

# Moderating and Facilitating Groups: Managing Breakout Groups

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## Overview

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- People tune out and do other things.
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- A breakout session is an opportunity to orchestrate meetings between specific people, and for specific goals.
- Breakout groups are a way to drill into smaller topics in the context of a larger topic.
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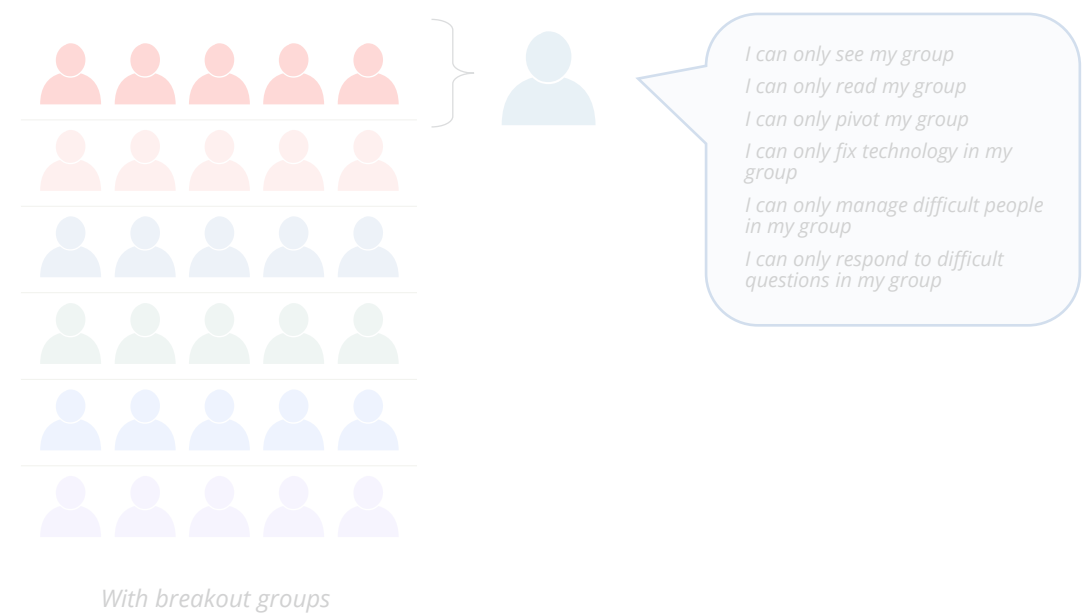
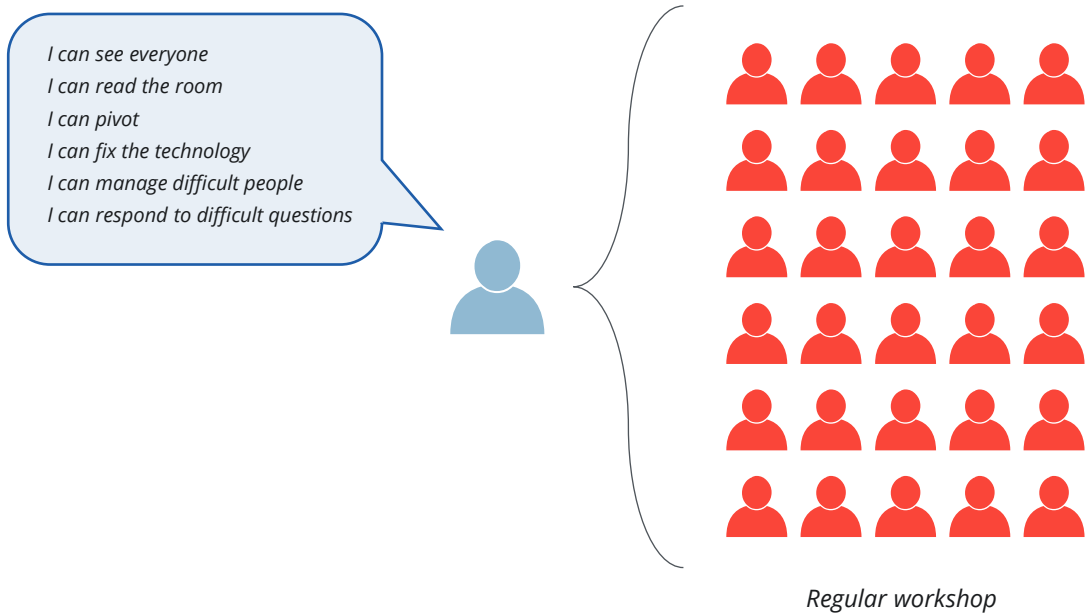
### **When attendees are in smaller groups, they are more likely to participate.**

- People have different working styles; small groups accommodate those.
- People who are quiet have an opportunity to speak and contribute in a smaller group.
- It's harder to hide in a small group, so participants are forced to focus.

