screen sharing and the interactive Whiteboard are included in the free plan, purchasing a paid plan provides two key upgrades: ticketed support centre, and a **30-hour** time limit on meetings rather than **40 minutes**. You can learn more about Zoom's features here.

Zoom Tips for LBS:

The Basics:

With a free account, group meetings (three or more participants) on Zoom can be a maximum of 40 minutes long. One-on-one meetings (two participants) can be up to 24 hours in length. Though ZOOM was new to us in March 2020, by now, most LBS agencies have purchased a paid account which allows for much longer meetings with multiple participants and increased functionality. You can find out more about Zoom on their website here.

Zoom Participants:

The Waiting Room feature allows the host to have control over who enters the meeting and when participants enter the meeting. If you are hosting a lesson with several learners, this is a valuable function to use to ensure that only the approved learners can enter the meeting. As well, if a learner loses connection or has to leave the lesson, they will enter the waiting room instead of the lesson, which allows the host to control disruptions. You can learn more about using the Waiting Room feature here.

As a meeting host, you can also lock the meeting so that no other people can join. You can also remove a participant from a meeting, which also blocks them from being able to re-enter the meeting.

Video Sharing:

When joining a Zoom **meeting**, all participants have the ability to share their video or not. Participants can turn their camera on and off at any time during the meeting. If you have chosen to host a Zoom **webinar**, then participants do not have the option to share their video.

When joining a Zoom meeting with a waiting room, participants can preview their video and choose to enter the meeting with or without their camera on. Learners can practice entering a Zoom meeting with this link. You can learn more about Zoom's video options here.

Audio Settings:

When entering a Zoom meeting with a waiting room, participants will automatically be on mute. Participants can then unmute themselves when they wish to speak.
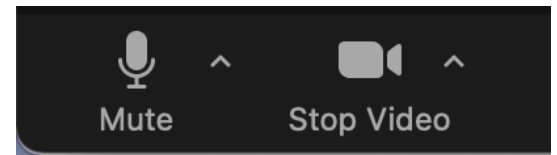
Click on the microphone to mute or unmute yourself. Click on the camera button to turn your video on or off.

If there is more than one learner in a meeting, you may wish to use the Raise Hand function for learners to indicate when they would like to speak in the meeting. This can be found in the "Reactions" panel. You can learn more about Non-Verbal Feedback and Reactions here.

If a learner does not have a stable internet connection, they can also join a Zoom meeting by phone. You can learn how to do that here.

Security and Confidentiality:

It is important to note that while Zoom says it has end to end encryption on all Zoom meetings, the company has been found to share information with other companies like Facebook. Be careful if you are sharing any confidential or protected information during a Zoom call. You can find out more about Zoom's privacy encryption here.

Top Tips for LBS:

As covered above, Zoom is a very popular choice for remote service delivery in LBS. Many instructors have reported that the screen sharing feature is perfect for leading a learner through a lesson plan. Some practitioners have used this feature to collect the notes from a lesson discussion in real time, as one would use a traditional whiteboard in an in-person class. You can learn more about screen sharing and Zoom's Whiteboards here.

Zoom fatigue is real as the pandemic drags on. Luckily, there are ways to make ZOOM more engaging for adult learners. Be sure to view GFCGlobal's *Dealing with Zoom Fatigue*: https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/zoom/zoom-fatigue/1/.

Two LBS examples of ZOOM in action:

Adult Learning Programs of Perth

LBS Instructor, Adam Stapleton, and his colleagues at the [Adult Learning Programs of Perth](#) used Zoom extensively when delivering programming remotely online. To make the transition to Zoom and online learning more manageable for learners, Adam recommends developing a clear onboarding program for the new platform which is delivered before beginning the regular lesson plan. Adam notes that in many cases, the learner may not be familiar with using a computer, or the Zoom platform, so it is important to build familiarity and confidence before starting with the regular lesson plan.

Adam developed an instructional deck using PowerPoint which was shared with all learners. If the learner needed additional support, Adam would connect with someone close to the learner (a family member or PSW in the home) who would then guide the learner through the process. Adam notes that repetition builds confidence and the small wins from learning the new online platforms add to the learner's overall confidence.

Adam notes that the average age of learners in his organization has increased by three years over the 2020-2021 pandemic period. More seniors are choosing to pursue digital skills upgrading to maintain their independence and to continue to access services online. For example, many learners have practiced ordering groceries online or attending an online medical appointment.

Wellington County Learning Centre

Elizabeth Debergh, Executive Director of the [Wellington County Learning Centre](#) (WCLC), embraced using Zoom at the start of the pandemic, and purchased Zoom Pro to run online LBS programs. The WCLC utilized the Not-for-Profit discount through TechSoup. Because the staff had never taught online before, Elizabeth decided to pick one program (Zoom) and had all staff complete training before starting online service delivery.
The team set up 30-minute Zoom meetings and in each meeting the staff team presented a new feature of Zoom and then spent time practicing with it. This can be done in pairs or larger groups.

Elizabeth rolled out each class one by one to ensure staff and learners were comfortable with the new Zoom format. The first class was taught to learners for 2-4 months while the staff made necessary modifications to ensure learners were comfortable with the remote delivery, pacing, and were not getting Zoom fatigue. Once the class was solidified, a new class was

started and optimized over the next 2-4 months. Over time, the WCLC built up a variety of classes that were fully developed, practiced, and running smoothly.

Elizabeth found that as they added more courses, the tech support needs of learners grew as well. So they hired a staff member to work flexible hours and offer basic computer support for learners. This took the pressure off the staff who were focusing on service delivery.

Additional Tips from Wellington County Learning Centre:

- **Zoom Pro has closed captioning**. We were able to register a learner who was deaf-blind and he was able to take the program. We have never engaged the deaf community but now on all our program posters we put something about having closed captioning and that those who are hard of hearing are welcome to participate. This will open the doors to new learners coming into our programs. People with hearing difficulties can now access Anglophone and Native programming if it is offered with closed captioning.

- **Zoom Pro can run concurrent meetings.** With individual logins for each staff member, we can run programs at the same time. Before remote service delivery, all classes were in-person, so we had to run classes one at a time. Now with Zoom, staff can run multiple classes at the same time.

- Make sure when you purchase your software, that you add the appropriate number of break out rooms because adding more rooms after you have purchased the software, is more expensive.

Resource Links:

GFCGlobal's Zoom Getting Started Guide:
https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/zoom/getting-started-with-zoom/1/

ZOOM's "Helpful Resources" (https://zoom.us/resources) contains short videos to help you learn to use the following features:
- Joining & Configuring Audio/Video
- Meeting Controls
- Sharing Your Screen
- Record a Zoom Meeting
- Schedule a Meeting

MTML's ZOOM Guide:
www.mtml.ca/resources/for-practitioners/the-silver-lining-cafe-and-zoom-tools