Overview

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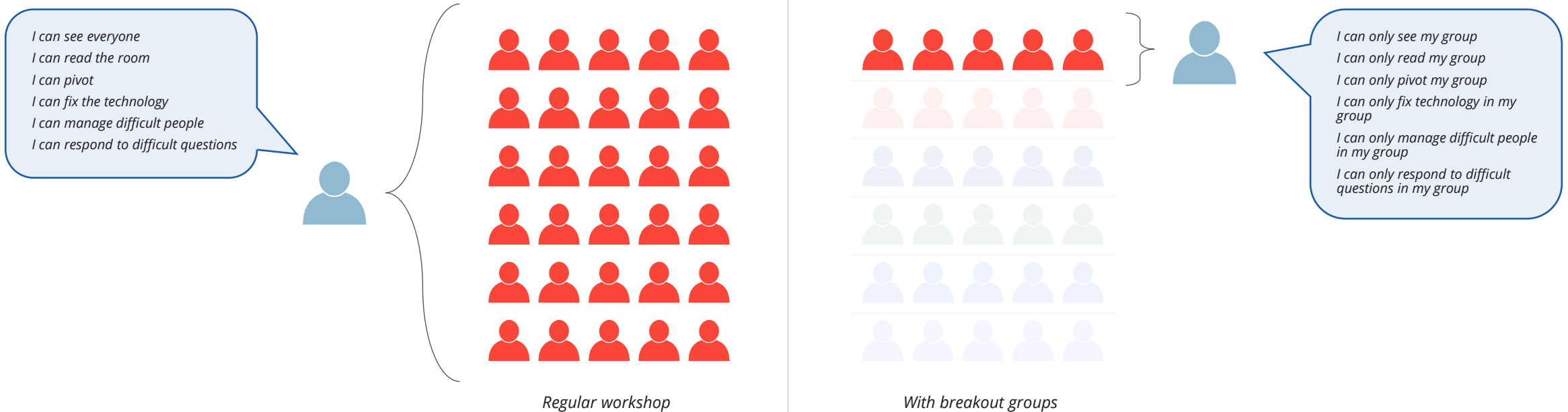
In a normal meeting, you can control the session.



Overview

# But breakout sessions add large organizational and logistical challenges.

In a breakout session, you lose control.



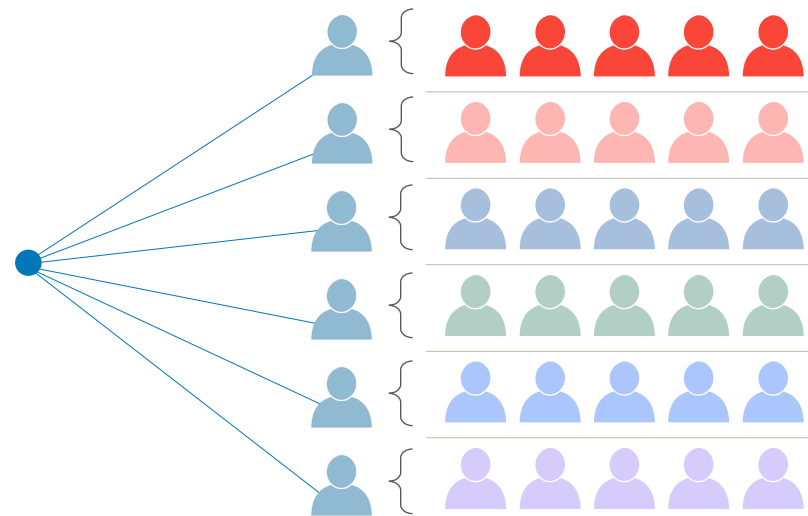
## Approach

# To run a successful breakout group, you'll need more facilitators.

Each group will need a facilitator

Each facilitator will need to be equally as knowledgeable and skilled

Each facilitator needs to be in-sync with other facilitators



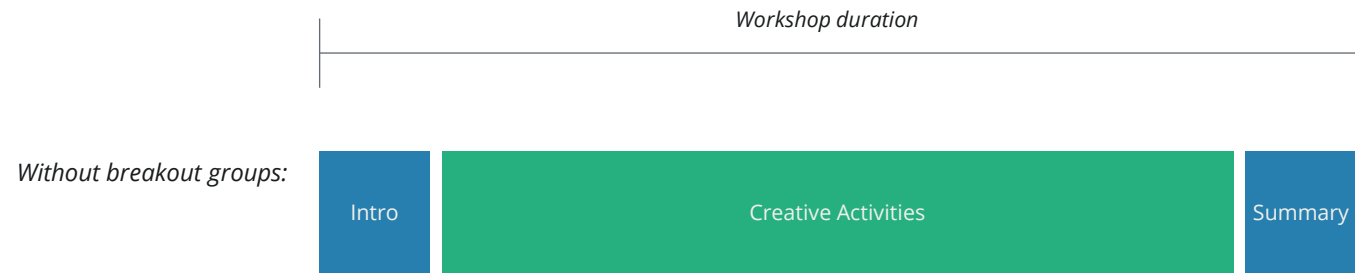
*With breakout groups*



## Approach

# The keys to running an effective breakout session: pacing, planning & practice.

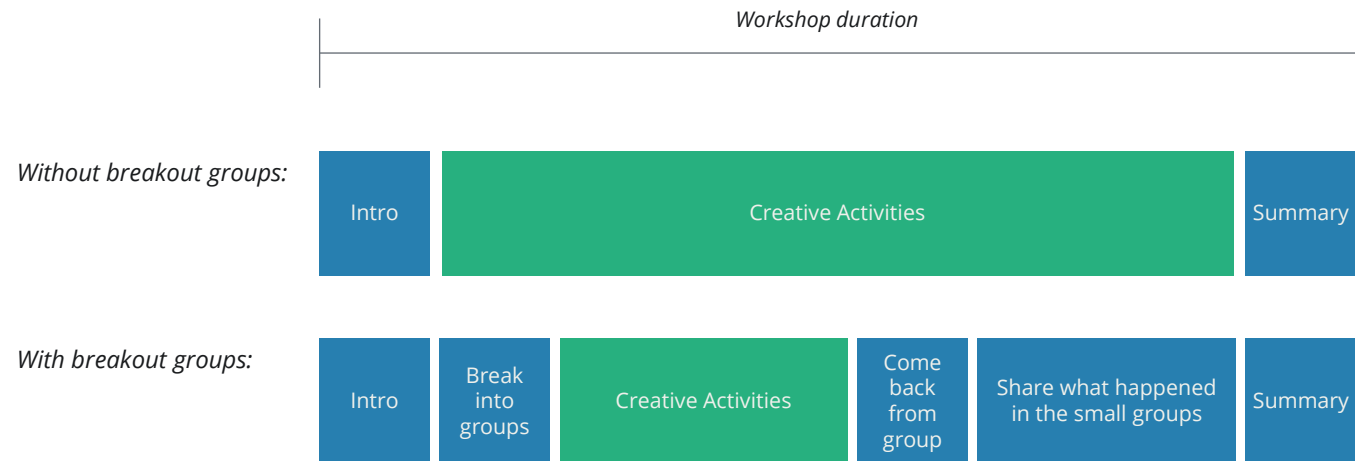
The biggest change to the session is that you'll need to move slower, and as a result, you'll get less accomplished.



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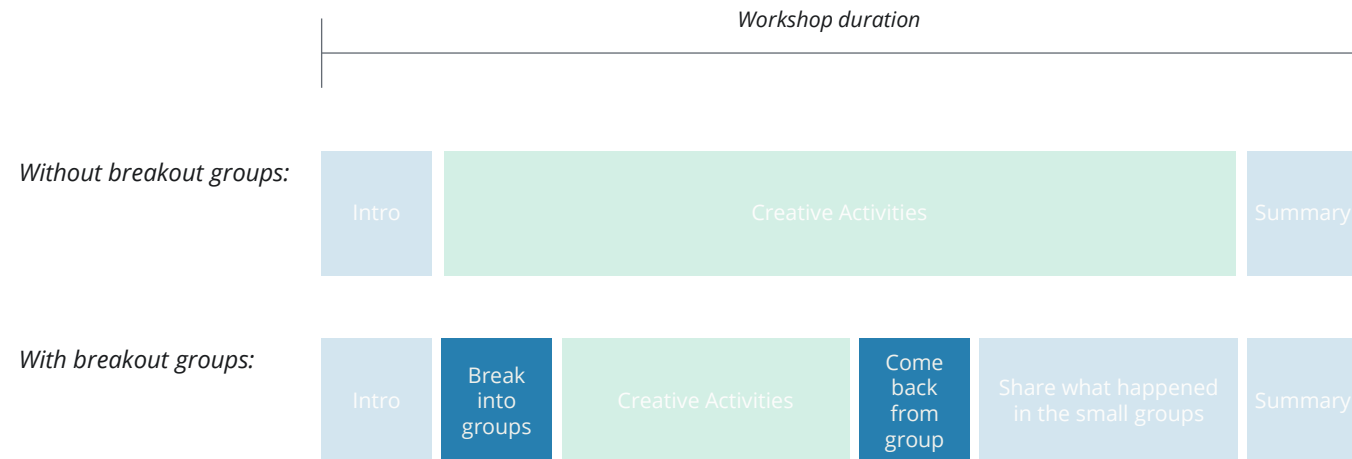


## Approach

# The keys to running an effective breakout session: pacing, planning & practice.

**Each time the team has a pacing break, you lose their attention.**

- People will find themselves waiting, and will start to “multitask”
- The attention shift from one Zoom room to another (or one physical room to another) results in loss of salience
- You may actually lose participants, who view the break as a chance to leave

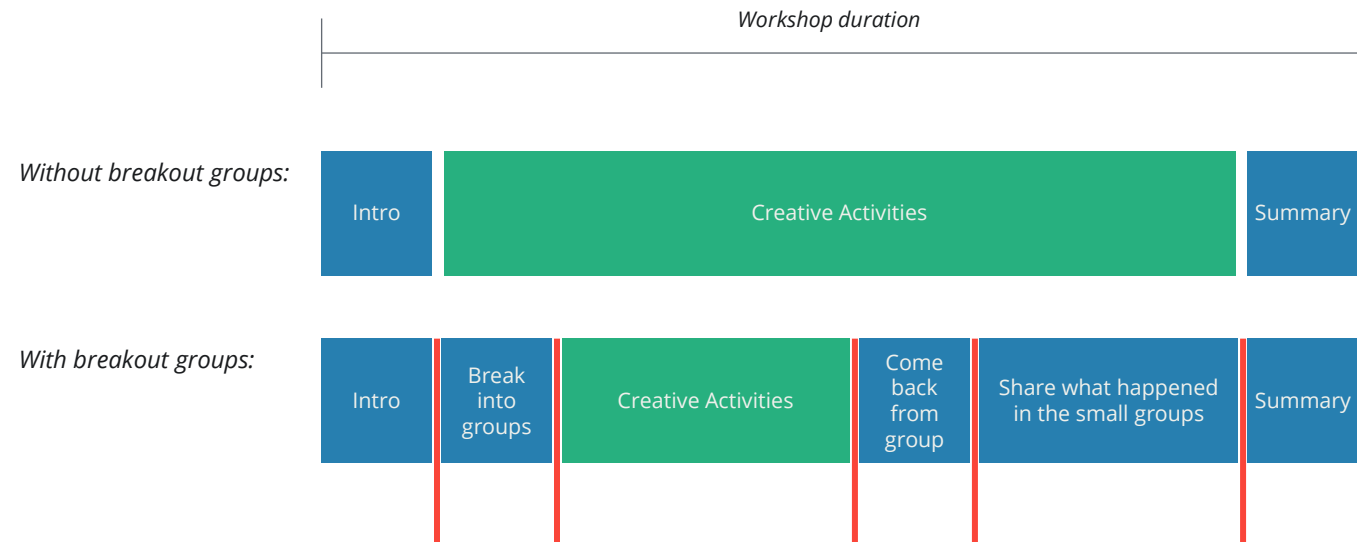


## Approach

# The keys to running an effective breakout session: pacing, planning & practice.

The best way to make sure the pacing works the way you want is to practice the transitions.

- How will the technology support the breakout rooms?
- How will each group gain understanding about the framework activity?
- How will the groups know when they are done?
- What will the groups bring back to the larger team?
- How will they share their work?
- How will you summarize the different group activities in one sense of closure?



To remain in control, practice the **transitions**.

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Difficulties

Breakout groups introduce a *knowledge gap*.

Difficulties

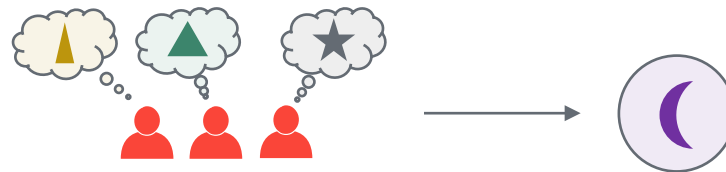
# Participants *know different things* when the workshop starts.



Things I know before  
the workshop

Difficulties

# Each breakout group generates new shared knowledge.

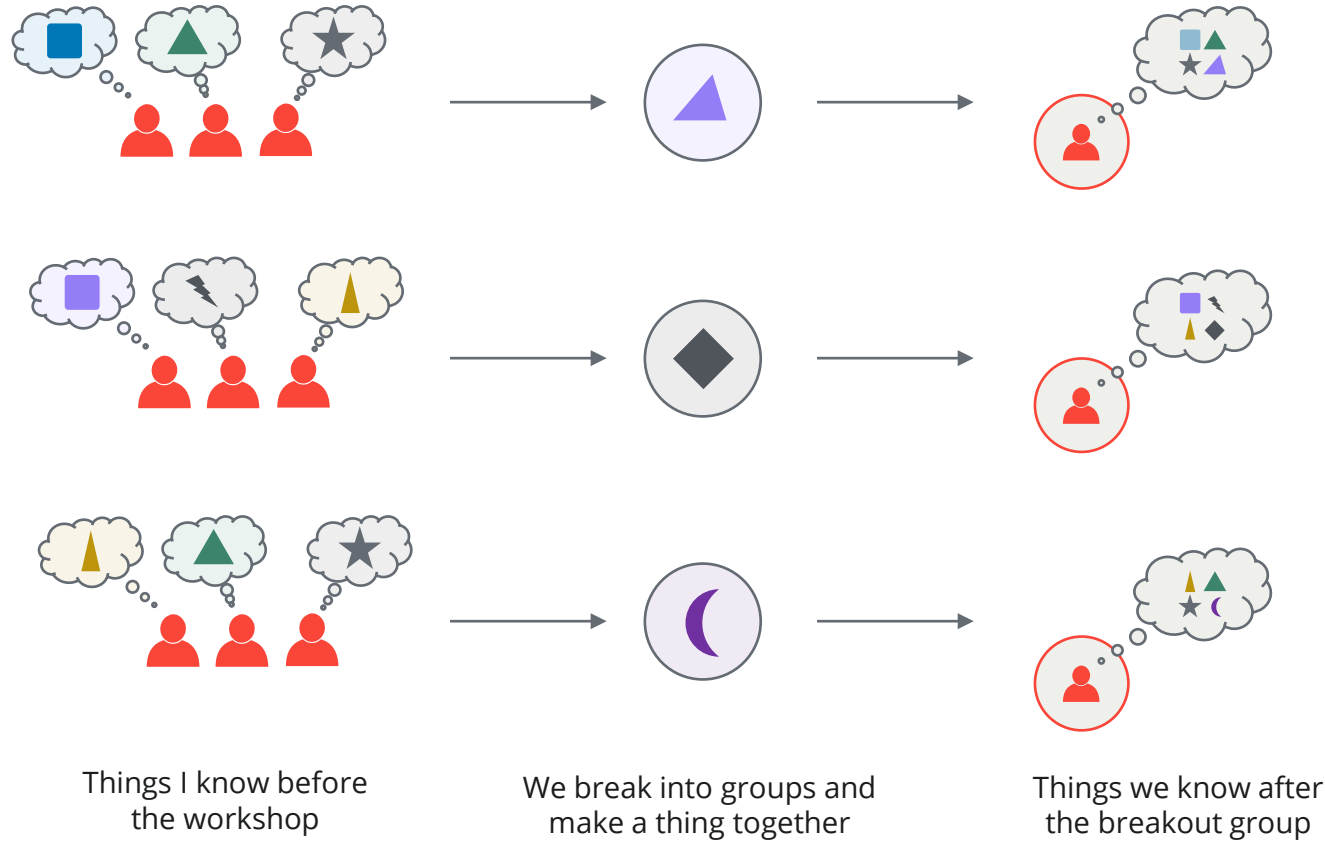


Things I know before  
the workshop

We break into groups and  
make a thing together

Difficulties

# But now, the larger group's knowledge is splintered.





## Difficulties

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**A shareout is an opportunity for each group to communicate the new knowledge they have generated.**

- The shareout is a period of time at the end of the meeting where each group describes what they made, and what they learned from making it.
- Each artifact acts as an outline for their mini-presentation.
- Other groups listen, and have an opportunity to ask questions or add comments and opinions.

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- When a group is presenting, other groups often stop listening and instead think about their own presentations.
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### **The artifacts that are made in the shareout are largely illegible to other groups.**

- Each group made their own artifact. They own the content, and can read through the sketchy, sloppiness of the creation.
- Showing the artifact to other groups is not meaningful – its sketchiness and lack of clarity is confusing, and makes it hard (or impossible) to engage with.

## Difficulties

# When you use breakout groups, the summary of the session gains importance.

**The summary now acts as a knowledge sharing artifact for the participants themselves.**

While the summary document was previously valuable to share knowledge creation with people not present in the session, it now acts as an anchor for all people who have been involved.

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# Thank you!

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